

## Person and Personality – Dichotomy and the Proper Name

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### Abstract

In this article we will try to show how the binary structure of the novel is also contained in many small elements that can be found throughout the story. The main story line is told in two main parts: Frankenstein's story and the Creature's story. We will show how the author uses small dichotomies/binarisms in order to incorporate them in the bigger frame of the divided story. These dichotomies are mostly incorporated in proper names which mainly show the opposite of the character of the person (Victor – the beaten; Felix – the unlucky; Justine – unjustly murdered...).

**Keywords:** dichotomy, binarism, Freud, proper name, person

### Introduction

In Mary Shelley's work named *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus*, she responded to a challenge that her husband, Percy Shelley, set her to face along with a close family friend named Lord Byron. Namely, the two who are probably the greatest poets of English Romanticism, during their socializing during the summer of 1816, were inspired by reading ghost stories and decided to arrange a competition in writing horror stories (horror story competition). Mary Shelley, whom at that time in many ways stood out from women-models in society, accepted the challenge and wrote her first and most popular book, *Frankenstein*.

However, *Frankenstein* was not only the ultimate literary work of a female individual in that time period (beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century), but a „highly individual and original piece of writing.“ (Marsh, 2009:206).

Where is the originality of *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* reflected upon? In relation to its two potential impacts, the gothic novel and Milton's *Lost Paradise*, *Frankenstein* shows many novelties. First of all, the gothic novel develops the theme of horror stories, related to ghosts, abandoned castles, and dungeons from the middle ages. The action in *Frankenstein* is placed in a contemporary context. The idea in a gothic novel is always based on the supernatural, while the work of Mary Shelley is substantiated with scientific evidence, where the novel deserved to be called the first science fiction novel. The novel gave incentives to many later written superb novels such as *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) by Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker and others.

The comparison with Milton's *Lost Paradise*, mainly stems from the fact that the Creature was reading that book and from there it acquired certain knowledge. There is no doubt the Mary

Shelley was reading *Lost Paradise* (having to read other books as well since her father worked as a publisher and had his own printing house and bookshop at the house). However, the comparison between the characters of *Lost Paradise* and *Frankenstein* seem a bit pretentious. In that way, for example, Gilbert and Gubar (cf. 2000<sup>2</sup>:230-232) compared Victor Frankenstein among other things, even with Eve since Victor Frankenstein “brought to the world” a child. They compare the language used in description of the creation of the Creature with the labour pain of Eve, the labour pain of a woman, during childbirth: „incredible labours“, „a passing trance“, oppressed by a slow fever“, „nervous to a painful degree“ ... (ibid. 232).

Other than the characters, the comparison is retreated from the three-part structure in *Frankenstein* and *Lost Paradise*. While the structure in Milton’s novel is divided in three parts, it is obvious that Shelley’s novel is divided into two parts, until the eventual third part can be interpreted as a sort of prologue or an epilogue describing Captain Walton.

In our seminar, we will examine the possible ways of reading *Frankenstein* and we will direct our attention to the dichotomy/binarism that pervades throughout the entire novel.

### **Binary Structure of the Novel**

As mentioned above, the action of the novel consists of two main parts in which each of the main characters, Victor and the Creature, are telling their own life story. Their stories are framed by a prologue and epilogue of a young sailor, Robert Walton, who was detained with ice far away from the North Pole, and wrote his stories to his sister in the form of a letter.<sup>1</sup>

The very structure of the novel gives a hint that permeates the main motive to a greater or lesser form of the entire novel – binarism. Namely, Victor and the Creature describe two seemingly separate stories that are permeated with smaller episodes from other people's lives (De Lacey family, Justine Moritz, Elizabeth Lavanza), and all of which together make up one whole and affect the psychological profile of the main characters. From seemingly different and unrelated stories, there will come a merge of the common goal the two main characters will share - the destruction of the other.

Regarding Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein*, countless articles are written, essays and reviews, and the ways in which the novel is interpreted are the following-

Cultural criticism that connects the term Creature with the situation in society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Postcolonial criticism that associates the term Creature with xenophobia and the inability of society to accept the difference and diversity.

Psychoanalytical criticism or the reading in which we can see *Frankenstein*’s double in the Creature, actually his *alter ego*.

We can add to these readings the ability to connect the content of the novel with the life of the author of the novel and so we get a certain autobiographical reading of the novel. Her mother dies by giving birth to her so she becomes the cause of her death; her father marries another woman and distance himself from her, sends her to school where she is left to herself, had an affair in which her child was born. The act of giving birth to her became monstrous as she

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<sup>1</sup> Since the novel did not share with us any prospective answers from Walton's sisters, Walton's letters served as an introduction and completion of two related stories - Victor's and the Creature's.

passed through a series of pregnancies, miscarriages, death of a newborn child and postnatal depression. (cf. Gjurgjan, 2002:292-293 respectively Shelley, 246-247).

## **Selection and Meaning of the Names (Covert Conflicts)**

### **Title of the Novel**

Before the actual analysis of the novel, we would say something about the title and the names of the characters, which, we believe, already with the selection points the character of the person.

The subtitle holds the name: *Modern Prometheus*. In Greek mythology, Prometheus was the titan who stood up against the will of the gods, Zeus, primarily to the Supreme God, in a way that because of the sympathy that he felt towards people, he took away the fire to allow them easier and better life. In that way, Prometheus gave them the independence and people ceased to be in need of the Gods. Fire as a factor for a better life was discovered by the Creature: "When night came again I found, with pleasure, that the fire gave light as well as heat and that the discovery of this element was useful to me in my food ..." (Frankenstein, p. 130)

Victor Frankenstein, from the reason Freud calls it sublimation<sup>1</sup>, creates a new being which should not only provide a better life, but to even conquer death: "Pursuing these reflections, I thought that if I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might in process of time (although I now found it impossible) renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption." (Frankenstein, p. 65)

However, after the achieved goals, Prometheus and Frankenstein suffered unbearable pain, one physical: Prometheus was chained to the Ural Mountains where crows pecked his liver, and the other psychological: Frankenstein's guilty conscience that gnawed at him, to the point of death: "My own agitation and anguish was extreme during the whole trial. (...) I could not sustain the horror of my situation... The tortures of the accused did not equal mine; she was sustained by innocence, but the fangs of remorse tore my bosom and would not forgo their hold." (Frankenstein, p. 105)

Apart from these obvious reminiscences of Prometheus, in several places of the novel, the author uses terms and expressions related to the fire, spark, light where she can strongly show the similarities between Frankenstein and Prometheus:

"... I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world." (Frankenstein, p. 65)

"... that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing ..." (Frankenstein, p. 69)

"... come on, then, that I may extinguish the spark which I so negligently bestowed." (Frankenstein, p. 123)

### **Names of the Characters**

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<sup>1</sup> One of the ways we tackle the unfulfilled desires is sublimation, Freud's term denoting the management of desire towards some socially accepted goal. (see Eagleton, 2003<sup>2</sup>)

The names of the characters, or for at least some, seem to not be completely random. She determines or to a certain extent illustrates some of the main characteristic traits of individual characters and in a certain way leads them towards the path of their fate.

In the name Victor Frankenstein, we can simply read the author's ironic game of the meaning of the word victor and the fate of the young scientist. Victor (lat. winner) managed to discover a way to breathe life and so to defeat death. Therefore, he is victorious over death. But his victory became a Pyrrhic victory and had a vast taste of defeat. He overcame death but all his loved ones died. Inside the same person he faced the greatest winner and the biggest loser.

The author probably picked the last name Frankenstein because in her "nomadic" life, she lived in close by village of the same name.<sup>1</sup>

However, there are other ways of interpreting the selection of the last name Frankenstein. Very often, it is described as a combination of *frank* ("free") and *stein* ("stone"). This can be interpreted in various ways: free in the access to science, liberal and yet steady as a rock, firm and resolute in his intention. The second interpretation is associated towards religiosity: *stein* (cup stone) the enchanted cup which Christ drank from at the last supper. Furthermore, it can be seen as a very common place name in Germany.

The second part of the last name, *stein*, as we have noted means "stone"<sup>2</sup>, is a very common suffix in last names all over Germany. He represents the strong and resolute character of a young scientist to succeed in his intention, whatever it might be. He is adamant in that to achieve all the goals alleged by his family and society. After all, he is determined in his intention even at the price of being his own victim, to stand in defence of humanity and to defend it from the danger of the Creature's threat, where it declared war, "perpetual war to that type," meaning to humanity. However Frankenstein, sensing or imagining the potential danger of creating a female being firmly took his stand: "Begone! I am firm, and your words will only exasperate my rage." (Frankenstein, p. 212)

The first part of the last name *Franken*, can be linked to a province in Germany. In that act, nothing would be unusual because ethnonyms are very common occurrence in names and last names, if it were not for that province that borrowed the name of France. Namely, the Franks as a Germanic tribe conquered the area of today's France, which would then be banished from the Romans that actually kept the name France. After the expulsion of the Germans, their name remains but the eternal antagonism between the French and the Germans is felt even today. It is just enough to recall the centuries and centuries of war between the two countries and to realize that these are two irreconcilable sides (the same people).

Due to that, Shelley placed the action in Switzerland which again, paradoxically, brought together the four nations including the French and the Germans. And so, Victor Frankenstein in his name and last name is split in two irreconcilable parts.

The attention Shelley gave to symbolism can be seen in the names of several characters.

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<sup>1</sup> Today, the village is called Zabkowice Slaskie and is located in Poland, while it belonged to Germany in the 19th century.

<sup>2</sup> The name can also be interpreted as homage to her mother Mary Wollstonecraft.

Justine Moritz, whose name with a little imagination means „righteous / justice dies”<sup>1</sup>, is wrongly accused of the murder of Victor’s brother William and is being carried to the scaffold where she was executed despite her innocence and justice.

Henry Clerval, Victor’s friend and faithful companion since childhood, symbolizes a blend of purity and nature: “He was a being formed in the ‘very poetry of nature.’ His wild and enthusiastic imagination was chastened by the sensibility of his heart. His soul overflowed with ardent affections...” (Frankenstein, p. 197) His last name precisely means “clear / clear valley” (fr. *clair* – “clear”; *val(ée)* – “valley”).<sup>2</sup>

Felix De Lacey (from the Creature’s stories of the De Lacey’s) was a sad young man who lived with his father and sister in one cabin. “They were not entirely happy. The young man and his companion often went apart and appeared to weep.” (Frankenstein, p. 138) “... I was inquisitive to know why Felix appeared so miserable ...” (Frankenstein, p. 143)

His kind of condition lasted until the arrival of a young Arab woman names Safi. She was Felix’s love and the reason for his previous depression and sadness and future happiness. “Felix seemed ravished with delight when he saw her, every trait of sorrow vanished from his face, and it instantly expressed a degree of ecstatic joy ...” (Frankenstein, p. 146) It is essential here to note another element in addition to the referral name (lat. *Felix* “happy”) on the mental state of the person. The Creature connects the feelings of happiness with sharing the feelings of love to the opposite sex (which he could not and will never be able to feel), which will have a major impact on the further course of the story.

From all the examples above, dichotomy/binarism is clearly outlined and the symbolism of conflict between the name and the person, respectively, their faith.

### **Name vs. No name (Nameless Others)**

Regarding the names of the characters in the novel, the Creature probably carried the most significant name. In fact, he was nameless, with no name whatsoever. This fact spoke about its status in society and the numerous unpleasant outcomes it faced for not having a name. The Creature was rejected, did not belong to society, was nobody, was not a person and he did not even have a name. Gjurgjan calls it the nameless Other, excluded from the society (2002:293) Many consequences derived, as we shall see, because of not naming a newly formed (new-born) being.

When a child is born, the first thing he/she receives is a name and owning a surname places the child in a narrow community called family. In this way, the name defines the child in relation to other individuals and the surname allows a specific affiliation to the community. Therefore, at birth the child becomes an identified individual in the community and it provides the child with security and love.

However, the opposite happened to the creature: he did not have a name and belonged to no one. It was bothered by this fact so much that at one point it asked: „But where were my friends and relations? No father had watched my infant days, no mother had blessed me with smiles

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<sup>1</sup> lat. *justitia* “justice”; *morire* “to die”

<sup>2</sup> Let us add in the fact that her half-sister was named Claire (Jane) Clairmont and there as well we could have seen a word play: *val* – *mont* (“valley” – “hill”). A particular influence probably played a role in the special relationship between Mary Shelley and her sisters. (See more in Marsh 2009:183-197).

and caresses ...“ (Frankenstein, p. 151) In the Creature’s eyes, we can observe how it alluded to the idyllic family life of the De Lacey’s. Despite the many hardships that have hit them, feelings of harmony and love were always present. At the end of its lamentations of its miserable condition which it was in, the creature added: „What was I? The question again recurred, to be answered only with groans.“ (Frankenstein, p. 151)

It seemed as if the Creature was suffering from a lack of the oedipal complex. Lin formulated it in the following way: “Creature must now search for that lost (m)Other who rejected and abandoned him at the moment of his birth; the abruptness of this "mother-child" separation makes it impossible for him to sense that moment of wholeness/oneness that may ideally be experienced in the oedipal stage.” (Lin, 2005:30).

Growing up in a family community, the child goes through many stages of development until he/she accepts the situation and function he/she has to take over in the family, which are imposed by the society the child lives in. Throughout the adolescence, when the child “successfully” passes through all the earlier stages, it then develops into a person. The Creature said for himself: “From my earliest remembrance I had been as I then was in height and proportion. I had never yet seen a being resembling me or who claimed any intercourse with me.” (Frankenstein, p. 151) The Creature was compelled to create a link between its own isolated existence and the outside world. In that particular act, he had no protection from family and was like a helpless new-born. Therefore, it lacked one stage in life where it was supposed to meet and deal with the oedipal complex. “It is not just another complex: it is the structure of relations by which we come to be the men and women that we are. It is the point at which we are produced and constituted as subjects; and one problem for us is that it is always in some sense a partial, defective mechanism... Moreover, the Oedipus complex is for Freud the beginnings of morality, conscience, law and all forms of social and religious authority.” (Eagleton, 2003<sup>2</sup>:135-136).

The Creature was deprived from those norms and moral senses, which allowed it to that extent to suppress guilt to continue on with the killings and hurting people he knew were innocent. The Creature did all of those horrific acts only with the intention to hurt Victor Frankenstein as much as possible. It was guided by its instincts since it did not have a reliable someone to learn from and adopt the rules of human society.

Of course, here one can ask the question: “Why do many people who have had a normal childhood reach out to violence and why does one’s own conscience trouble someone more and someone much less? According to Freud one of the problems is that the Oedipus complex is in some ways always an incomplete, truncated mechanism (see Eagleton, 2003<sup>2</sup>: 134-135). Similarly, it can be read from the words of Victor Frankenstein: “...we are unfashioned creatures, but half made up, if one wiser, better, dearer than ourselves – such a friend ought to be – do not lend his aid to perfectionate our weak and faulty natures.“ (Frankenstein, p. 30)

The Creature understood that in human society there are rules that are based on a number of complex relationships that are affected by natural and acquired feelings (for example: the relationship of a mother and child, father and son, and feelings that develop in these relationships). The Creature desired to get to know these feelings, but those feelings could not have been artificially learned. It referred to the De Lacey’s<sup>1</sup> as protectors, wanting nothing

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<sup>1</sup> The De Lacey family represented the world in a miniature, actually as an image of a functioning broader human society.

more than to identify and get closer to them. However, as the Creature himself admitted, it all happened to be an innocent, but half-painful self-deception (Frankenstein, 130). The Creature wanted to feel their feelings and be able to apply them even though it did realize that at the same time it is alike and unlike people. It could have discerned the feelings of which the De Lacey's spoke of at their cottage, as the Creature listened to their lessons being taught. Unfortunately, he was not able to feel them because those feelings were gained mutually rather than being a one-way activity. Despite all the effort, the Creature remained nameless and as an undeveloped spirit. No one cared for it and it felt no sense of belonging. It was akin to no one, had no sense of love and understanding from another person and was rejected and maladjusted in human society.

In addition, even though Victor Frankenstein was completely sure in his success that he will create a man (human being), it never crossed his mind that that man should have a name (personal identification of an individual). Having no name, Victor referred to the Creature as: a demon, demonic carcasses, monster, devil, creature of Satan, destroyer, vile creature, parasite, creepy devil, and creature<sup>1</sup>.

## 5. Creator vs. Creation

Only God, the creator, has the privilege to create a living being. M. Shelley was aware of that, as she explained in the preface of her novel the idea that prompted her to write it: "I saw – with shut eyes, but acute mental vision – I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half-vital motion. Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world." (Frankenstein, p. 6)

As a 13-year-old boy, Victor Frankenstein began to take an interest in the "secrets of heaven and Earth," and his curiosity and research were always focused on the metaphysical and physical secrets of the world. When he was 17 years old, his parents decided to send him the University of Ingolstadt, where he met professors of natural philosophy and chemistry. They guided him towards the achievements in modern science and he was delighted with the outcomes of his studies in those fields. In particular, he was interested in the structural aspect of the human body. Victor rapidly progressed in his studies and after only two years of dedicated work, managed to discover the secret of giving a life: "After days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue, I succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life; nay, more, I became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter." (Frankenstein, p. 63)

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<sup>1</sup>Since the Creature had no name, we decided to call the newly created being: The Creature, and we wrote it capitalized to distinguish it from other, real unidentified creatures. Also, we did not want to call it a monster due to the relativity of the concept and applicability to other characters in the novel, which were considered as human beings and called by their own name. Nowadays, the Creature is often called by the last name of his creator, Frankenstein, so many titles of movies in relation to the novel appear as: *Frankenstein's son*, *Frankenstein's house*, *Frankenstein's encounter with a man-wolf* and many others in which the Creature has a name. (Information taken from Gjurgjan, 2002:292).

After his adolescent fantasies about the creation of the world, Victor Frankenstein began to reach closer to his own Creator. Like Him, he had the power of giving life. In this way, he as a man became God.

The similarity which he and the Creator shared did not stop. His spirit travelled further and exceeded the limits of a self-conscious scientist that made his achievements for the availability and benefit of mankind. "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." (Frankenstein, p. 65)

Victor's thoughts and plans went too deep and far out into the bloom. Apart from defeating life, he got drifted into the idea that he was able to even defeat death. The traumatic shock he felt in the oedipal phase when he lost his mother, made him come up with the idea to overcome death. More precisely, to bring the dead back to life. His idea was closely related to the death of his dearly missed mother and the inability to reconcile with it. He created a new form from death, hoping how someday he will succeed to reach his original subject of desire-his mother. This can be seen from the dream he had after the revival of the Creature.

The other connection we have with the Creator is the Creature's salutation to Victor Frankenstein. At the beginning, the Creature addressed Victor as "My Creator." As the story went further, the Creature talked much more about the embarrassments, disappointments and sufferings he faced in its short-term life. The Creature portrayed his creator as a cursed creator. Therefore, from an imaginary and blessed creator, he became a hated, cursed creator.

A few other minor comparisons with the Creator can be found in the text.

The Creature criticized Frankenstein for creating it as a freaky and hopeless monster, when God created Adam in his own image as a perfect being. "Like Adam, I was apparently united by no link to any other being in existence; but his state was far different from mine in any other respect. He had come forth from the hands of God a perfect creature, happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care of his Creator; he was allowed to converse with and acquire knowledge from beings of a superior nature, but I was wretched, helpless and alone." (Frankenstein, p. 163)

The Creature mostly disliked the fact of being alone and for not having a companion like Eve: "... no Eve soothed my sorrows nor shared my thoughts; I was alone." (Frankenstein, p. 165) Here we can see the evident connection and dependence the Creature had towards its Creator: the demand for a female counterpart represented the emptiness, the inability to enter the symbolic establishment of primary human relations and to structure subjectivity. This feeling of emptiness will be of crucial importance for the actions taken throughout the entire novel.

However, perhaps the best comparison with the Creator and the creation of a living creature happened after the revival of the Creature. At one in the morning on a gloomy November night, Victor felt disgusted from the moment the Creature opened its eyes, which caused him to faint. When he woke up, the first thing he saw was a white tower of the church in Ingolstadt. It is clear that the church represented God and that He in that way pointed out to Frankenstein that he knew about his venture. This is confirmed by the clock on the tower "...which indicated the sixth hour." (Frankenstein, p. 71) Again, the reminiscence of creation is clear, respectively, *the Book of Genesis*, in which God created man on the sixth day.

## 6. Life vs. Death (Eros vs. Thanatos)

### a. Life vs. Death

Mary Shelley's novel can be understood from various perspectives and it indeed befits the finest work of Gothic literature. One of the main motives that pervade the entire novel is probably the motive of life and death (which, given that we are talking about two opposite ends of one appearance-existence fits well in the general binarism motive in the novel)<sup>1</sup>.

The very background of the story is tied to the desire of finding the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life.<sup>2</sup> Frankenstein's advancement in science was directed to inhale life to the inanimate - create a living being. The ultimate goal, which he failed to accomplish, was to conquer death.

Countless times, life and death were evoked in the novel, and several times mentioned in such phrases: "Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through ..." (Frankenstein, p. 65)

However, while in the beginning the author approaches syntagm *life and death* rather frivolously, as if it is about a harmless issue, later in the novel, she takes on a much deeper and more subtle meaning. It is no longer just about a term that could be attributed to a youthful dazzle of one's own success or kind of rashness. That phrase slowly takes on the fullness of what Freud summarized in words that the aim of all life is death. Eagleton expresses it as follows: "The final goal of life is death, a return to that blissful inanimate state where the ego cannot be injured." (Eagleton, 2003<sup>2</sup>:139)

"Let the day therefore be fixed; and on it I will consecrate myself, in life or death, to the happiness of my cousin." (Frankenstein, p. 241)

"... and I devote myself, either in my life or death, to his destruction." (Frankenstein, p. 254)

Victor Frankenstein is aware that only the death of one of them (him or the Creature), will bring peace. To give a peaceful life to his family, he decided to fulfil a long time ago promise, which was to marry his adoptive cousin named Elizabeth Lavanza. The decision about the wedding was caused and approved by the feelings he always had towards Elizabeth, his mother's last wish for them to marry before her death, the urging of his father and mostly the Creature's words. After Victor Frankenstein broke his word about creating a new female counterpart, the Creature "promised" Victor: "... but remember, I shall be with you on your wedding-night." (Frankenstein, p. 213)

Victor Frankenstein rated that moment as very likely the last one to directly meet with the Creature, and that the death of one of them will interrupt the series of senseless killings. Victor is aware that the Creature's death will not bring him the desired peace and freedom, yet his family will then be able to relax because he will no longer be tortured and persecuted by the Creature.

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<sup>1</sup> "If Victor is the creator of the Creature's life, the latter is the author the former's death." (Lin, 2005:48).

<sup>2</sup> As an adolescent, Victor Frankenstein was amused by the works of Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus and Albert Magnus, who practiced chemistry, magic and occult sciences that lead to gaining the best knowledge of God.

"If he were vanquished, I should be a free man. Alas! What freedom? Such as a peasant enjoys when his family have been massacred before his eyes, his cottage burnt, his lands laid waste, and he is turned adrift, homeless, penniless, and alone, but free." (Frankenstein, p. 239)

On the other hand, he knew that the Creature was much stronger than him and that his death would be a much more certain outcome from a combat with it. That would actually be a twice more favourable outcome for Victor. After the Creature kills Victor, he will no longer have an incentive for further persecution of his family because he only and primarily wants revenge from Victor and in this way, his family will be safe. "Well, be it so; a deadly struggle would then assuredly take place, in which if he were victorious I should be at peace and his power over me be at an end." (Frankenstein, p. 239)

In that situation, we realize Freud's words and Eagleton's paraphrases. Only in death, in return to a senseless state, his ego will become safe knowing that neither he nor his family will experience something terrible.

When talking about life and death separately, you can read along how death only brings the real and true salvation from life. Life and death are inseparable parts of our being: something that we have always been and something that we will always be forever.

Striving towards death and repulsion from life can be read in the following allegations:

The Creature could still not conceive the state of death, but he knew well the feeling of pain and he said: "... but I learned that there was but one means to overcome the sensation of pain, and that was death..." (Frankenstein, p. 151)

Victor, after the accusations against him for the death of his friend Henry Clerval with resignation asked: "Persecuted and tortured as I am and have been, can death be any evil to me?" (Frankenstein, p. 227)

When Victor saw how dead and mutilated Elizabeth looked lying down on their bed, in disgust and some kind of insane irony noted: "Could I behold this and live? Alas! Life is obstinate and clings closest where it is most hated." (Frankenstein, p. 248)

The pain that permeates us in life (in that short sequence of our (non) existence) incomparably is larger and heavier than any kind of death whatever we thought about it.

## **Eros vs. Thanatos**

### **Eros**

Eros and Thanatos are in very close connection with life and death, almost of perfect synonyms with the difference that life and death are conditions and Eros and Thanatos are instincts for those conditions.

About Eros as the instinct for life, was written by J. Hale in his article 'Constructing Connectedness: Gender, Sexuality and Race in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein'. She sees it strictly as a desire for erotic love, for sexual deprivation, and she seeks the confirmation in certain behaviour that Victor and the Creature possess.

Victor Frankenstein was jealous of a female's privilege to give birth, so he decided to confront nature and create a new life himself. The drama of a monstrous creation is the result of a scientist's repressed desire (Oedipal desire for your mother).

Hale attributed particular sexual instincts to the killings committed by the Creature. "Gazing at the portrait of the beautiful Caroline Beaufort, the monster revises his account of why he murdered William – not "to silence him" or to exact "eternal revenge", but because he was "deprived the delights" of erotic love. The monster clearly associates his violent, murderous acts with sexual deprivation" (Hale, 2001:15).

Eros and Thanatos are directly connected in the Creature's character. Appealing to Justine in her sleep after killing William, once again reveals the Creature's erotic desire to the opposite sex: "Awake, fairest, thy lover is near – he who would give his life but to obtain one look of affection from thine eyes; my beloved, awake!" (Frankenstein, p. 181)

However, if we move away from Eros as the sole instinct for sexuality and if we examine it as a drive for life that is contrast with Thanatos, the death drive, we can see that the Creature's craving is primarily geared towards sensual rather than sexual emotions. It wants someone who will not abhor its appearance, someone it can share its feelings with and someone it will be able to live with. It does not care where it will live (he swore that he would go to South America). It is important to the Creature to just live, to feel, and that in return it receives the same feelings.

In the dialogue with Victor, we can see the Creature's true feelings:

"I am alone and miserable; man will not associate with me"; "You must create a female for me with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being."; "Am I not shunned and hated by all mankind?"; "Let him live with me in the interchange of kindness, and instead of injury I would bestow every benefit upon him with tears of gratitude at his acceptance."; "If any being felt emotions of benevolence towards me, I should return them a hundred and a hundredfold", "Oh! My creator, make me happy; let me feel gratitude towards you for one benefit! Let me see that I excite the sympathy of some existing thing", "My evil passions will have fled, for I shall meet with sympathy!" (Frankenstein, pp. 182 – 185)

Primarily, the important thing to the Creature was the sensibility for humane moral feelings and that the drive for Eros is secondary in its request for a female being. The creature wanted someone who will have the same flaws as he did, even though he knew that they will always be seen as monsters to humanity. "...cut off from all the world; but on that account we shall be more attached to one another. Our lives will not be happy, but they will be harmless and free from the misery I now feel." (Frankenstein, pp. 183-184) Paradoxically, the Creature (monster) wants a life worthy of a man that the Creature (man) can disable with monstrous evil and guided by human logic and laws.

However, it should be noted that the Creature did not ask for the exact same being as it was, but for a female counterpart. Although he declared that it would be overjoyed grateful a thousand times for the exchange of affection with a human (it did not specify whether it was referring to a man or woman), nevertheless, it is only asking for a female counterpart-being of the opposite sex. It can be that when the Creatures saw the happiness that seized Felix De Lacey when Safia came, he realized that the right sense of fulfilment comes only from a relationship of a man and a woman. In other words, beings of the same race but opposite sex and therefore, the Creature required a companion. Maybe even somewhere in its mind lies the thought how one day it might want to have a sense of being a parent (parent-child), which it was unfairly abridged from. Besides, being a parent is also one of the most important feelings

in human life, which in numerous ways makes the Creature's existence difficult to accept where it tends to feel unfulfilled and denied.

In that case and only in that one, we can understand Victor Frankenstein when he said: "Shall I create another like yourself, whose joint wickedness might desolate the world?" (Frankenstein, p. 182)

### **Thanatos**

"The aim of all life is death" (Freud)

At the beginning of this chapter, we have already mentioned Freud's statement written above that appears as a ubiquitous paradox of every life. In fact, no one wants to die and as much as possible with the aid of various assistive devices (for example, the elixir of life, philosopher's stone), everyone would like to live longer and even for eternity. However, the human ego drives us to accept death as a peaceful phase in the continuation of (non) existence. The human ego is subject to external influence which makes it either happy or oppressive. "The ego is a pitiable, precarious entity, battered by the external world, scourged by the cruel upbraiding's of the superego, plagued by the greedy, insatiable demands of the id." (Eagleton, 2003<sup>2</sup>:140). Regarding the two main characters, it is about the dejection of the ego with only an occasional greater or lesser period of happiness.

Victor Frankenstein was a beloved child, who lived up until his adulthood lived in a happy family. When he was 18, he went to a university and was left alone to himself. He only seeks pleasure in studying and to reach his ultimate goal-the creation of a living being. "From this day natural philosophy and particularly chemistry (...), became nearly my sole occupation. [...] Two years passed in this manner, during which I paid no visit to Geneva, but was engaged, heart and soul, in the pursuit of some discoveries which I hoped to make." (Frankenstein, pp. 60-61) His goal, or better said his id, occupied him so much that he completely forgot his friends and his own health.

The Creature was constantly torn. He was torn apart by its own feelings: it felt the goodness of others but towards it no one showed that affection, it helped others and in return got beaten up, they drove it away, hated it (The De Lacey's, father of the girl it saved the life of, the peasants...). His luck was only perceived in the promise of Victor Frankenstein that he will create a companion that will not be scared of it and with whom it will be able to share the same sentiments. However, the only real true feelings of both heroes are stated in their strive towards death, to Thanatos, respectively to the feeling of life fulfilment and finally a peaceful (non) existence. They want to reach a state in which their (its?) ego will no longer be tortured nor torn. Only at death, the ego will be able to calm down the id and gain the deserved eternal peace. This is the way in which Freud's first instinct came into being: the instinct to return to inanimate state.

Their mindless pursuit of one after the other can only be completed by destroying both of them. However, that is their fate and they cannot escape from it. While both are alive, none of them will be able to find peace and contentment. But as soon as one of them dies, the other will die as well. They are like two sides of the same coin. You cannot have one without the other. After the death of Victor Frankenstein, the creature comes to mourn beyond him and asks for forgiveness for the atrocities he has committed. Unfortunately, it knew deep down that it was already too late. It remains to execute the final murder in its life: to kill itself. That

act will not at all be harsh for it to perform. It is almost happy that everything is finally over and that it will finally be able to find the desired peace it has always been yearning for.

“Do not think that I shall be slow to perform this sacrifice... I shall die. I shall no longer feel the agonies which now consume me or be the prey of feelings unsatisfied, yet unquenched. (...) Polluted by crimes and torn by bitterest remorse, where can I find rest but in death? [...] Soon these burning miseries will be extinct. (...) My spirit will sleep in peace... Farewell.” (Frankenstein, pp. 281-282)

The pity that Frankenstein provokes in Walton leads him to one possible conclusion: “The only joy that he can now know will be when he composes his shattered spirit to peace and death” (Frankenstein, p. 266), so when its divided Id becomes one again. It can find that condition only in death.

### Conclusion

Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, offers many different ways of interpretation. We have tried to analyse the novel from different aspects. In every aspect, we tried to find dichotomy/binarism or certain duality that permeated the novel. We started from the structure of the piece, to the character names (Victor Frankenstein, Justine Moritz, Felix) to certain motives (name-no name, creator-creature, and life-death). In all aspects, we can partially read the dual structure of the piece.

The names of some of the characters show their double destiny, just the way Walton said it for Frankenstein: “Such a man has a double existence.” (Frankenstein, p. 31) Victor was the defeated winner, Justine was the righteous person who unjustly died, Felix was the “unfortunate lucky man”. We can find the symbolism of the names in (holy) cities, where Walton stayed in - St. Petersburg and Arkhangelsk, from which he began to encounter icy wasteland, in one kind of hell.

The nameless creature was rejected from its creator, unaffiliated in society, and persecuted by all. His revenge is the result of misunderstanding and lack of compassion and love. It, just like Victor Frankenstein, was torn by its own conscience. He did not kill willingly, took no pleasure in his immoral acts, as Frankenstein showed the opposite. The only murder that did not affect it was the murder of Elizabeth. She was his polar opposite and the only threat to Victor's happiness, forever deprived of a female being and perpetually unhappy.

We tried to explain Walton's narration in a way that it connects the Creature's to Frankenstein's story and to find binaristic elements in it. Their life paths greatly resemble each other's and it seems that in numerous ways they complement each other as the novel resembles the unconventional life of its author.

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