Question 1: Cultural Trend

Affect and Femininity: How Anger in Literature is Gendered

Literary Texts:

"The Taming of the Shrew", Shakespeare – Renaissance (1594)

The Woman in White, Wilkie Collins – Victorian (1859)

The Fifth Season, N. K. Jemisin – Modern/Post Modern (2015)

Theoretical Texts:

Boose, Lynda E. "Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman's Unruly
   Shakespeare Quarterly, vol. 42, no. 2, 1991, pp. 179–213. *JSTOR*,
Member www.jstor.org/stable/2870547. Accessed 22 Sept. 2020.

Camilla Nelson, Miss Havisham's Rage: Imagining the 'Angry Woman' in Adaptations of

   Dickens' Famous Character, *Adaptation*, Volume 13, Issue 2, August 2020, Pages
   224–239, https://doi.org/10.1093/adaptation/apz027

Ford, Tanisha C. "SNCC Women, Denim, and the Politics of Dress." *The Journal of Southern

   History*, vol. 79, no. 3, 2013, pp. 625–658. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23795090.

   Accessed 12 June 2020.

Lorde, Audre, and Gay, Roxane. "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding To Racism." *The
   Selected Works of Audre Lorde*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2020, pp. 53–66.

Lutz, Catherine A. Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll & Their
   Challenge to Western Theory. Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000.

"Everything can be used / except what is wasteful / (you will need / to remember this when you are accused of destruction')," (Lorde 59).

Human beings are expressive mammals that coexist in complex social structures. Like most pack animals, we enjoy being in the presence of other humans and convey vast varieties of meanings through language, particularly body language or the use of affect. Affect is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "A feeling or subjective experience accompanying a thought or action or occurring in response to a stimulus; an emotion, a mood. In later use also (usually a mass noun: the outward display of emotion or mood, as manifested by facial expression, posture, gestures, tone of voice, ect" (OED Affect). Human beings experience many emotions and the variety of them are all present in literature. The emotion anger, one would imagine, would be as much of a staple as the emotion of love, but anger undergoes an interesting phenomenon in literature; the emoting of anger has become a gendered spectacle.

Anger can be defined as "A strong feeling of displeasure, dissatisfaction, or annoyance, generally combined with antagonism or hostility towards a particular cause or object; the state of experiencing such feelings; wrath, rage, fury" (OED Anger). As previously noted, one trend salient in the selected literature shows that a woman's anger, much like her body, has been misconstrued and misrepresented to fit the patriarchal narrative that women are inherently flawed. Specifically, this narrative suggests that women's anger is a disruption of the ordered masculine sphere of power and therefore becomes a threat that requires a male interference (intervention) to bring the woman back under control thereby restoring balance. We readers observe this through the manner by which anger from certain characters garners different reactions based on the presenting gender of the character in question.

A variety of means are employed to achieve this, but one common way is by delegitimizing a woman's anger by denoting her as less than human. Readers are no stranger to similes that all denote animalistic or monstrous qualities such harpy, shrew, catty, or bitchy. The parallel drawn between women and animals is intentionally employed as a means of diminishing the legitimacy of a woman's anger and instead to portray the expressed affect as inept emotional control that is inherent in women. The implication being that because she can't control her anger the reasoning behind the emotion matters less than the loss of decorum. Shakespeare's play *The Taming of The Shrew* was meant as a comedy, extolling the main character and his adventure as he "tames" his froward wife.

In *The Woman in White* one of the female characters, Marian, begins to cry and bemoan that she is a woman when she expresses anger because she feels powerless to enact change for her life. The character feels inhibited and trapped by gender roles that she feels fetter her ability to express herself and for her feelings to be considered valid rather than as an internal flaw inherent to being a woman. A foil to her character is the man whom her sister is to marry, Sir Percival Glyde. Glyde is frequently angry but his anger is catered to and affirmed by other characters in the novel; his anger is not considered a failing of manhood but is considered a justified response to uncontrollable forces. When his conduct is brought into question by the

main antagonist of the novel, Count Fosco, he is shamed by being compared to a woman, rather than being ashamed of his actions on their own merits.

I chose the novel *The Fifth Season* because the novel focuses on the different stages of life for the same woman as she struggles with oppression against "orogenes" a person that can control kinetic energy. This novel has several key scenes that explore Essun's complex relationships with the other characters in her life and the events that break her down. This novel in particular allows for dialogue concerning one of the most easily recognized and exaggerated depictions of an angry woman, "the angry black woman". But, more importantly, this novel features a female main character that has and does use her power in defense against those that seek to recapture her. Her anger becomes a weapon that she wields against those that hurt her, proving that her anger can be more than something to fear. Her anger becomes a means for enacting change for her life.

The point of this question is not to suggest that one gender or the other does or does not experience anger. The question is how has women's anger used to control and systematically oppress women? How does the trend evolve over time and what recourse did women have at the time to ensure their survival? What use does anger provide?

Question 2: Theoretical Argument

The Realm of God: Exploring the Paranoia Surrounding Biotechnology and the Posthuman

Literary Texts:

Frankenstein, Mary Shelley - Romantic (1817)

The Island of Doctor Moreau, H. G. Wells – Victorian (1896)

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep, Philip K. Dick – Modern (1968)

Theoretical Texts:

Abrams, Jerold J. "Pragmatism, Artificial Intelligence, and Posthuman Bioethics: Shusterman, Rorty, Foucault." *Human Studies*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2004, pp. 241–258. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20010374. Accessed 9 Apr. 2021.

Braidotti, Rosi. *The Posthuman*. 1st ed., Polity Press, 2013.

Dennet, Daniel C, and Lovett, William. "The Creation of Thinking." *Kinds of Minds: towards an Understanding of Consciousness*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996, pp. 119–152.

Morton, Timothy. "Species." *Humankind: Solidarity with Nonhuman People*. Verso, 2019. 121-36. Print.

Ostry, Elaine. ""Is He Still Human? Are You?": Young Adult Science Fiction in the Posthuman Age." *The Lion and the Unicorn*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2004, pp. 222-246. *ProQuest*, http://ezproxy.emich.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/is-he-still-human-are-you-young-adult-science/docview/221769000/se-2?accountid=10650.

Szollosy, Michael. "Freud, Frankenstein and Our Fear of Robots: Projection in Our Cultural Perception of Technology." *AI & SOCIETY* 32.3 (2016): 433-39. Print.

 "Posthuman theory is a generative tool to help us rethink the basic unit of reference for the human in the bio-genetic age known as the 'Anthropocene', the historical moment when the Human has become a geological force capable of affecting all life on this planet. By extension, it can also help us rethink the basic tenets of our interactions with both human and non-human agents on a planetary scale," (Braidotti 6).

"Discourses and representations of the non-human, the inhuman, the anti-human, the inhumane and the posthuman proliferate and overlap in our globalized, technology mediated societies…The posthuman provokes elation but also anxiety (Habermas, 2003) about the possibility of a serious de-centering of 'Man', the former measure of all things. There is widespread concern about the loss of relevance and mastery suffered by the dominant vision of the human subject and by the field of scholarship centered on it, namely the humanities" (Braidotti 2).

"I cannot believe that I am the same creature whose thoughts were once filled with sublime and transcendent visions of the beauty and the majesty of goodness. But it is even so; the fallen angel becomes a malignant devil. Yet even that enemy of God and man had friends and associates in his desolation; I am alone," (Shelly 239).

Posthumanism theory, I believe, will only continue to become more relevant given the current political climate and technological advances that are progressing so quickly. In only sixty years we have seen the evolution of technology that was only dreamed about or portrayed as fiction. Literature from the early 1800's could only dream and speculate on what science would look like in the modern era. Technology that has bloomed rapidly is that of "God's" domain, or more specifically, biotechnology. When one considers how far humans have come in regard to scientific breakthroughs, some of what has been accomplished sounds fantastical: bringing humans back from the dead via electric shocks, cryogenically freezing cells or eggs for future

reproductive use, cloning organs or whole animals, or using the DNA of viruses to create vaccines are just a few achievements that humans boast. As most modern societies have (mostly) become used to these methods of biotechnology, apprehension continues to mount as scientists advance technology being used in conjunction with organic tissue, such as pacemakers, artificial limbs that respond to nerve firings, nanotechnology being used to transmit signals to the body. The pride engendered by the strides humans persist in making does little to offset the paranoia and suspicions behind motivations of those very people seeking the answers to the universe. The same people that trust the science behind their everyday pain killer or cure for their infection rebuff progress and instead use narratives of terror to prove that there is a danger in unchecked scientific pursuits.

The texts that I have chosen all address aspects of the posthuman, but also engage directly with the paranoia and fear that biotechnology can instill in people who either are unwilling to understand the posthuman, or feel vulnerable due to a lack of communication and transparency in regards to the science being employed. *Frankenstein* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau* both speak to the innate horror that comes from something "inhuman". In the case of *Frankenstein,* the "monster" created is merely formed from mismatched body parts, "chemicals" that are never described in great detail, and a spark. Though the monster is described as hideous, it is intelligent and articulate but eventually begins to enact revenge against Frankenstein. It is telling that the creation is never given a name, nor does it ever give one to itself. The narrative of Frankenstein is beautiful but haunted by being artificially created. Great detail is given to describing the feelings of passion that surround the pursuit of science and the exaltation Frankenstein feels while delving into the "hidden" parts of nature, but the mood whiplash is apparent in the very next breath when he gazes upon the "monster". Frankenstein's creation is a physical manifestation of all of the tumultuous components that make up being human. Frankenstein looked upon his creation and could not bear to face the truth that stared back at him. Frankenstein's creation stands for the ingenuity of human beings, our lust for creation and understanding, our unflinching progression that is equal parts ardently beautiful and horrifically appalling. While readers easily grasp that the story cautions against the folly of unchecked scientific progression, Frankenstein's creation represents the apprehension of posthumanism, the fear our scientific progress will not only move beyond our control, but eventually will destroy all that we hold dear.

Similar themes and fears appear in *The Island of Dr. Moreau,* where an island full of animal/human hybrids was discovered by the main character. The hybrids are created via surgical means, tapping into the visceral fears that humans can be made and unmade through the advances of science and a lack of restraint from the scientific community. The body horror surrounding the beings on the island reveal both the same fear of decentering of human superiority noted in *Frankenstein* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, but compound upon the fear of our very own bodies becoming something "inhuman", or the opposite coming true, where animals that have been abused for years evolve enough to compete on even footing with

humanity. Due to the fragility of the human body, in comparison to many other organic or inorganic objects, the innate fear of losing control over the autonomy of our bodies and control over our modern world, provides a wealth of horror literature that plays with the idea of mutation for good and for evil.

In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* the world has been destroyed due to nuclear war, and androids are almost imperceptibly different from humans. The previously amorphous fear that our technology will somehow harm us coalesces into a new fear, that human beings themselves will be displaced or controlled by that very technology we birthed. That level of paranoia is played out by the main character who uses a form of an empathy test to determine what person is a run away android and those who are normate humans. This simplified viewpoint of the boundary between human and not is foiled by the fact a fellow hunter displays less empathy then the actual android being hunted. By the end the novel Deckard faces the reality that "humanity" is a blurry nebulous designation whose definition is entirely dependent on the individual defining the term. Posthumanism offers a means of understanding that which is human, that which is not, and everything in between and bolsters respect for beings that are not necessarily one or another.