

THE ROLE OF EMPATHY IN LITERATURE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ALMOND AND FRANKENSTEIN

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Abstract

This thesis examines how empathy is depicted and served within the literature with a comparison of Frankenstein by Mary Shelley and Almond by Sohn Won-pyung. The study focuses on the ways in which the theme of emotional isolation, the theme of social rejection, and ethical development are reflected in the two texts and on the ways in which these situations influence the emotional and ethic paths of the main characters. With a qualitative research approach combining close reading and comparison, significant theoretical frameworks employed in the research include the theory of allocentric empathy by Patrick Colm Hogan, humanistic psychology advanced by Rogers (1961) and the Theory of Mind by Oatley and Mar (2011). They are also based on the theories of narrative empathy (Keen, 2007), ethical literary studies (Nussbaum, 1990, Denham, 2020), and existential ethics (de Beauvoir, 1948). Although Frankenstein reveals the tragic nature of what denied empathy and moral indifference leads to, Almond introduces a redemption tale in which empathy can be acquired, ethical development possible, in spite of lacking emotional instinct and tendency. The analysis also looks at cultural and temporal variability of the texts and demonstrates the ways of the functioning of empathy under the various styles of narration, settings, and emotions. The results show that a high level of emotional expressiveness does not necessarily lead to being socially empathetic and a low level of emotional restraint does not indicate the inability to grasp ethical insights either. Based on its analysis, the thesis can thus support the argument that literature serves to develop empathy, not only as a sensation, but as an ethical posture, in that it allows the reader to engage in emotionally challenging moral environments. The study advances a culturally and psychologically sensitive discourse on empathy in narrative fiction, which relates to the emerging body of studies concerned with affect and ethical criticism.

Keywords: *Empathy, Ethical Criticism, Frankenstein, Almond, Humanistic Psychology, Narrative Empathy, Alexithymia, Emotional Isolation, Cultural Context.*

INTRODUCTION

Human experience of empathy serves as a basic emotional ability which helps people understand other perspectives and form mental bonds with others. The current world filled with social tensions finds its most valuable benefits for understanding human relationships within literary works that overcome both cultural and emotional obstacles. Through many years literature has studied emotional understanding and showed how it influences human attachments and societal development. The authors of Frankenstein and Almond guide their readers to identify with their characters to share the characters' distress and achieve better recognition of humanity's emotional landscape. The research investigates how authors Mary Shelley and Won-pyung Sohn portray empathy in their works Frankenstein and Almond respectively. Within Frankenstein Mary Shelley portrays the tragic existence of the creature to explore alienation and compassion while Won-pyung Sohn's Almond shows how Yunjae with alexithymia faces empathy judgment in his daily life. The investigation analyses empathy representation through a comparison of Almond by Won-pyung Sohn and Frankenstein by Mary Shelley within different cultural and historical settings.

Research Objectives

The research aims to:

1. Compare the portrayal of empathy in two texts, *Almond* by Sohn Won-Pyung and *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, especially in its emotional response or restraint as it relates to gaining access to the inner world of the characters.
2. Discuss how empathy influences relationships and growth of the characters and its impact on moral choices, the development of their identities as well as social assimilation, especially when emotional connection (or the absence of it) has to do with it.
3. Contextualize the cultural and historical practices on the role of empathy in the two novels, with acknowledging the roles being played by Western individualism of the 19th century in *Frankenstein* and the contemporary collectivism in modern South Korea in the novel, *Almond*, in constructing emotional worlds of their characters.
4. Explore the ways in which diverse narrative styles and methods appeal to the readers through empathy, e.g., the stratified, contemplative form in *Frankenstein* as opposed to the terse and literal story-telling in *Almond*.
5. Add to the already existing literature by presenting a comparative ethical and emotional textual analysis of the two selected texts of different cultures, with a special focus on literature as a medium of ethical intervention and emotional learning.

Research Questions

1. In what manner empathy is portrayed in *Almond* and *Frankenstein*?
2. How empathy can be applied to the personal relationships among the characters and the personal growth of the characters?
3. What is the role of culture and history when speaking about how empathy is depicted in the two novels?
4. How the narrative methods of creating compassion in the readers are practiced by the authors?
5. What is the larger meaning of empathy as a topic in the literature to help build an understanding and benevolence in society?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empathy is the capacity to comprehend and experience another person's emotions; it is the ability to relate to someone because you have gone through what they are going through. Being able to share another person's suffering is a sign of empathy. Empathy has long been a major theme in literature, influencing moral engagement, character development, and story progression. Literature allows for emotional and psychological growth and change by allowing readers to see things from viewpoints different from their own. By comparing Sohn Won-Pyung's "*Almond*" and Mary Shelley's "*Frankenstein*," it is possible to examine how empathy—or the absence of it—serves as a defining characteristic of character growth and social interaction in these two very different works of literature. While "*Frankenstein*" challenges the Romantic values of science, morality, and physiological empathy, "*Almond*" explores the difficulties of emotional comprehension in a person with Alexithymia, a condition in which they are unable to identify or communicate their feelings.

In both books, empathy is presented as a complex idea that necessitates a greater comprehension of human connections and differences in addition to a basic emotional reaction.

The field of biomedical ethics has accepted "Frankenstein" as a warning story about the perils of science that are revealed by ethical considerations during the last 20 years. Scholars as Koplin and Massie (2021) mention that Frankenstein was a treatise on bioethics that was composed a hundred and fifty years before the existence of the discipline, yet is still very applicable to current discussions. The novel's criticism of scientific ambition has drawn attention from critics, who have emphasised its caution that unbridled scientific advancement can lead to terrible consequences. A closer reading of the text, however, shows that "Frankenstein" is a commentary on the confusion of scientific and moral theory, especially as it relates to physiologic sympathy, rather than just a criticism of amoral science. The attempt by the Romantic era to combine science and ethics into a single theory of universal sympathy—which requires that people be physically and emotionally alike in order to connect—is criticised in Shelly's book. According to the theory of physiological sympathy, social sympathy is only safe for people with essentially the same psychological and physical makeup because fragile bodies are prone to infection and collapse.

Both the creature and Victor Frankenstein are trying to find sympathy in "Frankenstein," but Victor is unable to do so because of the creature's physical and emotional differences from him. The narrative is driven by this incapacity to understand difference, which has a tragic outcome. Because it makes the assumption that sympathy can only exist between people who have similar physiological and psychological characteristics, the theory of physiologic sympathy falls flat. According to Shelly's critique of this theory, empathy necessitates acknowledging each person's distinct emotional experience rather than being reduced to a straightforward, universal reaction.

"Almond," by Sohn Won-Pyung, offers a different but no less nuanced depiction of empathy. The main character, Yunjae, has a condition called alexithymia that prevents him from recognising and expressing emotions. Despite his condition, he progressively learns to navigate the world of emotions and starts to develop empathy despite his emotional detachment, which isolates him from others. "Almond" questions the idea that people who are emotionally typical are the only ones who can fully experience empathy, arguing that empathy can develop via personal development and an attempt to comprehend others who might have different emotional needs. Yunjae's journey serves as a reminder that empathy is a process that can change over time rather than an innate quality.

In "Almond," Yunjae's interactions with others—especially his family and peers—delve into the ethical ramifications of empathy. In her study, "The Importance of Empathy in Adolescence Portrayed in Won-Pyung Sohn's Almond; A New Criticism Study," Mawaddah (2021) contends that the book illustrates empathy as a crucial component in overcoming emotional isolation. The challenges that people who suffer from emotional detachment face are reflected in Yunjae's battle with Alexithymia, but his eventual capacity for empathy highlights the novel's larger theme: empathy is more than just sharing feelings; it's also about comprehending the experiences of others, particularly those who may be emotionally different.

Similarly, in their article "Moral Value of Novel 'Almond' Written by Shon Won-Pyung,"

Angeline and Mulatsih (2021) stress that the book challenges readers to think about empathy as a moral requirement. Empathy is portrayed in "Frankenstein" as a vital social link that is necessary for moral responsibility and interpersonal communication. However, Victor's inability to sympathise with his creature, which has disastrous results, serves as an example of how the novel critiques the limitations of sympathy. In contrast, "Almond" presents empathy as a dynamic process that necessitates self-awareness as well as a readiness to comprehend others, despite emotional differences.

The 2024 study "Why Empathise with a Monster?: A Discussion About How to Aid Students' Ability to Empathise and Think Critically Through Teaching Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*" by Johansson (2024) examines the empathy-teaching potential of the novel. Johansson emphasises how the book challenges the readers to consider the moral ramifications of Victor's deeds and to critically engage with the creature's suffering. "Frankenstein" urges readers to reevaluate the intricacies of empathy by depicting the creature's yearning for pity and to view the creature as more than just a monster but as someone who merits sympathy.

Moral aspect of the story in the *Almond*, with its emphasis on empathy as the social and personal building block, bears a strong contrast to the inability of empathy to do anything but spawn violence and tragedy in *Frankenstein*. In *Frankenstein*, the issues of alienation and destruction arise due to the fact that Victor did not realize the emotional requirements of his creature. By demonstrating how an overly straightforward model of universal empathy can be harmful (Hogan, 2003), especially when it ignores the emotional differences between individuals, Shelley challenges the Romantic ideals of sympathy.

The suffering of the monster in "Frankenstein" highlights the perils of the physiologic sympathy theory (Smith, 1759/2002), which maintains that empathy can only exist when people are similar to one another. Shelley challenges the reductionist interpretation of human nature, which aims to impose homogeneity on emotional and physical experiences, by illustrating the tragic results of this theory's shortcomings. In addition to being the outcome of Victor's rejection, the creature's tragedy serves as a critique of a culture that does not value diversity.

On the other hand, "Almond" presents a broader perspective on empathy. The gradual process of Yunjae's emotional development is depicted as requiring both self-awareness and a growing comprehension of the emotional world of others. According to the novel, empathy is a dynamic and ever-evolving process that calls for work, patience, and emotional investment rather than a fixed attribute. The significance of accepting the diversity of human experiences and recognising emotional differences is highlighted by Yunjae's journey.

In her curriculum unit titled "Empathy Through Eyes of a Creature: A Journey Into Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," Harriet J. Garcia (2012) highlights the educational value of "Frankenstein" in fostering empathy. Garcia contends that the novel's depiction of the creature's suffering forces readers to reevaluate their presumptions regarding moral obligation and empathy. "Frankenstein" invites readers to consider the moral implications of empathy and the

emotional needs of others by examining the creature's emotional loneliness and desire for acceptance.

Brenda Almond (2010) critically analyses the viability of developing an ethical framework based only on sympathetic sentiments in her critique of Michael Slote's "The Ethics of Care and Empathy." Slote frames empathy as the foundation of a moral life and argues that moral behaviour is dictated by the caring motivation behind it. However, Almond expresses concern that treating emotions like empathy as moral obligations is problematic because they are not always able to be commanded or generated at will. She also raises doubts about whether a public ethical framework can be maintained solely by sympathetic feelings, pointing out that in order to preserve justice and autonomy, civil society needs institutions that transcend personal emotions. The complexity seen in both "Frankenstein" and "Almond" is reflected in this philosophical conflict. Victor's inability to sympathise with the creature in "Frankenstein" leads to extreme violence and isolation, underscoring the perils of depending solely on emotional resonance to guide moral behaviour. However, "Almond" suggests that moral responsibility entails both intentional ethical engagement and emotional growth, presenting empathy as a slow, conscious development as opposed to an automatic emotional response. Thus, Almond's criticism enhances our comprehension of the function of empathy in literature by highlighting the importance of fusing emotional ties with more comprehensive ethical frameworks.

Both "Almond" and "Frankenstein" challenge the conventional wisdom that regards empathy as a simple emotional response. Instead, they present empathy as a complex, multifaceted process that goes beyond awareness of one's own experiences and emotional differences. Genuine empathy (Rogers, 1961), according to these novels, means recognizing people's unique emotional worlds, trying to connect with them despite differences, and connecting with them on a deeper level. It transcends emotional resemblance as well.

The limitations of a limited understanding of empathy are powerfully reflected in "Frankenstein's" critique of physiologic sympathy (Smith, 1759/2002; Barker-Benfield, 1992). The book shows how violence and alienation can result from an oversimplified understanding of empathy that places a premium on emotional and psychological resemblance. On the other hand, "Almond" offers a more complex perspective on empathy, highlighting its capacity for moral and personal development despite emotional detachment.

Both novels the moral and ethical obligations that come with empathy, and the perils of not being aware of other people's emotional needs. This study compares these two works in order to investigate the intricacies of empathy in literature as well as the ways in which these novels subvert accepted notions and emotional involvement.

In summary, the themes of empathy are explored in both "Frankenstein" and "Almond" in ways that go against oversimplified conceptions of emotional connection. Almond portrays empathy as a dynamic and changing process that necessitates self-awareness and an understanding of others' emotional experiences, whereas Frankenstein challenges the Romantic ideal of universal empathy and the theory of physiological sympathy. The complexity of empathy and

the ways that both personal and societal factors influence it are highlighted by this comparative study. The direct comparison of the two pieces, especially with regard to how they handle the limitations and possibilities of empathy as a theme, the cultural differences in how empathy is expressed, suppressed and understood fills a vacuum in the body of existing literature. By bridging the gap between classical and contemporary representations of empathy, this study will advance our understanding of empathy in literature and offer a nuanced viewpoint on the moral and ethical aspects of emotional engagement.

METHODOLOGY

Using a qualitative method based on comparative literary analysis, the study examines how empathy is represented in Mary Shelly's "Frankenstein" and Sohn Won-Pyung "Almond". The investigation's main goal is to comprehend how empathy is portrayed in these two pieces, as well as the significance of their stories and cultural setting. Importantly, the study employs interpretive techniques to examine primary texts in order to identify literary patterns and meanings.

This research paper investigates how cultures dictate human social ties and emotional conduct while discussing narrative tools for understanding misunderstood characters. The study examines how empathy appears across multiple contexts through a philosophical, historical and cultural evaluation of both literary works. This research examines Eastern and Western approaches to empathy through complete and imperfect illustrations which help expend the literary comprehensions of this bond.

The two main literary works are the primary study materials for this research.

1. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818)
2. Sohn Won-Pyung's Almond (2017)

The two literary works were chosen through critical and thematic analysis because they deal with protagonists whose emotional ties are hampered by psychological and physical impairment. The selected text present compatible views about empathy which creates ideal conditions for research analysis. The research adopts purposive sampling as a method that suits specific themes in the research questions instead of random selection.

The research analysis which draws data from secondary sources adopts a meticulous multiple-dimensional techniques to interpret the texts. The steps are as follow:

1. Through a focused reading of the novel the research analyzes major plot points together with character development, thematic content, empathetic and alienated scenes that stand out within the stories.
2. The research investigates how narrative methods combined with symbolism represent empathy through multiple expressions throughout both texts.
3. This research examines the philosophical as well as cultural along with historical contexts through which each author presented empathy in their works.
4. The analysis seeks to identify how empathy gets treated across both texts although it compares the approaches separately.
5. The analysis implements medical humanities along with humanism and reader-response criticism as interpretive theory at this point.
6. Primary and secondary sources provide data that leads to the development of an advanced analytical finding about empathetic portrayal in literature.

The study design of this research is based on interpretive and qualitative perspective that is specifically applicable in addressing complex thematic features of empathy in the context

of any literary work. In that design, deep, contextualized comprehension of literature is stressed, with an overall conclusion pursuing a meaning making, topical examination of texts, and a cultural interpretation rather than its statistical or empirical verification. Since the emphasis of the study falls on the interpretive process more than on a measured one, the research employs the so-called non-experimental research methods that enable to work with the texts in the conceptual and philosophical context without having to go through manipulated variables or measure the results of such inquiries.

This research is constructed on the interpretive analysis. The ground of this methodological approach is the belief about the text of literature as an active entity which can be read and interpreted in different ways due to the reader, specifications of place in history, and various theories. In the presented case, the interpretive approach enables revealing the way the construction of empathy is created, communicated, and altered in the regarding texts. The study questions the way that various writers depict empathy, the way that their characters perceive and feel this emotion, and the way that these depictions speak to the larger social, psychological, and philosophical concerns.

In addition to interpretive analysis, there is also the usage of qualitative literary methods of comparisons in the study. The need to apply a comparative analysis in this research is due to the fact that it aims at exploring empathetic transformations between two different literary works that belong to completely different historical, cultural and linguistic contexts. Compares the works of these two authors, one of which, Mary Shelley, is the author of a canonical Gothic novel written in the 19th century in the England, and the other one, Sohn Won-pyung is a contemporary South Korean writer, whose novel is based on psychological and emotional growth, this analysis makes it possible to draw parallels and differences in the comprehension of empathy both on the universal, as well as on a culturally specific level. The comparative framework assists in recognizing thematic continuities and divergence, which will give an idea how the concepts of empathy changed throughout history and in different cultural settings.

There are no experiments and controlled observations in the research design since the research is classified in the humanities where they would not work. Rather, it is anchored on textual analysis, theoretical work and analysis of critical discourse. This non-experimental method allows studying the literary, emotional and symbolic dimensions of each reading and it is possible to consider how the empathy is pre-formed by the narrational structure, the plot development, the border meaning of the author and the socio-historic impacts.

Further on, interpretive research approach helps the researchers to work with the multi-layered and intricate texts applying various instruments of accessing and interpretation including thematic analysis, symbolism, theory of narrative, and psychoanalytic or sociological types of literary criticism. These tools can be used to not only offer us what is written and how and why it is written but expands our idea of how empathy can work inside and outside of the text.

This study, in essence, aims at developing a subtle interpretation of the literary portrayal and alterations of empathy as it is manifested in these two novels. It also looks at how such representations are both representational and determined by social and cultural contexts within which they have been devised. As a result of such in-depth and comparative analysis, the acquisition of complex look at the role of empathy involved in literature, its role in involving the readers, and how it creates a bridge between people, cultures, and eras in history, the study should emerge in the greater discussion of empathy in literature.

In this research paper, a layered textual analysis is used in investigating the construction of empathy in *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, and *Almond* by Sohn Won-pyung. A close reading of both of the given novels makes it possible to concentrate on four main dimensions, i.e. social rejection, emotional development, ethical consciousness and symbolic representation. The Creature of *Frankenstein* and Yunjae, the main characters of the “*Almond*,” both find themselves in a serious state of social isolation that influences emotional and moral persona. It is not only the plot device of their ostracization from society but also the statement against social conventions or even the effect that othering has on the psychology of the other. The paper points out how these characters grow into the situations around them, slowly achieving emotional maturity and morality even though they were initially deficient or traumatized to a certain degree.

Internal monologue, limited perspective, symbolic imagery are other narrative elements that make the reader more involved into the emotional life of the characters. When presented in first person narrations as in *Frankenstein*, the misery of the Creature is humanized whereas the passive narration of *Almond* unveils the slight changes in Yunjae. Right and wrong are also brought out in how the two characters face the results of their actions and reveal how empathy and moral can be learnt and are molded. Symbolism-e.g. through the monstrosity of the Creature, and the frequent symbol of almonds to the outer world, their internal conflicts are brought out further giving depth to the emotions discussed in the texts. Cumulatively, all these show how a literature text can represent the evolution of empathy and allow readers to immerse themselves in emotional and ethical dilemmas in various scenarios.

The research does not require any ethical considerations since it is based on textual analysis and it does not presuppose empirical methods of research and human participants. Therefore, such questions as informed consent, privacy or protection of data are irrelevant. However, intellectual integrity is high in the study because it has carefully cited all other publications and drawn clear differences between creativity and other literature. The attributed quotation is precise and paraphrasing is done carefully so that misrepresentation does not occur and this is not plagiarism. Such practices will be transparent and promote the provisions of scholarly ethics and the general credibility of the study.

Despite the study having provided a concise and detailed analysis of empathy using the works of literature, such as, “*Frankenstein*” and “*Almond*”, the study is limited by its scope and therefore cannot be generalized. In focusing on only two works, of different cultures and historical backgrounds a British novel of the early 19th century and a modern work of South Korea it omits some form of literary representation that it might have used to enrich analysis. In addition, the comparison made across cultural boundaries brings interpretive problems because of differences in symbolic systems and narration conventions. Nevertheless, these constraints are admitted as very specific frames that underline the importance of cultural particularity and seem to highlight potential areas of comparative literary researches in the future.

This research paper is able to take a look at the way empathy is constructed and displayed in *Frankenstein* and *Almond* through what can be described as a layered methodological approach. With the help of close reading, a thematic and symbolic analysis, the studies help us to determine that literature is capable of expressing sophisticated emotional and moral episodes in any contexts. The comparative framework does not only reveal the peculiarities of each of the texts in terms of their description of social marginalization, emotional maturity, and ethical understanding but also shows how literature can promote inter-cultural sympathies. The

following research highlights the timelessness of empathy in literary studies and supports the idea of fiction in the context of moral thoughtfulness and emotional insight.

My close reading style has also helped me in conducting this research which is actually to make active interpretations on how empathy, emotion, and ethics work within the context of each novel, but I also respect the contexts of each novel. I am aware that symbols such as the Creature in “Frankenstein” or the almond in “Almond” do not bear one unchanging meaning. Rather, their meaning varies with their application and context, time of emergence and their relevance to the emotional and narrative progression of the narrative. I have not been trying to dictate meaning and significance, but to allow it, over time and with reliance upon the development of character and reliance on tone, structure and theme. In this manner I am able to read symbolically in a sensitive and rich way, using theory when it is useful, and being open to the textures of the text itself. I feel that such an approach enriches the research since it does not underestimate the intricacy of literature; it enables me to participate in an interpretation that was informed, measured and based on the reality of both the rhythm and ethical undercurrents of every story.

Theoretical Framework

This research paper bases the discussion on empathy and moral growth upon three overlapping theoretical frameworks, including Hogan (2022) theory of allocentric ethical prototypicality, the person-centred psychology of Rogers (1961), and narrative empathy of Keen (2007). Taken together, these frameworks explain how literary texts encourage its readers to engage in experiencing beyond the self-regarding interests and how characters learn to feel and appreciate as a result of holding relationships constant and how the narrative strategy renders such process on the readers.

Hogan (2022) handles ethics in terms of cognitive prototypes. By far the most characteristic indicator of an ethical action, he approaches empathic concern about the well-being of others, the so-called allocentric empathy. The theory should be restated to discard the notion that moral life will be mainly rule-guiding or self-interest masquerading as something else; rather it should be used to emphasize how persons imaginatively put themselves in the place of someone and change their actions based on that. The prototype learning presented by Hogan is important to this project since it demonstrates how fictional story patterns are important: narratives provide emotionally codified patterns of success and failure that direct the readers in the process of improving their own moral prototypes. When the plot is about breakdown of empathy Shelley fell into the Creature and withdrew to violence after repeated rejection, Hogan (2022) calls that plot an ethical storyline failed to pan out. On the other hand, he refers to such gradual turning-on of attention, as occurs in a story in which Yunjae finds warmth in friendship, as an effortful generalization of empathy. Both instances shed light on why fictional work exhibits itself as a field of experimentation.

When Hogan (2022) theorizes the cognitive structure of empathy, Rogers (1961) describes the relational conditions under which empathy is able to develop. Psychology of individual, especially the creation of person-centred, states that each human is able to grow and expand emotionally, but can do so only in the presence of relationships with unconditional positive regard, genuineness, and empathic understanding. Rogers (1961) thus relates the field of moral learning to the tangible ways of dialogue and acknowledgement: one genuinely listens without evaluation, and the receiver gets to be capable of feel and to rearrange self think and to behave with attention to others. The framework devised by Rogers (1961) helps to understand why the development of Yunjae is the result of constant attention on the part of Gon and Dora, and why

the Creature of Frankenstein, all it gets is horror and running, shrinks into anger. The comparison stresses out the statement of Rogers (1961) that empathy is not the attribute but interpersonal accomplishment.

The third member of the triad is the way formal choices guide the readers to these ethical dramas that Keen (2007) describes. She trots out the term narrative empathy to denote the mechanism through which voice, perspective, time management, and rhetorical invitation precipitates an audience to experience a fiction of being with, as opposed to about, fictional characters. Several narrative voices embedded within Frankenstein ask readers to transfer sympathy in different contexts as they are making the judgment that has changed when the focus of perception shifts. In the meantime, the pared-down, keen-eyed style of Sohn retards emotional recognition and compels readers to guess at the way Yunjae is feeling through gesture and situation. The theory by Keen (2007) therefore explains why literary form cannot be received as an ornamentation: it is the imaginary building wherein plot is transformed into a practice of moral perception.

These three views support each other. Hogan (2022) demonstrates the real meaning of acting ethically by using empathy; Rogers (1961) demonstrates how real or fictional relationships form that capability; Keen (2007) demonstrates why certain narrative practices pass or fail to transfer the experience to readers. The fact that they overlap explains the prominent gap in empathy research that they bridge: many studies tend to cut either psychological processes or literary aesthetics, whereas the given project combines them, proving how fictional worlds inform, convey, and challenge allocentric moral practice.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The analysis component of the present thesis carries out comparative exploration into ethical, emotional, and narratological relationships established in the works by Mary Shelley, Frankenstein, and Sohn Won-Pyung, Almond. The chapters have been informed by close textual readings, cross-cultural contextualisation, and each explores how each of the novels builds (or fails to) empathetic response, the implications that this construction has on morality, and how the construction is part of multiple sociocultural concerns of marginality and recognition. Using the publication of Hogan (2022) regarding allocentric morality, the humanistic psychology of Rogers (1961), and the more recent notions on narrative empathy (Keen, 2007, Oatley & Mar, 2011) as anchors, the discussion follows the paths leading to the making the Creature and Yunjae test cases of failed or successful development empathic interactions. Led by this question, the analytical direction of the study is methodologically directed towards both a formalist approach (focalisation, voice, temporal layering) and the ethical criticism and affect theory to reveal how formal properties of writing itself serve as tools of a moral argumentation. Putting the works in their respective historical and cultural context and comparing the Romantic fears of monstrosity to the contemporary, twenty-first-century concerns regarding neurological difference positions the analysis as one that does not only highlight the logics internal to each text, but that also determines the trans-historical, or rather, the so-called story universals (Hogan, 2022) capable of dictating the emotional reaction of the readers. Finally, the section ventures beyond summary of plot to show how literature works as an experimental field where readers practice ethical choices, renegotiate cultural scripts, and measure the boundaries of sympathy.

4.2 Social Rejection Psychological Development

The chapter examines formation and misrepresentation of empathy in “Frankenstein” by Mary Shelley and “Almond” by Sohn Won-pyung based on the social realities of marginalization and loneliness. The characters in both works prove to be alienated to the normal human emotions in their own ways-Frankenstein Creature because of his unfamiliar look and being deserted and Yunjae because of his neurological disorder and not being able to choose what to do with his feelings, alexithymia. Emotional paths of their life portray how sensitive they are to empathy and appreciation of the moral sense of culture that is socio-constructed, neurologically intricate, and are gesturally framed.

Frankenstein written by Mary Shelley involves the reader in what Hogan (2022) describes as “a morality centralized within allocentric empathy”. Shelley intended to make us think of the Creature as more than a horror object because of the narrative design she develops, she presents it as an object of ethical interest. It is represented best by the following words, “I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend” (Shelley, 1818, p. 101).

According to Hogan (2022), ethical decisions should contradict individualistic self-interest and, on the contrary express care about the welfare of others, which is referred to by the author as the criterion of allocentric ethical prototypicality (Hogan, 2022, p. 19). The Creature is disposed to kindness but the unending rejection destroys the moral integrity of the Creature. It is not that he is vile by nature, but that society does not have the empathy toward him that would have brought out his better side, thus, he becomes a tragic figure. According to Hogan (2022), the unsuccessful ethical story lines-the unimaginative judgment based on superficial traits of characters as opposed to their inner goodness-hinder emotional growth and enhance moral harm.

In Sohn Almond there is the structural reversal of this story. Yunjae starts his life without the possibility to obtain emotional access; he is brought into an ethical world little by little with the help of social relationships. She writes,

“They told me that I had some kind of brain, which did not know how to be afraid of fear or angry or loving and hating. I simply lacked the so-called almonds to it” (Sohn, 2020, p. 7).

His statement does not signify any kind of deficiency but a person who was on the beginning of an emotional apprenticeship. The evolution of Yunjae proves an example of what Hogan (2022) defines as an “effortful generalization of empathy” (p. 6) moral learning development that relies on narrative, example, as well as mutual recognition. His transformation corresponds to the theory of Rogers (1961) according to which personal development could be ensured through the empathy relationship that could provide unconditional positive attitude. As explained by Rogers (1961), “when someone really hears you without passing a judgment... it feels damn good” (p. 116) and this is what Yunjae gets to finally feel as he progressively realizes the fact that Gon and Dora are coming to treat him consistently and emotionally.

To the extent that readers are involved with the two texts, both reflect what Oatley and Mar (2011) of the psychologists refer to as fiction that is a simulation of social experience. They say that literature lets the readers learn how to be empathetic as it puts them in the position of other people, developing their Theory of a Mind. The novel “Frankenstein” propels this cognitive-emotional simulation via the stratigraphic construction of the narrative. The reader switches among the perspectives of Walton, Victor and the Creature, which Elin Johansson (2024) describes as a sort of empathetic detachment or, as readers, teaching us to be critical of what we are supposed to fear by stepping into the psychological and emotional mind of the creature. Such an assumption is strengthened by Alison Denham, who proposes narrative fiction as a means of achieving emotional transportation, enabling an affective alignment of oneself with others as a matter of form, and of language (Denham, 2020). Notably, she does

not think such responses are irrational but, as she states, such responses have an epistemic responsibility, which, in the case of fiction, is to stay responsible to epistemic norms (p. 198). Such a move that suggests empathy as a way of ethical questioning displaces empathy as a luxury.

Nussbaum (1990) extends this view in *Love Knowledge*, that literature form is also part of ethic knowing and communicating. According to her, style on its own presents its demands; happens what must by way of style; has its sense of what counts (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 3) and that she is specific; there are truths of human life that cannot be said in any other than the language and in any other than the forms suited to the story-teller, (p. 5). Put differently, emotionally stratified form created by Shelley serves as more than a conveyance of a story, it trains the moral imagination. Her story lacks moralizing, having a tendency to push against the reader to sense their way to moral clarity.

The experience of Yunjae in *Almond* ignites a more not so obvious form of empathetic understanding. Since he is not endowed with instant emotional appeal, the reader has to deduce a tone of emotion in smaller gestures and hesitations, and creates a slower contemplative reading experience. The theory of narrative empathy by Keen (2007) stresses the fact that fiction promotes ethical thinking, which appeals to the moral imagination of the reader beyond sharing of emotions. Nussbaum (1990) goes further and concludes that emotions themselves represent the forms of seeing, ways of understanding what is valuable and what is to be done (1990, p. 6). The reader, then, who empathizes with Yunjae is in a way perceiving morally, but not a response to dramatic pain, but to diminished difficulty.

This difference between *Creature* and Yunjae brings out a paradox the most expressive creature in emotional terms is not given empathy whereas the emotionally repressed character develops empathy albeit slowly. The *Creature* wants to be identified and studied but is constantly refused; Yunjae cannot even comprehend the notions of empathy until empathy is extended towards him. This lack of social empathy even destroys those who are ethically capable as the text of Shelley shows. Sohn, in turn, has more optimistic rhetoric: she claims that empathy can be learned once it is offered. Both of the stories allow us to confirm what Hogan (2022) says about literature as the form that involves us ethically in its games without the prescription of what to do and how to act, but through the mapping of emotional and cognitive identification (2022, p. 52). Nussbaum (1990) goes even further: “the specific judgements of literature cannot be reduced to the rule-based ethical theory” (1990, p. 6) and fiction is a unique way of knowing how moral life feels like.

Empathy used in such novels is not decorative- it has become part of the character as well as interaction with the readers. Denham calls the experience of sweet sorrow the method of fiction to allow the reader to experience the suffering without being subsumed by it and acquiring ethical understanding as a result. On the same note, Robinson (2020) holds the opinion that literary form, in itself, is a form of coping mechanism that regulates the emotional closeness to the characters and allows contemplating the painful topic of loss and transition to a new state. The embedded narratives provided by Shelley confound the reader as to what is real and what is not; Sohn would want her reader to work. Both the writers adopt form to extend the sense of moral attention in the reader.

Besides, the tales tell of what Hogan (2022) calls the story universals which are emotionally coded plot templates that cross-cultural lines and put the stamp of similar moral receptivity. Desperate need, acceptance and rejection, uncertainty of creating-all these are factors which make up the narration of the lives of the characters as well as those of the reader. Literature, in turn, will here be a sort of moral anthropology, not so much in the business of giving us rules

as in the business of presenting us with emotionally complex lives that call our ethics to task and sift it.

Finally, Shelley and Sohn apply narration and emotion in developing an ethics of empathy. In *Frankenstein*, lack of compassion proves to be disastrous. In *Almond*, there is relational growth which is the presence of relational care. These books do not invite us to feel sorry about their characters but to sympathize with them-to put ourselves imaginatively into their ethical predicaments. Literature (as Nussbaum, 1990 would remind us) is at least as much bound up in the felt sense of choices made and attachments, as well as regrets. “In good fiction the emotions are smart reactions to the idea of value” (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 3). The development of empathy in the literary work is therefore not a dormant response but is a developed habit-a way of knowing of what justice and humanity demand.

Ethical Development

This chapter examines the way *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and *Almond* by Sohn Won-pyung address the ethical maturation-or fall-ward with respect to narrative presentations of moral development, individual suffering and decision. The heroes of the two pieces stand on the fringe of emotional and social awareness. Their adventures shed light on the ethical consciousness which, yet more often than not, is not only conditioned by rational thought but equally influenced by feelings, childhood and personal development. The current chapter of analysis relies on the theory of moral development formulated by Kohlberg (1981), ethical literary criticism by Nussbaum (1990) and Hogan (2022), existential ethics and notions of character ethics based on the affective psychology.

In *Frankenstein*, the Creature is born having no moral knowledge, yet makes young efforts at learning morals. Along with watching the De Lacey family, he tries to be like them, trying to show their kind attitude and social harmony and wants to be a part of their moral world. This is typical of what would be termed as a movement beyond pre-conventional stage, characterized by self-centered fear and the evasion of punishment by conventional stage as moral reasoning is rooted in terms of conformity and social acceptance. However, moral desires of the Creature are ruined when he tries to bond and it is treated with horror and violence. He looks back with agony at the increasing knowledge of his person, The Creature was awed by the beauty and grace of the cottagers, but further on we read that when he sees his own reflection as Shelley (1818) puts it,

“But how was I terrified, when I viewed myself in a transparent pool!” (p. 117).

His horror with the way he looks is not only seen in the moment, but a breaking down of the ethical ideal he constructed based on kindness when it comes to human beings.

Without moral education and social acceptance, the Creature falls back to the logic of revenge: the inability to elicit love will drive people to fear (Shelley, 1818, p. 138). In the case of such breakdowns, Hogan (2022) argues, empathy-based moral structures break down: ethical decisions are made when a conflict occurs with egoistic self-interest, and a moral orientation requires what he calls allocentric concern informed by empathic and narrative characterizations of what is good. Having been deprived of the plotline of the beloved freak-turned-hero through love, the Creature instead represents the plot formula of the tragic freak whose rational argumentation is being broken by the constant unfairness.

In *Almond*, on the contrary, Yunjae starts with a similar position but, reverse-socially recognized and emotionally detached. He has alexithymia, and his moral judgment is not innate, but the set of morality rules after learning them imperfectly taught him by the mom:

“Mom taught me rules. Tissue should be given to a person who is in tears. Apologize when you harm a person. It is still possible to say, “Even though I do not feel it.” (Sohn, 2020, p. 11).

This is the **pre-conventional** level in the Kohlberg (1981) model where both punishment and rewards drive behavior, thus, not based on its own morality which is internalized. Nonetheless, unlike the Creature Yunjae is not deprived of all human relations; on the contrary he is gradually brought to ethical maturity by his friendships, and particularly with Gon.

The fact that he chooses to forgive and assist Gon even after being offended by him on several occasions amounts to a shift towards existential ethics. The existential ethics of de Beauvoir (1948) describe a moral action as the willingness to take care of the freedom and dignity of an Other even when that care is not determined by law or any type of emotional urge. Yunjae does not follow the feelings familiar to empathy, but he implements the logic of empathy: he decides the need to help Gon not through fear, not through habit, not through reward, but rather as through the accumulation of a sense of duty. This confirms the idea of de Beauvoir (1948) about ethical subjectivity which is based on action and not on emotion.

Adding to this position, the theory of narrative ethics developed by Hogan (2022) emphasizes that moral development involves the use of the empathy-guided story structures. Part of the argument that he provides is that fiction has an affective purpose to teach us to be interested in characters and hence develop moral insights: "Narratives develop emotional and ethical judgement... empathy is often normative". In Almond, instead of being a moral agent through feeling, Yunjae is a moral agent through interpretation of consequence of care, pain, and presence, as time goes by. As he relents at last to do the ethical thing, even though he does not have access to emotion, this proves what Hogan (2022) refers to as the effortful extension of empathy which she describes as an ideal of ethics brought into actuality by the means of plot and the morally exemplary character.

Nussbaum (1990) has brought even more to this interpretation by assailing the division between feeling and morality. She says that we do not have blind emotional reactions and that emotions are rather types of judgment and discernment, modes of comprehending what is good and what ought to be undertaken (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 6). Although Yunjae does not have the sense of feeling that most of the people can experience, he is able to perceive value based on his lived experience, observation, and speculation. Such ethical development, according to human capacity in this perspective, is not a preserve of the emotionally fluent but is open to the situationally made, embodied learning.

These opportunities are withheld however by the Creature. The moral collapse that happens is not chosen but rather it is left to its own devices. According to Patrick Colm Hogan (2022), the ethical nature of a story will be based on how much the main character is empowered to make a choice that crosses- the boundaries of egocentric self-interest. Shelley does not frame the violence of the Creature as the simple villainy, though, but as something resulting in the lack of ethics-that is, a result of not being taught and being condemned without being understood.

The neuroethical research by Sapolsky (2017) is elaboration of this opinion and creates a difference between deliberative studies in ethics and spontaneous reaction to ethical situations. He points out, that moral deeds are not always picked upon reflection, but are an expression of preconditioned character traits, what he identifies as acts implicit automaticity that is developed out of childhood as a product of moral modeling (Sapolsky, 2017, p. 593). This is how the early teaching works: it develops the moral reflexes, where the emotion is frustrated. On the contrary, the Creature is not offered this training, is not provided with rituals of moral repetition. The distinction between the two is that on the one hand society gives preparation- or fails in giving preparation to them, leading to ethical life.

What are the ways and means through which we can transform ourselves so that we can become ethical subjects and this becomes the central question of Foucault in the two novels. Routines, care, correction, and community are what Yunjae is given but the creature is not. The novel by

Shelley attacks the Enlightenment rational thinking and the futile science that is not reinforced with morals. The novel by Sohn, on the other hand, demonstrates the experience of ethical selfhood formation through the practical act, in spite of being found limited by emotions.

Moral development, therefore, is revealed in both “Frankenstein” and “Almond” as being a social negotiated, narrative process that is not totally dependent on an internal emotional capability. The idea of ethical growth is not represented as an upward evolution, but an interactive balance of self, society and structure. Shelley used her novel in the manner of an ethical tragedy or neglect; Sohn used hers in the manner of an almost muted testament of the potential of ethics through connection. Comparing both texts, there is a point to note that empathy as the felt, acted, or described is not only the theme in a literary work, but the engine of the structural moral clarity in literature.

Isolated Emotional Effects

This chapter explores the way that “Frankenstein” and “Almond” portray emotional isolation not only as a state which individuals find themselves in, but as part of the many structures to support their narratives. The two novels are about discovering what it is to live on the edges of the affective life, and how that being re-forms moral identity, social action and even form itself. By doing that they enact a crisis as central as modern literature, it is how to describe the untrusting, the un nameable, the un shareable.

The situation of the emotional isolation of the Creature in Frankenstein is hammered out since his very creation when, upon seeing the Creature, Victor runs away terrified. The beginning of the life of the Creature is connected with such sensations of the body as hunger, cold, etc., prior to the learning of language or to the provision of contacts with people. His world of affects does not start with emotion but with affect as defined by theorists like Brian Massumi, and Spinoza, is not completely processed by the brain but is rather a physical feeling which does not need to pass through the body to be experienced. Later the Creature learns to name these effects but, in the process, he has already been impacted with their result:

I had been fascinated by the ideal bodies of my cottagers... but how was I horrified, when I saw myself, in a clear pool! (Shelley, 1818, p. 104).

This horror, prior to being a sense of rejection, is a pre-emotional atonal gnosis – a self-discordant cognition.

Discussing as its subject matter contemporary crisis fiction, Emily Horton has described how this type of emotional dislocation is found in more current characters who believe that they are not only no longer present in their experience, but that they experience even the lack, itself, effectually - not by the intense presence of emotion, but by the second-order distancing-what her analysis terms, “second-order panic”. This is exactly what the Creature is: the more his feelings are developed, the more abstract, expressive and rhetoric his affective life becomes, the more heated it is. He does not develop into becoming more empathetic, but turns instead into what Sianne Ngai has dubbed ugly feelings-envy, resentment, and despair all that forms feeling charged with no catharsis that is fruitful on the social plane.

In Almond, the come-uppance is just inverted by Yunjae. He does not start with an excess but absence of emotion. Yunjae is diagnosed with alexithymia; he lacks access or means of describing an emotion; his voice of narration is muted, utilitarian, and at times descriptive. He recalls,

They would say that I had a brain which could not understand how to be afraid of something or feel angry, loving or hating something (Sohn, 2020, p. 7).

However, this can take them to be desensitized and even numb when in truth it is more of an atonement but organized around repetition, training and vicinity. Other affect theorists, such as

Alex Houen and Denham (2020), believe that emotional development in literature may take place without the use of expressive language by ways of described as simulation, affective mirroring and transportation.

Oatley(2011) explains that fiction is defined as simulation of selves in interaction, which assist readers to practice social understanding without having to respond emotionally at that point. The path of Yunjae perfectly reflects this and not necessarily just to the character, but to the reader as well. Through the unfolding of his story readers are compelled into his line of thinking learning how to read into his silent gestures of love as emotional in nature even though not technically so. It is expressive of a cognitive-affective theory of empathy, the comprehension and moral concert with people with no shared affective states.

The Creature, in turn, has an opposite path: he is full of emotion, but this emotion can never be justified. He talks with joy, with goofiness and is silenced. In the words of Cathy Caruth, the trauma theory, this structure is identical to the trauma according to her theory, because the structure of reception in her observation indicates that trauma is not in the event itself but on the fact that the event is articulated and witnessed. This is exactly the type of delayed reception that happens to the Creature as he tells Victor about his misery but loved ones who are repulsed by him. His personal life is turned inwards and it becomes violent not because of some immanent monstrosity but in reaction to the ongoing denial of the inner truth.

Based on this understanding, Denham (2020) offers the idea that fiction can enable the readers to experience the same pain, but in a manner that is neither irrational nor masochistic. To the contrary, she claims that emotional transportation is the mechanism of epistemic engagement to emotionally problematic states as it propounds a safe but vivid simulation in space. Reading *Frankenstein* or *Almond* we cannot simply observe suffering but we are tempted into co-habitation with suffering, reflection on suffering and conversion of this suffering into moral knowledge.

More so than the internalities of the characters themselves, the narrative structures of the two novels evidence their emotional structures. *Frankenstein* is created in the triply framed narratives of a textual version of emotional distancing as readers know the Creature by the letter of Walton, by the account of Victor and finally by the self-account of the Creature. This stratifying does some formal dislocation of sorts leaving the reader emotionally connected, but structurally dislocated. *Almond*, on the contrary, employs the first person's voice, yet its diction is lean, almost tone-deaf. This restrained simple style, what Attridge (2021) has termed a distancing device, however, creates the affective depth efficaciously in this restraint.

These approaches have weighty implications in literature. The two novels undermine the notion that affect has to be expressive and immediate in order to be ethically effective. They require what Denham (2020) terms as empathic attunement, which is the learning to accord with tamed, disjointed or non-traditional emotional signals. Readers of *Almond* have to read between the lines they should observe actions and silence. Consumers of the story of *Frankenstein* have to make their way through clouds of narrative displacement, contradiction, and plea. These demands produce what Hogan (2022) and Oatley call effortful empathy; an achieved moral state made not by instincts but by literary work.

Drawing a conclusion, we can say that the emotional isolation of *Frankenstein* and *Almond* is not a casual attribute but a theme-structural principle. The two protagonists present reverse emotional dilemma: the feeling born of one character has no release with no form of identification; the feeling born of the other character has not enough and needs to ways to be ethical in any case. In conjunction, they criticize the easy attempts to tie complex and multidimensional issues of expressiveness and goodness. They show that emotional alienation when taken in literary conduction can produce extremely intensive types of ethical cognition.

In such scenarios literatures are not a means of getting some relief but release of the way the emotions get tamed and readers may be imagined increasing their sphere of empathy by the very acts of the estrangement.

Parallels in Empathy and Moral Response

Considering Frankenstein and Almond to be written centuries and in strikingly different cultural context, the two pieces of literature arrive at one and same crucial literary and moral question: what is the price of unsuccessful empathy? This chapter provides a contrastive analysis of ethical and emotional triangles in the two novels, concluding to the argument that the two novels have portrayed empathy not as the basic emotion, but a moral framework, upon which identity, justice, and even humanity itself is supported. The texts upset the standard divisions between feeling and thinking, between the expressive properties of emotion and the moral deeds the emotionality of monstrosity and vulnerability. With these two stories juxtaposed, this chapter discusses the culturally as well as formally constructed development of empathy and the way in which literary form itself can be viewed as arena of ethical testing. Victor Frankenstein created the Creature, which enters the world where he has no chance even to be accepted as a human being. He does not start out with native hatred and aggression, but he never finds a way to communicate with others without terror and violence. Hogan (2022) proposes that ethical decision-making can effectively be made wrong when such judgments are distributed on basis of what has come to be known as prototype-based moral judgments instead of allocentric empathy. That kind of moral judgment would be based on superficial qualities like looks or perceived deformity rather than emotions and ethical knowledge. In this sense the Creature is the moral aftermath of social misrecognition. Another factor worsening his sufferings is not only isolation, but the lack of other people recognizing his sufferings as legitimate. This is because a lack of what Denham (2020) defines as the ability to feel with and on behalf of other person, the so-called emotional attunement, results in the breakdown of the psyche concealed by the eloquent rhetoric and philosophical generalizations. The downfall is a tragedy that cannot be explained as a self-destructive act but more so the inevitable outcome of moral abdication. This sensitivity of emotion camouflaged by his voice becomes cantered in a world that pays no attention.

Almond gives a reversed paradigm in its protagonist Yunjae. He cannot identify and connect to traditional emotions because of alexithymia but with help of long-term care, education, and observation, he plays a role of a moral agent. It is not by being allowed to feel more, that he grows, but by being taught how to behave ethically, in spite of his feeling less. His progress is informed by what Hogan (2022) refers to as an effortful generalization of empathy, in that moral development is not natural, but rather willful, through practice and social role respecting. This confirms the existentialist ethics of de Beauvoir (1948) who considers that a person should be responsible to the Other not by means of emotional contagion but through a willing choice. The framework presented by de Beauvoir (1948) agrees with the notion that the ethical-self is not predetermined, but it has to be built through a relationship with other people. Here as well Bloom (2016) offers a criticism of the idea of spontaneously occurring empathy: the surest moral behaviors are often not the immediate sympathy but the conscious will to find ways of caring beyond available affect. Yunjae displays such an ethical maturity, but not on a basis of the emotional intuition, but rather on a basis of the ethical commitment.

Narrative structure, as well, is shown in the novels to instill moral understanding. The embedded structure used in the novel Frankenstein replicates the marginalization of the creature. The reader is on several steps of distance to his voice because he has received to walk

through Walton and Victor as frames. This estrangement in literature represents an imitation of the emotional and social distortion the Creature undergoes in the novelistic world. Specifically, this type embodies what affect theorists call the alienation effect a literature technique that, instead of allowing the readers to consume the emotional material, requires them to judge it. The readers are also made to doubt the possession of the narrative voice and rebuild the reality of ethical truth on their own. Conversely, Almond writes in the spare and literal first person narration style, one that requires them to give the emotional work of inferring silence, silence, and the quietly vague carriers of information. Therefore, Yunjae does not usually clarify on how an individual feels, therefore the attainment of growth must be deduced by the reader by actions and minute hints. According to Oatley and Mar (2011), this is what they call fictional simulation; a psychological area where readers will simulate social and emotional behaviors by immersing themselves with a story. Neatness turns out to be the strength of Almond-imposing readers to interact with a character with no expressive hints, and one who in-conversely quietly transforms in ethical depth.

The result of the two stories is that one has the same stake in the so-called narrative emotions which Martha Nussbaum (1990) identifies as not just the feelings as of a character, but the patterns of emotion which shape and outline the moral logic of the text. The latter patterns of emotions become the instrument by which literature conveys moral observation. This chain of reasoning in *Frankenstein* is imperfect and leads to desolation and retribution due to denial of recognition of emotion. Each lost chance of empathizing is a step down on the path of destruction. Moral development in Almond is, thus, steadily leading to story-of-understanding, specifically because ethical involvement is framed by caring-even where there is no intuitive sharing. Not only do these emotional structures define the destinies of the characters, but they also determine the way the reader becomes emotionally involved and, as is asserted by Nussbaum (1990), this is an important means of ethical perception.

Also, the sociocultural constructs of emotion are dealt with in the novels. According to Nussbaum (1990) and other people, emotions are not pure expressions of the self, rather they are repertoires that are taught by the stories. Cultural expectations, language and interpersonal scripts determine these repertoires. The Creature is not even given the opportunity of acquiring these scripts since he breaks the empathy of other humans by his looks. The society never allows him to belong yet he tries to learn and integrate, he tries to contribute, but he is never allowed to. Yunjae, in turn, is provided with the scripts: his mother and his grandmother present him with the scripts and although he at first fails to internalize them emotionally, he starts to live in terms of them ethically. The stories so presented echo what in another context has been called the ethics of form: the interaction of organization and substance of a paper to promote or to minimize moral insight. Whereas the structure employed by Shelley forms an intricate moral puzzle that must be solved by the reader, the structure employed by Sohn leaves room to savor the ethics at a slower pace. The divergence of the forms is reflected by divergence of the ethical possibility.

In a comparative position, *Frankenstein* acts out the disastrous outcomes of the unsuccessful empathy. The Creature with all its emotional richness turns into a warning symbol of social disregard. His eloquence turns into an enactment of his successfully excluded- poetically strong, but emotionally unresolved. This is indicative of denunciations of so-called empty empathy in which a performance of emotion lacks action or care. With this, Shelley is commenting on the society responding to the different with fear and inaction. In contrast, Almond envisions a more positive (but also more modest) ethical vision: even where sentiment is constrained, cognition can expand; even where commonness of feeling is unattainable, there

can be solidarity. According to Sohn, empathy is not an appealing superfluous luxury, empathy is a need, and it must be frequently taught, encouraged and selected, when bonding with emotional affinity is not an involuntary instinct.

These remarks replay what Hogan (2022) calls narrative universals-stories repeating that put the elemental moral and emotional predicaments of human existence. Legends of rejection, desire, abdication of duty and restoration of self-worth cut cultural boundaries since such tales appeal to people irrespective of cultural differences since we all have an emotional plateau. The two novels can be considered as two parallel stories a protagonist travels through in terms of emotional alienation towards moral challenge. This challenge to the world leads to the fatal encounter followed by sadness since it is a failure of human accountability in *Frankenstein*. In *Almond*, it concludes in qualified communion, a statement that morality does not have to be based on emotional intensity to be true. Here, the reader is faced by the two paradigms of ethical involvement, one doomed and twisted the other delicate and restoring.

The relative verdict is evident: literature makes us know that being empathetic has more to do with being morally-oriented rather than emotionally-resonant. It is an architecture of attention, an act of taking other people seriously-even when they do not have the language of familiar feeling at their command. Not only do the readers in both novels sympathize; they are asked to imagine morally, to do what Oatley refers to as the capacity to simulate selves in interaction, and what Denham (2020) refers to as epistemic emotion. Fiction is, then, not only a reflection of the emotional life, but the nursery of ethical perceptions. It is not a problem of empathizing with the characters of these novels, but of thinking and doing as they faced their isolation-and in process to enlarge the imaginative boundaries of an own moral vision.

CONCLUSION

Summary and Conclusion

The thesis aimed to explore how and why empathy is represented and developed in literature and what its ethics are by providing a comparative study of Mary Shelley “*Frankenstein*” and Sohn Won-pyung “*Almond*”. Using the close reading of the both texts and relying on an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, consisting of primarily the theory of allocentric empathy by Hogan (2022), humanistic psychology by Rogers (1961), and narrative empathy by Keen (2007), the study has stated that the empathy in literature is not a passive affect, but an active moral process which is affected by the story construction, character progress, and cultural background.

It was found in the four analysis chapters that the construction of empathy in literature is based on the lived experience of emotional isolation, the ethical development (or decline) of characters, and the manner in which the story evites readers to the ethical experience. *Frankenstein* by Shelley reveals the disastrous effects of the empathy being deprived and the Creature is a character of emotively expressive nature, an individual who is socially alienated, and whose tragedy is not in his character, but rather in the failure of the world to recognize him moralistically. Sohns *Almond*, in contrast, creates an ethically underdeveloped character at the beginning in this narrative, an individual with alexithymia, who can emerge into an ethical person only with the help of relationships based on care, patience, and social education.

Among the most important contributions of the given study, one can trace the fact that a paradox of the two novels was identified: the expressiveness of emotions does not always entail the social empathy, and the restriction of emotions does not always exclude the moral understanding correspondingly. This paradox is the one that questions traditional ideas of empathy as something unplanned or emotion-driven and links theories according to which

ethical responsibility, selected action, and narrative mediation are key aspects of empathic development.

The thesis made clear as well the validity of structure on narrative in defining the presentation and reception of empathy. Emotional distance and ambiguity are induced when Shelley uses layered and embedded narrators thus the readers assess the morality of one or the other character of what is being told. The economy and straightforwardness of Sohn makes the reader do her own emotional work, most especially in reading the repressive facial gestures in Yunjae. In either instance the form in which the narrative is offered is not a mere receptacle but a productive element of ethics in the experience of the reader.

Culturally, the thesis followed the development pattern of non-identical views of the past and society in the presentation of emotional otherness. Frankenstein speaks to the values of the Enlightenment era, particularly its interests in rationality, science, and morally and psychologically acute limits of the human, whereas Almond speaks to the values of modern South Koreans, namely their interests in emotionalism, family and its responsibilities, and mental fortitude. Such cross-cultural differences indicate that, whereas empathy can be based on universal feelings, its execution and processing is extremely formulated by the social environment.

Within the framework of ethical criticism, humanistic psychology, and narrative theory, this study addresses a notion that has been left unnoticed in empathy research to date with either an overdependence on the emotional theory or reduced to studying the works of western canonical authors. Even the comparative methodology that the present exercise deploys not only expands the literature to which one can address the thought of empathy, but also commends the supposition that literature functions as auspicious site of practice in ethical opinion, development of moral awareness, and negotiation of social boundaries.

Finally, the thesis argues that the empathy in literature is not an emotion to be witnessed but a place to be settled into. Both Frankenstein and Almond have invited the reader to think ethically, to know pain without necessarily experiencing it and to be responsible on behalf of emotional difference. By so doing, these works of text (these texts) both prove to intensify our perceptions of empathy and also re-announce through human literature its long-standing ability to influence human moral imagination.

Limitations of the Study

Although this thesis provided valuable meaning to the portrayal of empathy and its role in Frankenstein and Almond, there are a few limitations that must be brought to fore.

The scope of the primary texts is the first factor to consider, as it is restricted to two novels: Canonical western and contemporary Korean Novel. Although this selection allows making a fruitful cross-cultural comparison, a larger scope of texts, especially those outside the cultural and linguistic contexts, could have further enhanced the analysis and given the better idea of the way empathy operates in the context of different literary traditions.

Second, Almond was examined in its translated English, and not in its original Korean. The translation is well done, but depth of cultural expression and turns of phrase, as well as tonal variations may have changed or been left behind. Some insight into the original language might be used to produce a more real cultural/emotional reading, as emotional communication takes so much precedence in the research process.

Third, though this study appeals to psychological and ethical theories to underscore its developments, it is not empirical reader-response information. The analysis presupposes some specific reader-responses and emotional alignments according to the narrative structure and theory (e.g. narrative empathy by Keen, 2007) and does not prove its assumptions gaining

respective surveys, interviews, or experiments. A future study may examine the real experience of the subjects (readers in various cultural backgrounds) with empathy towards characters.

Fourth, this research paper is largely literary and interpretive and creates a combination of interdisciplinary approaches, including affect theory, cognitive psychology, and ethics, but it does not immerse as much into such disciplines as trauma studies, disability studies, and neurodiversity studies, all of which would have offered added insight, particularly into the emotional and psychological states of the characters.

Last but not least, there is subjective close reading, which, though legitimate in academic terms, is necessarily embedded in the interpretive scope of the researcher. Even though the consistency of theories was achieved, other scholars or readers could come to different conclusions about the main scenes or symbolic elements.

Having recognized these limitations, transparency can be had and new avenues of forward scholarship can be pursued, especially to generate more diverse, interdisciplinary-based, and reader-focused methods of approaching literary empathy.

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