

**UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
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**HORROR VS. TERROR IN GOTHIC LITERATURE AND THEIR
CREATION IN MARY SHELLEY'S NOVEL *FRANKENSTEIN; OR,
THE MODERN PROMETHEUS***

BA thesis

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to analyse horror and terror in the context of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* and to determine the differences horror and terror have as well as see, through close reading, what is used to create them.

The present thesis is divided into an introduction, two main body parts and a conclusion. In the introduction I will be giving a general overview of how *Frankenstein* fits into the Gothic literature genre, a short summary of the novel and how the thesis will be structured. In the first part of the thesis I will be giving an overview of Gothic literature, its beginnings and main characteristics. I will then move on to terror and horror, analyse how different they are from each other and what is used to create atmospheres of horror and terror. I will also be looking at what has been previously said on this topic. In the second part of the thesis I will be closely analysing examples from *Frankenstein* that best show by which means horror and terror were created. The thesis ends with a conclusion where the main points will be repeated. The abstract in Estonian will be provided at the end of the thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

Frankenstein is regarded as one of the most well-known novels in the Gothic literary movement. Mary Shelley's creation and use of horror and terror in *Frankenstein* highlight her as a Gothic author and put her novel in the genre. However, it is not easily defined as either a horror novel or terror novel. Ideas on this topic fall into two categories: those who see it as a horror-gothic novel and those who see it as a terror-gothic novel. In this thesis I aim to understand how horror and terror differ from each other, what is used to create atmospheres of horror and terror, and finally to see how *Frankenstein* fits into these categories. I will be analysing scenes from the novel that best show what techniques Shelley has used to create terror and horror.

First published in 1818, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* tells the story of a young scientist Victor Frankenstein, who believes to have found how to create life, but not by natural ways but from death. He is successful in his attempt, yet the creature he created is not the vision he hoped it would be. His creation fills Victor with terror and he abandons it immediately, yet the feelings and sensations stay with him for the rest of the night. Victor decides to abandon his creation and hope that it will die somewhere, however the creature comes looking for him and Victor is forced to return to his home in Geneva. At one point the creature appears before him and tells his story, and asks that Victor create a companion for him. At first Frankenstein agrees, and he travels to a remote island in Scotland to execute the task. Yet he is overcome with fear at what these creatures together could be capable of. At the sight of Victor destroying his companion, the creature is overcome with anger and promises Victor to appear before him on his wedding night. The wedding night arrives and by then, Victor's closest friend Clerval has been murdered by the creature. However, his vengeance does not stop there. Victor wrongly believes that the creature is coming for him, but he is actually there for Victor's fiancée Elizabeth. After

her murder, Frankenstein promises to hunt the creature to the ends of the earth. At the end of the novel he reaches the Arctic where he is taken aboard by captain Walton and his crew who are on an expedition to the north pole. He dies on the ship, and in the final moments of the book, the creature appears before his creator, and then disappears into the icy landscape of Arctica.

In Chapter 1 I will firstly be giving an overview of the gothic literature genre, its history, and main components. The literature review will examine terror, how it relates to the sublime, and horror, and how these two sensations are different from each other. This will also include the ways in which horror and terror are created. I will also be briefly looking at the life of Mary Shelley and her novel *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*. In Chapter 2 of the thesis I will be analysing scenes from the novel in the context of horror and terror. The scenes have been previously selected on the premise that they indeed include either horror or terror. The thesis will end with a conclusion where I bring out the differences between horror and terror, how they affect the reader, what means are used to create them, and how these are applied to Mary Shelley's novel. The conclusion will include the main points made in chapter 1 of the thesis, a summary of the analysis and a short summary of the findings that were made through the analysis.

Chapter 1. HORROR, TERROR AND MARY SHELLEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN*

The genre of Gothic literature emerged in the late 18th century, with the anonymous publishing of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764 and began its decline after the year 1820 (Hume 1969: 282). The main characteristics of Gothic literature are dark and gloomy environments that evoke fear, contrasts between light and dark and old and new, wild and barren landscapes, and creatures that are unfamiliar to the reader. In addition, gothic literature uses these characteristics to introduce horror and terror in a text. By using the above-mentioned components, authors of the gothic genre have distinguished it from others and defined the literary movement.

Gothic literature was a reaction against the neo-classical ideals of the late 17th and early 18th century values. Fred Botting (1996: 15) describes how the influence of classical values such as unity, stability, harmony and rational thinking formed a past that was seen as barbarous and uncivilized. He adds that the ideas of the Gothic past were believed to be uncultured and almost childish, however other Gothic traits such as superstition, wildness, fancy and extravagance became associated with an opportunity for aesthetic creation and imaginative potential. Andrew Sanders suggests that gothic fiction was created as a reaction against the comfort and security the enlightened society enjoyed (1996: 341). Maggie Kilgour (1995: 3) further explains that gothic literature is considered a revolt against the established aesthetics of neoclassical order. It intends to dismantle the ideas of strong morals and give way to the imagination. Additionally, during the era, revolutions that happened in Europe and overseas likewise influenced the genre. As Botting (1996: 3) states, Gothic highlighted devotion to medieval values for those who supported the revolutionary ideas. Aristocratic society was imagined as the villainous and tyrannical character to make way for the rising middle-class. It was inspired by the ancient nations of

the Germanic tribes, whose strong loyalties to freedom were associated with the archaic heritage.

The literature of the second decade of the 18th century intends to stir the imaginative sympathies, says Hume (1969: 282). The literature of the Gothic genre is a “literature of process”, which aims to help the author to express their thoughts and therefore reflect the author’s mind through the novel (1969: 282). Gothic novels have, as mentioned above, descriptions of barren and extreme landscapes, gloomy castles, and vividly terrifying images of creatures unfamiliar to the reader. They bring out contrasts between old and new environments, light and dark settings, which aid in creating the emotion of fear in a novel. The first novel in the Gothic genre is considered to be Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, which includes many of the elements that Gothic literature begins to include as it progresses, such as the wait for the supernatural, fusion between the villain and the hero, and cramped spaces to evoke strong emotional states (Sage 1998: 81-82).

One of the key aspects of gothic literature is the distinction made between two sensations - horror and terror. Ann Radcliffe, pioneer and author of several gothic novels, has, in her posthumously published essay *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, distinguished the difference between horror and terror. According to her, terror “expands the soul and, awakens the faculties to a high degree of life” while horror “contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them” (cited in Hume 1969: 284-285). For many earlier authors of the Gothic genre, terror was the means of creating fear in the text. Terror, connected with the sublime, was seen as a higher priority than horror. Terror triggers the mind and imagination, which allows the mind to conquer fears and change from a passive state to one of active (Botting, 1996: 48). Botting (1998:123-124) writes that terror, which is connected to feelings of astonishment and wonder, signifies positive emotions. The subject, upon seeing an object

of sublime, experiences a terrified wave of emotions that prompt a sense of elevation (Botting 1998: 124). This is in accordance with Ann Radcliffe's idea that terror expands the imaginative abilities of a person who is experiencing something sublime. The sublime is an idea in which a person's mind is expanded upon seeing something that is of sublime nature. The most well-known author on the topic of sublime is Edmund Burke. In 1757, Burke published *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* to distinguish sublime from beauty. Objects of beauty are small in dimensions and delicate. They ought to be light and cause feelings of fondness and love. The sublime however greatly differs from beauty. Objects of sublime are grand, vast in dimensions. They should be dark and gloomy and elicit feelings of terror and astonishment (Burke 2009: 102-103). Burke reasoned that objects of beauty do not require attention and one can easily identify objects of beauty without giving much thought to it. "It is not by the force of long attention and enquiry that we find any object to be beautiful; beauty demands no assistance from our reasoning; even the will is unconcerned"(Burke 2009: 84). He goes further and discusses how beauty submits to the admirer and how they are "flattered into compliance"(Burke 2009: 103), which suggests that one can easily agree that an object is an object of beauty and not an object of sublime. While objects that are small, delicate, smooth, are objects of beauty, objects of sublime are vast, grandiose and obscure. Sublime lingers in these and forces a person to submit to the object they are admiring which consequently becomes the only thing they can focus on. Sublime forces them to give their full attention and does not allow them to concentrate on anything else (Burke 2009: 103). These objects evoke terror and, furthermore, astonishment. Astonishment is the motion in which all movements of the soul are halted, and the focus is entirely on the sublime object. (Burke 2009: 53) This applies to sublime in nature as well. Sudden contrasts in landscapes, the play of light and dark adds to the sublime. It produces excess that a rational mind could

not understand. (Botting, 1996: 26) Alison Milbank (1998: 227) further comments on the subject and continues how Edmund Burke locates the sublime primarily in fear. "Whatever is fitted in any sort of to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort of terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime" (Burke 2009: 36). Terror is closely related to fear and robs the mind of its abilities. Threat should not be immediate, otherwise delight or pleasure cannot be obtained from the experience. The sublime is always a kind of power that "works against our will". By these definitions, terror is always near and forces the character to acknowledge the threat that is nearby although not instantly there and recognisable.

Horror, however, is seen as immediate and definite. It does not creep around in the character's environment but appears before them without a warning. A feature of horror is that it provokes the person once and, after evoking feelings of disgust and revulsion, is gone. It is definite in the sense that it appears, attacks, and then disappears, leaving only the person to experience these physically negative emotions. Robert D. Hume (1969: 285) suggests that the writers of horror-Gothic do not keep the attention of the reader on suspense and dread, but rather attack them frontally and instead of elaborating on what might happen, the reader is faced with a bundle of horrors which leave them shocked. Botting (1996: 48) mentions that horror, which most often appears in decaying buildings or underground chambers, stops the mind and freezes the body. While terror is both a physical and an emotional sensation, horror is more of a physical one. The cause of it is usually a direct contact with physical mortality. An example might be when someone has come into contact with a dead corpse. The scene is immediate, and the sight of a dead body frightens and disgusts the character, and the reader as well, so much that they can do nothing but feel revulsion and horror at the sight. Botting discusses how the body, which

is seen as one whole unit, is suddenly taken apart and thus creating horror as the image of death confronts the imagined unity of the body (1998:126). Horror is associated with feelings of loathing, disgust, revulsion, and can cause loss of consciousness and speech, physical powerlessness and paralysis (Botting 1998:124). In addition, Botting adds that horror surfaces when the fears of a character "come a little too close to home" (1998: 124) which suggests that horror is evoked when something horrible happens to surrounding settings and characters that the reader can recognise in an instant. Viktoria Prohaszkova discusses how horror novels focus on emotions and the esthetic aspect in order to evoke fear in the reader, and how the environment in which a story is taking place is another important factor of horror (2012: 134). Horror was seen as a secondary source in creating fear. Xavier Reyes suggests (2015: 52) that because horror is linked to "explicitness and irrationality" it is continually put lower than terror, which demands character's full attention and reaches deep into them to force a conflict between clashing emotions.

Mary Shelley was born in the later half of the 18th century, to William Golding and Mary Wollstonecraft (Sanders, 1996: 345). She is best known for her novel *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus*, which was first published in 1818. Shelley is one of the more well-known gothic authors of her time, having written, besides *Frankenstein*, several other novels, travelogues and short stories which also deal with the themes of rebirth and animatedness. (Mulvey-Roberts 1998: 211) *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus* was written in 1818 as a challenge suggested by Lord Byron. The novel, according to Andrew Sanders, aims to show what happens when limits of knowledge have been reached and the unknown approaches (1996: 346). *Frankenstein* deals with the nature of life and its limits. Shelley's writings, like her life as well, have themes of abandonment and death, as Mulvey-Roberts suggests (1998: 212). The novel sees the abandonment of the creature by

its creator in the beginning of the novel and the abandonment of Victor Frankenstein at the end, where his family has died through the hands of his creation.

The novel is considered one of the most famous novels in the gothic literary genre. The use of gloomy yet sublime landscapes and objects and descriptions of dark and changing weather contribute to the novel belonging in the gothic literary genre. By describing the changing sublime landscapes, dark and dim weather, using contrasting objects such as the creature in a quiet field, and suspension, Mary Shelley expertly brings the attention to the changing atmospheres throughout the novel which contribute to the creation of both horror and terror. Sandra Kuberski describes how the mountainous scenery that surrounds the characters brings out the aspect of terror and shows how nature can overpower humans (2011: 14). With the use of descriptions of vast landscapes, the aspect of terror is created, as it shows the sublime, from which terror comes. Shelley's use of contrasts brings out another gothic aspect of *Frankenstein*. Kohil Mouna (2018: 230) suggests that in the novel, a contrast is being made between an old and isolated environment setting and the modern era. The beginning and end of the novel is told by Robert Walton, a captain leading an expedition to the north pole. The environment around him is covered in ice and this gives a stark contrast to the modern environment from which Victor Frankenstein comes from. Mouna goes on to add that setting is also an important aspect that Shelley uses in *Frankenstein*. He suggests that the setting aids with evoking fear in the reader. The darkness of Frankenstein's workspace during his journey of creating a human being evokes feelings of mystery and help the reader sense fear that is soon to come with the awakening of the creature (Mouna 2018: 230).

Literary discussion on the topic of horror and terror in *Frankenstein* is wide and ranges from theory to theory. Ideas vary, and scholars seem to have divided into two sides: *Frankenstein* is either a horror Gothic novel, or a terror Gothic novel. Nicholas Marsh

(2009: 209-210) addresses the distinction between terror and horror in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. He suggests that, while most other Gothic novels deal with terror, *Frankenstein* focuses more on the horror aspect. Marsh says that terror is provoked by anticipation and suspense, and brings out the idea that Shelley did not use suspense to the best of her abilities and rather created impatience instead of terror in the novel. However, horror, as Marsh explains, is provoked when readers feel revulsion from the descriptions. He highlights some examples from the novel that show horror, such as the descriptions of Frankenstein's research in slaughterhouses and graveyards and the image of the creature, and concludes that "rather than a terrifying tale of the supernatural, *Frankenstein* is a horrifying tale of the scientifically possible" (2009: 210). Philip Tallon (2010: 36) expresses that *Frankenstein* can be considered the most famous horror story of the 19th century. He does not go into the characteristics of horror in *Frankenstein* but offers an idea that the horrors presented in the novel work as an internal critique of the overall feelings and moods of the 19th century (2010:36).

However, Nora Crook (2015: 110) puts *Frankenstein* under the terror novel category. She says that despite Mary Shelley's hope to "awaken thrilling horror", the novel contains mainly of disguised elements of terror. Crook brings out some stock elements of Gothic terror novel and shows how they are implemented in *Frankenstein*. She mentions how the decaying abbey is transformed into Frankenstein's laboratory and Victor is the secluded monk or student, the general villain's pursuit of the maiden becomes Frankenstein's pursuit of the creature, and the novel contains a dreadful portrait of Frankenstein's mother (Crook, 2015: 110).

Similarly, discussion of the ways in which Shelley has created horror and terror in her novel differ. Robert D. Hume (1969: 285-286) compares the ways in which horror and terror are created and brings out that Mary Shelley creates horror by piling the many

horrors presented in *Frankenstein* in the reader's mind and attack them directly, thus getting the attention of the reader and forcing them to be involved with the story. Fred Botting comments on Shelley's 1831 introduction and offers an idea that, Shelley, in order to create horror, uses effects of "decomposition at a most physical and vital level" (1998: 125). Botting hints at the number of deaths occurring in the novel and how Shelley uses death to bring out horror. He further notes that the most intense moment of horror appears during the awakening of the creature, towards which Frankenstein suddenly feels utter horror and disgust.

Kuberski (2011: 13-14) however looks at the ways in which Shelley has created terror in her novel. One of the aspects she brings out is the idea that terror is mainly achieved through the suspense that Victor feels because he is unable to cope with the deaths of his family members. Kuberski brings an example where Frankenstein is agitated about the fact that the creature will come and kill him on his wedding night, and how the anxiety increases terror in general and thus forces readers to feel it as well.

Shelley's work, especially *Frankenstein*, is part of the gothic literary movement. Her use of contrasts, suspense, sublime environments and descriptions of death that produce negative emotional and physical feelings to produce horror and terror shows her knowledge on the different characteristics of Gothic literature and her expert use of these in her novel bring out both horror and terror and distinguish her as a gothic author as well as show *Frankenstein* as a gothic novel. It is because of these reasons I have decided to choose *Frankenstein* as my preferred subject of analysis and will be applying the knowledge from the theoretical part in my analysis.

Chapter 2. THE ANALYSIS OF HORROR AND TERROR IN *FRANKENSTEIN*

In the following chapter I will be looking at three different aspects that Mary Shelley has used to create terror and horror in her novel. I will be analysing how sublime landscapes and suspense is used to create terror, and how descriptions of death and feelings of disgust or revulsion that accompany death are applied to establish horror.

Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus tells the story of a young hopeful scientist Victor Frankenstein, who has discovered a way to bring to life a dead corpse. Hopeful that he will create life from death, he gathers different body parts to construct a human. He succeeds in bringing it to life, however the reality soon hits him, and he is horrified at the sight. In his hopes to create a wonder, he as actually made a monster. Terror overcomes him and he escapes, leaving the just awakened creature to its own devices. The novel follows Frankenstein as he tries to come to terms with his actions, see the deaths of all his closest friends and family through the hands of the creature, and finally decide to go after it. The final moments of the novel show Frankenstein on board the ship of captain Walton, his death and the creature's final words to him.

2.1 Sublime Landscapes and Contrasts

Terror is first and foremost connected to the sublime. The sublime is considered a sort of higher power that, when experienced, causes the person to feel an abundance of emotions which leave them unable to comprehend that which is in front of them. Sublime demands their full attention and they lose their sense of control over their emotions, except for terror and astonishment.

In *Frankenstein*, most of the plot takes place around mountainous scenery and thus the reader is immersed in the sublime landscapes that Mary Shelley has created throughout

the novel. Victor Frankenstein comes into contact multiple times with sublime landscapes that give an understanding that nature is a power that is higher than everything and everyone. With the addition of contrasts, Shelley develops the feelings of fear in the reader and in her characters.

Early on in the novel, the reader is met with sublime landscapes through captain Walton's letters. Him and his crew are surrounded by miles of barren icy landscapes that are slowly closing in on the ship, which creates feelings of uncertainty regarding the surroundings. Shelley uses the cold and desolate environment to establish feelings of fear in the reader:

Last Monday (July 31st) we were nearly surrounded by ice, which closed in the ship on all sides, scarcely leaving room in which she floated. /.../ About two o'clock the mist cleared away, and we beheld, stretched out in every direction, vast and irregular plains of ice, which seemed to have no end. (Shelley 2012: 15)

To add to it, she inserts both Victor Frankenstein and the Monster into the landscape, thus evoking the contrast between them and the environment and constructing feelings of fear. The sheets of ice that surround the ship are desolate and empty which creates feelings of uncertainty and suspense of what or who might appear amongst the ice blocks.

The sublime icy landscape can offer a contrast to Victor's work in the dark and gloomy laboratory, where the monster is being crafted. Shelley makes the reader see that while Victor attempts to play God and create life from death, he ultimately fails and begins to understand that he should not meddle with the natural forces of nature as it is all-powerful and, as stated by Milbank (1998: 227) "works against our will". The cold wilderness, and nature in general, is presented as the higher power that nobody can control and is in ironic contrast with Victor's attempt to play God and create life from death. And while he succeeds in constructing his ideal creation, instead of being something wonderful, it turns out to be a monster.

The sublime landscapes are present throughout the novel and Shelley uses them to remind the reader and her characters that nature is divine and dominant against which humans have no control over and they should not meddle with it. As Frankenstein reminisces on his childhood, he remembers a thunderstorm:

When I was about fifteen years old we had retired to our house near Belrive, when we witnessed a most violent and terrible thunder-storm. It advanced from behind the mountains of Jura; and the thunder burst at once with frightful loudness from various quarters of the heavens. /.../ As I stood at the door, on a sudden I beheld a stream of fire issue from an old and beautiful oak, which stood about twenty yards from our house; and so soon as the dazzling light vanished, the oak had disappeared /.../ (Shelley, 2012: 32-33)

As thunder crashes into an old and beautiful oak tree, the strongest of all trees, Shelley once again reminds that one should not intervene with the actions of nature, because the forces have the ability to destroy even the strongest, and thus gives the reader the feeling of terror at such a powerful sight. It forces the reader to concentrate only on the imagery that Shelley has written and be consumed with the emotions of astonishment and, also, fear. Because nature is above humans and can bring consequences to those who attempt to play with it.

Furthermore, as Frankenstein is returning to Geneva from his studies and experiment, he witnesses lightning storms over Mont Blanc:

/.../ I saw the lightnings playing on the summit of Mont Blanc in the most beautiful figures. /.../ I quitted my seat and walked on, although the darkness and storm increased every minute and the thunder burst with a terrific crash over my head. /.../ vivid flashes of lightning dazzled my eyes, illuminating the lake, making it appear like a vast sheet of fire; then for an instant every thing seemed of a pitchy darkness, until the eye recovered itself from the preceding flash. (Shelley 2012: 69)

These plays of nature once again show how Shelley establishes nature as the dominant force and power, and reminds Frankenstein of his unnatural crime against nature. By using the verb “dazzle” Shelley displays how easily Victor can be blinded by his own ambition and reminds him of his ungodly creation. She brings in another contrast to further insert the feeling of terror. The monster has reached Victor and, as he suddenly notices his creation, he is overcome with terror because the absolute hideousness of the monster is contrasted against the marvellous and terrifying backdrop of the stormy and sublime

landscape. Shelley uses this contrast to create fear in the reader and acknowledge the divine power nature has used against others.

Shelley finishes the novel with cold and icy landscapes to tie everything together and create a kind of frame around the novel. The final moments with the creature sees him disappearing into the snowy and freezing landscape, thus creating terror in the reader, because, as a sublime landscape, it forces the reader to concentrate on the vast and great plains of ice and see how terrible and astonishing it is to watch how the terrifying creature becomes one with the nature of Arctic

2.2 Suspension

The second aspect that Mary Shelley has used in her novel to create the feeling of terror is by using suspense. In this circumstance, terror is evoked by making a character feel fear of something that is around them, but not instantly noticeable or visible. Shelley uses suspense in *Frankenstein* for the creation of fear of the creature appearing or being close, but not in sight. The suspicion that the creature might be lurking in the forests or other settings nearby creates fear and terror for the reader.

After having created the monster and subsequently running from its grasp, Victor Frankenstein wanders the streets of Ingolstadt:

/.../ The porter opened the gates of the court, which had that night been my asylum, and I issued into the streets, pacing them with quick steps, as if I sought to avoid the wretch whom I feared every turning of the street would present to my view. I did not dare return to the apartment which I inhabited, but felt impelled to hurry on, /.../ (Shelley 2012, 52)

He is consumed with terror, fearing that the creature might still lurk around the town. Shelley uses suspense to highlight the idea that the monster is near, as this makes Frankenstein wonder and fear for what might come if others found out what he has done and what he has possibly caused for them.

Another moment of suspense comes to the reader in chapter two of volume three, where Frankenstein and his friend Clerval are travelling in England. Frankenstein fears

that, if the monster stays behind, he would destroy his family, however if he was following them, he might go after Clerval. The terror Frankenstein feels when thinking that the creature is after them or his family becomes overwhelming and he cannot do anything but have these thoughts that overpower him:

He might remain in Switzerland, and wreak his vengeance on my relatives. This idea pursued me, and tormented me at every moment from which I might otherwise have snatched repose and peace. /.../ Sometimes I thought that the fiend followed me, and might expedite my remissness by murdering my companion. (Shelley 2012: 166)

During Frankenstein's labour in his solemn laboratory, the creature visits him. Terror in this moment is in the suspense that Frankenstein feels when he hears footsteps in his house:

In a few minutes after, I heard the creaking of my door, as if some one endeavoured to open it softly. I trembled from head to foot; I felt a presentiment of who it was, and wished to rouse one of the peasants who dwelt in a cottage not far from mine; but I was overcome by the sensation of helplessness, so often felt in frightful dreams, when you in vain try to fly from an impending danger, and was rooted to the spot. (Shelley 2012: 172)

Terror presents itself in this scene with the creature's looming presence near Frankenstein. He has an idea who might be behind the door, but he is unable to escape and, in fear, waits as the door is opened because the creature is not a thing of beauty, but a thing of the sublime and that knowledge freezes Frankenstein's mind.

Through suspension, Shelley creates terror in the novel and therefore in the reader as well. Suspension forces the reader to concentrate on the piling moments before everything is suddenly cleared, thus causing them to feel feelings similar to astonishment. In this way, terror overcomes the mind and the reader can only feel the emotions that terror has created. Even after the initial moment is gone, these feelings linger and require the reader's full attention.

2.3 Descriptions of Death and Feelings of Disgust and Revulsion

While terror is looming around in the surrounding environment and the sublime landscapes and the characters and readers fear what might come their way, horror shocks them directly. Characters encounter something that can evoke feelings of disgust, revulsion and leave them in a state of shock. Horror can be considered to be a more physical feeling than terror, which resides primarily in the mind. In *Frankenstein*, Shelley creates many of the horrors by using direct encounters with the object of horror or by descriptions which leave the reader in a state of disgust and shock.

The first example where Shelley has used horror in, is during the process in which Frankenstein collects human parts for his creation and experiments on small animals:

Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? /.../I collected bones from charnel-houses and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame. In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase, I kept my workshop of filthy creation: my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; /.../ (Shelley, 2012: 47-48)

Shelley's descriptions of these ungodly actions that Victor has taken in order to fulfil his quest horrify the reader. Frankenstein attempts to create life from death, and that is the most horrifying thing to the reader, because nothing good can come from this practice. This scene is a direct attack on the reader, as its horrible descriptions leave the mind disgusted at a sight that could very well happen in real life. Yet it does not linger for a long time. It charges and then disappears, because horror does not force the reader to focus all of their attention on the present scene. Additionally, the idea that someone could dig in graves truly horrifies the reader, as that action is deemed sinful. Horror once again physically intervenes, and the reader is compelled to experience disgust at the sight of grave-digging.

Shelley's description of the monster right after it has awakened can be considered as one of the most horrifying scenes in the novel when Frankenstein has completed his task

in creating human life. However, what he sees is horrible and is unable to comprehend the ugliness of the being he has created:

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! – Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips. (Shelley, 2012: 50)

The descriptions of the creature are what evoke horror in that scene. Vivid images of the creature's features are disgusting to Frankenstein. The ideal that he had imagined is shattered and he is faced with the horror that is his creation. Once again, Shelley brings the reader's attention to the fact that creating life from death goes against the natural order of things and playing God will bring about the downfall of a character.

Sudden appearances of something that characters do not expect are another part of creating horror. The objects they come into contact with are usually corpses or decaying bodies. The sight of something that is familiar, yet unfamiliar forces characters and readers to experience horror. In the novel, several scenes that create such feelings and show sudden appearances are to do with Victor Frankenstein facing his creation. The creature appears before him unexpectedly and forces Frankenstein to confront his most dreadful fear:

I trembled, and my heart failed within me, when, on looking up, I saw, by the light of the moon, the daemon at the casement. Yes, he had followed me in my travels; he had loitered in forests, hid himself in caves, or taken refuge in wide and desert heaths; and he now came to mark my progress, and claim the fulfillment of my promise. (Shelley, 2012: 171)

Frankenstein feels horror, since the creature has appeared to confront him about his task.

In chapter four, when Frankenstein has reached Ireland and discovers that his closest friend Henry Clerval is murdered, he feels anguish. Horror is evoked in this scene, because the image of Clerval overtakes Frankenstein's mind and he cannot escape from it. He is Frankenstein's lifelong friend and the death of Clerval almost destroys him.

I entered the room where the corpse lay, and was led up to the coffin. How can I describe my sensations of beholding it? I feel yet parched from with horror, nor can I reflect on that terrible moment without shuddering and agony. /-/- when I saw the lifeless form of Henry Clerval stretched before me. I gasped for breath /.../ (Shelley 2012: 182)

The second death Frankenstein comes upon is his wife, Elizabeth, after she is murdered by the creature. After Frankenstein has reached their shared room, he finds Elizabeth. The development of horror is evident in this setting, as Frankenstein is very suddenly met with a dead body that was alive a few moments. Shelley uses the death of Elizabeth as a way to create horror and force it onto Frankenstein. It is described in the novel that "every where I turn I see the same figure – her bloodless arms and relaxed form flung by the murderer on its bridal bier" (Shelley, 2012: 202).

Death is a source which Mary Shelley uses extensively to create feelings of disgust and revulsion to further exemplify horror in her novel. By explicitly describing the deaths of Frankenstein's younger brother, wife, and best friend, Shelley succeeds in making the reader feel horror at the sights of physical deaths and further solidifies horror as a more physical feeling than terror.

CONCLUSION

Gothic literature emerged in the final decades of the 18th century, with the anonymous publication of Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* in 1764. The stock components of Gothic fiction are sublime landscapes that provoke fear and wonderment and consume the mind, stark contrasts between light and dark environments, unknown and terrible creatures, decaying buildings and horrors that come with dead bodies, among others. By 1820 the genre had fully developed. It has specific traits which make the genre easily recognisable. The use of wilderness and barren landscapes, dark castles, and monsters aid in making the genre stand out. Additionally, Gothic fiction makes a difference between feelings of terror and horror and ways in which they are created.

The aim of this thesis was to understand the differences between horror and terror and see what is used to create them. For this I chose Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, as Shelley has used techniques that aid in distinguishing terror from horror. Terror, which is mainly connected with the sublime, makes the reader feel fear and wonderment at something that is of sublime nature. Objects of sublime, and sublime landscapes create fear through their size and vastness. Dimensions play an important part in creating feelings of fear through the sublime. But terror can also act as a presence felt by someone and yet never directly showing itself. The suspense in feeling what might come and not truly knowing the creator of that uncertainty constructs the feeling of terror. Horror on the other hand is more imminent and sudden. It is created by using vivid and horrible descriptions of death, and the sudden appearances of characters that can have supernatural abilities or looks. Horror is more physical than terror. It instantly attacks the reader and forces them to feel physically negative emotions such as disgust and revulsion. However, it does not linger. While terror consumes the mind completely and the reader can do nothing but feel astonishment, wonderment or even fear

when seeing a sublime object or landscape, horror is more fixed in the sense that it appears, attacks the reader, and is quickly disappeared again. Mary Shelley utilises these techniques and creates atmospheres of both horror and terror in her novel *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*. She uses sublime landscapes to showcase how powerful nature is and how humans have no control over it, as well as displaying contrasts that are created inside the sublime nature. Shelley uses suspense to further build on the feelings of terror. Suspense is evoked when Frankenstein feels the threat of the creature lurking near him, even when the creature might not be there, and thus forcing the reader to feel fear at the possibilities of the creature suddenly appearing. Horror, on the other hand is created through the descriptions of the monster and death that surrounds Frankenstein. Horror plays with the depictions of death and through that, makes the reader feel physical disgust or revulsion, among other negative emotions.

As a result of the research and analysis, I have discovered that, although horror and terror are vastly different from each other, the ways in which they are created can overlap with each other and thus create either one or the other. Horror is evoked through a sudden appearance of something undesirable and ugly, while terror is created through sublime objects and landscapes or suspense. However, when put together, as Mary Shelley has done in one of the scenes where Frankenstein notices the creature, the atmosphere can shift to either horror or terror. In this case, the contrast created between the horrendous monster and beautifully terrifying landscape creates terror and leaves the reader in fear of the scene. This highlights how Shelley's novel comes in full circle in the Gothic aspect. By using techniques that showcase both horror and, Shelley makes *Frankenstein* into a fully realised Gothic novel.

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RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Pilleriin Albri

Horror vs. Terror in Gothic literature and their elements in Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*

Horror vs. Terror gooti kirjanduses ning nende ilmingud Mary Shelley romaanis *Frankenstein, ehk, Moodne Prometheus*

Bakalaureusetöö

2020

Lehekülgede arv: 26

Annotatsioon:

Käesoleva bakalaureusetöö eesmärk on uurida erinevusi kahe gooti kirjanduses esineva termini – horrori ja terrori vahel ning analüüsida neid Mary Shelley romaanis *Frankenstein*. Töö peamine eesmärk on selgitada romaanis esinevate näidete põhjal erinevusi horror ja terrori vahel ning nende tekkeviise.

Antud bakalaureusetöö on jaotatud sissejuhatuseks, kaheks sisupeatükiks ning kokkuvõtteks. Sissejuhatuses antakse lühike ülevaade horrori ja terrori seosest gooti kirjandusega, Mary Shelleyst ning *Frankensteinist*. Esimeses sisupeatükis keskendutakse gooti kirjanduse ajaloole ning selle peamistele tunnusoontele, erinevustele terrori ja horrori vahel ning nende loomisel käsitletavatele võtetele. Töö teises peatükis analüüsitakse romaani *Frankenstein* teoreetilise osa põhjal ning keskendutakse kolmele horrori ja terrori tekkeviisile, milleks on subliimsed maastikud ja kontrastid, pinge, ning surma kirjeldused ning nendega kaasnevad jälestuse tunded. Töö lõppeb kokkuvõttega, kus kõik põhipunktid on uuesti välja toodud.

Märksõnad: Horror, terror, gooti kirjandus, Frankenstein, Mary Shelley

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