

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This first chapter constructs six parts of introduction consisting of background of the study, limitation of the study, problem formulation, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and outline of the study.

A. Background of the Study

As of the historical point of view, the Romantic Age flourished in Britain from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. It came up with industrial, ideological and artistic revolution that happened from the 1750s to the 1850s. First, the industrial revolution was marked by modern economic system changing from an agrarian to an industrial economy. It brought many social changes such as vast development of cities, poor living of urban working-class, and pollution. Second, in term of the ideological and artistic revolution, Romantics fought for their freedom of expression of personal feeling against classical rules and authority. In writing a literary work, Romantics tended to stand out their emotion more than their logic. They depicted character's emotion by using symbolism. Moreover, they explored nature as the source of atmosphere development and showed freedom of individual expression in imaginative way and rebellion against society's rational values (Brannstorm 7).

In addition, Romantic age embedded the Dark Age. The word "dark" being connoted to black is an unmentionable color in Western countries. Dark or black is either related to death, damage, tragedy even devil or to a meaning of

evil, inexplicable, vague, despair and grief which were used as common themes in Romantic literature back then (Chen 250). Speaking of Romantic literature in the nineteenth century, its existence bestowed impacts on new sub-genre called gothic fiction. Gothic fiction is a narrative that is created to rebel against the basic principle of reason in age of Enlightenment of Neo-classicism that usually perceived human having only good nature. This definition lies on the basic concept of romantic literature that wants to urge readers to experience imagination in which Hume calls it “a sub literary depths of romanticism” (282).

Most of irrationally horrifying stories, in the Romantic Age, were set in Gothic fiction that is recently represented to Gothic horror. Its scope includes Gothic poetry, Gothic novelette, and Gothic novel. “Gothic”, at first, comes from the word “Goth” which belongs to one of Germany tribes. The Goth was known as barbarian who invaded the great Roman Empire and destroyed its civilization in the fourth and the fifth centuries. Here, Gothic is also referred to the Dark Age in the medieval time as is the period of the fall of Rome (Pang 16). Gothic fiction firstly flourished in the history of English literature between 1764 and 1820. It was marked by the publication of Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1765) (Mouna 228).

In common sense, Dark Romantics such as Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville build dark atmosphere by using gothic interior room such as dungeon, labyrinth, vault, long and narrow corridor and sorrowful mansion (Kao 6; Pang 16). On the other hand, gothic writers tend to build dark atmosphere by having nature phenomena throughout their plot. Both might have

slightly different characteristic but the two embody the same basic concept that is to create darkness. The darkness is also portrayed to expand sense of horror in both genres of romantic literature.

In line with gothic tradition, horror is an aesthetic element that emerges in most traditional gothic fiction. Its existence is triggered by fear, mystery and suspense of the hero-villain. In addition, horror defines itself as a great measurement to evoke reader's emotion. Sense of horror is created from sense of irrationality and unreality as in the creation of monsters and mysterious or supernatural phenomena that are usually connected to nature description (Prohászková 134). To create sense of horror in the story, gothic writers often provide creepy situation through some classical elements of gothic. It can be seen in the depiction of ancient dim setting, grim landscape, hero-villains and women in distress, and appearances of ugly creature.

Subsequently, both Romantic and gothic fiction are not significantly distinguishable. It can be said that especially Dark Romantic and gothic writers borrow the same elements. Figun Dincer asserts that gothic and romantic fiction have superior elements of darkness, mystery, the paranormal being and irresistible interest of man which bring tense situation throughout the narration. (219). Henceforth, Gothic fiction is seen as a type of unique romantic literature that employs darkness in sense of anguish, depression, and anger through mind complexity and unstable emotion of the characters.

Gothic novel, apart from another scope of gothic fiction, in the Romantic era had different style to embed the theme of dark side of human being as considered an expertise of the Middle Ages for devastating dread. Its common motif of ghastly supernatural story was considered illogical for some scholars. At the first time, the existence of gothic novel was less attractive. The groundbreaking view of Abdelwahed points out that less critics reviewed on gothic literature in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Thus, it was not counted as an essential book of the history of English Literature in the early time (35). However, Mouna enhances that gothic novel has gained popularity among researchers over last few decades. In the 1970s and 1980s, reading a gothic novel was a habitual action amongst European. So, many critics noticed its popularity and attract them to evaluate it (227).

Some researchers believe gothic novel has its own aesthetic function in illustrating natural human mind: pain and pleasure. Edmund Burke in *On the Sublime and the Beautiful* reveals that pain and pleasure are, in simple way, positive emotions of human that does not come in contact one another (*The Harvard Classics*, 2001). In essence, gothic novel stems from an idea of pain and terror embodied by the main character. Then, it proposes the readers to imagine the feelings experienced by the character. When the imagination comes up to their mind, pleasure is perceived. Thus, for gothic writers, pleasure of literary work depends on how the writer emerges reader's imagination through the work. They believe that a great work creates arcane emotion of the readers so called horrifying enjoyment or the sublime.

Following Burkean theory, anything vast, uncertain, and obscure that can arouse the most thrilling emotion of human can be an object of terror and sublime (Roth 56; Chen 250). The sublime itself is driven by people's apprehension, that is to say feeling of extreme fear that indicates terror. Fear or apprehension is a common sense brought up by guilty and anguish (Pang 16). The majority of scholars believe that gothic writers relate their work to the aspects of sublime including passion, terror, obscurity, power, vastness, infinity and privation that brings tremendous emotion to reader's mind (Roth 56; Yue 692). These seven elements of sublime can be depicted in the description of nature that is believed to be fascinating but sometimes also destructive (Giacomoni 120). Citing Burke's theory, Chen sums up that sublimity in gothic novel bestows violence in brutal killing and death, great admiration and mystical appearance and disappearance (251).

In particular way of the sublime, Burke wants to assert that horror story also brings enjoyable excitement. For him, to find pleasure in horror plot with full of terror, the reader is supposed to create sense of sublime which then brings positive imagination. However, if the reader brings the horror of narrative to real realm, he will only feel fear as Roth cites Burke:

...pleasure is experienced in the mind only if the object is perceived as a fiction. When sight and associated certainty are removed, emotions such as fear are produced, especially if one perceives the object as violent and capable of true harm. However, if the mind processes an object as fictional, the mind can then feel pleasure

from horror...If horrifying objects are too close to proximity or realness; sublime emotions fade into sheer horror, becoming painful (57).

Believed to use Burke's Sublime, Horace Walpole and Mary Shelley are considered as the most impressive gothic writers even they live in different time. Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* is set in the medieval time that reveals a ghastly terrible ghost destroying a building. Meanwhile, Shelley's *Frankenstein* is considered as a work that mingles traditional gothic elements and science fiction that illustrates Greek myth "Prometheus" meaning a man creates a man which then endows only grief. *Frankenstein* was created in 1816 and finished in 1818. Critics might have bestowed negative thought towards *Frankenstein* because it was firstly published incognito. Many speculations appeared due to the author of the work. Many reviewers considered *Frankenstein* as a hideous tale yet a big success in time (Huang par. 2.15; Abdelwahed 35). In 1823, the second edition of *Frankenstein* was proceeded by the name of Mary Shelley as the author.

Specifically, Pang describes that gothic stories often endow a special appealing charm (15). In essence, it does not only tell about terror and horror but also has particular enjoyment "beauty of spirit" to the readers as Burke calls it sublimity (Howard 4). Thus, the study is interested in digging the gothic elements used by Mary Shelley to live up the sense of horror in Shelley's *Frankenstein* which is not much explored but still attractive to discuss for some scholars. Furthermore, under the influence of Burkean theory, the sublime expands the study of gothic fiction to show that horror story has a side of enjoyment

depending on how the readers control their imagination. At last, discovering the gothic elements and the sublime aspects brought up in the gothic story is importantly the way to find enjoyment in gothic horror.

B. Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on the establishment of sense of horror in mind through the elements of traditional gothic that Mary Shelley preserves in her *Frankenstein*. Then, this study highlights that gothic horror also has aesthetical function that affords pleasant pleasure to the readers through the aspects of the sublime that Edmund Burke proposes.

C. Problem Formulation

Based on the limitation above, the problem formulations are stated as follows:

1. What are the gothic elements that portray sense of horror in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*?
2. How does gothic horror facilitate the sublime emotion in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*?

D. Objectives of the Study

According to the statement of those problems, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To reveal and describe the sense of horror through elements of traditional gothic within Shelley's *Frankenstein*.
2. To analyze the aesthetical function of gothic horror that brings enjoyment in term of sublimity.

E. Significance of the Study

Significance of the study regards its benefit helping students of English Literature Department of Sultan Agung Islamic University obtain deep comprehension about gothic elements and its sublime. Additionally, the result of this study can be aimed as meaningful reference of analyzing the similar topic exploring gothic elements and Edmund Burke's sublime, in any kinds of gothic fictions, for every researcher.

F. Outline of the Study

The final project involving fundamental tenets of research report in undergraduate project consists of five chapters. The first chapter is called introduction. It contains background of the study, limitation of the study, problem of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and outline of the study. The second chapter underlines the review of related literature. It embeds the synopsis of Shelley's *Frankenstein* and the explanation of gothic elements and sublimity. The third chapter describes the research methodology used in this final project. It includes types of data, data organizing, and analyzing the data. The fourth chapter develops the problem formulation into deep explanation of the analysis. It embodies the sense of horror in *Frankenstein* that can be traced through its gothic elements and the sublime emotion as a proof of extreme fear experienced by Viktor. The fifth chapter includes conclusion, a succinct explanation of the analysis, and suggestion offering the other theories that can be done in *Frankenstein*.