

Technology as a Double-Edged Sword: A Study of Selected Science Fiction Texts

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Abstract

This paper explores the nature of technology through three major science fictions namely Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Jeanette Winterson's *Frankissstein* (2019), and *The Stone Gods* (2007) as an enabler of human progress as well as an existential risk. These novels have moves that explore humanity's approach in relation to technology over time.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) was written when huge scientific advances and industrialization were changing life. The subtitle ties Victor Frankenstein to the Greek Titan who was punished for stealing fire to help humans. It came after the Enlightenment and at the start of the Industrial Revolution. The book captures early fears about what might happen when people try to control nature. Shelley drew her themes on experiments with electricity and galvanism. Luigi Galvani's demonstrations that electricity could bring dead animal tissue to life fed into this story to make it as a literary reaction to the technological prospects that challenged natural laws. In the age of AI, robotics, and transhumanism, Jeanette Winterson's *Frankissstein* (2019) is a 21st century retelling of Shelley's story which revises her concerns for a digital context. The novel combines a story about Mary Shelley writing *Frankenstein* parallel with a modern story about Dr. Ry Shelley, set against the backdrop of heated debates about what artificial intelligence can offer and what transhumanism may hold. *The Stone Gods* (2007) offers a cyclical perspective of human civilization across various planets and time. Advanced technology has brought about a level of unprecedented comfort but also environmental disaster on the planet Orbus, necessitating the exploration of a new planet, which is where the story begins in the novel. The story is then set on Easter Island during the period of ecological collapse on Earth, in the constricted near-future, and on a post-apocalyptic planet. *The Stone Gods*, published when worries about climate change and environmental damage were growing, links technological progress to ecological consequences. Hence, each novel representing different facets of the technological interaction between man and his world.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Bioethics, Ecological Consequences, Transhumanism, Technological Hubris

Introduction

This paper examines how science fiction genre reflects humanity's evolving relationship with technology. By analysing Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Jeanette Winterson's *Frankissstein* (2019), and *The Stone Gods* (2007), it pictures the complex balance between technological progress and its associated risks. These novels highlight the ethical responsibilities creators face, the impact of unchecked technological development, and the enduring nature of human concerns about the machines we build.

Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus

Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* (1818) examines how the act of creation alters the creator. Frankenstein looks at how making something changes the maker's life. Victor grows isolated, secretive, and overwhelmed by responsibility for his creation. This transformation reflects the worries of the modern world about how the blind quest of technological development is changing certain priorities and eroding the ethical base. Victor's relationship with his work, at the expense of family and social bonds, also prefigures modern fears about technology's ability to both empower and dehumanize its users.

The creature in *Frankenstein* is technology's first major intervention in the overdetermination of embodiment as it is made from bits and pieces of human bodies. However, despite his corrupted origin in the natural world, the Creature is able to acquire linguistic, emotional, and moral skills that are deemed to be uniquely human. This forms the basis of bioethical debates on the definition of humanity.

The novel explores knowledge's double edge through contrasting characters. While Victor's unrestrained pursuit of scientific knowledge catapults into a catastrophe, the Creature's pursuit of knowledge about the norms of human society and the origins of his being is a balanced pursuit of knowledge. The fact that the creature is able to learn by himself through reading classic books is a sign that knowledge is not always destructive in nature. Technological overreach results in a private catastrophe in *Frankenstein*. Technological arrogance leading to the destruction of creator, destroying his intimate circle with the death of his brother, his friend, his bride and ultimately his own death. This pattern of destruction suggests that technological overreach creates ripples of harm that eventually comes back to their source (*Frankenstein's* monster kills the people around its creator before its creator himself). The futuristic setting is the desolation of the Arctic wasteland that serves as a metaphor for Victor's character and his actions, thus reinforcing the apocalyptic consequences of his deeds. The novel also allows for renewal in the form of Robert Walton, to whom the warning tale is told. The technological failures can be listened to and their recurrence prevented is suggested by Walton's choice to cease with his own risky mission. This possibility of learning and correction offers a moderately hopeful counterpoint to the tragic novel by Shelley.

Victor Frankenstein's tragedy is from his quest for knowledge with little regard for its ramifications. His fatal flaw does not lie in the act of creating life but an abandonment of responsibility for his creation. This pattern of avoidance was set into motion when Victor fled the room in horror at the sight of his living creation. This abdication serves as a warning regarding ethics and the obligations that go with technological power.

Through the creature's exclusion from society, the political dimensions of technology are revealed. The creature's unnatural origins mark him as a perpetual "other," despite his intelligence and sensitivity. These dynamics mirror how technological progress perpetuates social-political hierarchies and exclusions. The creature's request for a companion denied by Victor is a demand for technological power to address marginalisation, rather than exacerbate.

Frankissstein: A Love Story

Jeanette Winterson's *Frankissstein* (2019) reworks Shelley's themes for the current age of AI, robotics and transhumanism. It weaves Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* into a present-day plot about Dr. Ry Shelley, a transgender doctor, and Victor Stein, an AI researcher trying to move consciousness into digital form. It looks at how new tech messes with ideas about embodiment, mind and what being human even means. By tying these modern worries to Shelley's story, Winterson shows both how things have changed and how some fears stick around.

Victor Stein's goal of uploading human consciousness, feels like a modern Promethean quest. He says "human beings really don't have a better chance than AI" (W. Shelley, 264). This updates Frankenstein's ambition for the digital era. Like his predecessor, Stein works alone and in secret. Thus, the trope of technological hubris is still alive today.

Winterson also looks at the money and politics behind tech. Characters like Ron Lord, who makes sex robots, show how markets push what technology does and who it serves. Modern tech doesn't just come from lone geniuses. It depends on systems. It comes from funding, research networks and commercialization. Each step brings its own values and biases into the mix. *Frankissstein* treats responsibility as spread across networks of creators, investors and users. Stein needs institutions, venture capital and public buy-in. This proves the blame is not placed in just one creator like in Shelley's tale.

Winterson shows how markets shape ethics through the character Claire, who smells money in Stein's work. She says, "The future is a plausible app" (W. Shelley, 80). This stands for how economics can drive tech forward and bend its ethics. It forces to look past individual choices and at structures and institutions too. The book taps into fears about the singularity, the moment in which AI outthinks humans.

The Stone Gods

The Stone Gods (2007) links technological creation to destruction. On Orbus, the tech that made life easy also wrecked the planet. Billie says, "That when we destabilized the planet it was in the name of progress and economic growth. Now that they are doing it, it's selfish and its suicide" (Winterson, 31). The book's looping structure suggests human-tech relations repeating across ages and worlds. This gives a sharp view of how tech can both create problems and try to fix them.

The Easter Island section shows how making monuments with technology cause collapse, and it rings true for today's environmental worries. Winterson reads the past as a warning: creation can lead to destruction and this pattern goes way back. The cyclical form pushes the idea that the pattern repeats because of something deep in human behavior and how we use tools. The book also shows how smart systems can blind societies. On Orbus, high tech sits next to ecological collapse. A civilization can master life extension but forget how to live in balance. That is a critique of selective tech priorities.

The Stone Gods gives the most apocalyptic take on unchecked technology. Multiple civilizations fall because of their tech choices. One-character states: "Science and technology have played in bringing about mass destruction" (Winterson, 135). It suggests apocalypse might be a repeating human pattern. Still, the book leaves room for hope. Billie and Spike's recurring love survives civilizations. That emotional thread implies something essential can persist even after collapse. The final part, set after an apocalypse, shows people trying to learn and break the cycle.

Conclusion

In *Frankenstein*, technology works at the individual level. Victor creates life on his own. This reflects early industrial worries about lone inventors and their risky creations. The novel shows how unregulated power, cut off from social duty, can lead to disaster. *Frankissstein* balances doom with possible renewal. Ry's transgender identity works as a metaphor for change and adaptation. The idea of moving consciousness into digital forms might be evolution, not extinction. The book resists simple labels, not just apocalypse or utopia. *The Stone Gods* treats tech as a force that shapes whole civilizations. On Orbus, a near-utopia hides inequality and environmental ruin. The ruling system "MORE" (Monetary-Operational-Research-Expansion) links technology with economic and political power. Winterson shows how systems can develop their own logic and override human values. People see the path to destruction

but feel unable to stop it. All these novels suggest technology's dangerous side often comes from systems that gain momentum beyond any single person or group.

Across these texts the ways of creation differ. It's from reanimating dead tissue, building AI, and to making robot companions. But all of them converge on a point. They push for an ethics of creation that includes responsibility, care and thinking about long-term effects in connection with tech world. These can be considered as the literary depictions of technology emphasising its dual nature as both empowering and potentially destructive, and only time can tell what the future holds for humanity.

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