

JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *FranKissStein* – A Love Story



«I do not know if I am the
teller or the tale.»

J. Winterson



ABOUT JEANETTE WINTERSON

- English novelist and writer
- Born in Manchester in 1959
- Adopted by Pentecostal parents
- Left her home at 16, after her lesbian coming out
- Graduated at Oxford University
- Output: novels for adults, children, non-fiction paper articles (The Guardian) and screenplays



FranKissStein – A Love Story

J. Winterson's "FrankKissstein – A Love Story" is

- A postmodern novel
- No central topic can be clearly defined
- Overlapping of different themes

A novel about:

- artificial intelligence
- human beings and their future,
- the sense of life,
- the relevance of death in life
- discussion, research and reflection about the meaning of progress
- the connections past, present and future
- a Postmodern remake of M. Shelley's Frankenstein



STRUCTURE

- Organized into chapters
- Separated by quotations.
- Proposing a non - standard fictional organisation
- Interwining two apparently different storylines:
 - One following Mary Shelley's real life events and her novel writing experience with "Frankenstein"
 - The Postmodern remake ⇨ AI at the centre of discussion



Mary Shelley

HOW ARE THE TWO STORYLINES LINKED?

The two storylines are strictly linked:

- Mary Shelley's thoughts and discussions with the other characters ⇒ the main points and topics also discussed in the Postmodern novel
- The doubts of the past versus contemporary science that seems to have no secrets.
- Characters' in Mary Shelley's storyline find a Postmodern correspondence (Mary Shelley = Ry; Victor Frankenstein = Victor Stein; Lord Byron = Ron Lord ecc.)
- The present brings to surface doubts and questions of the past) under contemporary, technological perspectives ⇒ opportunities in the present
- The problem of HUMAN IDENTITY is present in both plots
- Intertextuality creates a silent dialogue between the two different parts

SETTING/S

ROMANTIC NOVEL MARY SHELLEY'S STORYLINE

Most narration takes place in

- Geneva, in 1816 ⇒ M. Shelley spent her time there with her husband Percy Bysshe Shelley
- Germany, where Mary and her husband went on a trip, and where Mary discovered Frankenstein Castle ⇒ her source of inspiration
- Bedlam, London, a mental hospital where a minor story takes place
- Other European cities the two characters visited

POSTMODERN REMAKE RY AND VICTOR'S LOVE STORY

- Memphis, at the International Robotics Exhibition ⇒ Beginning of their storyline
- Alcor Life Extension Foundation, Arizona ⇒ the two main characters know each other
- Manchester and the secret tunnels built in the 50s ⇒ Victor Stein workplace

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

TELLING AND SHOWING

- ⇒ First person narration (protagonist, story teller, eyewitness)
 - Narrator changes according to storyline
 - Always limited, ⇒ a character living his/her personal life experiences
 - Use of personal judgements and reflections
 - Interior monologue
 - Dialogue



Frankenstein Castle;
Manheim, Germany

MAIN THEMES

- Artificial Intelligence
- Cryopreservation
- Technological progress
- Science Fiction
- Creation of life
- Relation between Life and Death
- Relation between mind, consciousness and body
- Transhumanism
- Machismo



Cryopreservation

POSTMODERNISM IN THE NOVEL

- Narration, story is obscured by ideas and reflections
- Intertextuality
- NO single and clear plot
- *Entrelacement* of different storylines or episodes
- Lack of clear chronological order
- Lack of truths, different ways of perceiving the world
- no absolute principles or values, different opinions on the same topic
- Inner reality(ies)
- Multiple identities
- Sexbots
- References to cinema and music



*"We may lose and we may win though
we will never be here again"*
EAGLES, *Take It Easy*

REFERENCES TO MOVIES

- Ridley Scott, Blade Runner; 2001: A Space Odyssey; Stanley Kubrick
- Stanley Kubrick, Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb;
- Wally Pfiste, Transcendence
- Morten Tyldum, Passengers;
- Morten Tyldum, The Imitation Game
- Alex Proyas, I, Robot

