MARY SHELLEY AND THE CAPITALIST PARADIGM: FORMED AND DEFORMED BODIES IN *FRANKENSTEIN*

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MARY SHELLEY AND THE CAPITALIST PARADIGM: FORMED AND DEFORMED BODIES IN *FRANKENSTEIN*

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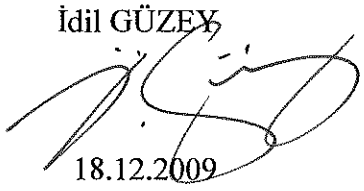
Signature	:	
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ABSTRACT

MARY SHELLEY AND THE CAPITALIST PARADIGM: FORMED AND DEFORMED BODIES IN *FRANKENSTEIN*

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Mary Shelley lived in an age that witnessed a great paradigmatic change: the shift from the mercantilist to the capitalist world order. In *Frankenstein*, she unveils the social and psychological impacts of the new system acting on the individual by illustrating the case of Victor Frankenstein, who, by creating a monster for his own social emolument, turns into a symbolic figure standing for Western unethical capitalist mentality. Her target of criticism being capitalism itself, she shows that the system is, in fact, self destructive.

While attacking the capitalist system of her age, Mary Shelley reveals that capitalist culture is the greatest of all challenges for man for it forms and

deforms the individual. Frankenstein, the culturally formed scientist of the new capitalist age, represents both the social and psychological deformity in the Western paradigm for he creates a destructive “monster,” the pathetic residue of Frankenstein’s selfish social and individual pursuits, as well as an emblem of the disrupted psychology of the character. The two clash in the novel, and their mutual struggle ends in the Arctic with the destruction of the two, showing that this capitalist civilization itself is the threat to its own existence. She demonstrates that capitalist and progressive mentality of both individual and society produces perversity, disrupting the healthy growth of human psyche and the constituents of Western culture. Finally, through *Frankenstein* Mary Shelley indicates the catastrophe awaiting mankind.

Keywords: Capitalism, Progressive Mentality, Social Emolument, Disrupted Psychology, Perversity.

ÖZ

MARY SHELLEY VE KAPİTALİST PARADİGMA: *FRANKENSTEIN* ADLI ESERDE YAP-BOZ OLUŞUMLAR

Güzey, İdil

Yükseklisans, İngiliz Edebiyatı ve Kültür İncelemeleri

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Mary Shelley merkantilist düzenden kapitalist düzene geçişte önemli değişimlere tanık olmuş bir yazardır. *Frankenstein* adlı eserinde yazar, kendi toplumsal yükselişini sağlamak amacıyla bir "canavar" yaratarak, Batı'nın ahlak dışı kapitalist zihniyetini temsil eden bir karaktere dönüşen Victor Frankenstein'ın durumunu betimler: yeni sistemin bireyin üzerindeki toplumsal ve psikolojik etkilerini anlatır. Mary Shelley'nin eleştiri oklarının hedefi kapitalizmin bizzat kendisi olup, sistemin aslında kendi kendini yok etme özelliğine sahip olduğunu gösterir.

Mary Shelley, çağının kapitalist sistemini eleştirirken, kapitalist kültürün bireyin karakter gelişimini kötü yönde etkilemesinin insanoğlunun

karşılaşabileceği zorluklardan en önemlisi olduğuna değinir. Romanda yeni kapitalist düzenin üst sınıfına ait bilim insanı Frankenstein, kendi bozuk psikolojisini tatmin ve sosyal yükselişine araç olması için yarattığı o yıkıcı canavarla, Batı paradigmasındaki sosyal ve psikolojik bozulmayı ve bu paradigmanın yaratığı pozitivist bilimsel zekasının ümitsiz kalıntısını temsil eder. Romandaki çatışan tarafların karşılıklı mücadelesi Kutup'ta iki tarafın yok olmasıyla sona erer; Mary Shelley'nin betimlediği yıkım, bu kapitalist medeniyetin aslında kendi varlığına tehdit oluşturduğunu gösterir. Yazar hem bireyin, hem de toplumun sahip olduğu kapitalist ve "ilerlemeci" zihniyetin insan aklının sağlıklı gelişimini ve Batı kültürünün bileşenlerini sekteye uğratarak sapkınlık derecesine ulaştığını anlatır. Son olarak, *Frankenstein* yoluyla yazar insanoğlunu bekleyen felaketin haberini verir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kapitalizm, İlerlemeci Zihniyet, Toplumsal Yükseliş, Bozuk Psikoloji, Sapkınlık.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Gothic literature concurs with the last decades of the Age of Enlightenment, an "idealistic," philosophical, and scientific age, emphasizing the validity of secular and rationalist worldview. The rise of the Gothic, with its emphasis on the irrational, unintelligible, and the pessimistic side of human existence, is a reaction against the positivist Enlightenment attitude. The philosophy of the new age, characterized by a stress on simplicity and clarity, rejected medieval spiritual perception of the world, and advocated the importance of reason and utility. With a reliance on *raison d'être* as the best guide for belief and action, Enlightenment philosophy gave rise to materialism, and hence to the Industrial Revolution, which changed the entire structure, not only of English society, but also of the whole world. Capitalist economic system, established through the rise of industrialization in the West, sharpened class distinction and separated people from each other by forming *nouveau rich* classes in society. The oppression acting on the "have nots" increased vices, maladies and subjection, and was made a legal practice by the newly emerged "elite" and by their plutocratic political system. Without any moral obligations to follow in a world in which man's position and function were being reevaluated and reassessed, mankind lost touch with God and His

fiats. Human psyche, once formed on the pedestal of staunch belief and kept its integrity by belonging to tradition, was dispersed by the rapid socio-economic developments in the new age. Having lost the pillars of meaningful existence, man was driven into self-indulgence and immorality. This moral decadence, together with the disruption of human psyche, is best exemplified in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,* in which the destructive side of the Enlightenment is presented through an ambitious character whose psychology has already been distorted. Victor Frankenstein, without any moral responsibility, follows the teachings of his progressive bourgeois society just to destroy the same materialist world he belongs to.

To be able to define her own age in terms of what it is not, and to show the moral lacunae of individuals like Frankenstein in the new scientific world, Mary Shelley, like the gothicists before her, creates a paradox between the "modern" and the "medieval." Although she writes about her "modern" age and the application of "modern" science, she also incorporates the traditional gothic devices to renovate them. She converts the haunted chamber of the typical Gothic novel into a fully equipped laboratory, and in place of ghosts and mysterious beings, she creates a "monster," the product of the "scientific mind" of man. The horror element that is the repulsion of modern man in a science-governed world takes the reader into a setting of invention and experience; yet it is a world in which man has already lost his essence, his soul. Mary Shelley, via her portrayal of a world in which science and technology are considered as the means of deciphering all human problems, challenges the general optimism of her age. *Frankenstein* is, therefore, Mary Shelley's response to the 19th century positivist bourgeois ambition for

progress, and a warning for the future generations that mankind's economic, political, ethical and spiritual problems will hardly be solved by *reason* only.

Victor Frankenstein's attempt to solve the great mystery of human existence and to create the perfect creature ends in failure, and this failure of the "hero" gives way to the social criticism of Mary Shelley. Frankenstein, whose good intentions blind him to the true nature of his enterprise, is the new individual of the age. He is so consumed with the knowledge of animating a "faultless" human being through science that he ignores the universal religious moral that creation belongs to God only. Before long, his elation turns to utter terror when he realizes what he has unleashed. Through him, Mary Shelley shows that associated with science and scientific knowledge, rationalism bestows man the courage to go beyond the limits, to break the ethical barriers put before him. It produces a hysterical attitude for more, a hunger leading man to his final destruction as exemplified at the end of the novel with the creator and created locked in mutual pursuit and conflict. Hence, Mary Shelley reveals that the new age has already created individuals who are hungry for more, and who defy all ethical codes for the sake of social emoluments.

The Monster, as the product of technology, epitomizes Frankenstein's blind pursuit for scientific materialism, and stands for his perverted ethical stature and "scientific" mind. Abandoned by its creator, the Creature stands as a metaphor for all those ambitious and ruinous Enlightenment and Industrialization processes, which left the poor, the needy, and the destitute outside the "formal" social structure. Mary Shelley, therefore, uses the figure of Frankenstein and his creature to challenge the general optimism of her age, and to set the limits of human knowledge. Her novel is a response to the

scientific revolution in her age which has the potential to create monstrosities. Even more important is her admonition of the inherent perils in materialistic culture, and the capitalist outlook, which will cause the final destruction of man.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, therefore, attacks the Enlightenment philosophy as well as industry and capitalist order. Despite being considered as the last example of Gothic novel and the first example of science fiction, the novel develops into a social novel, condemning the capitalist perspective of both society and individual. Mary Shelley, hence, formulates her work as a critique of the sentimental culture, aiming to lampoon the confident worldview of the new industrial age. She paints an elucidating picture of environmental and psychological antimonies in both individuals and society to unravel the conflicts of her era.

Mary Shelley also manifests that the new capitalist progressive order hinders the healthy growth of human psyche. She, therefore, presents Frankenstein as a man who has been taught to *gain* only by his materialist and progressive culture. The experience of *loss* being the death of his mother, however, causes Victor to suffer a psychological injury. In order to cure the wound, he begins his experiments with the aim of finding a way to conquer death. His consuming ambition for success leads him to the point where he becomes unperceptive to the consequences of his project, and instead of creating a "perfect" being he fabricates a "monster." In his efforts, he is revealed as utterly egotistic and self-seeking. Through her title character, Mary Shelley illustrates that such a psychological reaction can only be shaped in an industrial, possessive culture which constructs personalities like Frankenstein.

In a society where materialist and progressive forces shape individual personalities, Frankenstein is a case personality who exemplifies in his character the Enlightenment ideal of "progress," and of accomplishing the unattainable for social emolument.

In her attempt to enliven a narrative of social issues of her time, Mary Shelley adapts the devices, themes, and the terminology of the Gothic genre with a blend of social and science fiction. In the construction of her novel, she, therefore, makes it a hybrid with the intention to better combine and present the moral dilemmas, hypocrisies, materialism, and the moral lacunae of her age as the outcome of social and individual transformations. Her critical style in *Frankenstein* is her defiance against the blind pursuit of knowledge for power. She, in this regard, forms in the reader a sense of "heterodoxy" regarding the principles of her society. Through *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley creates an amalgam to voice her revolutionary thoughts.

In the chapter entitled "Mary Shelley and Her Gothic Reaction to 19th Century Positivist Ideology," Mary Shelley's gothic-romantic attitude will be studied with reference to the emergence of the movement. The chapter will show that since Mary Shelley is a staunch follower of romantic ideals, she borrows her themes and motifs from both the first and second generation of romantic writers to create a powerful Romantic and Gothic representation of human nature in the novel. The chapter will reveal that she employs gothic devices and romantic themes and amalgamates the two modes of expression (gothic and romantic) to penetrate more into the aura of the new capitalist paradigm and for the purpose of criticizing her own age.

In the chapter entitled "Victor Frankenstein: A Product Producing Catastrophe," Frankenstein will be depicted as the product of the capitalist order: an eighteenth century aristocrat who has developed bourgeois tendencies for progress, and who defies, for this purpose, all religious and ethical codes, will be shown to be the new individual of the age. Frankenstein's materialism and the moral lacunae will be demonstrated as stemming from the rapid social and individual transformations. Driven by greed and left free to pursue his self-interest which eventually causes destruction, the figure of Frankenstein will be seen as Mary Shelley's response to the bourgeois dominated capitalist progressive order.

In the chapter entitled "Perverse System Perverse Psychology," disruption of the natural developmental stages of the individual by the capitalist order will be highlighted. In accordance with the capitalist culture creating the individual mentality, Frankenstein's personality will be seen as constructed on the notions of *loss* and *gain*: after *losing* his mother, Victor becomes obsessed with mastering life and death; his outrageous ambition for success and social emolument, however, renders him blind to the consequences of his project, and in place of creating a "perfect" life form, he fails in his efforts, and manufactures a "monster." The Creature will be regarded as the pathetic residue of Victor's "scientific" and "progressive" mind. The chapter will disclose that the development of Frankenstein's character and his choice of occupation are culturally constructed and/or corrupted.

Finally, in the conclusion part, the dissertation will reveal the capitalist and progressive mentality to be cataclysmic, demonstrating that the capitalist

and progressive order brings with it spiritual, moral and intellectual lacunae by hindering the natural growth of human psyche.

CHAPTER 2

MARY SHELLEY AND HER GOTHIC REACTION TO 19TH CENTURY POSITIVIST IDEOLOGY

Born into parents who had both written various pieces of literature, Mary Shelley was destined to be a prominent literary figure. Her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, was an influential Enlightenment radical, and wrote passionately and persuasively for the rights of women, and her father, William Godwin, was a celebrated philosopher, and the writer who believed in man's individual perfection and ability to reason. Though the mother had died only days after Mary's birth, leaving Mary to the care of her father, it was from her mother's works and from her father's education that she received the aspiration and training necessary to make her a writer. Under the influence of Percy Bysshe Shelley, the romantic poet with whom she eloped, and the Romantic literary trend of the age, she produced a work whose influence and durability on the following generation of writers have been immense.

What distinguishes Mary Shelley as a novelist from the writers of fiction of her time is the gothic-romantic attitude she assumes in her work. As the novel form is considered to have emerged by the rise of realism, Mary Shelley, as opposed to the general viewpoint, uses romantic themes and motifs to penetrate more into the rationalist aura of her time, and to establish new

standards, a new “rationalism” for both the novel form and her progressive age. To lampoon the “sacrosanct” values of the bourgeoisie, the anterior writers of the Gothic such as Walpole, Reeve, Radcliffe, Lewis, and Maturin, who established a short-lasting tradition in fiction, formed in their works conflicts between the ancient and the modern, showing the haunting influence of the old upon the new. Hence, they created a provocative genre to stimulate awareness in the reader, rousing him from the dogmatic slumbers. Mary Shelley, in this respect, is the last novelist of this convention for she uses similar gothic devices in her work for the purpose of criticizing her own age. Her style, however, is slightly different for she updates the cliché gothic devices and relies more on her romantic background.

As part of the Romantic Movement, Gothicism is “a mode of writing which each of the romantics ‘outgrew’ an immature expression of their concerns.” (Punter, 1996, p. 87) Gothic is a means of conveying the underlying horror of everyday world. Horror, in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,* is directed against the social ethics, and the new social paradigm, which she thinks will cause the total destruction of man. Within her Gothic framework, Mary Shelley intends to demonstrate how Frankenstein has usurped God’s power, and shows that the Monster is a morally neutral creature who is made evil by circumstances of the society he is born into. The novel not only emphasizes the need for care and responsibility in scientific matters, but it also alludes to the precept “Know Thyself,” which in discussion of moderation and self-awareness, refers to comprehending human behaviour, morals, and thoughts.

Originally, the Gothic drew its intense images from the poets of the Graveyard School and gradually developed into a unique genre. The poets of this trend hold significance as the early forerunners of gothic fiction, and among the poets of this tradition are Robert Blair, Edward Young, Thomas Warton, and Thomas Gray, who doted on the lives of the ordinary, the unidentified individuals and the deaths of those individuals. By this way, they questioned the concepts of bereavement, mortality, religion and melancholy in their works. It was through the air of pensive gloom that they created the Gothic-romantic aspiration and context for the coming generation of romantic writers. This trend in literature was a challenge to the established literary canons of the age in which the neoclassical themes prevailed as the uncontested mottos for writers and critics. Starting with this revolutionary development, more radical thoughts in individual and society emerged, and to the totality of these ideas were given the name Romanticism.

If the place and influence of *Frankenstein* in literature and popular culture is to be understood and appreciated, first, this gothic-romantic influence is to be recognized since it played an important role in forming the revolutionary trend in Western culture, and constituting meanwhile the revolutionary core of Mary Shelley's work. It was through this literary and intellectual movement that radical ideas emerged, and these ideas gave way to the age of revolutions, including American and the French Revolutions, which changed the whole fabric of Western culture. During this period, there flourished both optimistic and pessimistic ideas concerning the future of mankind. In reaction to classical values of order, regularity and objectivity, the Romantic Movement laid emphasis on the emotional forms of articulation.

“The “Romantic” refus[ed] to recognize the restraints in subject matter or form, and . . . represent[ed] the abnormal, grotesque, and monstrous . . . modes of expression.” (Perkins, 1967, p. 2) English Romantic writers in building upon and reacting against the thought of their predecessors broke with major trends and regarded themselves as visionaries with the ability to look beyond the ordinary in life, and to contemplate man's ultimate intent in an uncertain world.

The first generation of Romantics like William Blake, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge questioned in their works the ultimate purpose of human life, and queried the essence of human nature. William Blake, the earliest of the Romantics, called into question the underlying framework of man and society, and with his images of light and dark, he dealt with the paradox between good and evil. He devoted two sets of poems to innocence and experience, concluding that evil is present in man and society. In “Chimney Sweeper,” published in *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, Blake dealt with the moral aspects of his industrial society, and protested the living and working conditions in Britain. He condemned the new capitalist paradigm with a particular focus on the odious practice of child labour. Coleridge, as well, expressed anxiety, concerning the core of human nature. Evil, to him, meant the basic force, which destroyed harmony and goodness of both the individual and the universe. His poem, “The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner,” to which Mary Shelley refers in *Frankenstein*, holds particular significance in his exploration of evil in man and nature. William Wordsworth, with his lighter and pastoral works, “attributed to . . . literature the primary role in keeping human beings emotionally alive and morally

sensitive . . . in the modern era of . . . increasingly urban society with its mass media and mass culture." (Abrams, 1993, p. 141) In his attempt to reveal the threats posed to the Romantic ideals attached to the individual, and the Romantic concepts of the beauty of nature and the emotional free spirit, Wordsworth criticized the dehumanization caused by the Industrial Revolution. When seen in this light, it may be deduced that Mary Shelley was exposed to the ideas of Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and to their mottos concerning man and his nature, in *Frankenstein*. Since she was a staunch follower of romantic ideals, she borrows her themes and motifs from both the first and second generation of Romantic writers.

The second generation of Romantics like Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats used Gothic forms and styles as modes and styles in their poetry, creating an inclination towards the supernatural. Byron, with Gothic modes of expression, depicted a dark and pessimistic vision of the world: in "Darkness," he warned humanity of their impending doom via a dream vision about the end of the universe. In "Manfred," he presented a prototypical Byronic hero, a defiant so superior to other mortals that he rejects submission to the constraints of human society and seeks an answer among the divine. In his failure to transcend humanity, he is obliged to accept the human condition. Percy Bysshe Shelley used the Gothic for purposes similar to that of Lord Byron's: he questioned the existing social order of his day, and offered an emotive and passionate improvement of individual and society as he had faith in the perfectibility and ultimate progress of man. In "Ode to the West Wind," his attempt is to awaken the mind of man: he wants his message of reform and revolution to spread over the universe and the "wind" becomes a

metaphor for spreading the word “change.” In “Ozymandias,” with his sad and melancholic mood, he emphasizes the transitory nature of man, concluding that man and his works turn to dust in time. Poetry of John Keats, as well, reveals melancholy acquainted with the Gothic and supernaturalist literature of his time. In his poems “Ode on Melancholy” and “Ode to a Nightingale,” he explores the themes of nature, transience and mortality with direct references to death. As bereavement and despair went hand in hand in much of the poetry of the second generation of Romantics, these themes led to “a kind of expressionism, [a kind of] exaggerated shadow of reality,” (Punter, 1996, p. 97) and stressed the ethics of the past, standing on the side of the bygone times. Medievalism, hence, became a major subject in their works. Amalgamating the two modes of expression of these poets, Mary Shelley creates *Frankenstein* to objectify the human world through the Gothic-romantic genre.

The interest of the romantics in the medieval past as a time of mystery finds expression in the Gothic-romantic style. *Frankenstein* is in many ways the product of such an imagination. The dream of a rebirth of mankind is a dream of the Romantic time. The people by whom Mary Shelley was mostly influenced - - Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron - - had the vision of a new mankind in a newly structured society: the vision of a revolutionary man without timidity and conventional morality. *Frankenstein*, however, emphasizes the impossibility of this dream vision. This influence could be a possible explanation for Mary Shelley's choice of her subject matter: the creation of the forlorn creature. Her title character, suffering for offenses committed against God, man and nature,

wanders the earth alone. His personal torment in a vast universe is emphasized by desolate settings of icebound seas, jagged mountains and bottomless abysses. Mary Shelley, in this way, explores the mysterious, the monstrous and the supernatural within man in her Gothic context, creating a powerful Romantic and Gothic representation of human nature in her novel.

The Gothic perspective conceives of the human condition as a dilemma of duality: in Frankenstein's case between the old and the new paradigms. In order to better convey this paradox, Mary Shelley "form[s] . . . [an opportunist] hero who has transcended death via the forbidden byways of magic and science:" (Roberts, 1990, p. 95) a character who is spellbound with *modus vivendi* and the *esoteric* truths of the past. Frankenstein studies chemistry at the University of Ingolstadt, which communicates the increased interest in this field of study during Mary Shelley's time: "Probably the greatest theoretical breakthrough made in the second half of the eighteenth century lay in the field of chemistry." (Koç, 2005, p. 140) Frankenstein, however, shows deviation from the positivistic principles of chemistry, and makes use of an older "pseudo-science," alchemy. He begins his quest for the elixir of life with Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus and Albertus Magnus, and sees these alchemists as his gods and regards their works as holy texts. Although his studies include such modern sciences as galvanism, magnetism, chemistry and anatomy, he relies more on this ancient knowledge. As he cannot combine the "truths" of the two different paradigms, he fails in his project and creates a "monster."

It can be argued that Frankenstein's alchemical curiosity is born out of a reaction against the established opinions on the empiricist principles that all

knowledge comes from experience, a characteristic aphorism of the Age of Enlightenment. In this sense, he "shares the alchemists' rebellion against the established . . . scientific authority of his time." (Koç, 2005, p. 141) Although he is portrayed as a modern scientist, his emulation of the medieval alchemists makes him a pseudo-scientist who does not work within the limits of the physical world, but makes use of the positivist methods only to acquire the occult secrets. The height of his fascination with the elixir of life puts him into the shoes of Dr. Faustus[1], who, through magic, desired worldly satisfaction. Frankenstein's interest in the ancient and the modern knowledge creates a split in his psyche which is represented through the use of multiple narrators. Each of these narrators, in fact, stands for a different phase of Frankenstein himself. In order to better communicate the varying stages of Frankenstein's paradigm, Mary Shelley uses Robert Walton to characterize the early Frankenstein, Frankenstein's own account of himself to show the "development" of the hero, and the Monster's story to deconstruct the stories already told. This narrative method also helps Mary Shelley to go deeper into the unknown realms of human psyche, and to the split personality of the hero.

1 "At some time during the 16th C. late medieval legend about a man who sold his soul to the Devil became linked with the man called Johann Faust (c. 1488-1541), an itinerant conjuror." (Cuddon, 1998, p. 311)

CHAPTER 3

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN:
A PRODUCT PRODUCING CATASTROPHE

The novel starts with the letters of Captain Robert Walton from the North Pole to his sister Mrs. Saville in England. His letters announce the expedition to the pole, and the rescue of a stranger, Victor Frankenstein, whose story Walton then includes in his letters home. Enclosed in Frankenstein's story, there is another story: the tale of the "hideous" creature he has created and abandoned. In the Creature's story, there is another story: the story of the DeLaceys, the family he tries to adopt as his own. The multiple layers of framing and retelling make *Frankenstein* a novel narrating the stories of each character in a reliable manner within a variety of settings. Although the frame story is exclusively set aboard the primary narrator, Captain Robert Walton's ship, the events of the story take place all over Europe; from Geneva to the Alps, England, and Scotland, as well as the university at Ingolstadt. As there is a great deal of moving about in the novel, and as the exploration of the unknown is one of the overarching themes, the setting of the novel is constructed from a whole series of places rather than of one singular location, showing the romantic yearning for freedom and diversity. *Frankenstein*, in this sense, reveals the diversity of places, different moods and perspectives with

the intention to bring about feelings of short-lived happiness, loneliness, isolation, and despair as the results of progressive outlook.

In his first letter addressed to his sister, Robert Walton talks about the restlessness in his soul:

> What may not be expected in a country of eternal light? I may there discover the wondrous power which attracts the needle; and may regulate a thousand celestial observations, that require only this voyage to render their seeming eccentricities consistent for ever. I shall satiate my ardent curiosity with the sight of a part of the world never before visited, and may tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of a man. These are my enticements, and they are sufficient to conquer all fear of danger or death . . . But, supposing all these conjectures to be false, you cannot contest the inestimable benefit which I shall confer on all mankind to the last generation by discovering a passage near the pole to those countries . . . or by ascertaining the secret of the magnet, which, if at all possible, can only be effected by an undertaking such as mine. (Shelley, 2004, p. 8)

The letter reveals that Walton's quest is an internally oriented one and for the purpose of constituting a "self" for himself. To be able to identify himself, he needs to find a kindred spirit, and he is looking for such a figure in the Polar Regions of the North.

Walton's letter epitomizes also one of the main themes of *Frankenstein*, that of "light" as the symbol of knowledge and discovery. His initial aspirations to discover the North Pole are similar in spirit to Frankenstein's: the wish to go beyond the limits of nature, traveling towards the unknown, and the pride of being different. Despite being immensely attracted by the pole, Walton, in sailing toward the extreme of conditions, is a good-intentioned naïve romantic. His explicit goal arises out of curiosity, and he sees himself as an enduring hero if he should be successful in his endeavour. It is his hope that in the land of "eternal light" he will discover the source of magnetism and a passage near the pole. He is convinced that these treasures are his rewards for

his persistence and willingness. While looking for the magnetism of the pole, he finds Frankenstein and is immediately attracted by his magnetic power, finding in him the kindred spirit he was looking for:

> I said in one of my letters, my dear Margaret, that I should find no friend on the wide ocean; yet I have found a man, who, before his spirit had been broken by misery, I should have been happy to have possessed as the brother of my heart. (Shelley, 2004, p. 22)

When Walton meets Frankenstein, he sees in him the inherent capacity for companionship: he seems to be intelligent, ardent, and sensitive. He is the kind of "friend" Walton can talk about his aspirations. In his recognition of the characteristics that belong to them both, Frankenstein, however, becomes the force of change in Walton's life: he allows Walton to learn a lesson. It is through Frankenstein's account of his tale Walton perceives that "the gratification of [his] wishes may . . . be a serpent to sting [him]." (Shelley, 2004, p. 25) After hearing his story, he reasons that Frankenstein is not a "celestial spirit" (Shelley, 2004, p. 24) and that although he claims only the best intentions, his actions have been unethical. In recognizing a possible himself in Frankenstein, Walton gives up his outrageous ambition, resigning in disappointment.

It is possible to see Robert Walton as the young Frankenstein whose determination for knowledge and wisdom to overcome death and to achieve glory brings about his destruction. Walton is also enchanted by what he might learn in the North Pole, and he is driven more by his sense of recognition and accomplishment of glory than by the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. In his curiosity to attain the mysterious and the unknown, Walton has the romantic striving against the customary limitations, and is tempted to know

what no one else knows. It is, in this sense, that he reflects the naïve and positive outlook of Romanticism. With Frankenstein starting to tell his story, however, the visions of glory and the mood of optimism depart. The description of the wretched Frankenstein, and of the melancholy which surrounds him bring to mind that dreams and quests can leave their pursuers broken, rather than bringing them victory.

Through Frankenstein's story, Walton also receives a forewarning. An example of premonistic allusion inherent in the narrative lies in Mary Shelley's reference to Coleridge's "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner."[2] When Walton says in his letter that he is "going to unexplored regions, to 'the land of mist and snow'; but [he] shall kill no albatross," (Shelley, 2004, p. 15) he means that he will not go beyond the limits; he will not violate the rules of nature as the mariner did in Coleridge's narrative poem. It is, however, through Frankenstein's story that he becomes aware of his situation as the one about to "shoot the Albatross."

Mary Shelley's reference to "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner" is an attempt to emphasize the inherent evil in human nature waiting to be triggered by the appropriate circumstance. The Mariner's act of killing the albatross is symbolic of this innate evil in man. It is also symbolic of the original sin, suggesting the eating of the Forbidden Fruit by Adam and Eve, which results in their expulsion from Heaven. The Ancient Mariner, likewise, having sinned,

[2] Coleridge, in his work, tells the story of an old sailor, who is telling his tale of suffering to a young man at a wedding. His account is about his escapades at sea sailing towards the South Pole and how an albatross, a sign of good luck, is following his ship. The sailor, making a deadly mistake, kills the albatross, which is regarded as an act of curse. In order to punish him, his shipmates hang the albatross around his neck until the spell is broken. The sailor is, then, forced to tell his tale forever. He tells it to others and warns them of what he experienced. Although Walton's promise that "[he] shall kill no Albatross" (Shelley, 2004, p. 15) is a direct reference to Coleridge's work, he does not, however, seem to have taken a lesson, and his position is no different from that of the Ancient Mariner.

continually feels the agonizing compulsion to tell his tale to others as his punishment. All his crewmates suffer from the Mariner's mistake, as all mankind is said to be suffering from the mistake of Adam and Eve. It is in this sense that Frankenstein has become the wanderer. "Afflicted" with evil, he "robs" graves and abuses the flesh of the dead for his experiments. When he finally creates the Monster, this means that he "has already symbolically shot *his* Albatross, spurred on to this act by the prevailing opportunist and competitive ethos of his industrial (and industrious) society." (Koç, 2005, p. 138) As a result, he is doomed to a life of exile just as the Mariner is condemned to wander the earth until the Judgment Day.

Frankenstein's narrative starts with his early childhood, explaining how his past and the norms of his society along with his familial milieu shaped his present. He reveals his family background and the social class he belongs to when he says:

> I am by birth a Genevese; and my family is one of the most distinguished of that republic. My ancestors had been for many years counselors and syndics; and my father had filled several public situations with honor and reputation. He was respected by all who knew him for his integrity and indefatigable attention to public business. He passed his younger days perpetually occupied by the affairs of his country; and it was not until the decline of life that he thought of marrying, and bestowing on the state sons who might carry his virtues and his name down to prosperity. (Shelley, 2004, p. 27)

The Frankensteins are a family of "patrician *citoyens*." (Vincent, 2007, p. 652) As the son of an aristocrat, Frankenstein portrays his fortunate upbringing, and tells in his account that his father, Alphonse Frankenstein descends from a long line of "counselors and syndics." He is a person of noble rank and a well-respected figure in the community. Frankenstein further details his father's character, emphasizing his devotion to public duty. Born of a father who is a

leading citizen in Geneva, Frankenstein embodies the class division at the origin. His initial emphasis on his family as elitists lays bare his aristocratic pride of rank, and the way he is symbolic of white European aristocracy. His stress not only embodies social superiority of his class but also shows that he is proud of being a member of Geneva's patrician ethos.

Raised in an atmosphere where he is conscious of his social position, Frankenstein illustrates his parents as ideal caregivers. However, the overtone of his narrative reveals that he, as a child, was already imbued by possessive greed:

> When my father became a husband and a parent, he found his time so occupied by the duties of his new situation, that he relinquished many of his public employments, and devoted himself to the education of his children. Of these I was the eldest, and the destined successor to all his labours and utility. (Shelley, 2004, p. 29)

Frankenstein is stricken with the attitude that worldly possessions constitute the greatest good and highest value in life. He, never satisfied with what he has, sees himself fated for his father's "labours and utility." Behind his aristocratic spirit, then, lies a keen bourgeois manner. As an aristocrat, he, in a patrilineal society, is the principal heir of his father, but he thinks of this inheritance not just as an obligation, but as a material expectation as well. He soon comes to realize, however, how deeply he has failed to live up to the expectations of his father and of his earlier self in this regard.

In *The German Ideology*, Karl Marx argues that "from the start the 'spirit' is afflicted with the curse of being 'burdened' by matter." (McLellan, 2000, p. 183) Marx means that human nature has already been "afflicted" with the inclination that physical matter is the only certainty and that all - including thought, feeling, and will - can be explained in terms of matter and physical

phenomena. In accordance with this view, Frankenstein can be seen as "afflicted" with such tendency. He is, thus, symbolic of this spirit of man, for whom acquirement of matter is the primary concern. Even as a child, he exhibits his "possessive" character since he is expecting material inheritance.

Despite his aristocratic family line, Frankenstein displays the traits of an eighteenth century bourgeois man who is eager to make progress. Before long, he cuts all his ties with his past and gets more influenced by the capitalist and progressive aura of his age. In his narrative he says:

> I paid no visit to Geneva, but was engaged, heart and soul, in the pursuit of some discoveries, which I hoped to make. None but those who have experienced them can conceive of the enticements of science. In other studies you go as far as others have gone before you, and there is nothing more to know; but in scientific pursuit there is continual food for discovery and wonder. A mind of moderate capacity, which closely pursues one study, must infallibly arrive at great proficiency in that study; and I, who continually sought the attainment of one object of pursuit, and was solely wrapt up in this, improved so rapidly that . . . I made some discoveries . . . which procured me great esteem and admiration at the university. (Shelley, 2004, p. 47)

Frankenstein's personal account shows that he begins his studies with a desire for knowledge for its own sake, a desire to surmount ignorance. His story of his early years reveals, therefore, both curiosity and ambition for earnest research to discover the hidden laws of nature and the mysterious soul of man. His consuming ambition, however, leads to a wish to ameliorate human condition for he says:

> One of the phænomena which had particularly attracted my attention was the structure of the human frame, and, indeed, any animal endued with life. Whence, I often asked myself, did the principle of life proceed? It was a bold question, and the one which has ever been considered as a mystery. (Shelley, 2004, p. 48)

and "this desire . . . provokes him into hubris equally appropriate to the scientific age: he attempts to *perfect* human race." (Koç, 2005, p. 141)

Frankenstein is symbolic of the eighteenth century man who began to embrace an exaggerated belief in the perfection of humanity based on reason in the Age of Enlightenment; a man who abandoned reliance on biblical truth and lost his fear of God. In *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Frederick Engels writes that "man's character is the product of his inherited constitution on the one hand, and of his environment during his lifetime, especially during his period of growth, on the other." (p. 69) In this regard, Frankenstein is the child of Enlightenment during which great changes occurred in scientific thought and exploration; new and radical ideas emerged at the forefront of philosophy and man was eager to explore these ideas freely. Frankenstein, as the representative figure of the era whose new gods are reason and rationality, characterizes a society and individual constantly hungry for emoluments. He communicates individual's continual desire for rank, social position, and power in a progressive society. Without feeling any moral or spiritual responsibility, and as a daring character, he goes to the extent of disturbing the sacred and the hidden:

> Darkness had no effect upon my fancy; and a church-yard was to me merely the receptacle of bodies deprived of life, which, from being the seat of beauty and strength, had become food for the worm . . . . I was led to examine the cause and progress of this decay, and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel houses . . . . My cheek had grown pale with study, and my person had become emaciated with confinement . . . . Yet still I clung to the hope which the next day or the next hour might realize . . . . The moon gazed on my midnight labours, while, with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness, I pursued nature to her hiding places. Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil, as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave . . . . My limbs now tremble . . . but then a resistless and almost frantic impulse urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. (Shelley, 2004, pp. 48-52)

Frankenstein becomes obsessed by the paradoxical notion that the purpose of life is death and the purpose of death is life. In bestowing animation on lifeless matter, he endeavors to renew life where death led to the natural decay and corruption of the human body. This thought motivates him to "pursue nature to her hiding places" with feverish excitement. By moonlight, he gathers the body parts he needs by visits to the graveyard, to the charnel houses, to the hospital dissecting rooms, and the slaughterhouses. Although he finds his solitary preoccupation repulsive, his nature urges him to go on, "almost [in a] frantic impulse," to bring his work near to a conclusion.

Frankenstein's passion to defy death and renew life echoes the ambitions of science during the Industrial Revolution. He sees himself as fated for great deeds, and works as "a perfect empiricist and utilitarian, aiming . . . at 'improving' goals approved by [his progressive] society." (Koç, 2005, p. 143) In fact, the *material cause* stems from Victor's own culturally determined attitudes. Frankenstein's portrayal, in this sense, parallels Marxist concept of man:

> The production of ideas, concepts and consciousness is first of all directly interwoven with the material intercourse of man, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the spiritual intercourse of men, appear here as the direct efflux of men's material behaviour . . . we do not proceed from what men say, imagine, conceive, in order to arrive at corporeal man; rather we proceed from the really active man . . . . Consciousness does not determine life: life determines consciousness. (Eagleton in Watson and Ducharme, 1990, pp. 148-149)

What is fundamental to Marx's view is the way in which consciousness develops. Consciousness, in accordance to his precept, arises out of the need for man to engage in intercourse with life. To him, experience within that intercourse determines consciousness as he explains this by saying:

"Conceiving, thinking, the spiritual intercourse of man . . . appear . . . as direct efflux of men's material behaviour." (Eagleton in Watson and Ducharme, 1990, pp. 148- 149) The mental intercourse of man - that is consciousness - flows out of his material behaviour, out of his experience. Thus, consciousness is merely the product of this experience. For this reason, man's ideology, politics, law, religion, art and science are reflected in his life activities.

The formation of consciousness is "the fabrication of the culture into which the individual is born." (Koç, 2004, p. 41) In the case of Frankenstein, he is revealed as the product of his age. The Age of Enlightenment, in this sense, as a period of scientific awakening, discounting the need for God, holds significance. In renouncing the authority of Church and Bible, and believing in the supremacy of nature and reason, philosophers of the age retained their faith in the immortality of the soul. In a period when the might of religious knowledge is overthrown, and the scientific understanding and the quest for knowledge are the key pursuits, Frankenstein epitomizes man's denial of death, and his continuous pursuit of eternal life. Imbued by the possibility of creating a "perfect" man, he says:

> Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me . . . . If I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might in process of time renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption. (Shelley, 2004, p. 51)

Although Frankenstein "nobly" wishes to illuminate humanity by breaking the bonds of death, he desires to conquer nature. He endeavors to transcend the natural laws, and his motivation to bring a new species into being is because

he wants to enjoy their worship of him as their creator. In this respect, despite being an aristocrat, his aspirations are those of a capitalist entrepreneur: among "new species [who] would bless [him] as its creator and source," he is egotistic and seeks power and honor as a deity at the top of the social pyramid. When seen in this light, Mary Shelley demonstrates that "science or scientific discoveries are the true sings of a . . . capitalist economy." (Koç, 2004, p. 43) Via Frankenstein, she not only portrays a Machiavellian hero, the new capitalist who is hungry for more, and who defies all ethical codes, but also she criticizes the undisciplined, masculine aspects of science with the irresponsibility of the scientist. The figure of Frankenstein is, then, Mary Shelley's "response to the emergence of a middle-class-dominated capitalist economy" (Punter, 2004, p. 112) suggesting the social hysteria for progress.

As the product of his age, Frankenstein exemplifies two different aspects of bourgeois society:

> with his intention to do good . . . he represents the "enlightened" virtues of his society. His 'deviant' research and its unforeseen catastrophic consequences, on the other hand, epitomize the folly or *hamartia* (error of judgment) of nineteenth century Western Europe. (Koç, 2005 p. 134)

In this regard, Mary Shelley portrays the downfall of Victor Frankenstein, whose materialistic desires to endure life ultimately make him unperceptive of any possible consequences, which could arise from his discoveries.

During sleepless weeks of hard work, Frankenstein isolates himself from society for three seasons. He says:

> Winter, spring, and summer, passed away during my labours; but I did not watch the blossom or the expanding of leaves - sights which before always yielded me supreme delight, so deeply was I engrossed in my occupation. (Shelley, 2004, p. 54)

The length of these three seasons is symbolic of the time a baby is formed in its mother's womb. The passing of seasons from when Victor begins his creation and finishes it is then significant as it refers to painful and alienated labour without interruption, and the creation of the forlorn creature.

In *The Revolutionary Ideas of Karl Marx*, Marx considers alienation to be a sign of material process. He says, "in [a] society of free competition, the individual appears detached from the natural bonds, etc, which . . . make him the accessory of a definite and limited human conglomerate." (Callinicos, 2004, p. 69) Frankenstein's alienation is a material process: in his sleepless weeks of endless labour, he cannot create a man and his attempt is limited to fabricating a "monster." During this process, he is estranged from himself and from the reality of the outside world. He identifies himself with a divine existence, that of God, which becomes a substitute for reality. He is, then, torn by a conflict between his real self and ideal self, and thus reduces himself to a state of slavery:

> In a solitary chamber, or rather a cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase, I kept my workshop of filthy creation; my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; and often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation, whilst, still urged on by an eagerness which perpetually increased, I brought my work near to a conclusion . . . . I appeared rather like one doomed by slavery to toil in the mines, or any other unwholesome trade, than an artist occupied by his favourite employment. Every night I was oppressed by a slow fever, and I became nervous to a painful degree; a disease that I regretted the more because I had . . . enjoyed most excellent health, and had always boasted of the firmness of my nerves. (Shelley, 2004, pp. 52-54)

Frankenstein cuts himself off from the world and eventually commits himself entirely to an obsession. Engrossed in his occupation, he grows pale with

study, and his person becomes wasted with confinement: he feels "rather like one doomed by slavery to toil in mines." He senses oppression by "a slow fever" or a "disease" which he regrets the more as he once "enjoyed most excellent health." In this sense, Marx's precept that "the capitalists are themselves . . . condemned to live a less than human, debased existence" holds true. (Marx in Callinicos, 2004, p. 71) Frankenstein becomes physically as well as mentally debased due to his capitalist nature.

As a result of his desire to achieve god-like power in order to create a new life to overcome death, he is doomed by the lack of universal ethics. He disassociates himself, turning into a brute in his outrageous obsession to find everlasting life. Having acquired arcane knowledge, he creates the Monster. The being, meanwhile, becomes progressively more and more alienated from his creator and from his creator's society, eventually committing a series of hideous crimes.

The Monster's choice of victims is not arbitrary. His target is the relatives and confidantes of his creator. William, Frankenstein's little brother, is his first victim. Then follows Justine, the servant girl of the Frankenstein household, unjustly accused of William's murder and so executed. The Monster, before long, demands that Frankenstein create a mate for him, and threatens him saying that he will continue his crimes if he refuses to do so. At first, Frankenstein agrees. Moved by fears that "a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth," (Shelley, 2004 p. 204) he destroys the half-completed female counterpart and continues with his *own* marriage plans. This the Monster cannot consent to: he murders Elizabeth.

Through his creation of a "monster," Frankenstein's consuming ambition for success brings with it only misery, agony, and mental as well as physical degradation. As Frederick Engels says, "accumulation of [power brings only the] . . . accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, bestialisation, mental degradation." (p. 98) Having lost his family and friends, his entire consciousness is occupied by ideas of revenge. He resolves to leave Geneva, and pursue the Creature across the frozen icy wastes of the Arctic. Although he knows that this final journey will mean certain death, he keeps track of the Monster for months, guided by signs and hints that the Creature leaves for him. Terribly exhausted and already ill by his journey, he reaches the summit of the globe on the brink of death. This, however, is no victory for Frankenstein. Although the act of reaching the summit of the earth seems glorious, it just leads him to his self destruction.

Karl Marx thinks that capitalism has the core of self-destruction in itself when he declares "capitalism as a historically transitory mode of production whose internal [and inherent] contradictions would lead to its downfall.' (Callinicos, 2004, p. 105) Similarly, Frankenstein, in his choice of career and his devotion to a practical ambition, has acted in accordance with the expectations and dictates of his culture. Although this, in itself, does not contradict the expectations of his society, it only leads to his death, destroying also the materialist world he belongs to. Hence, from Mary Shelley's perspective, Victor Frankenstein is the product of his capitalist culture in whom there is the core that will destroy his materialist paradigm.

CHAPTER 4

PERVERSE SYSTEM PERVERSE PSYCHOLOGY

Frankenstein's account commences by the flashbacks from his childhood. He recalls the period as blissful for he says: "I feel pleasure in dwelling on the recollections of childhood." (Shelley, 2004 p. 32) This joyful period is the time when he was the sole concern of his parents, and he remembers those days, admitting: "No creature could have more tender parents than mine. My improvement and health were their constant care, especially as I remained for several years their only child." (Shelley, 2004, p. 29) However, with the arrival of Elizabeth, all the childhood bliss disappears as she comes to share the parental love he was enjoying. Although this event is reported in the same idyllic terms without any trace of jealousy typical of a child at the appearance of a new *sibling*, Elizabeth's "unwanted intrusion" into the family seems to have affected all his future life.

Upon Elizabeth's adoption, Frankenstein's first reaction is to debase her, and he confesses in his narrative that he took Elizabeth as his pet: "From this time, Elizabeth Lavenza became my playfellow, and . . . my friend. She was gay and playful as a summer insect . . . While I admired her understanding and fancy, I loved to tend on her, as I should on a favourite animal." (Shelley,

2004, p. 30) Elizabeth grows up dependent on the Frankensteins. Victor, in his account, reveals this dependency by labeling her as his "favourite animal." (Shelley, 2004, p. 30) This not only reduces her to the level of a domestic creature, but also reveals Frankenstein's mentality that he has hardly considered Elizabeth as his sister or his equal. He tries to label her as his possession, and thereby control this "adoption" or intruder like a pet.

When Frankenstein reaches adolescence, he compares himself with his friends. He sees that he does not have the same disposition for he shares none of their interests. He voices his singularity by describing their personalities in contrast to his own. In speaking about differences in the respective educations of Elizabeth, Henry, and himself, he refers to his interest in science as a career. He expresses his curiosity about the world and his desire for discovery when he says that the world is to him "a secret, which [he] desired to discover." (Shelley, 2004, p. 31) Such a study, from the viewpoint of young Frankenstein, promises great achievements, and he is never humble in his plans for a future career. However, Elizabeth and Henry prefer humane fields. Elizabeth "busies herself in following the ærial creations of the poets." (Shelley, 2004, p. 31) Henry, "a boy of singular talent and fancy, stud[ies] . . . books of chivalry and romance." (Shelley, 2004, p. 31) These two characters are, in fact, Frankenstein's intellectual and emotional foils.

Frankenstein's description of his childhood and youth discloses that the development of his character, and the steps leading toward his pursuit for knowledge have been determined by his early traumas he suffered, and that his character has been shaped accordingly. The major influential factor is the death of his mother, for which he holds Elizabeth responsible. When Caroline

dies, young Victor faces up to death for the first time. His great love for his mother, and his inability to accept her death amount to a hidden hatred for Elizabeth, and also triggers in him a motivation to explore the great questions of life and death.

Frankenstein's unconscious repressed desire - that of blaming Elizabeth - is revealed in his dream:

> I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became vivid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. (Shelley, 2004, p. 56)

Victor dreams that he sees Elizabeth, his "would-be wife," in the "bloom of health." When he kisses her lips, however, they become "livid with the hue of death." As he holds the corpse in his arms, it is transformed into his dead mother.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud says that

> dreams [are] neither the manifestations of possession by some spiritual power nor the result of normal somatic processes during sleep. Rather, dreams [are] to be regarded as symptoms of a neurosis in the dreamer, evidence of a psychic wound or illness. (Thomas, 1990, p. 74)

For Freud, dreamers tend to be wounded figures, suffering from a traumatic experience. In this sense, Frankenstein's nightmare unveils the extent of his emotional injury, that he is still tormented by his mother's death. In his dream, his unconscious identification of his mother with Elizabeth is also reasonable given the information he provides earlier, that his mother died while tending her "favourite" (Shelley, 2004, p. 38) foster child, who was sick with the scarlet fever. This identification suggests that Frankenstein holds Elizabeth responsible for causing his mother's death, and the loss has also caused such a

psychological injury that, in order to heal the wound, he defies all natural rules, including death, through alchemy.

Victor's early research into the works of alchemists is an indication of his interest in discovering the principles of life and death. He begins his search for the elixir of life, a "panacea" to cure the ills of mankind. Hence, he "demonstrates the Promethean tendency inherent in the newly secularized science to aspire to the divine power from which it claims to have released itself." (Clemens, 1999, p. 93) He longs to "enter . . . into the search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life," (Shelley, 2004, p. 34) and to banish death from the human frame. Unable to accept his own limits, and like Prometheus, defiant of the gods, he decides to recreate life.

Mary Shelley shows that such an extraordinary psychological reaction can only be shaped in an industrial, possessive culture which moulds ambitious personalities like Frankenstein. In a society where materialistic and empiricist undercurrents create the individual, Frankenstein is a case personality who epitomizes in his character the Enlightenment ideal of "progress," and of achieving the impossible. Hence, Frankenstein's desire to go beyond the human limits and his formed psychology are the hallmarks of an age Mary Shelley shows to be cataclysmic.

Upon the death of his mother, Frankenstein cannot bring himself to admit the loss. For he has been taught only to gain in this world by his materialist culture, in his narrative he laments for *the loss*: "It is so long before the mind can persuade itself that she, whom we saw everyday, and whose very existence appeared a part of our own, can have departed forever." (Shelley, 2004, p. 39) He thinks that if he acquires the knowledge of creation, he can

overcome the greatest of all human miseries: death itself. He says that “if [he] could banish disease from the human frame, and render man invulnerable to any but violent death,” (Shelley, 2004, p. 34) he would be victorious over this human “defect.” Obsessed by the idea of defeating death, he tries to reverse the laws of nature, and hence makes, as a result of his culturally formed pride, an error of judgment: he attempts to remould life, and through his project, he seeks the means of bringing his mother back to life. His attempts to acquire the knowledge of creation, and his experiments on dead bodies indicate a belief that he can ignore religious, as well as moral proscriptions. As the product of his “enlightened” culture, he is a perfect materialist for whom any action, no matter how unethical or immoral, can be justified for the purpose of any needed outcome.

In order to stave off disease and death, which took his mother away, Frankenstein establishes distinct kinds of experiments associated with modern science, galvanism, magnetism, chemistry, and anatomy. In the early part of his confessional narrative, however, he has an approach to science, which is decidedly anti-modern. He studies alchemy and occult, and describes how his project to reanimate the dead was initially inspired by the alchemists who are considered by M. Krempe, his natural philosophy professor at Ingolstadt University “as musty as they are ancient.” (Shelley, 2004, p. 42) With his “repulsive countenance” (Shelley, 2004, p. 43) and like his father, he is dismissive of Victor's interest in alchemy as a waste of time, and encourages him to start his studies anew.

While Frankenstein refuses to go to the lectures of “that little conceited fellow,” (Shelley, 2004, p. 43) he is drawn by curiosity and idleness to the

lecturing room of M. Waldman, a more attractive figure for him since: "He appeared about fifty years of age, but with an aspect expressive of benevolence . . . His person was short but remarkably erect; and his voice the sweetest [Victor] had ever heard." (Shelley, 2004, p. 43) Waldman's insight and kindness make Frankenstein think of him as "a man of vision," and Waldman's attitude to Victor's alchemical heritage is more "forgiving." However, Frankenstein cannot realize Waldman's "two-facedness" in public and private spheres. In his lecture, he says that "[t]he ancient teachers . . . promised impossibilities and performed nothing. The modern masters . . . whose hands seem only made to dabble in dirt, and their eyes to pour over the microscope or crucible have indeed performed miracles." (Shelley, 2004, p. 44) On the same evening, when Victor pays a visit to him, he sees that his professor is a different person in private. He recounts the event saying:

> I departed highly pleased with the professor and his lecture, and paid him a visit the same evening. His manners were even more mild and attractive than in public . . . . He heard with attention my little narration concerning my studies, and smiled at the names of Cornelius Agrippa, and Paracelsus . . . . He said, that "these were men to whose indefatigable zeal modern philosophers were indebted for most of the foundations of their knowledge." (Shelley, 2004, p. 44)

Although M. Waldman says in public that the alchemists produced nothing, in private he claims just the opposite. This is the culture in which Frankenstein is educated. This is hypocrisy. M. Waldman is the representative figure of such a moral decadence, and Frankenstein, as his "apprentice," is the product of this hypocritical culture.

Following the teachings of a neurotic personality like M. Waldman, Frankenstein combines his awareness of both alchemy and modern scientific

knowledge into the creation of a life form from human remains. In order not to become a "petty experimentalist," (Shelley, 2004, p. 45)

> Victor [does not abandon] alchemy . . . but [supplements] it. The elixir of life is not forgotten, but is pursued by another route, that of scientific chemistry and physiology. Lured by his thirst for discovery, his studies take him beyond the limits of *agreed* knowledge. (Ellis, 2000, p. 149)

Therefore, under Waldman's influence, Victor devotes himself, with avidity, to his studies, and rapidly "improves" his knowledge both on chemistry and alchemy.

The triggering influence for "discovery" being the death of his mother, Frankenstein "pursue[s] nature to her hiding places." (Shelley, 2004, p. 52) There, however, he follows not the teachings of scientists like M. Krempe, but the teachings of M. Waldman, the pseudo-scientist. Why he prefers Waldman to Krempe is because Waldman takes him back to his early childhood where lies the great personality lacunae of Frankenstein. He finds in him the necessary encouragement to continue his childhood dream. As he initially desired to bring her mother back to life, and as he was unable to complete the stages of personality development upon the death of his mother, he still has the aspirations of his childhood. He simply refuses to grow up and become a mature person. Rejecting the natural law of death and decay, Frankenstein exhibits a personality which needs to pass through some developmental stages. Since he was unable to complete these stages at home and with his parents, he will have to pass through the phases of development in the following stages of his life.

Freud sees the trials and tribulations of childhood period as the source of the adults' psychological distresses and disturbances. In discussing childhood experiences and their subsequent effects, he says:

> It is not the good and pious precepts, nor is it any other inculcation of pedagogic truths that have a moulding influence upon the character of the developing child but what most influences him is the peculiarly affective state which is totally unknown to his parents and educators. The concealed discord between the parents . . . the repressed hidden wishes, all these produce in the individual a certain effective state . . . which . . . works its way into the child's mind. (Mullahy, 1955, p. 130)

Freud argues that childhood experiences are the crucial factors in the determination of adult personality, and that traumatic childhood events could have devastating negative effects upon the adult individual. Mary Shelley, like a psychiatrist, shows this effect of childhood experiences on the adult behavior through Frankenstein. She details her character's early experiences, paying particular attention to his childhood "lacunae." She demonstrates that there are two external causes for such "deficiency:" the arrival of his adapted cousin, and the death of his mother. From the Freudian viewpoint, these hinder Victor from the experience of the normal stages of human development.

The stages of human development, from the Freudian standpoint, are central to the healthy growth of human psyche. Each stage concentrates on a particular part of the anatomy, and each has implications for adult life. According to Freud, individuals, early in their childhood, experience three overlapping phases. The first period is referred to as the oral stage. Elaborating on his analysis, Freud distinguishes between an early and a late oral phase. During the early oral phase, "impulses to suck predominate, and sucking, aside from the taking of nourishment, gives pleasure because of the excitation of mouth and lips." (Mullahy, 1955, p. 58) The latter part of this phase is

characterized by teething, which is a source of pain and the child learns to abreact the ache by biting certain objects. At this stage, "the drive aim is . . . a tendency to *take* and *take in.*" (Olsen and Koppe, 1988, p. 389) General characteristics of the oral phase can be marked as "restlessness, curiosity, an inclination toward scientific investigation." (Mullahy, 1955, p. 60)

The death of his mother deprives Victor of the unconditional motherly love he needed as a child since "Motherly love by its very nature is unconditional . . . The infant needs mother's unconditional love and care physiologically . . . Mother has the function of making him secure in life." (Fromm, 1956, pp. 35-36) Frankenstein cannot fully enjoy this unreserved love and care. Never forgetting this kind of love for the loss itself has created such a lacuna, he delays this period to enjoy similar delights at a later stage. His failure to ensure proper "breast-feeding" and satisfy himself orally leads him to experience the oral period when he is an adult at Ingolstadt University.

At the university, Victor's life is remarkably secluded and domestic. He "ardently desires the acquisition of knowledge," (Shelley, 2004, p. 41) and occupies himself in various works. Under Waldman's "guidance," he studies chemistry and alchemy, and even makes discoveries in the improvement of chemical instruments, which procures him great admiration. When he arrives at this point and becomes acquainted with the theory and practice of natural philosophy, his enquiry takes on a new dimension and expands to tackle the question: "Whence . . . did the principle of life proceed?" (Shelley, 2004, p. 48) Therefore, besides chemistry, he begins studying alchemy, and eventually combines his awareness of both occult power and modern scientific knowledge into the creation of a being. All this "absorption" in finding the

principle of life is reflective of a child in the oral phase. Having already failed in his oral interaction with the mother, this deficiency shows itself as sucking knowledge: Frankenstein reads everything both about chemistry and alchemy like an infant sucking the breast of its mother.

Freud asserts that "ungratified sucking period" may give way to undesired consequences: it may lead to "a craving to obtain everything." (Mullahy, 1955, p. 59) Frankenstein recounts the events of his past, and remembers his father's negative attitude which contributes to his already unsatisfied state of being. His father's rejection of the alchemists and their works hinders him from the compensation of this "ungratified sucking period." On the contrary, this pushes him to study alchemy further. He admits that his father should have given him more guidance when he tells how his father "looked carelessly at the title-page" and dismissed the work as "sad trash." (Shelley, 2004, p. 33) He states that, if instead, his father had taken the time to explain why he rejected him reading Agrippa, that alchemy had been disapproved, "the train of [his] ideas" (Shelley, 2004, p. 33) would have been different. Frankenstein's scientific curiosity then "arises in response to his father's belittling of his first show of interest in the writings of the medieval alchemist Cornelius Agrippa." (Thornburg, 1987, p. 82) Not knowing that modern science has already proven alchemy impractical as well as impossible, his father's hasty dismissal of alchemy triggers in Victor a desire to study it further, indirectly leading to another ungratified period, and hence, to the creation of a life form.

In *The Art of Loving*, Erich Fromm says that "the child . . . need[s] father's . . . guidance . . . father has the function of teaching him, guiding him

to cope with those problems with which the particular society the child has been born into confronts him." (p. 36) Frankenstein, however, is left on his own without any guidance from the father. Unable to cope with the outside reality, and restricted by the father, he finds a great resource in science, and a greater opportunity in alchemy to complete the developmental stages of his personality.

Frankenstein's alchemical curiosity, from Freudian perspective, can also be seen as a "wishful impulse." Freud says that "wishful impulses . . . which have been sunk into the id by repression, are virtually immortal . . . They can only be . . . deprived of their cathexis of energy, when they have been made conscious." (Freud in Watson and Ducharme, 1990, p. 217) Although Victor's desire to study alchemy is repressed by the father, it remains "immortal" in his unconscious mind, and emerges at a later stage in his life in the form of a return of the repressed. This unconscious impulse is, in fact, "reawakened" by Waldman as Victor finds in his teachings the necessary encouragement to continue his childhood aspiration of bringing his mother back to life.

Regarding Freud's psycho-sexual developmental stages, the second phase is referred to as the anal stage, in which the primary focus of the libido is on controlling bladder and bowel movements. Freud divides the anal phase the same way he divides the oral stage. In the early anal phase, the child "derive[s] an "incidental" pleasure from defecation." (Mullahy, 1955, p. 60) The anus becomes an object of pleasure as the infant learns the delights of this act.

> [The infant] takes interest in feces as much as he is allowed, and excrement holds a primary place in the child's relations to other persons. The child gives it away as gifts, expects special attention to be

> given to it and wants to be present when others relieve themselves. (Olsen and Koppe, 1988, p. 390)

This phase of the anal stage is often accompanied by encouragement, reward, and praise from the parents. The child is thus convinced of the value of "producing" things at the "right" time and place. Freud suggests that this provides the basis for adult productivity and creativity, or the converse of obsessive anxieties over production.

The later anal phase is "characterized by the use of the anal sphincter. The child learns that he is able to regulate defecation, just as he discovers that he can increase and intensify pleasure by holding back feces." (Olsen and Koppe, 1988, p. 309) In this phase, depending on the parents' feelings concerning defecation, the child develops certain traits and values. If parents are strict, the child may hold back feces. The defiance in "holding back" provides for the possibility of a change in the child's character: he may become stingy and obstinate later in life. Or, in response to the parental pressure, the child may respond with rage by defecating at the most inappropriate times. This is the prototype for traits such as disorderliness, cruelty and destructive behaviour. However, when the parents praise the child extravagantly after a bowel movement, the child feels that producing feces is extremely important, and as an adult is likely to demonstrate *creativity* and *productivity.* Freud believes that positive experiences during this stage serve as the basis for people to become competent, productive and creative adults. A child who has successfully completed this stage will be characterized as having learned proper toilet manners. He, once disunited with the pot, will realize his

independence as a separate being from the mother, and successfully move on to the psychosexual developmental stages.

According to Freud, the anal stage holds special significance given that positive experiences during this phase provide the basis for individuals to become competent, productive and creative adults. For Freud, parents who utilize praise and rewards encourage positive outcomes, and help children feel capable and productive in their later lives. In Frankenstein's case, his mother's death and his father's rejection and limitation are the two handicaps to become integrated with the mundane world: he is not only deprived of motherly love, but he also suffers from the lack of fatherly guidance. Without any direction, he is left on his own. He receives no encouragement or praise, and this leads him to "hold back" his creativity at home. His inhibited resourcefulness finds a chance to express itself at a later stage, during his university education.

Frankenstein's *efforts* to "create" life at the university can be compared to a child in the anal stage. In examining the principle of life, Victor derives insurmountable pleasure from his sole occupation. It is as if he is drawn to his project by some kind of "supernatural enthusiasm." (Shelley, 2004, p. 48) It holds a primary place in his life as days pass by while he is engaged, heart and soul in this one pursuit. He has recourse to graveyards and charnel houses. In his graveyard laboratory, experiment is undertaken at night, out of sight and in secret. "Within the secretive darkness of vaults and charnels, he dabbles in filth, his heart sickening at the work of his hands as he disturbs with profane fingers the tremendous secrets of the human frame. The imagery has an unmistakably *anal* . . . *cast*." (Sherwin in Bloom, 1987, p. 31) Despite the filth, his nature urges on "[a] frantic impulse," (Shelley, 2004, p. 52) which

perpetually increases, and with growing obstinacy, he acquires the knowledge of creation. When he becomes capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter, he sees that he has found so "astonishing a power" (Shelley, 2004, p. 50) placed within his hands. This sense of "productive power" can be likened to a child's pride in evacuation in generative terms. However, what Victor "produces" is no different from defecation.

Why Victor produces "excrement" is because he does not take into consideration what his father thinks about alchemy, and he obstinately pursues what he is interested in. In this way, he tries to break free from the authority of the father, whose dismissal of alchemy only reinforces his pursuit of great ideals. In this sense, Frankenstein's "efforts" show that he is, in fact, on a quest to constitute a self for himself, a self free from fatherly constraint and judgment. However, while Victor attempts to establish a self, he creates, as a result of his endeavors, a "by-product," the Monster. After months of hard work when the gigantic creature opens his eyes, he becomes horrified with the result, as he says:

> How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe or how delineate the wretch whom such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! - Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion, and straight black lips. (Shelley, 2004, pp. 55-56)

Frankenstein realizes that what he has created is no different from "excrement." The Creature looks *filthy*, and Victor finds him repulsive with his "yellow skin" stretched tightly over his muscles and arteries. After

working for nearly two years, on what he thought would be a beautiful creature, he now realizes "the beauty of the dream vanish [with] . . . disgust fill[ing his] heart." (Shelley, 2004, p. 56) The Creature is, in fact, a representation of Frankenstein's "creative" self, a "grandiose" embodiment of the creator's development stage.

Through her protagonist, Mary Shelley shows that such a "creative self" can only be shaped in an industrial and progressive culture. Writing at a time when scientists felt empowered to unlock the mysteries of nature and establish mastery over it,

> Mary Shelley was aware of the damaging consequences of a scientific, objective, alienated view of both nature and human labour. [She anticipated that] uninhibited scientific . . . development, without a sense of moral responsibility for either the processes or products of these new modes of production, could easily, as in Frankenstein's case, produce monsters (Mellor, 1998, p. 114)

who pose a threat to the nineteenth century conformist bourgeois social structure. Victor, however, instead of mending his mistake, flees from his creation and by this way he thinks that he can get rid of the problem.

In *The Return of the Repressed*, Chris Baldick states that "in taking flight from the monster . . . Victor can be seen to be shunning the recognition of his own 'desire,' his failure." (Baldick in Clemens, 1999, p. 101) In this sense, through his scientific project, Frankenstein seeks the means for the banishment of death and disease, convinced that mankind will benefit from his discoveries. During the process of creation, he is "possessive" of his "product." However, when he sees what he has manufactured is like "defecation," his "possessiveness" turns into disgust and horror. Having lost the mother and having received no encouragement or praise from the father

when he wanted to study alchemy, Frankenstein's situation can be likened to an infant's delaying the "anal stage" experience. He thus undergoes this stage at the university. This hindrance results in a perverse productivity as an adult: producing an "excrement" like creature towards the end of his anal stage, he can hardly accept the fact that he has failed in his project. For Frankenstein, this is a painful process, and causes him to finalize the phase with difficulty.

Since Frankenstein has completed the anal stage with such a great horror and disgust, he enters into the third and final stage of his psychosexual development: the genital stage, which is the period of sexual maturity and the creation and enhancement of life. Freud divides this stage into two periods: the phallic (or early genital) phase, and the definitive genital phase (from puberty onward.) (Freud in Olsen and Koppe, 1988, pp. 391-392) The relationship between the two resembles the relationship between the early and the late oral and anal phases. The early genital phase consists of the period when the child's erotic inclinations are organized around the genitals. According to Freud, the penis is conceived as a phallus embodying *power* and *completeness* rather than a narrowly defined genital organ. He says, "both the boy and the girl consider the penis to be the more desirable organ, since it is bigger . . . (or so the children think) more . . . sensitive than the girl's organ." (Freud in Olsen and Koppe, 1988, p. 391) The phallic phase gives way to the period of latency, and phallic sexuality is now further developed, until it takes on its definitive form as genital sexuality. In the definitive genital stage, the interest in the child's own sex organ and in other people's replaces the earlier focusing on the satisfaction of hunger and control of feces and bowel movements. The genital personality is mature and is no longer dominated by the early drives for

pleasure. Conditioned that the other stages are completed successfully, the individual should "possess a quantity of affectionate and friendly feeling" (Mullahy, 1955, p. 64) to transfer on to other people or on to his whole environment. Whereas in the early stage the focus is solely on individual needs, interest in the welfare of others develops during the later stage. In Frankenstein's case, however, as the early phases of psychosexual development have not been completed in the normal way, the definitive genital stage assumes the form of destructive phallic stage.

Frankenstein begins life with benevolent intentions, and he "thirsts" for the moment when he should put those ideals in practice, and make himself "useful" to his fellow beings. Hence, he creates a new life form. The beauty of this dream disappears when he beholds the "accomplishment" of his toils: he realizes *for the first time* what he has produced, and this awareness marks the end of his anal stage. Thereon, Frankenstein starts experiencing the genital stage. In this phase, the "filthy mass . . . [he creates] may represent a monstrously oversized *phallus*." (Sherwin in Bloom, 1987, p. 31) This phallus commits the forbidden act(s) Frankenstein *wants* committed: through his creation, Victor indirectly murders Elizabeth, whom he had blamed for the death of his mother. The being, then, can be considered as the alter-ego of Frankenstein, making him commit the crimes he could not dare to commit in his boyhood.

Frankenstein's childhood shows that the development of his character has been determined by his early traumas he suffered, and that his character has been shaped accordingly. The major influential factor on his personality development is his mother's death, for which he holds Elizabeth responsible.

His great love for his mother and his inability to accept her death, however, results in a strong *hatred* for Elizabeth, and this has initiated in him the motivation to overcome the great mysteries of life and death. This hatred, although once repressed, reappears in Frankenstein's adulthood as a *delayed reaction* to the loss. In fact,

> . . . the death of a parent . . . during childhood or adolescence may lead to a multitude of serious and enduring psychological consequences . . . Responses are usually classified as immediate reactions, which occur during the initial weeks and months after the death; intermediate reactions, which may emerge some years later in childhood and adolescence; and long-range, or "sleeper" effects, which appear in adulthood either as ongoing reactions or as delayed reactions to the loss. (Krupnick and Solomon in Jonathan and Feshbach S. Bloom, 1987, p. 361)

A range of emotional and behavioral responses may follow the death of a parent. These responses are the immediate and intermediate reactions. There is also the long-range "sleeper" effect, which appears in adulthood as a delayed reaction to the loss. In Frankenstein's case, his hatred of Elizabeth has a "sleeper" effect. It emerges when he is an adolescent boy. It is as if Frankenstein created a "monster" in himself and kept it during his childhood and boyhood periods. When he literally creates the being, he concretizes the hatred in the form of a monster, and allows him to murder Elizabeth.

In fact, his unconscious is revealed when he says:

> But to me the remembrance of the threat returned: nor can you wonder, that, omnipotent as the fiend had yet been in his deeds of blood, I should . . . regard him invincible; and that when he had pronounced the words, *'I shall be with you on your wedding-night,'* I should regard the threatened fate as unavoidable. But death was no evil to me, if the loss of Elizabeth were balanced with it; and I therefore, with a contended and even cheerful countenance agreed . . . that . . . the ceremony should take place in ten days, and thus put . . . the seal to my fate. (Shelley, 2004, p. 236)

Frankenstein perceives his creation as "invincible." When he hears him pronounce the words that he will be with him on his wedding night, he simply accepts his destiny and regards "the threatened fate as unavoidable." Despite the threat, he "consents" to the ceremony and thus seals Elizabeth's fate.

Frankenstein's hatred for Elizabeth may, in fact, be seen as creating an uncanny effect. As is quoted from Schelling by Freud, "everything is uncanny that ought to have remained hidden and secret and yet comes to light." (Freud, 1959, p. 376) For Schelling, "uncanny is in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old-established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression**.**" (Schelling in Freud, 1959, p. 394) It is as if Frankenstein's hatred is kept concealed in his unconscious and "comes to light" when he is an adult in the form of a "monster" to target Elizabeth, who destroyed his childhood paradise. Hence, "on his wedding night, he . . . leaves the victim unprotected, sending Elizabeth to the bedroom alone while he wanders through the hallways with his . . . pistol in hand" (Clemens, 1999, p. 105) and laying the "dirty work" on the Creature. When the being warns Frankenstein, "it seems . . . natural, granted [his] egocentricity, that he worry about his own safety and not his bride's and that, despite the warning, [he] *allows* Elizabeth to be murdered." (Oates in Bloom, 1987, p. 77)

Despite his *unconscious* consent to the murder of his "beloved," Victor stands in conflict with his creation and recounts his story in opposition to the "monster" he created, and the sorrow of loved ones murdered at the hands of the Creature. When he reminisces about the lifeless form of William, the execution of Justine, and the murder of Clerval, he is seized by remorse and by the sense of guilt as he cries out: ". . . they died by my machinations. A

thousand times would I have shed my own blood . . . to have saved their lives; but I could not . . . sacrifice the whole human race." (Shelley, 2004, p. 229) Although Frankenstein calls himself the murderer of William, Justine and Clerval, he, in fact, confesses that they were destined to die as he could not jeopardize the whole human race. In order to purge himself of the guilt, he blames himself through an indirect way:

> As the memory of past misfortunes pressed upon me, I began to reflect on their cause - the monster whom I had created . . . I was possessed by a maddening rage when I thought of him, and . . . ardently prayed that I might have him . . . to . . . revenge on his cursed head. (Shelley, 2004, p. 245)

This confession can be seen as a "defense mechanism" to help deal with his past experiences, past crimes. Having absolved himself of the guilt, Frankenstein locates the source of his ruin outside himself: the fault lies not with him, but with his creation. In this sense, although Victor is the one to be blamed, he seems to show utter contempt for the Monster; he denies his relationship with him, and in this way, his unconscious is relieved.

Deserted by his creator, the Monster becomes a wanderer: he leaves Frankenstein's laboratory in Ingolstadt, and traverses a vast portion of the earth in quest for the one who gave him life and left him. He follows a Northeast path along the Rhône, the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, the wilds of Tartary and Russia. In his voyages, he encounters with people from the 19th century society. However, wherever he sets off, he is rejected, shunned and hated by people on account of his physical deformity. He is deprived of all hope of love and companionship. As he is made up with the body parts of those who lived in the past, the Monster can also be seen as a metaphor for the past paradigm as

> [he] is the poor, the archaic (for the body parts have been collected from the cemeteries and charnel houses and belonging to the past, dead paradigm), and the socialist . . . representing the "deformed" archaic East[erner]. Frankenstein, however, is the rich, the scientific . . . the capitalist . . . representing the "formed" West[erner], the European. Hence, the Monster, from the viewpoint of Frankenstein, who is the embodiment of the West, is the cultural [and economic] other. (Koç, 2004, p. 45)

Through such a metaphor, Mary Shelley shows that the new age has already discarded the teachings of the past world; lost all the moral values of the anterior tradition.

Despite his recluse existence, the Creature expresses a wish to recreate his own life in the image of the very social structure which has already excluded him: he demands a mate for company and solace. He demands his creator to create a female counterpart:

> You must create a female for me, with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being . . . . If I have no ties and no affections, hatred and vice must be my proportion; the love of another will destroy the cause of my crimes. (Shelley, 2004, pp. 172-176)

The Creature's reference shows that he is far more human than his creator and has healthier urges. Whereas Frankenstein's attitude towards his bride is ambiguous, it is the "Monster" who seeks love. Frankenstein appears to seek *revenge* only. In this sense, the Creature is the psychological other of Frankenstein. Hence, through placing the Creature in a sentimental setting, Mary Shelley suggests that Frankenstein is the more monstrous creature formed by the capitalist culture.

Fred Botting in *The Gothic* argues that "excluded figures, once represented as malevolent, disturbed, or deviant monsters, are rendered more humane while the systems that exclude them assume terrifying, persecutory,

and inhuman shapes." (Botting in Punter and Byron, 2004, p. 265) When considered from Botting's viewpoint, while the Creature reveals himself to be more emotionally aware, more human than his creator, Victor's aspirations define him as being the monster. Frankenstein creates an inferior being, a lesser species since he starts his project with the prospect of a "new species [who] would bless [him] as its creator and source." (Shelley, 2004, p. 51) Such an inferior being can be utilized by Frankenstein for psychological satisfaction of social emolument as he already admitted that "[he] was surprised that among so many men of genius, who had directed their inquiries towards the same science, that [he] alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret." (Shelley, 2004, p. 49) Significant, too, is the fact that "the bourgeois background and assumptions of Frankenstein family . . . the belief that material prosperity and social recognition are conferred on superior merit." (Thornburg, 1987, p. 67) Victor manifests his enthusiasm for these values his family embodies when he utters:

> I am by birth a Genevese . . . My ancestors had been . . . counselors and syndics; and my father had filled . . . public situations with honor and reputation . . . . it was not until the decline of life that . . . he thought of . . . bestowing on the state sons who might carry his virtues and his name down to prosperity. (Shelley, 2004, p. 27)

Victor identifies himself immediately as a member of the upper class, and of a distinguished family; he explains that reputation and social recognition are merits momentous for the Frankensteins. In acting for his own interest, and aspiring to see his name glorified by humanity, he communicates his desire to maintain those merits. It is, then, natural that he abandons his second experiment. Why he is repulsed by the thought that "a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth" (Shelley, 2004, p. 204) is due to his fear of failure,

that his non-accomplishment will be known by everybody, and this will bring with it a bad repute. He is, therefore, utterly self-serving, and takes on an inhuman shape.

Having lost his bride and any chance he might have of happiness, the Creature revolts against his creator. He exclaims: “Slave, I before reasoned with you, but you have proved yourself unworthy of my condescension. Remember that I have power . . . You are my creator, but I am your master; - obey!” (Shelley, 2004, p. 206) This reference shows that the creator and his creation double one another: the “slave” becomes the master while the master becomes the “slave” to the demands of his more “powerful” creature. The Monster’s rebellion, however, does not lead to liberation. It results in the creator and the creature becoming locked in a life and death struggle, which eventually destroys them both. Rebelling against Frankenstein’s tyranny, the Creature becomes his master’s *doppelgänger*, a victimizer himself, leading Frankenstein to the point where he speaks of “[his] own vampire, [his] own spirit let loose from the grave, and forced to destroy all that was “dear” to [him].” (Shelley, 2004, p. 81) Hence, the Creature can be regarded as “an outsized mirror image of his creator,” (Oates in Bloom, 1987, p. 77) and the victim of Frankenstein’s personality defects.

The Creature’s reign of “terror” can be traced to his unsocialized existence: he is first rejected by his creator, and this is followed by rejection and prejudice by the people he meets; the lack of a nurturing and loving creator as well as companionship and acceptance from society drive the Monster against his creator, and cause the deaths of his family members. However, despite Frankenstein’s abjuration of responsibility, the aborted

creature manages to survive with his own instinctual abilities. Through his observation of the De Lacey family, he acquires language and literacy, and observes the effects of domestic affection. His education in book knowledge begins with a discourse by Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, and is greatly furthered by his discovery of an abandoned leather satchel, in which he finds three books: Milton's *Paradise Lost*, *Plutarch's Lives* and Goethe's *The Sorrows of Werter*. He regards these books as his treasures, and they are of infinite importance to him. However, as he reads, he observes his "own feelings and condition" that he is "[himself] similar, yet at the same time strangely unlike" (Shelley, 2004, p. 151) other men: "[his] unhappy realization is that he has an innate capacity for reason and feeling, but that inalienable qualities of birth and origins deprive him of justice and society." (Ellis, 2000, p. 155)

The Creature's final statements confirm his emotional depth in this regard. Obviously grief-stricken at Victor's death, he tells Walton how he suffered as a result of his own actions in destroying Victor's world. He says:

> A frightful selfishness hurried me on, while my heart was poisoned with remorse. Think you that the groans of Clerval were music to my ears? My heart was fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy; and when wretched by misery to vice and hatred, it did not endure the violence of the change, without torture such as you cannot even imagine. (Shelley, 2004, p. 271)

When Walton, with apparent justification, accuses him of hypocrisy, the Creature denies the accusation, but says that he expects no sympathy and that he is "satisfied that abhorrence and opprobrium" (Shelley, 2004, p. 271) should be given to him after his death. He continues, "Once I falsely hoped to meet with beings, who pardoning my outward form, would love me for the excellent qualities which I was capable of bringing forth . . . . But now crime

has degraded me . . . the fallen angel becomes a malignant devil." (Shelley, 2004, p. 273) And justly, he points out that he has not been "the only criminal" (Shelley, 2004, p. 273) and asks "Why do you not hate Felix, who drove his friend from his door with contumely? Why do you not execrate the rustic, who sought to destroy the savior of his child?" (Shelley, 2004, p. 273) To listen to the Creature, even Walton must shut his eyes.

The Creature's claim that his suffering, greater than Victor's "is *not* . . . a hypocritical plea for pity; he is indeed the greater sufferer if only because he has more human capacity for suffering, as he has more human capacity for all feelings," (Thornburg, 1987, p. 119) and

> because he is not only conscious of the wrongs done him, but also aware of his own guilt and of its nature. The "frightful selfishness" that drove him to his crimes is indeed [his] flaw, but it is his greatness as well, in the sense that his selfishness is nothing more or less than his passionate awareness of life, of his own individuality, and his drive - stemming from that awareness - to love and cherish his fellow beings. (Thornburg, 1987, pp. 199-120)

It is, in fact, Victor's tragedy to be closed, unloving, unaware of his selfishness, and only partly aware of his responsibility for what has happened; it is the Monster's to be completely aware of the reasons for his suffering, including his own actions, and still unable to change either the causes of that suffering or his awareness of it. Hence, "[the Monster] sentences himself to death, even burning his body so that its remains may afford no light to any curious and unhallowed wretch, who would create such another as [he] has been." (Bowerbank, 1979, p. 429)

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud postulates that humans are driven by two conflicting central desires: the life drive (Eros) and the death drive (Thanatos). (Freud in Laplanche, 1985, pp. 107-108) For Freud, the

death drive presents an urge inherent in all living matters to return to a "(primeval) inorganic [or dead] state." (Freud in Mullahy, 1955, p. 33) Freud says:

> Every living being aspires to death by virtue of its most fundamental *internal* tendency, and the diversity of life . . . never does anything but reproduce a series of transformations determined in the course of evolution, a series of adventitious detours provoked by any one of a number of traumas or supplementary obstacles: the organism wants not simply to die, but to "die in its own way." (Freud in Laplanche, 1985, p. 107)

When viewed in the light of Freud's theory, the Creature can be said to be consciously desiring death. After causing his creator's destruction, incompleteness robs him of his will to survive, and pursue happiness in this world. Having lost the only family he has ever known, he ends his narrative with a suicidal note, saying "I . . . shall seek the most northern extremity of the globe; I shall collect my funeral pile, and consume to ashes this miserable frame." (Shelley, 2004, p. 274) In this sense, for the Creature, death is an escape from suffering and misery, and from the torment of existence.

While the Creature consciously aspires to death, Frankenstein wishes death in an unconscious way. Having lost his family and friends, Victor's entire consciousness is occupied by fantasies of "revenge." He decides to leave Geneva and pursue the Creature northward. He tracks the Monster for months, guided by slight clues, messages, and hints that the Creature leaves for him. Terribly exhausted by his journey, he reaches the zenith of the world, and there he meets Walton. When he meets Walton, he is on the verge of death for "his limbs [are] nearly frozen, and his body [is] dreadfully emaciated by fatigue and suffering." (Shelley, 2004, p. 20) He tells Walton his story, and entreats the sea captain to continue his search for vengeance after he is dead.

In this regard, although Victor looks forward to the peace that death will bring him, he dreads the idea of dying with his task unfulfilled. He, therefore, begs Walton to kill the Creature if he shows himself to him, no matter how eloquent and persuasive he seems.

Taken aboard Walton's ship to recover from exhaustion and exposure, Victor has the chance to look back and evaluate his past and present states of being. He says:

> From my infancy, I was imbued with high hopes and a lofty ambition; but now how am I sunk! Oh! my friend, if you had known me as I once was, you would not recognize me in this state of degradation. Despondency rarely visited my heart; a high destiny seemed to bear me on, until I fell, never, never again to rise. (Shelley, 2004, p. 261)

Frankenstein suffers both physical and moral decline. His belief that he was destined for some great enterprise seems to have gone. Purged of this ambition, he is now ready to make the confession that he has failed in his project.

Although Frankenstein has gained an awareness concerning his situation, he does not seem to be mature enough to see himself completely. This results in some conflicting actions and comments made by the character. While Frankenstein tells Walton the story of his life since he does not want the sea captain to follow in his footsteps of despair and misfortunes, he also says:

> I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been . . . . listen to my tale, I believe that the strange incidents connected with it will afford a view of nature, which may enlarge your faculties and understanding. (Shelley, 2004, p. 25)

By this remark, he ensures that the story is passed on to, and serves as a warning for future generations. For this reason, it might also be deduced that Victor is conscious of how immoral his actions have been. On the other hand,

however, despite his tone of warning, by the end of the novel, Frankenstein exhorts Walton's crew to persevere in their journey when the men demand to return home. Victor says:

> What do you mean? What do you demand of your captain? Are you then so easily turned from your design? Did you not call this a glorious expedition? And wherefore was it glorious? Not because the way was smooth and placid as a southern sea but . . . because danger and death surrounded, and these dangers you were to brave and overcome . . . . You were hereafter to be hailed as benefactors of your species; your name adored, as belonging to brave men who encountered death for honor and benefit of mankind. And now, behold, with the first imagination of danger . . . you shrink away . . . Do not return to your families with the stigma of disgrace marked on your brows. Return as heroes who have fought and conquered and who know not what it is to turn their backs on the foe. (Shelley, 2004, p. 265)

The trapped crew demands to return home. Frankenstein, however, responds to this by delivering a passionate speech, and he even goes to the extent of accusing the men of cowardice and unmanly behaviour: he tells them that death is preferable to the shame of returning home without having risked every danger in the pursuit of their "glorious expedition." If they are to abandon their expedition, they will return home with the "stigma of disgrace." When judged by this speech, it might be inferred that Victor has not learnt much of his ordeal as he "does not truly recognize . . . the hopelessness of any success that another, like himself, may attain." (Thornburg, 1987, p. 116) He apparently still feels that people should put their own feelings and desires above everybody else's. Furthermore, on his deathbed, he cautions the sea captain against excessive ambition and curiosity, saying ". . . avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries." (Shelley, 2004, p. 271) However, despite the warning, Victor is unwilling to relinquish his ambitions as his last words to Walton leave open

the possibility of the future success of similar quests for knowledge: “Yet why do I say this? I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed.” (Shelley, 2004, p. 271) Hence, although he acknowledges that he has allowed his desire for knowledge and understanding to develop into a self-destructive passion, Victor never really gives up his original vision. In this regard, he, by the end of his final developmental stage, does not achieve full maturity.

While Frankenstein fails in achieving maturity, Walton can be regarded as a more mature romantic hero. Primarily,

> the explorer starts the novel by relating to his own aspirations. Writing home to his sister, he enthuses about his project, of how, feeling the breeze that gives him a foretaste of those icy climes, he is inspired by this wind of promise and by the fervent and vivid daydreams. Suppressing images of frost and desolation, he imagines the North Pole as the region of beauty and delight, a region of eternal sunlight diffusing a perpetual splendour. This . . . fantasy of a paradisiacal Pole exerts an irresistible attraction for him and repels any fear of death and danger as it promises a realm of total unity, a place of complete undifferentiation. (Botting, 1991, p. 131)

As he has the romantic striving against the customary limitations, and is tempted to know what no one else knows, Walton replicates the aspirations of Frankenstein. However, he never reaches the North Pole and, instead of discovering the realm of eternal sunlight, his ship is trapped by enormous icebergs. Although “the desire for discovery, encouraged by Frankenstein, lingers on . . . the explorer . . . abandons his pursuit after his crew have threatened mutiny.” (Botting, 1991, p. 132) At this final stage of the novel, Walton’s choice, whether to follow Victor’s example of solitary endeavour or return to his sister’s domestic life, unveils him to be a responsible and mature adult. There is something to learn for Walton: through Frankenstein’s account

of his tale, Walton receives a lesson and learns that man is ambitious, blind to himself, self-deceptive and egotistic. Therefore, he will keep the promise: he will kill no albatross.

In *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley demonstrates that, in capitalist systems, the individual human psyche is formed and deformed by such factors as education, money and class, the meanings of which are shaped by the culture itself. These phenomena constituting individual consciousness are what Mary Shelley describes. In her depiction of Frankenstein as a character who, in his choice of career and his devotion to a practical ambition, acts in accordance with the expectations and dictates of his "enlightened" culture, Mary Shelley not only deplores the way in which individuals' personalities are moulded by the 19th century industrial and progressive society, but also shows that capitalist order disrupts the healthy growth of human psyche. Through the creation of the Monster, she reveals that it is on account of materialistic undercurrents that individual perversity grows. Hence, Frankenstein's desire to go beyond the human limits and his formed psychology are the hallmarks of an age Mary Shelley shows to be cataclysmic.

CONCLUSION

Surrounded by the great literary figures of Romantic tradition, Mary Shelley was acquainted by the revolutionary ideas of her era. As the last gothic writer of the Romantic tradition, she depicts in *Frankenstein* the new capitalist paradigm as cataclysmic: she sees Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, and the eventual progressive capitalist system as the great threats to human existence on earth. When she wrote *Frankenstein* in 1818, the Age of Rationalism had already changed the face of Europe and was beginning to give rise to the Industrial Revolution, which involved not just rapid economic and technological transformation, but also an urban and a social revolution, having the potential to subvert authority, tradition, religion, and morality. In her work, Mary Shelley not only lampoons the destructive side of industry, but also challenges the Enlightenment philosophy, and the new capitalist order established through the rise of industrialization in the West. She shows that materialism and the moral lacunae of her age are the outcomes of rapid social and individual transformations. Hence, she presents Victor Frankenstein as a Machiavellian hero, the new individual of the progressive age who is eager to rise up on the social ladder, and who defies all religious and ethical codes for the purpose of any needed outcome. Although Frankenstein begins life with seemingly high intellectual ideals such as increasing the store of knowledge and contributing to the well-being of mankind, his personality becomes

increasingly obsessive and self-absorbed. His wish to discover the principle of life develops, later on, into a desire to employ that knowledge to create life for his own purposes. As he pursues this single-minded ambition, he loses sight of all established morals and natural laws and creates a "monster." However, his initial desire to create a being is replaced by the desire to destroy the Monster, so that he is always *possessed* by an obsessive pursuit, which eventually destroys him. Through her protagonist, Mary Shelley shows that in the new age for the sake of progressing, man is about to transcend the limits and break the ethical barriers placed before him; he is stricken with a hysterical attitude for more, a hunger leading him to his total destruction.

In presenting Frankenstein as a character who is hungry for more, Mary Shelley reveals him to be the product of the capitalist age. Imbued with the spirit of this age, the character displays the traits of an eighteenth century bourgeois man. In his attempt to create a "faultless" being, he begins to embrace an exaggerated belief in the perfection of humanity based on reason. However, his efforts are limited to manufacturing a "monster." Victor's desire to transcend the human limits and his formed psychology are, therefore, the characteristics of an age Mary Shelley shows to be catastrophic.

Significant too is the fact that in criticizing the advent of the new capitalist world, Mary Shelley reveals that the capitalist order disrupts the healthy growth of human psyche. Born into the capitalist values of his age, Frankenstein accepts and receives the teachings of his progressive era. That he has been taught only to gain in this world by his materialist culture is of particular significance as Victor faces up to the concept of *loss* for the first time when his mother dies of scarlet fever. *The loss* causes a psychological

injury and, in order to heal the wound, he cuts all his ties with the past paradigm and begins his experiments with the stated aim of creating a new species beyond mortality. He believes that if he acquires the knowledge of creation, he can conquer the greatest of all human miseries: death itself. Possessed by the idea of defeating death, he endeavors to discover the hidden laws of nature. His consuming ambition for success, however, blinds him to the consequences of his project for all he aspires to is his goal of achievement and not the repercussions of his action. In this regard, he is utterly egotistic and self-serving. Through her protagonist, Mary Shelley unveils that such an extraordinary psychological reaction can only be shaped in an industrial, possessive culture which constructs personalities like Frankenstein. In a society where materialistic and empiricist undercurrents mould individual personalities, Frankenstein is a case personality who typifies in his character the Enlightenment ideal of "progress," and of achieving the impossible for social emolument.

While Frankenstein's process of creating the Monster is characterized by a trance-like state of being owing to his capitalist nature, he does not succeed in his endeavours of forming a perfect being. The Creature literally sewn together from dead body parts and animated by arcane knowledge looks filthy. With its hideous exterior, he cannot be viewed without terror. The Creature is, in fact, the product of Frankenstein's "creative self," a grandiose embodiment of the creator's ambitious and egotistic mind. He is the result not only of Victor's depraved view of science and of life but also of his perverse psyche. Through her title character and his creature's faulty and imperfect appearance,

Mary Shelley demonstrates that capitalist and progressive mentality of both society and individual produces perversity.

To conclude, in *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley regards the new social paradigm as destructively alarming, presenting the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution as the perils to human existence on earth. Via her title character and his creation, she demonstrates that this new order of life brings with it spiritual, moral and intellectual lacunae by hindering the healthy growth of human psyche. Therefore, in her work, she lampoons the destructive side of industry, and calls into question the Enlightenment philosophy and the new capitalist progressive order. By this way, she establishes in the reader a certain heterodoxy concerning the ethics, and warns against the danger awaiting mankind. At the end of the novel, as her protagonist does not abandon his original vision and leaves open the possibility of the future success of similar quests for knowledge, she unfolds a sombre and pessimistic vision of mankind, confronting inevitable destruction.

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APPENDIX

CIRRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

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EDUCATION

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BA	Ankara University, Department of American Culture and Literature	2005
ELT Certificate	Ankara University, Faculty of Educational Sciences, ELT Certificate Programme	2005
High School	Brussels American High School, Belgium	(Accreditation) 2001

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2007 – Present	Ufuk University, Department of English Language Teaching	Instructor (Öğretim Görevlisi)
2006 – 2007	Ufuk University, Preparatory School	Instructor (Okutman)

COURSES GIVEN

Year	Course Name
2009 - 2010	ELT 107 Listening and Pronunciation I ELT 108 Listening and Pronunciation II ELT 203 English Literature I ELT 204 English Literature II
2008 - 2009	ELT 103 Oral Communication Skills I ELT 104 Oral Communication Skills II ELT 107 Listening and Pronunciation I ELT 108 Listening and Pronunciation II ELT 204 English Literature II
2007 - 2008	ELT 107 Listening and Pronunciation I ELT 108 Listening and Pronunciation II ELT 103 Oral Communication Skills I ELT 104 Oral Communication Skills II ELT 101 Contextual Grammar I ELT 102 Contextual Grammar II ELT 303 Short Story: analysis and teaching
2006 - 2007	Ufuk University Preparatory School Courses

FOREGIN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, French (fair)

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Literature and Poetry, Oral Communication Skills, Listening and Pronunciation.