

BA thesis

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The Romantic Prometheus: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, P.B. Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* and Lord Byron's *Manfred*

Supervisor's Report

The thesis sets out to outline and discuss the role of Prometheus as symbol and motif in three key texts authored by the second generation of the English Romantics – a novel, a lyrical drama, and a dramatic poem. It consists of an introduction mapping out the literary and historical context of the Promethean myth, based around Blake's and Coleridge's treatment thereof, and three following chapters each devoted to one of the analysed texts, followed by a concluding chapter summarizing the thesis and attempting a final comparison of the Promethean elements in the works discussed.

As far as the methodology of the thesis is concerned, it consists of a review of the literary predecessors of the works analysed in relation to the Promethean focus, as well as analyzing selected Promethean elements in these works. This is always supported by relevant passages from the primary texts, and usually also by selected critical material. The concluding chapter attempts to compare and contrast the ways in which these selected Promethean elements are treated in the respective works, with a final query as to how these works recast or reviewed the Promethean myth.

Needless to say, the scope of a BA thesis is limiting by definition, so the conclusions are not as comprehensive as one might hope for, and there are passages where the candidate has not entirely succeeded in presenting a bullet-proof argument. However, I appreciate the candidate's effort to bring the Promethean elements in the primary texts into focus by drawing only brief parallels between these and other well-known works of the period, and working with a fair range of critical material to support the points gleaned from close reading of select passages.

I have a few questions for further discussion during the viva voce examination:

1) How does the generic difference (a novel and two lyrical dramas), if at all, influence the authors' treatment of the Promethean elements?

2) How does Byron's *Manfred* position the Promethean myth in relation to modernity – in what way does it transgress/redefine the ethos of the Promethean myth?

3) In what ways does Coleridge's *Mariner* differ from Frankenstein's Creature in terms of ethics?

4) What are the implications of Mary Shelley's novel for the future legacies of the Promethean myth in our time?

Overall, the thesis presents a well-structured review of the Promethean elements in the selected works, and although it is not always entirely close-knit, it keeps its balance, largely by virtue of its useful treatment of secondary sources.

I am happy to recommend this thesis for defense, with the preliminary grade of 2 (Very Good).

15.6.2015

Mirka Horová, PhD.