

Frankenstein: critical reflections by ginn and hetherington essay

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Frankenstein by Mary Shelley is one of the novels that are frequently argued about. The complexity of the novel and its meaning is often compared to the challenging and full of struggles life the writer herself. As a result, the critics expressing their interpretation and reflection on the novel usually tend to have very different stands. In their critiques, Sherry Ginn and Naomi Hetherington emphasize the reflection of Shelley's psychological struggles as opposed to the popular idea of Frankenstein being an autobiographic novel.

In her article concerning the meaning of Frankenstein and its possible relation to the real-life events faced by Mary Shelley, Sherry Ginn assumed the position contradiction the popular idea that the novel is autobiographic. In particular, Ginn gave credit to the authors and critics who contributed to the creation of the biography of Mary Shelley and reflected on her work. However, Ginn added that there exists a perspective alternative to the one shared by so many critics.

In brief, the main point of the author's critique is illustrated by the following quotation: "reducing the novel to autobiography is too simple" (Ginn). The critic actively acknowledged the basis for the idea that Frankenstein could be linked to some of the events that happened in Shelley's life such as: "the motherless child; the father rejecting the child; a grieving mother mourning for a dead child; a university student conducting wild experiments" (Ginn). However, at the same time, the author believed that the meaning of Shelley's work could be better understood through the perspective of psychosocial theory and Erik Erikson's framework in particular.

Evaluating this thesis, one can notice that Ginn offered to view Frankenstein as the reflection of the author's identity crisis instead of a reflection of her biography. I agree with this perspective and believe that the psychosocial analysis of the contents of the novel reveals more details regarding its meaning for the author and her unconscious intention.

Similarly to Ginn, Naomi Hetherington acknowledged the opinions and points of view of the other critics reflecting on Frankenstein and what it could represent. However, instead of focusing on Shelley's unconscious actions and worries that resulted in the creation of the novel, Hetherington proposes searching for the keys to understanding the work.

In that way, the author believed that the meaning of Frankenstein was not hidden and did not mirror the struggles and sufferings of the author. Instead, she reflected her philosophical worldview and insights. About the meaning of the novel, Hetherington wrote: " Mary herself suggested several keys with which to unlock it," encouraging the readers to pay attention to the full title of the novel - Frankenstein, The Modern Prometheus (Hetherington).

Hetherington argued that in her work, Shelley incorporated the problem of an individual's maturation, self-image, and recognition of what being a human entails. Hetherington stated that being immature, Victor became obsessed, attempted to play God, and learned to raise the dead because he wanted recognition and could not cope with the death of his mother.

Besides, Hetherington emphasized the issue of personal values and social inclusion juxtaposed with the struggles of isolation and alienation.

Practically, it could be said that the two authors shared the point of Shelley's psychological struggle reflected in the novel (such as the problem of independence, the need to be associated with someone, and the challenges faced by the author in the search for her own identity).

The critiques by Ginn and Hetherington offer an alternative vision of the meaning of Frankenstein by Mary Shelley focusing on her conscious intention to communicate her worldview, as well as her psychological struggles of identity and isolation. Both authors supported their opinions with quotations from the novel itself, the works of other critics, and the psychosocial framework. In that way, it may be concluded that Ginn and Hetherington made strong points in their attempts to maintain their arguments that clashed with the more popular belief that Frankenstein was an autobiographic novel.

Ginn, Sherry. " Mary Shelley's Frankenstein: Science, Science Fiction, or Autobiography?" UFL, n. d.

Hetherington, Naomi. " Creator and Created in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein." UPENN, n. d.