

A Revolution in Horror Literature: Frankenstein and The *Vampyre*

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Abstract

Horror has always been an outstanding theme that authors use in their literary works for centuries. Over time, these horror themes have been changed and developed based on societies' fears and needs. Especially the 19th century is considered to be a turning point for the evolution of horror as a reflector of human's fears and preoccupations. Meanwhile, monsters that acquire extraordinary features have made a breakthrough in horror literature. One of the most important events which leave its mark on the era is the *ghost story* competition started by Lord Byron. Two important pieces of English Literature, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein (Or The Modern Prometheus)* and John William Polidori's *The Vampyre* emerged in this challenge. This study will discuss the comparative analysis of the books mentioned. It will present gothic factors, major symbols, characters and their roles in the novels, on the one hand; it will compare the relationships between the protagonists and the antagonists on the other.

Keyword: Victorian Gothic Literature, Mary Shelley, John William Polidori, Frankenstein, The Vampyre

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Korku Edebiyatında Bir Devrim: *Frankenstein ve The Vampyre*

Öz

Korku yüzyıllardır yazarların edebi eserlerinde işlediği öne çıkan temalardan biri olmuştur. Zamanla bu korku temaları toplumların kaygı ve ihtiyaçları temel alınarak değiştirilmiş ve geliştirilmiştir. Özellikle 19. yüzyıl, insan korkuları ve kaygılarının yansıtıcısı olan korkunun evrimi açısından bir dönüm noktası olarak kabul edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda sıra dışı özellikler kazanan yaratıklar korku edebiyatında çığır açmıştır. Döneme damgasını vuran en önemli olaylardan biri Lord Byron tarafından başlatılan *korku hikâyesi* yarışmasıdır. İngiliz Edebiyatının iki önemli eseri olan Mary Shelley'nin *Frankenstein (or The Modern Prometheus)* ve John William Polidori'nin *The Vampyre* romanları bu yarışmada ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çalışma adı geçen kitapların karşılaştırmalı analizini konu edinecektir. Bir taraftan gotik unsurları, önemli sembolleri, karakterleri ve bu karakterlerin romandaki rollerini ortaya koyarken diğer taraftan karakterler ve rakipleri arasındaki ilişkileri karşılaştıracaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Victoria Gotik Edebiyatı, Mary Shelley, John William Polidori, Frankenstein, The Vampyre

Extended Summary

The theme of horror holds an important place in Victorian literature. In this period, subjects that were not emphasized before were dealt with and terrible characters were created. Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* and John William Polidori's short story *The Vampyre* are the best examples of this enterprise. These stories were created on a dark and rainy night in a contest organized by a group of writers for fun. These books both scared and astonished people because they were the kind of works people were not used to. This astonishment increased the interest in the works and made them popular in a short time. But it is not only the horrific elements that these books still hold in popularity, or are replaced by new similar works, even today. What is important is that the authors dealt with many psychological and social themes and succeeded in conveying these themes along with horror elements.

Authors also included sections from their own lives in their works and identified the characters in the books with themselves and those around them. For example, in *Frankenstein*, the characters of the novel were motherless characters, just like the author. Frankenstein, Walton, Elizabeth, Justine, Felix, Agatha, Safie, and the monster were either deprived of their mothers or never had a mother. The novel tells the sad stories of people who were defeated and pushed out of society while fighting their own. Rather than being a horror novel in which a monster dominates the main theme, *Frankenstein*, on the other hand, contains profound themes such as life, the source of life and death. The scientist in the book aims to find immortality. Taking on the duty of God, he created a monster and gave it life.

Later, he found the monster disgusting and escaped from this creature; however, the creature did not abandon him. This creature wanted a wife from his creator for his loneliness, because he needed a partner. When his creator refused to do so, he tried to take revenge, even though he was kind-hearted when he was created. The author is also inspired by John Milton's *Paradise*

Lost and includes many similar relationships such as god-man, god-devil, and Adam-Eve. After reading the *Paradise Lost*, as told in the novel, the monster questions his life, himself and all humanity. That is why he asks for an Eve from his so-called god, Victor Frankenstein. The book was published under the title Frankenstein (or The Modern Prometheus) because it was also influenced by the myth of Prometheus. *Frankenstein* is also considered the first science-fiction novel, because, in her novel, Mary Shelley focused on subjects like medicine, electricity, magnetism, and galvanism. In short, Shelley's novel emerged as an original novel, very different from classical Romantic period novels.

Polidori's *The Vampyre*, on the other hand, is also considered to be the oldest example of the vampire genre. This story has a more gloomy and lifeless atmosphere than *Frankenstein*. In the story, emotional depictions are not given much attention and more horror themes are used. The most prominent character in the book is Lord Ruthven, the evil character who is known for drinking blood. The other important person is Aubrey, who, unlike Lord Ruthven, seeks favour for everyone and everything. Therefore, in addition to terror, it is a narrative that makes the reader think about good and evil. In the story, almost no attention is given to women. Men are seen as strong, brave and superior; women are depicted as poor and powerless. This story has shed light on many works to be written after and the next generation of writers.

In this study, these two works have been examined in terms of themes, main ideas, characters, fear elements in the books and the relationships between the characters. Some basic information has also been given about the lives of Victorian writers and the story of the emergence of novels.

Introduction

There is no doubt that fear is an inseparable part of human existence and culture; in other words, fear is a humane sensation. In this respect, fear is found wherever mankind exists. If the human being was born as deprived of feelings of fear, one aspect of life they live would always be incomplete. Undoubtedly, it could not be expected that a type of literature would not emerge from the intensity of emotions that are so important in human life. In literature, the most proponent reflectors of fear are monsters created as representatives of human concerns. The monsters have always been the darker side of people that they try to suppress. Although people abstain from talking about these suppressed senses, they always take pleasure in reading about them. Due to this reason, humanity has created monsters to characterize these concepts and the literary works made them a part of human nature and soul. Although the notion of horror had existed for so long, it did not gain importance until the Romantic Period. The most important reason behind the fame of the horror figure in the romantic period is the leading writers of the period.

For that matter, a group of writers including Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley, and John William Polidori held a horror story writing contest that left its mark on the era. With this contest known as Ghost Story Challenge, two important pieces of English Literature, Shelley's *Frankenstein (or The Modern Prometheus)* and Polidori's *The Vampyre* emerged. These horror novels are first of their kind. Their immortal creatures provide a basis for the creation of two major mythic figures that would have a great impact not only during the 19th century but until today (Buzwell 2014).

Consonant with the changes in the society these figures have been adjusted to the needs of the time. In this regard, some of the monsters retain their popularity while others left their place to their contemporaries. Victor Frankenstein and his creature have been imprinted on minds, whereas Lord Ruthven in *The Vampyre* has been substituted by figures like Dracula or the contemporary

vampire Edward Cullen. Why one of these works of the same genre and period maintains its originality while the other fades into oblivion has always aroused curiosity. By this means, the purpose of the study is to introduce a comparative analysis of *Frankenstein (or the Modern Prometheus)* and *The Vampyre*.

1. The Victorian Age and Its Literature Aspects

The Victorian Age covers the period between 1837 and 1901 when England was ruled by Queen Victoria. The power of the Queen, which lasted nearly 64 years, witnessed many historical developments and changes. During her rule, Britain was strengthened more than ever, so this period is technically considered as the rise of the history of England. Within this period, the Industrial Revolution increased and the years were accepted as the peak years of the Empire. With the Industrial Revolution, large factories started to use machinery in place of manpower. This allowed more work to be completed in less time, but the workers had to either use these machines or find new jobs. Despite the fact that the Industrial Revolution led to such many unemployment issues, England views these years as a period of prosperity. For instance:

“British history is two thousand years old,” Twain observed, “and yet in a good many ways the world has moved farther ahead since the Queen was born than it moved in all the rest of the two thousand put together.” And if the whole world had “moved” during that long lifetime and reign of Victoria’s, it was in her own country itself that the expansionist movement was most marked and dramatic, a movement that brought England to its highest point of development as a world power (Abrams 1987: 1889).

However, The British Empire, which dominated extensive lands, brought great wealth for some; it ruled millions of others without any support. For instance; the landowners were the richest and most powerful in England. The noblemen, who lived in a large house in the village, were usually the owners of the villagers’ houses and most of the villagers worked on their lands. Small farm owners were generally in good condition and independent. The working class was the worst affected class in Victorian times. For some ordinary peasants, the living conditions were so miserable that their children had to work in order to earn their living (Mitchell, 2009, pp. 34-40).

Even the conditions for some families and their children were “unimaginably brutal” and they lived like “packs of rats in a sewer”. Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s poem, *The Cry of the Children* (1843), can be shown as evidence of the difficulties that children experienced (Abrams 1987: 1892).

“For oh,” say the children, we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap
...
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,
Through the coal dark underground
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round (Elizabeth Barrett Browning).¹

In this period, the population increased more and more and the transition to urbanization accelerated. This development caused many changes in the field of health. People in developed cities lived healthier, fitter and disease-free. Considering the historical records, the people of the period lived longer and better than the people in the 21st century. For the working class, the situation was different. Almost all the work required physical activity and the workers had to walk at least 6 miles a day. Many working-class women and children were also forced to work in factories and workshops about 16 hours a day. Therefore, overweight and obesity were rarely seen in Victorians. The time was also the period in which the child deaths were experienced most (Clayton-Rowbotham 2009).

In this time of troubles, some authors such as Charles Dickens and John Ruskin made harsh criticisms on the shortcomings of the Victorian social life. For example: *Stones of Venice* (1853) and *Unto This Last* (1862) by Ruskin explicate the defects of commerce, industry and economy of the period (Abrams 1987: 1894).

In those times, women had no right to vote or hold an office. The only occupation that a mid-class Victorian woman could do was governess but it had long working hours and low wages. The governesses were somewhere between a servant and a family member. Important writers of the era such as Charlette Brontë, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Florence Nightingale wrote about the inequity that women faced. They criticized that women were given trivial things

to spend their time. The novels *Jane Eyre* and *Vanity Fair* are the most important examples of this (Abrams 1987: 1903).

Moreover; Victorian poetry and critical prose were in conflict with religion and science. Therefore; “Was religious belief useful for the needs of a reasonable person?” was argued a lot. Harriet Martineau, a writer, and freethinker, explained her reasons for the question: “There is no *theory* of God, of an author of Nature, of an origin of the universe, which is not utterly repugnant to my faculties (to my feelings) so irrelevant as to make me blush; so misleading as to make me mourn.” (Abrams 1987: 1895).

Although many scientists were firmly attached to their religion, scientific developments caused much damage to established faiths. To give an example, Ruskin exclaimed to complain about the “flimsiness” of his own religious belief: “If only the Geologists would let me alone, I could do very well, but those dreadful hammers! I hear the clink of them at the end of every cadence of the Bible verses.” (Abrams 1987: 1896).

The social and cultural background of the period had a deep impact on the literature of the Victorian Era. As a reflection of this, common themes of the Victorian literature focused around these issues such as: conflicts between classes, women’s rights, the glory of the past, realism, humanism, romanticism and philosophical ideas. Many authors from this period wrote about these unfavourable situations in their novels or stories. The most criticized issue in English Literature in the 19th century was differences in socio-economic status. In the novel *Great Expectations*, for example, Charles Dickens mentions this socio-economic problem. Readers may easily find both very poor and very rich characters.

England, which always had class distinctions within the structure of society, caused more difficult conditions in the lives of the poor people of the lower classes during this period. Poverty and injustice affected especially women in this class more. The lower class woman could never reach the conditions and comfort that was reached by the aristocratic class woman. These discriminations among women and arguments about the nature and role of these women produced “The Woman Question”. The question attracted a lot of debate in the

era in terms of what women could or should do (Abrams, 1987: 1902). These problems that many women faced had also been the subject of literary works. As quoted by Abrams, in the poem *The Princess* by Alfred Tennyson, the writer voices a view of women's role in the era:

Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
Man for the sword and for the needle she:
Man with the head and woman with the heart:
Man to command and woman to obey (Abrams 1987: 1904).

In addition to the revolutionary actions, another important movement that affected the literature of the era was Romanticism. The Romantic Movement, which had most adorable examples of poetry, was apparent in England between 1798 and 1832. The theme of the works that emerged in the Romantic period was nurtured by nature. Other issues that appeared in this period can be characterized as simplicity, genuineness, childhood, and innocence. Romantics focused on the fact that human beings are nourished by motives, dreams, creativity, and emotions. William Wordsworth's answer to the question "What is poetry?" is a summary of the whole period. "[P]oetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity." (Abrams 1987: 1392).

The strict moral rules of the Victorian period had influenced the literature as well. Most works were written to teach moral lessons to readers. Hard work and strong virtue were always rewarded and poor behaviour was punished at the end. In the Victorian period which is prosperous in the literary sense, various genres such as poetry, novel, non-fiction, theatre, children's literature, gothic and supernatural literature took an important place. Among these genres, especially horror fiction reached its top. It can be considered briefly as a genre that tries to intimidate the reader. It is often described as an element of fear, using the devil or its derivatives, or by using supernatural powers. Faith, feelings, and imagination are emphasized in Gothic fiction. In Gothic literature written pieces are often presented darker and more tragic than other works of the period. The sense of fear is revealed by fantastic stories and sometimes by supernatural events. The concept that dominates the Gothic genre is the personality conflicts

that are deep and dark. Some writers create a profound sense of fear by telling the reader without his own personality conflicts using his own ideas, which are not extraordinary events. The most modern example of this is found in the stories of Edgar Allan Poe. When these aspects are concerned Mary Shelley and John William Polidori, differently from Poe, evoke a sense of fear through supernatural creatures.

2. Mary Shelley and John William Polidori

When Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin was born in London, the calendars marked August 30, 1797. Her father, William Godwin was a famous philosopher and political writer and her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft was a famous feminist writer. The author did not get a chance to know her mother who died ten days after she gave birth. Her father remarried, and his stepmother did not send Mary to school while sending her own daughters. Even though she did not go to school, Mary was a child who loved to read and write, and she developed herself by taking advantage of her father's extensive library and prestigious guests, such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth, who came to their home quite often. Among these guests, she met Percy Bysshe Shelley, a student of his father. The friendship between them turned into a love affair over time, and then they got married and had children.

In 1818, when her children died, Mary became a long-term depressant. During her depression, she devoted herself to her writing career and contributed many important works to literature. *Valperga* (1823), *The Last Man* (1826), *Lodore* (1835) are some of these works. After her husband's death, Shelley, whose health was deteriorating, was unable to read books. In 1851, she died of brain tumour in her home in Chester Square, England (Moers 1974: 3-5).

John William Polidori was born in London in 1795. He was an English writer and physician. Polidori was the oldest son of an Italian scholar, Gaetano Polidori and of an English governess, Anna Marie Pierce. He was one of the youngest students of the faculty of medicine. In 1810, he wrote a thesis on sleepwalking and got a degree in medicine at the age of 19. After graduation, he began accompanying Lord Byron on his trips as his personal physician and the

recorder of the journeys. In April 1819, “New Monthly Magazine” published the famous story called *The Vampyre* which was attributed to Byron. He became famous for his concerns with the Romantic Movement and the leading author of the vampire genre of fantasy fiction. Polidori developed a new point of view for people to look into the world of vampires. Unfortunately, although he achieved such important success at an early age, Polidori committed suicide by cyanide at the age of 26 because of depression (Rosetti 1911: 1-24).

3. Ghost Story Challenge

Those who want to trace the origins of *Frankenstein* and *The Vampyre*, need to look into the date June 1816. The place is the house of the famous poet and aristocrat Lord Byron on the shores of Lake Geneva in Switzerland. Some writers such as Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley, John William Polidori decided to spend their holiday in Geneva. The ashes that the Tambora volcano erupted in Indonesia in 1815 were so massive that it was a winter that lasted almost a year in most parts of North America and Europe. Therefore; the year 1816, which is called “the year without summer”, led to unprecedented famine in many countries. That summer, the temperature was measured below zero, and the fog, cold, dark and rainy weather prevailed all around Switzerland. Because of the weather conditions, the group spent their nights discussing scientific developments and telling each other Gothic German horror stories at Byron’s house. When the group got bored of telling ghost stories, the host Lord Byron had the idea of organizing a ghost story contest (Shelley 2012: 19-26).

One of the issues mentioned in those days was whether the dead can be resurrected by galvanization. In those days, the techniques doctors used were quite different than the techniques they use today. Thus, it was common for doctors to use the corpses, who were either executed or died in prison, to develop their anatomy knowledge. When the corpses were insufficient, some people did some grave robbery attacks. At first, Mary had nothing in mind to finish her writing. A few days later, she had a nightmare in which a corpse from the grave was brought back to life with a powerful machine and the scientist who did it was afraid and ran away. Only then did she finish her work successfully. So,

her work is considered as the first real science-fiction novel in the history of literature. Doctor Polidori, on the other hand, was the only name in the team that produces a worthwhile work except for Mary Shelley (Mellor 2006: 9-25).

Polidori, who wrote *The Vampyre*, is accepted as the pioneer of the modern vampire myth and is one of the classical writers of gothic horror literature. This story influenced many authors like Bram Stoker, Anne Rice, Alan Ball, and Francis Ford Coppola. The work was published under the name of Lord Byron because of sales concerns. John William Polidori got into depression because of his inability to publish the work under his own name. Jackson states that: “We owe the two greatest horror tales of the last two centuries to a handful of troubled souls shut up together in an old house one wet summer” (Jackson 2016).

4. *Frankenstein (Or The Modern Prometheus) and The Vampyre*

In the first half of the 19th century, Victor Frankenstein, created by a young girl, was among the most popular gothic stories in the literary world. Mary Shelley achieved extraordinary success with the personality analysis, psychological analysis and professional style with her work when she was very young. She successfully reflected the influences of the society she lived in.

The title “Modern Prometheus” on the cover of *Frankenstein*, where romanticism was blended with gothic literature also draws attention. Prometheus is the Titan that steals the “fire”, which burns only on Mount Olympos, from the gods and as a result of this behaviour; he is severely punished in Greek mythology. In this myth, fire represents wisdom, and after mankind has found fire, nothing has ever been the same (Cartwright 2013).

In *Frankenstein*, the fire of Prometheus is electricity. Victor Frankenstein, the creator of the monster, gives life to the monster by using the power of lightning. Victor suffers like Prometheus only because he has used the privilege of giving life which belongs to the gods. The basic idea Shelley wants to emphasize in the work can be summarized as follows:

Although the creature came into the world as sinless as a baby, he became a monster because he was rejected by his creator and all the people around. The words of John Milton, which are cited at the preface of the book, clearly support

this idea: “Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay to mould me man? Did I solicit thee from darkness to promote me?” (Shelley 2012: 31).

The novel *Frankenstein* describes the events that occur around the creator and the creature. In the novel, Victor Frankenstein, a student of medicine; wants to regenerate the human to discover the secret of life, and to achieve immortality. He brings together pieces of corpses he has collected from various graves and cellars. He creates an unnamed monster by the power of galvanism, alchemy, and electricity but he rejects what he has created, and he runs away. The creature doesn't know why Victor abandons him and he wants Victor to explain all. The monster that starts to follow a family after a while sees the love of the family members towards each other and feels lonely. He wants a female partner from Victor but his request is rejected. As his loneliness increases, he becomes cruel and attempts to take revenge from his creator in a terrible way. The monster ruins Victor's life by killing members of his family and friends. Then, he goes after the monster to destroy him and eventually reaches the North Pole. He is rescued by Captain Robert Walton, one of the Arctic explorers, and taken to his ship. He gets tired here and dies before he reaches his goal. The monster feels remorseful about his creator's death and goes far away to destroy himself.

In the novel that tells the creature's rebellion against God, Mary Shelley also asks the cause of the unhappiness she experienced. She revolts God through the hero she created, because of the pain of her mother's death, her unhappy and solitary childhood, her troubled husband, and her deceased children. She utters: “Why did you form a monster so hideous that even you turned from me disgust? (Shelley 2012: 181) and she adds: “Cursed, cursed creator! Why did I live? Why, in that instant, did I not extinguish the spark of existence which you had so wantonly bestowed?” (Shelley 2012: 188).

There are, on the other hand, lots of myths about the vampires. The subject-matter of the other book *The Vampyre* includes one of them. Vampires, with which people are familiar, are human corpses who are said to resurrect from the grave to damage the living creatures. They have Slavic origins and are not older than a few hundred years. However, older versions of the vampire were not thought to be human, but supernatural and devilish creatures that did

not take human form. Matthew Beresford, author of “From Demons to Dracula: The Creation of the Modern Vampire Myth” says: “There are clear foundations for the vampire in the ancient world, and it is impossible to prove when the myth first arose. There are suggestions that the vampire was born out of sorcery in ancient Egypt, a demon summoned into this world from some other.” Asian vampires, like the Chinese jiangshi, have evil spirits that attack humans and consume their life energies; the blood-drinking Wrathful Deities in the “Tibetan Book of the Dead” and many others (Radford 2014).

In *The Vampyre*, the story is about seduction, murder, and the connection between a young nobleman and vampirism. Two new-comers appear in upper-class parties in London. One of them, Lord Ruthven, is terribly pale, but still quite handsome and people find him attractive because of his strange appearance and deep look. The other man, Aubrey is handsome and joyful. He manages to see the goodness in every person he meets. Despite these differences, the two decide to embark on a journey to explore Europe. On their arrival in Rome Lord Ruthven gambles and is involved in immoral behaviours. Although Aubrey tries to stop him, Lord Ruthven also seduces young innocent girls.

Because of his behaviour Aubrey leaves Ruthven and goes to Greece where he meets a beautiful Greek girl, Ianthe. Ianthe tells him an interesting vampire legend. After this story, one day Aubrey finds Ianthe’s dead body in the forest as he hears a scream. He finds her in a very bad condition; her throat is completely ripped off. Anyone who sees her dead body is sure that it was done by a vampire. From that day on, Aubrey begins to have nightmares about vampires and Lord Ruthven. On his travels, Aubrey meets Ruthven again and realizes that he has all the characteristics of the Vampires. However; Ruthven threatens him not to tell anyone this secret. When Aubrey returns to London he sees that Ruthven is closely interested in his sister. Aubrey learns that his sister will marry Ruthven, and he gets desperate each day, becomes sick and dies. Aubrey’s sister is also killed by Ruthven on her wedding night (Polidori 1816).

Many experts see this story as an allegory for Byron and Polidori’s relationship. After publishing the story signed by Byron, Goethe would call it the best short story ever written by the acclaimed poet. When young Polidori claimed

the authorship of the work, he was accused of plagiarism and of using Byron's name to become famous. Defeated, the young physician tried to become a monk, but the novel he had previously written impeded his access to the monastery. Afterwards, he attempted to study law, but was soon disappointed and fell directly into gambling. When Byron found out about the young man's suicide, he only said: "Poor Polidori, it seems that disappointment was the cause of this rash act. He had entertained too sanguine hopes of literary fame" (Gonzalez de Leon 2014).

After the heated debate between the two writers, Polidori and Byron, the duo made almost a duel. Polidori began to write this story with inspiration from Byron's efforts. When it was published for the first time in 1819, the readers declared how much the villain, Lord Ruthven, looked like another famous Lord. Some saw the story as a reflection of Byron's wicked adventures; others saw it not as Byron himself, but as one of his best works. Lord Byron was not the only one likened to one of the characters in the story. Polidori was also likened to the protagonist of the novel, Aubrey, an unfortunate bourgeoisie man in the story (Jackson 2016).

5. Comparison of the Books

The most important factor in the selection of these works is that their themes are common and belong to the same era. Moreover; these works, which were written in the same period, carry gothic elements and contain similar symbols. In terms of characters, it is possible to find traces of the period when the protagonists and antagonists are taken into account.

In the same period, in the same competition and in the same kind of writing, these two works had many characteristics in common, but at the same time differed from each other in some points. Down here is the comparison of the themes and main ideas as well as the character analysis and gothic elements.

a) Themes and Main Ideas: In fact, although the novel, *Frankenstein* seems to be composed of a certain fiction, there are many messages underlying the main idea. Even though it is written for a philosophical purpose, it is still considered a novel of horror. First of all, the creature's questions of "Who am I? Where do I come from and where do I go?" emphasize that we should think

about our own existence. The most important indicator of this is the attempt of the creature to learn continuously and reach the information after its basic impulses such as hunger and thirst. In addition, the creature refers to Adam and Eve that God has mercifully given him a wife, so that he would not be left alone, whereas Frankenstein is too cruel to do so. The essence of the creature is both good and bad. The evil that was not discovered before begins to emerge when Frankenstein and other people treat him without mercy. Thus, a movement from good to bad takes place. Finally, in the book, the phenomenon of death and the elements that remind it are quite included. This quotation from the novel clearly reflects the theme of the book: “Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change.” (Shelley 2012: 265).

On the other hand, Polidori’s book, the *Vampyre* deals with social themes such as the role of women in Victorian culture, virtue, and betrayal as well as vampirism. The book mainly focuses on the relationships between Lord Ruthven and the women that he pursues. However, women are not given much right to speak in the book, and just a few of them are given a name. The only female characters, mentioned in the book, Ianthe and Miss Aubrey, are deceived just like all other women. Deceiving women also points out another important theme, betrayal. Relationships between people are based on disloyalty and almost everyone in the book betrays each other. For instance, although Aubrey takes an oath to Lord Ruthven, he reveals his secret. Still, there are several sentences that mention virtue in the story. The idea emphasized in the book is that women should be proper, well-behaved and virtuous. A pure heart and soul have always been the ideal option for vampires.

b) Characters: The protagonist of the novel, Victor Frankenstein is obsessed with scientific achievement and he seeks the secret of life. He dedicates himself to his work by making sacrifices from his health and relationships. Victor represents the dangers of science and the responsibilities they bring. His scientific success has led to his downfall instead of being proud.

The antagonist of the novel, the nameless creature always seeks to communicate with people and a belonging. He is excluded by people because of his horrific appearance, but in fact, he has a compassionate character. Because of

his loneliness and suffering, he has the tendency to violence. When analysed, the creature looks like a complex character because he is a monster and a murderer, but also an innocent spirit seeking compassion and love. The novel indicates the importance of being a part of the society and having empathy for each other. The monster is the best example of what can happen when basic human needs are not met.

Considering the other book, the protagonist, Lord Ruthven is a British aristocrat with mysterious characteristics that women find interesting. He is a vampire and devours young innocent women after sucking their blood. Lord Ruthven, the most portrayed character in the book gives rise to a cult about vampires that has mutated into various forms and genres.

The antagonist, Aubrey is a kind and good-hearted man who always looks for the best in people. He is an orphan and his only family is his sister. He ends up dying when he is mentally disturbed. Aubrey, always in the shadow of Lord Ruthven, proves to be one of the most important characters of the book by revealing the secret. As it is known, Lord Byron and Polidori are two close friends who journeyed together a lot just like the characters in the book. At this point, it can be said that Aubrey and Polidori share lots of similarities.

Ianthe is the young, innocent and beautiful Greek girl that Aubrey met. Although women are not given important roles in the book, Ianthe has an important task to fulfil. She allows the secret to be revealed with the vampire stories she tells, however; what she does costs her life.

c) Gothic Elements and Symbols: In these two works, which were written during the reign of Gothic literature, the Gothic factors were frequently included. What makes Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* one of the most important horror novels of the period is these gothic elements. The two important elements in this genre are the isolation of characters and the dark and gloomy settings where the events take place. The book is full of many supernatural phenomena, especially the raising of the dead. Besides gothic elements, there are many symbols in the novel. Light is one of the major symbols that represent hope, knowledge, and discovery. "Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark

world.” (Shelley 2012: 82).

The disasters like Victor’s family’s murder and his ignorance of the creature also symbolize darkness. When the monster discovers the fire he says, “When night came again, I found, with pleasure that fire gave light as well as heat; and that the discovery of this element was useful to me in my food.” (Shelley, 2012, p. 147). The monster also uses the power of fire to destroy himself, so the fire is a symbol in the novel that represents both good and evil. The fire also brings the Prometheus myth to minds. The monster represents the first man, Adam. Victor, who created the first and only monster of his kind, assumed the role of God. When the monster reads the epic poem of Milton, *Paradise Lost*, he says “I ought to be thy Adam”, (Shelley, 2012, p. 141) however; the sins he committed indicate that he became the Satan. Victor hopes that his creation would be beautiful and charming when he creates it, but it turns into an ugly and evil creature.

Polidori’s vampire story is also categorized into gothic works with its dark and gloomy theme. The book begins with the depiction of a mysterious man. “... that he might by a look quell it and throw fear into those breasts where thoughtlessness reigned.” (Polidori 1819). Never-ending doubts and the unpredictability of what happens next are indicative of the mystery of the story.

The novel, in general, is based on vampires and the fear against them. In some parts of the book, vampires do not take place, but by the time they are mentioned, the tone of the book becomes dreary. After the vampires emerge, the rest of the novel is extremely scary and full of bloody and brutal deaths. Polidori ends his story thus: “Lord Ruthven had disappeared, and Aubrey’s sister had glutted the thirst of a VAMPYRE!” (Polidori 1819).

d) Relationships between the Protagonist and the Antagonist: When the relationship between the protagonist and the antagonist is taken into consideration, in *Frankenstein* Victor is in parallel with God, and his creature represents Adam, the first of humankind. Victor is conducting his experiments with great exaltation and passion, but when he is able to manage, his passion turns into hatred. While Victor is always portrayed as a prominent character in society, the creature, on the other hand reflects his selfish desires that he always

wanted to hide. Although Victor is the creator of the monster, in time, the creature takes over the power and makes Victor regret the day he was born. He does this not by harming Victor but by taking the lives of his loved ones. Although the main character is Victor, it is not possible to talk about a certain hero-villain relationship, because they both have demonic behaviour towards each other. Victor explains the cause of this evil attitude, which he never demonstrates with his behaviour: “Seek happiness in tranquillity and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries.” (Shelley 2012: 290).

In *The Vampyre*, the protagonist Lord Ruthven and the antagonist Aubrey are friends in the beginning but, the fellowship between them turns into hostility when the mystery is solved. Throughout the novel, Ruthven threatens Aubrey and forces him not to talk about the secret that he is the vampire. Ruthven always holds the power throughout the story, and no one is able to defeat him. Even the creature, the evil character of *Frankenstein*, has a good sense of kindness, Ruthven, the main character of *The Vampyre*, is completely devoid of goodness. This difference in their behaviour provides the reader with compassion for the creature, but for Ruthven, it is just the opposite.

Conclusion

It is possible to see the traces of the period in these works, which emerged as a result of the horror story competition. For example, the portrayal of gothic elements is easily noticed in both works. In addition, demonstrating the weakness of women, moral sentiment and the apparent processing of social class differences constitute the themes of the works. Therefore; these works carry the traces of the events that left their mark on the period and the fragments from the writers’ own lives.

These two works, which were put forward with the contest, were written in the same genre but dealt with very different themes. Both of the protagonists, Victor Frankenstein and Lord Ruthven, struggle to beat the villains, but the first dies while the latter lives through. Shelley gave life to a new creature with the parts from the dead people in her book, Polidori, on the other hand, created a

horrible vampire that sucked blood. So, in Frankenstein, the sense of fear is given to the readers by the resurrection of the dead. What scares the reader is not the hideous appearance of the creature, but the fact that it is a living being made up of independent pieces. While in the other novel, fear is given by murdering people in a terrifying way. These unique novels have succeeded in both surprising and frightening the people of the time. Not only did they influence their own periods, but they also inspired future writers. Today, they still retain their popularity that they have been re-written and adapted to theatres and movies. There is no doubt that these two unique works will continue to be read, watched and discussed in the future to come.

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