

The Violence concept based on Ahmed Saadawi's Frankenstein in Baghdad and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

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Abstract:

This study attempts to investigate how Ahmed Saadawi's work, an Iraqi adaptation of Mary Shelley's, portrays violence as the abjectness, as defined in powers of terrors. In this book, corpses that have been destroyed by explosions are stacked and joined to form a whole body. Subsequently, this image becomes a manifestation of its developed soul, initiating a conflict to exact retribution on the person who killed and dispersed its physical parts. In research questions, the investigator takes on the role of the monster, representing an abject that is the source of moral defilement and the cause of death. Shelley and Saadawi make distinct references to the creature. Although Shelly's Frankenstein creature lacks human traits, it is sympathetic conversely, Saadawi's monster alludes to terrorism and its terrible forces. Saadawi's Frankenstein in Baghdad uses the violence of war as a metaphor for how people lose their humanity and merge with non-human reality, much like a monster. The study's postmodern framework is used by the researcher to analyze books by Saadawi and Shelley that explore the impact of Western aggression and its propagation goals. The researcher will come to the conclusion from implications and results that people must reject terrorism and all of its effects, as well as all manifestations of hatred. Only then will terror and bloodshed cease. In addition, the people must stop supporting Western terrorism and brutality in order to regain their humanity.

Key words: (Violence, Postmodernism, Frankenstein, terrorism, Ahmed Saadawi)

Introduction

Gothic literature helps us comprehend our life and ourselves thoroughly and provides us with a sense of the world in which we live. Regarding the historical significance of the Frankenstein viewpoints, Randel fills in a hole in his 2003 study "The Political Geography of Horror in Shelley's Novel." Randel notes that "modern European novels" frequently honor historical occurrences connected to the locales in which they are set. (Randel, 2003: p. 465).

When Shelley was residing close to Geneva, the home of Frankenstein, she recognized the idea of the novel from a text titled Frankenstein. She then left Geneva with Percy and traveled to Chamonix, where she saw the scene between Frankenstein and his monster in Blanc. Shelley occasionally illustrates the absence of facts from the book that are also not personally significant to the writer. The researcher in this study will also delve into the background of the French Revolution and the revolutionary activities of the English Civil War at Shelley's birthplace.

Being the daughter of well-known philosophers on political philosophy, Shelley is regarded as a member of the political lineage. In contrast, her spouse and parents have consistently upheld the extreme viewpoint in their written works. But in her work, Shelley blends these ideas with her own conflicting viewpoint (Bower Bank, 1979: p. 418), leading to a notable autonomous development as a modern writer and political theorist between 1818 and 1831.

Frankenstein in Baghdad was not a paraphrase of Mary Shelley, as Saadawi stated. Thus, comparisons and contrasts between the two novels can be made. According to Saadawi in an interview, the book only makes two allusions to Frankenstein:

Aside from these two allusions, the inhabitants of Baghdad in the book refer to the unusual creature as "what's-its-name" or "the one who does not have a name," and it's possible that they don't care whether it resembles a Frankenstein creation or not. (Najjar, 2014)

Baghdad's Frankenstein revolves around the word "abjection". Human bodies are treated like trash, and human souls are wasted. Hadi al-Attag, an elderly inebriated junk dealer, is the main character of Saadawi's book. According to him, the theme is the primary distinction between his book and Shelley's. "In this novel, Frankenstein is a condensed symbol of Iraq's current problems," the author states. During the time the

novel is set in Iraq, there was a strong Frankenstein-esque aura of terror. (2014, Najjar).

Hadi in the Iraqi version lacks Victor Frankenstein's "high hopes" and "great ambition," which is one of their distinctions. Hadi wants to utilize the body for something positive, but he's not sure what will come of this "terrible and mad deed." Najjar (2014) But Hadi al-Attag and Victor Frankenstein have both made a top-secret discovery. I found "the life secret" with Victor. "I was surprised that I alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret among so many men of genius who had directed their inquiries towards the same science," the man states. (The Frankenstein Shelley).

Hadi's discovery is more closely tied to violence than it is to science. The key to this revelation is to ignore human sainthood. He has found the secret of violence in waste or abjection. Working in the coffee shop owned by his Egyptian buddy Aziz El Masry, Hadi tells his audiences the tale of the creature he has put together in order to give it a respectable funeral.

Despite being one of the most significant Gothic novels of the Romantic era, Frankenstein also represents the individualization process and how it shapes the human person by showing how language is used by the characters in significant ways. Language introduces the subject to the Other, and according to Botting (1996), "the Other... constitutes the human subject in language through the effects of speech."

In Frankenstein, Mary Shelley focuses on "the interactions between a refusing father and his refused creature" to depict the relationship between Victor and the Creature (Miller, 1998: p. 59). Really, estrangement is the first emotion the Creature experiences when he opens his eyes to the outside world. He expresses to Victor how he feels by

saying that "I have a really hard time remembering the first few years of my existence; everything seems hazy and disorganized." (Miller,1998: p. 79). When he faced the world at the first time first, he feels an emptiness.

"From the creature's birth, Frankenstein has rejected it as 'demoniacal' and heaped abuse upon it," Mellor asserts (Frankenstein: p. 46). As a result, after the Other rejects the Creature, Victor jumps ahead of the actual order and enters the imagined order as soon as he opens his eyes. Victor says of his initial rejection:

What words can I use to express how I feel about this disaster? the dream's beauty disappeared and my heart was filled with gasping horror and disgust? I could not bear the part of the creature I had made. I stormed out of the room and spent a long time walking about my bedroom, unable to bring myself to fall asleep. (Frankenstein: p. 45).

The subject's resignation of the Other is symbolized by this rejection, which is significant to Lacan. Normally, this abdication is supposed to take place when Victor establishes fullness with his creature by accepting him. But the Creature is turned down outright. The Creature is denied the chance to exist in the symbolic order as a result of this rejection.

The Violence

The aggression Because the world in which we live is so diverse in terms of forms, there are many different ways that violence is portrayed in literature, politics, and other social and cultural domains. Frankenstein in Baghdad by Ahmed Al-Saadawi is a novel that captures all of the bloodshed during a troubling time in Iraqi history. It reflects violent acts and embodies the novel's central topic. This grim novel of Frankenstein set in modern-day Iraq is called Frankenstein in Baghdad, and it differs from the true story of the creature being created by a physicist in his laboratory. Instead, the monster is

created by a waste-picker, who assembles human parts that have been broken apart by bombings on a daily basis into one body on the roof of a house in a poor neighborhood in Baghdad that is partially destroyed. The word "shesma," which means "what's its name" in Iraqi Arabic, is gestured toward this stitched corpse.

The basic plot of the novel is revealed by one of Saadawi's characters, Farid, who works in the media. The incident, known as the Imam's Bridge Incident, happened in 2005, two years after the US invasion of Iraq, and claimed the lives of over a thousand Shiite pilgrims on a bridge in Baghdad when someone warned of a suicide bomber, causing a stampede that forced many of them to jump into the river. "The fear of death caused the innocent people to perish on the bridge" (Frankenstein.: p.98).

This demonstrates how fear, which has been heightened and made into a monster, is at the heart of the conflict. According to Saadawi in an interview, this monster "represents the complete Iraqi individual" because it "is made up of parts taken from Iraqis of different races, sects, and ethnicities."

The Bulgarian-French thinker Julia Kristeva claims in her book *Powers of Horror* that Saadawi's novel's violence is as the Abject. She states that "abjection preserves what existed in the pre-objected relationship archaism, in the violence that has existed throughout history when a body separates itself from another body in order to exist." (Kristeva, 1982) Put another way, the human subject must vehemently object to being separated from the mother's body in order for it to be born. According to Kristeva, violence is a fundamental aspect of human existence. According to Kristeva, every person is a monster in their own unique way. The Abject, according to Kristeva, "disturbs identity, system, and order." (Kristeva, 1982). Because Frankenstein is constructed from several corpses, both the original and the Iraqi versions represent a materialization of this "turmoil" of a continuous identity. He came into being because of violence. "Any crime is abject because it highlights the weakness of the law," asserts

Kristeva. Kristeva (1982). Put another way, violence is monstrosity because the depressed are also monstrosities.

Saadawi's creation is indeed a fine illustration of the deplorable, much like Shelley's. Kristeva claims that the body is the clearest illustration of the deplorable thing. "The corpse is the height of abjection when viewed without God or science" (Kristeva, 1982). Here, the corpse is branded as contamination, an infection, and a serious threat to one's identity.

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Furthermore, because it is "the most sickening of wastes," Kristeva links it to distaste (Kristeva, 1982). This boundary, which separates humans from non-humans, has been crossed. The corpse's association with violence makes it extremely significant. To get rid of the waste, the living organism resorts to violence. All human functions are actually deplorable, particularly those pertaining to waste or decay. The waste continues to be expelled until the body brutally decomposes into a corpse.

In addition to its consequences on sexual brutality, incestuous familial and sexual relationships are another noteworthy aspect of one of the violence kinds in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. These sexual and family relationships influence the characters' subjectivity and sexual identities. In Making Monstrous: Botting asserts

The question of gender, of the way *Frankenstein* represents differences between male and female, masculine and feminine, and the significance of these representations, has come to be major issue for criticism of the novel. (*Frankenstein* :p.100).

The work addresses the effects of virility as well as portrayals of overly masculine and female sexualities. One of these depictions is the cruelty, horror, and partiality that are expressed in *Frankenstein* in a complicated and unsettling way (Johnson, 1982: p. 57). Lacan's critique of sexual identity arises from the fact that the symbolic replaces the real. As stated by Lacan:

In the Oedipus complex, the gendered child transitions from being a gendered phantasm to a sexual human child by subjecting them to the symbolic test. If all goes according to plan, he will eventually become and accept himself for who he is: a little boy among adults with the full right to one day become "like daddy," that is, a masculine human being with a wife.

Given this, it is possible to discuss Victor Frankenstein's sexual identity in connection to his mother. Elizabeth becomes more attractive to Victor as a sexual object as their relationship grows between mother Caroline and father Alphonso. Victor's father has provided protection for his orphaned mother.

The pressure subjects in certain sexual communication, such as heterosexuality and relationships between people of the same gender, as well as the association between sexual meaning and knowledge, truth, and authority, are also key to this study.

Furthermore, these Gothic imagination crisis places are also areas of particular interest in postmodernist thought.

In this study, the researcher demonstrates how those whose gender or sexual orientation deviates from social norms have, in a way, turned into the "monsters" of contemporary sexual discourse. Gothic literature has rightfully placed a premium on the monster image since, in western culture, monstrosity has long been associated with sexism and gender nonconformity. The odd strength of Gothic monsters has been asserted by critics who have strategically tried to re-appropriate and re-spread the monster's strength in support of postmodernism critique.

Many nineteenth-century Gothic works have been reinterpreted by critics in recent years as depicting the tumultuous rise to prominence and cultural domination of a middle-class, heterosexual, white, western identity.

The Terror

One of the key characteristics of postmodernism is the blurring of boundaries in Saadawi's writing, which sets it apart from Shelley's. Killing criminals also killed victims, hence the victims and criminals are intertwined. Saadawi gently suggests that "each one of us has a measure of criminality... there are no innocents who are completely innocent or criminals who are completely criminals" (Saadawi's: pp.156, 214) when the (Whats-its-name) decides to the dramatic finish. It's Saadawi's way of expressing that everyone in Iraq is both a criminal and a victim. Thus, the creature has evolved into:

a metaphor for an unending circle of retaliation that is impossible to break. What starts out as a noble effort to bring victims of the anarchy that followed 2003 to justice quickly turns into criminality as guilt and innocence get conflated. (Electrastreet.com, Hassan)

Thus, Saadawi gives his message with clear way in his novel that we have all “played a turn in creating this creature, in one way or another,” (Saadawi: p.217) by this “evil we all have inside us ... because we are all criminals to some extent” (p.227). In his interview, Sadaawi states, “if there is a lesson to draw and a moral moment to stop at today as Iraqis, it is to acknowledge that we are not purely victims and that we have all helped to produce victims in different ways” (Najjar, arabicliterature.com). If there is an abject in Saadawi’s novel, it is Baghdad. Baghdad is the abject, with its haunting souls, its pervasive violence and darkness, its “ominous clouds,” (p.277) and the dead bodies that “littered the streets like rubbish” (p.153). If Baghdad is an abject in Saadawi's book, then it is. Baghdad embodies the desolate, characterized by eerie spirits, widespread violence and gloom, menacing skies (p. 277), and lifeless corpses that scatter throughout the streets like trash (p. 153).

Characters portrayed as vampires, demons, or aliens in Gothic-postmodernist writings are a clear example of Freudian self-abatements, in which the otherness within the self is suppressed and demonized. The monster's first appearance initiates a discourse between the self and the other, which is then absorbed by the hesitating horror that makes it possible to go beyond the self and into the world of unknown otherness.

This demonstrates the "fundamental need" for dread in order to expose the "repressed" and start a dialogue about how to understand oneself and society. Saadawi aimed to create a "dialogue" with oneself that went beyond his writings. Thus, according to Lyotard (1984:

p. 82), we can "hear the mutterings of the desire for a return of terror, for the realization of the fantasy to seize reality."

The statement of problem

Although the chosen novels were written over two centuries apart, Mary Shelly's Frankenstein and Ahmed Saadawi's Frankenstein in Baghdad both addressed the same subject, as this study will demonstrate comprehensively. This study aims to investigate the ways in which a fractured identity can be expressed via the reading and analysis of two novels: Frankenstein by Mary Shelley and Frankenstein in Baghdad by Ahmed Al-Saadawi. By supporting terrorism in all Islamic countries overall and in Arab countries specifically, Western colonial powers exploited all of their resources to splinter the identity of Islam. Their methods involve taking advantage of some of their clients inside these nations in order to infiltrate the violence and terror. Furthermore, the monster idea employed by the researcher illustrates the extent to which colonization powers persist in eradicating all social and cultural norms within these nations.

In order to analyze Saadawi's and Shelley's chosen works and investigate the impact of Western violence and its propagation, the researcher uses postmodern theory as a framework. It is understood that until people reject all manifestations of hatred as well as terrorism and its effects, terror and bloodshed will not end. In addition, the people must stop supporting Western terrorism and brutality in order to regain their humanity. According to the researcher's findings, identity is created by and projected onto individuals, and it can be reconciled from a negative to a positive.

Literature Review

According to David Punter's published book, *The Literature of Terror*, the Gothic genre was developed to evoke a spooky atmosphere in historical contexts, such as haunted castles that were inhabited by vampires, ghosts, and monsters. The way in which the paranormal is employed to exploit psychological fixations in twisted settings echoes the themes of death,

mystery, graveyards, gloomy atmospheres, and unwavering moods, as well as the melancholy tones found in literary expressions (Punter, 1996: p. 1–20). Furthermore, according to Punter (Punter, 1996: p. 18), "exploring Gothic is also exploring fear." Something that "looked dark and barbarous" was implied by the passive sense of the Gothic (Varma, 1957: p. 10). As the phrase began to represent "a valuable imaginative freedom," this conventional understanding gradually changed (Kilgour, 1995: p. 14). In this regard, Robert Hume maintains that "the atmosphere of the Gothic novel—one of evil and brooding terror—is its key characteristic, not its devices" (Robert Hume, 2002: p. 286). In her research Gothic-Postmodernism, Maria Beville offers fresh perspectives on the genre. According to Beville (Beville, 2009: p. 8), the "gothic" is "the clearest mode of expression in literature for voicing the terrors of postmodernity." While the Gothic style may be viewed as antiquated and tired, Beville proposes a fresh concept because "terror" is ingrained in postmodernity. Gothic-postmodernism is a literary genre that exists on the periphery of several literary genres that are positioned between past and present, truth and unreality, fear and desire, and so on. Occasionally, however, it manages to cross these barriers in literary representations (Beville, 2009: p. 96). Furthermore, according to Beville (Beville, 2009: p. 33), the Gothic has long served as a "outlet" for the expression of anxieties sparked by terror as well as "playing a significant role in the creation of terror itself."

Stephen King distinguishes between three types of fear: disgust, terror, and terror. According to King (1986: p. 21), dread arises when readers are left to envision frightening things that are hidden from view rather than seeing the basis of their anxiety. According to Fred Botting, "horror describes the moment of contraction and recoil if terror leads to an imaginative expansion of one's sense of self" (Botting, 1996: p. 10). Furthermore, because horror films depict the horrific incident in gory detail, Beville contends that terror is a

"limiting experience." Stated differently, "the difference between the smell of death and the stumbling against a corpse" distinguishes panic from horror (Varma, 1957: p. 130).

These sensations of horror and panic are, from a postmodern standpoint, paradoxically mixed with curiosity or, in Punter's words, symbolize "the dreadful pleasure" (Punter, 1996: p. 7). According to Botting (1996: p. 6), these horrors might also be pleasurable since they "stimulated excitements which blurred definitions of reason and morality."

As Botting demonstrates, the emotions most associated with Gothic novels are also ambiguous; they pique readers' curiosity rather than evoking objects like terror and horror (Botting, 1996: p.9).

As previously said, Gothic postmodernists reveal the dark and unsettling perspectives of people and society that are growing through our suppressed fears and forbidden lusts, or "the language of terror" (Foucault, 65). Beville (2009) describes their stories as "literary monsters" (p. 16). Gothic postmodernist tales are viewed as counter-narratives in this way, and Gothic postmodernism is viewed as a revolutionary discourse in the sense that it modifies reality by making us confront our unconsciousness.

Sigmund Freud tries to explain a certain type of fear that he labels as the "uncanny," that "class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar," in his psychological study "The Uncanny" (p. 20). Therefore, the uncanny in Gothic stories does not seem to be anything that is "new" or "foreign, ", but something that was suppressed for a very long time and is "known and old entrenched in the memory" (Freud, 1998: p. 241).

Furthermore, it suggests that Mary Shelley's novel is as versatile as possible, serving as a metaphor for both civil wars and some instances of violent political upheaval in general.

Noting that government is a "monstrosity" that imposes itself on those who institute it, and noting that "the monsters both of poetic fancy and political organization are made not by nature but by fallible human arts," British critic Baldick links the "uneasy feeling of human responsibility involved the conception" of political organization with Frankenstein in a way that no one else has (Baldick, 1987: p.15). Frankenstein is the best example of this uneasy feeling that man has transcended himself and produced a force that is outside his control in popular culture.

Baldick connects the French Revolution to the "politico-philosophical novels" of Jacobinism and the "massive pervasion of... 'Gothic' novels... [to] a wave of books and pamphlets provoked by Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790)" (p. 16). The Gothic, which is "preoccupied with feudal forms of unlimited personal power and its tyrannical abuse" (p. 16) and connected to "the specters of Britain's primitive, superstitious, corrupt and tyrannical Catholic past" (Davison,2009: p. 25), is one of the two camps of horror that Baldick deftly separates out of this literature.

Methodology

The relationship between "recognition and remembrance" of extant writings in the literary heritage is a key characteristic of postmodernism, as was previously mentioned. In literary studies, postmodernism brought in new ways of expressing ideas in order to clarify, to use Gerard Genette's terminology, the link between source texts and copies. Many authors and commentators oppose the idea of bringing back and rereading ancient literature. Because there is always language before and around the text, Ronald Barthes observes that all text is in this sense a fresh tissue of previous citations that pass into the text and are redistributed within it.

The best way to approach the discussion of interpersonal violence's nature is from a postmodernist standpoint, which supports a variety of different and sometimes

contradictory interpretations of the issue. Accepting different conceptions of violence—which are its patterns more prevalent than any other—is encouraged by postmodernism. (Maureen, 2005).

In their writings, Shelley and Saadawi both depict the horrors of their cultures. Punter defines terror as "an excessive force for the fears, desires, and anxieties that suffered the society as it developed toward capitalism" and claims that it is a fundamental element of Gothic literature from the eighteenth century (Punter, 1996: p. 23). Thus, according to Punter (1996), "Frankenstein by Mary Shelley articulated fears to do with the power of science, godlessness, social anarchy and privation." Since postmodernism's inception, these problems have "re-emerged" as fear has taken center stage in political discourse (Punter, 1996: p. 23). In the same way that Shelley warns against the "coming of industry" and the "rapidly changing world" (Punter, 1996: pp. 112, 23) of scientific discoveries. According to Schimmel (2012), Saadawi expresses "the terrors of war, its violence and the way it distorts the psyche both ethically and emotionally." As stated by Sam Metz,

The novel's dystopian features stem from the actual, terrifying violence that occurred in Baghdad in 2005, not from its fantastical, supernatural elements. (Metz, review. com; Los Angeles).

By exposing long-repressed material, Saadawi's "literary monster" compels readers to confront their own anxieties and recognize that all "abnormalities that we would divorce from ourselves, are a part of our selves, deeply and pervasively" (Hogle, 2002: p. 12).

Given that Beville's Gothic and Postmodernist influences have merged to create what is referred to as a "literary monster," its obsession with horror, negativity and irrationality, and antagonism against conventional reality rules situate it squarely in the revolutionary

camp. The fact that this revolution is directed against mankind as a whole is often alarming.

Conclusion

According to David Oakes, gothic literature is destabilizing literature because it makes readers reflect about their own lives, their communities, and the universe at large. The work functions as a cultural relic, capturing the anxieties and worries of both the writing and reading periods. Both Shelley and Saadawi use violence—its representations, its justifications, and its eventual destruction—to evoke this feeling of horror in their texts. Thus, violence is a reflection of human nature's inherent disarray and desire for destruction. The study revealed that fear and aggression will never end, and that individuals must choose to reject all of kinds of hatred, the effects of terrorism, etc. In addition, the people must stop supporting Western terrorism and brutality in order to regain their humanity.

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