FROM MONSTERS TO HEROES: REDEFINING THE POSTMODERN “MONSTER” IN JEANETTE WINTERSON’S FRANKISSSTEIN

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Master’s Thesis
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November 2024
DENİZLİ

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Yücel Emre KIVRAK
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To all of my monsters and heroes with gratitude
Pulvis et umbra sumus

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before all else, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Meltem UZUNOĞLU ERTEN for her patience and unwavering assistance. Without her positive attitude, friendly and wholesome approach, and constructive questions and comments this thesis would not have been possible. I am especially grateful that, just as myself, this thesis project, too, is born of the hope of such a strong and exemplary woman. I am also grateful to her husband, Assoc. Prof. Hüseyin ERTEN for his instructive and motivating comments along the journey.

I extend my sincere thanks to my distinguished professors Prof. Dr. Meryem AYAN and Prof. Dr. Şeyda SİVRİOĞLU for their vast knowledge in the field, and invaluable lessons, through whose suggestions and comments this study is shaped.

I would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Baysar TANIYAN for bringing to my attention the significance of self-confidence, and his wife Assist. Prof. Reyhan ÖZER TANIYAN for their meticulous attention to detail, and genuine approach throughout my masters education. Additionally, my appreciation is due to Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali ÇELİKEL for showing that modesty is essential in comprehending the power of knowledge, to retired Assoc. Prof. Dr. Cumhur Yılmaz MADRAN for inspiring my interest in analysis and human nature, as well as for reminding the importance of the soul in a mechanized world, to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Murat GÖÇ-BİLGİN for inspiring me with the desire to walk along the boundaries and to go beyond the ordinary, to Lect. Dr. Ali GÜVEN, for his huge smile, even bigger heart and invaluable lessons, to Lect. Nevin USUL, for emphasizing the value of simplicity, and Res. Assist. Müjdat BULMUŞ for his priceless advice and comments, and friendship.

Each of these individuals had a crucial impact on my hero’s journey and my monster’s reform with their important contributions since I still read with their voices, learn through their instructions, and teach through their motivation.

ABSTRACT

FROM MONSTERS TO HEROES:
REDEFINING THE POSTMODERN "MONSTER"
IN JEANETTE WINTERSON'S FRANKISSSTEIN

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Master of Arts Thesis

English Language and Literature Department

English Language and Literature Programme

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Meltem UZUNOĞLU ERTEN

September 2024, vi+94 pages

Jeanette Winterson's 2019 novel Frankissstein is a tour de force of literary intertextuality, weaving together diverse texts, genres, and historical references to create a narrative tapestry that challenges traditional boundaries and expectations. In its complex narrative, Winterson masterfully redefines the concept of monster, by questioning the traditional notions of monstrosity and heroism as well as reimagining how Shelley challenged the same concepts centuries ago. This criticism and redefinition scrutinize the notions of the hero and the monster in such a way that the definitions of these two concepts collide with each other. Since Winterson skillfully uses postmodern and contemporary narrative techniques, Frankissstein almost creates an understanding that suggests not only monsters are contemporary heroes but also the postmodern text itself becomes a monster. Through an examination of the novel's characters, narrative structure, and themes, this study explores how Winterson challenges traditional notions of monstrosity and heroism, highlighting the fluidity of identity and the subversion of established literary and societal norms within the postmodern framework.

Keywords: Frankissstein, Postmodernism, Hero, Monster, Text, Intertextuality

ÖZET

CANAVARLARDAN KAHRAMANLARA: JEANETTE WINTERSON'IN FRANKISSSTEIN'INDA POSTMODERN "CANAVAR"I YENİDEN TANIMLAMAK

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Yüksek Lisans Tezi

İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü

İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Programı

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Eylül 2024, vi+94 sayfa

Jeanette Winterson'ın 2019 romanı *Frankissstein*, geleneksel sınırları ve beklentileri zorlayan bir anlatı dokusu yaratmak adına çeşitli metinleri, türleri ve tarihsel referansları bir araya getiren edebi metinlerarasılığın usta bir örneğidir. Romanın karmaşık anlatısında Winterson, canavar konseptini geleneksel canavarlık ve kahramanlık kavramlarını sorgulayarak ve Shelley'nin yüzyıllar önce aynı kavramlara nasıl meydan okuduğunu yeniden hayal ederek ustalıkla yeniden tanımlar. Bu eleştiri ve yeniden tanımlama, kahraman ve canavar kavramlarını, bu iki kavramın tanımlarının birbirleriyle iç içe geçeceği şekilde irdelemektedir. Winterson postmodern ve çağdaş anlatım tekniklerini ustalıkla kullandığından dolayı, Frankissstein adeta yalnızca canavarların çağdaş kahramanlar olduğunu değil, aynı zamanda postmodern metnin de bir canavara dönüştüğünü öne süren bir anlayış yaratır. Romanın karakterlerini, anlatı yapısını ve temalarını inceleyerek bu çalışma, Winterson'ın geleneksel canavarlık ve kahramanlık kavramlarına nasıl meydan okuduğunu araştırıp; kimliğin akışkanlığını ve yerleşik edebi ve toplumsal normların postmodern çerçeve içinde yıkılışını vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Frankissstein, Postmodernizm, Kahraman, Canavar, Metin, Metinlerarasılık

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INTRODUCTION

"We live in a time of monsters." (Cohen, 1996: vii)

Since the beginning of the fictional narratives, concepts of *hero* and *monster* have been represented in many forms. Starting with oral literature in the form of songs, riddles, myths and mythological tales, understanding or interpreting "...the monster is a problem for cultural studies, a code or a pattern or a presence or an absence that unsettles what has been constructed to be received as natural, as human" (Cohen, 1996: ix). Similarly, the heroes who fought against these monsters have been complexly constructed. Yet, both monsters and heroes have had clear cut definitions based on a binary structure that opposes each other for centuries until the 20th century, when the transition from modernity to postmodernity required a new identification of the dynamic between the two concepts.

The shift from traditional, in all means, which is a trademark of modern literature, gave way to the production of more daring works and characters. Along with this, postmodern literature of the late 20th and early 21st centuries became interested in the rewritings of the literary works of the previous centuries that were ahead of their time like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Thus, Shelley's *Frankenstein* became the inspiration for Jeanette Winterson's 2019 novel *Frankissstein*. In harmony with the category-defying nature of postmodern literature, *Frankissstein* rewrites the famous story with references to the original. Starting with the nonlinear tapestry through a clever intertextual dialogue with Shelley's Frankenstein and her impersonation of Shelley, as well as many popular culture references, Winterson breathes new life into the narrative, updating it to reflect the concerns and anxieties of the twenty-first century as well as reimagining the struggles of the time of the original work. This nonlinear narration, although a prominent characteristic of postmodern narrative, takes Winterson's work to the margins of the natural as compared to the pre-postmodern era. In addition to the narrative, Winterson effortlessly navigates a spectrum of genres, from Gothic fiction to science fiction, historical narrative to metafiction. This genre fluidity is a testament to the intertextual richness of the novel, as it draws from a wide array of literary traditions, while also challenging readers' expectations of genre conventions. Moreover, it adds to the overall deviant nature of the novel. Last but not least, Winterson engages with the Enlightenment philosophy that underpinned Mary Shelley's

era in Frankissstein. Through intertextual references to Enlightenment thinkers like Mary Wollstonecraft and Voltaire, the novel explores themes of reason, progress, and human agency. By interweaving these historical discourses with contemporary concerns about artificial intelligence and transhumanism, it invites readers to reflect on the ongoing relevance of Enlightenment ideals. Therefore, the novel itself becomes *a problem for cultural studies* by scrutinizing and unsettling *what has been constructed to be received as natural, as human* starting from Winterson's narration and the questions on the ethical discourse of AI and robotics in the novel, all over to the fluidity in plot and genre, the novel itself becomes a monstrosity for its time.

Winterson's novel is one of many examples of contemporary literature that employs a postmodern framework to challenge the grand narratives of previous generations. Winterson introduces us to a diverse cast of characters who defy conventional categorizations of the monstrous and the heroic. Since the beginning of postmodern writing, characters against the narrative norms and grand narratives scratch the boundaries between the hero and the monster, forming heroic monstrosities that make the readers question even the basic principles of each concept. Contemporary literature often challenges traditional moral absolutes and binary notions of good and evil, and therefore the reimagining of characters traditionally labeled as monsters as in Frankissstein provides them with motives, backstory, and emotional depth that somewhat 'humanize' them. At the heart of the novel, for instance, is the character of Dr. Ry Shelley, a transgender medical doctor whose identity challenges societal gender norms. Dr. Ry embodies the essence of transformation and transcendence, moving beyond the boundaries of traditional identity. Winterson portrays Dr. Ry as a hero who courageously navigates a world that often marginalizes those who do not conform to the established norms. Through Dr. Ry's journey, Winterson prompts readers to reconsider what it means to be heroic in a society where difference is often stigmatized while graying out the boundaries between hero and monster concepts. Similar to Ry Shelley, each character in the narrative, including the narrators, carry heroic attributes while simultaneously bearing monstrous features. Therefore, the challenge directed toward concepts like dualisms, hegemony, and literary and societal norms by postmodernism will be the focus of this study as it delves into the question if monsters are turning into modern heroes in contemporary literature as a result of their nature and postmodernist

movement while the postmodernist patchwork structure that provides the text with independency will also be of interest.

Through this study, the readers will initially be represented with etymological definitions of monster and hero concepts with a brief reference to their chronological definitions and functions throughout literary history. Regarding the impossibility of suggesting a literary or philosophical definition for the concept of monster without referring to the hero archetype, this study aims to analyze the examples of the monster through the literary, philosophical and cultural periods before delving into its counterpart, hero concept in order to use the two notions as signifiers. Some references to and examples from different fictional works will be introduced through the definitive chapters. During the definitive chapters, the study will use the help of various studies and sources of Monster Theory, mainly focusing on *Monster Culture the Seven Theses* by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, as well as various studies on heroes with the main focus being Joseph Campbell's *Power of Myth*, elaborating on the reasons behind the creation of hero and monster concepts and their cultural significance.

Then the study will continue with the argument of whether and how monsters have turned into heroes, or how the boundaries between the two concepts disappeared in contemporary literature. Additionally, the problem of defining these concepts will be discussed through the contribution of postmodernist critical approaches. Through examples that show the similarities and differences between the concepts, this part will try to prove that the monster and hero evolved throughout centuries to finally intertwine with each other with the help of posthumanist rebellion against binary oppositions and metanarratives. Derrida's theory of *différance* will be used to explain how these concepts have continuously defined each other, while reflecting the cultural battle between the center and margin until the structure is challenged through poststructuralism. Additionally, the effects of the evolution of the societies and cultures that produced these concepts will be scrutinized through subjectivity, while familiarity as another concept will be introduced to the reader through the studies and findings of various researchers. Also with references to philosophical posthumanism, consumerist culture and mass media, the transition from hero to monster as well as monster to hero will be explained, finally concluding with the discussion of how the monster and hero coexist in the postmodern protagonist.

Followed by a detailed character analysis through a close reading, the study will then analyze each character in terms of their monstrosity and heroism in the novel to inspect if and how they contribute to the argument. Eventually, Winterson's novel *Frankissstein* will be analyzed to observe how the text itself is represented as a monster through intertextuality and pastiché, scrutinizing also about the author's intentions on composing the novel in such a manner.

CHAPTER I

MONSTERS & HEROES

1.1. What is a Monster ?

“We make our own monsters, then fear them for what they show us about ourselves.”

(Carey & Gross, 2011)

Since the biblical narrative of Adam's task of naming in the creation myth, humanity has continuously sought to assign names or descriptions to everything in their environment. However, phenomena that transcended conventional perception and definition required heightened attention for categorization or description. Deriving directly from the Latin *monstrum* to express a “divine omen indicating misfortune” or a “portent, sign; abnormal shape; monster, monstrosity" the word “monster” started to be used in the 14th century to categorize misproportioned animals or human beings that have deformations or a birth defect. Another equivalent is from 12th century Old French *monstre*, or *mostre* meaning “monster, monstrosity” while the original Latin word *monstrum* also used to describe a “repulsive character, the object of dread, awful deed” or an “abomination”. The meaning was extended by the late 14th century to include enormous and unusual fantastic beasts such as centaurs or griffins and from the 1520s to indicate “animal of vast size”. Until the late 1550s the word increased its span to include “person of inhuman cruelty or wickedness” or a “person regarded with horror because of moral deformity”. Two of the earliest examples of the word monster are Grendel and his mother in the Anglo-Saxon epic poem Beowulf, originally dating back to *jötunn* or *jotun* from Germanic Mythologies, representing a race of giants that are often in conflict with the gods in the Norse Mythology. Another etymological root is from the Latin *monere* which is the root of monstrum meaning "to remind, bring to (one's) recollection, tell (of); admonish, advise, warn, instruct, teach" while suggesting at the same time that Latin origins for the word monster are also understood as an ill omen or a foretelling of unusual. Conclusively, it can be inferred that every being named a “monster” has been beyond the usual and impossible to acknowledge for its time. (Harper, n.d.)

When considering encounters with unusual or extraordinary beings labeled as monsters, the question of what qualifies as a monster arises, often with subjectivity playing a significant role. Particularly from a contemporary perspective, whether monsters solely inhabit the realms of fairy tales, or also find residence in the fears of children, lurking under beds or within closets are questions that often come to mind. Understanding the concept of the *monster* necessitates an examination of what is deemed *usual* and *normal*, as it transcends the definitive boundaries of these notions which are otherwise part of dualities. Given the subjective nature of normativity, the concept of the monster has acquired diverse meanings over centuries and across cultures, often conveyed through symbolism and metaphors. Therefore, in literary and philosophical scopes, it is almost impossible to suggest a definition of the monster without setting the boundaries for what is acceptable or usual and normal.

The notion of the monster in the classical period emerges as a primal expression of the unknown, the mysterious, and the terrifying through the desire to explain the inexplicable. In the oral traditions and early written works of various civilisations, monsters feature prominently as embodiments of fears and marvels and they mark the liminal spaces between myth and reality, serving as cautionary tales or symbols of cosmic chaos. As these ancient societies were often surrounded by untamed wilderness and confronted with the mysteries of nature, conjure beings beyond the realm of human experience emerged such as the multi-headed Hydra of Greek Mythology that terrorizes the land, as well as Nordic Jörmungandr that encircles the world and the seas. Apart from some examples that portray the monsters as mentors or spiritual guides such as Chiron and Sphinx from Greek Mythology, monsters in mythologies worldwide usually stand as a challenge in the hero's path, or as a borderline that marks the liminal space in between the known and the uncharted parts of nature that is, "[f]rom its position at the limits of knowing, the monster stands as a warning against exploration of its uncertain demesnes" (Cohen, 1996: 12). For instance, one of the well-known monstrous figures from Norse mythology, Jörmungandr could be seen as a metaphor for the boundary defining nature of monsters in the video game *God of War* as a figure surrounding the explorable plane of the game's map (Santa Monica Studio, 2022). These monsters have long served as metaphors for social taboos or the anxieties while embodying the cultural symbols reflecting the fears, desires and anxieties of the society they emerge from.

In a similar manner, monsters of the medieval period were also created by social prejudices and normativities. In addition to the early history, monsters in the medieval period were symbols of existential anxiety and moral ambiguity. Monsters appeared in religious texts, spanning from the pre-existing mythologies and the Bible to the apocryphal texts surrounding many religious and cultural scripts that have used them to provide answers for the existential questions and moral boundaries of the societies. As Cohen argues;"...the monster arises at the gap where difference is perceived as dividing a recording voice from its captured subject; the criterion of this division is arbitrary, and can range from anatomy or skin color to religious belief, custom, and political ideology" (1996: 14). Various mystery plays and literary works have depicted sins in the form of monsters as quoted in Bildhauer and Mills's introduction to *The Monstrous Middle Ages*:

> "...medieval conceptions of geography and anthropology demonstrates that, within the medieval Christian imagination, the monstrous races believed to populate the far-flung reaches of the earth were not simply decorative embellishments or trivial exoticisms, but provocatively and problematically disturbing of divine categories and intentions" (2003: 5).

In addition to the fantastic depictions of innumerable creatures policing the borders of yet to be discovered world from the cultural standpoint, throughout the medieval period monsters were highly dependent on what lies beyond the cultural and moral boundaries of the society they were created by as a part of an "early colonialist mentality", since "late medieval travel literature and *mappa mundi* (world maps) commonly located monsters and monstrous peoples in extreme geographical locations: the East, India, Ethiopia or the Antipodean zone" (Bildhauer & Mills, 2003: 8). Monsters in the Medieval period also dwelled in places "...closer to home. Stories proliferated of monstrosities at the edges of one's village, valley or parish, beyond which lay the great unknown" (Bildhauer & Mills, 2003: 8). Cohen also states on the matter that "…the manifold boundaries (temporal, geographic, bodily, technological) that constitute "culture" become imbricated in the construction of the monster—a category that is itself a kind of limit case, an extreme version of marginalization, an abjecting epistemological device basic to the mechanics of deviance construction and identity formation" (Cohen, 1996: ix). Despite the earlier depictions of the monster and monstrous it becomes "...a cultural body" (Cohen, 1996: 4) that not only stands for its

appearance but also a metaphor for the negative values of the society which creates it. What is more, “[t]he monster's body quite literally incorporates fear, desire, anxiety, and fantasy (ataractic or incendiary), giving them life and an uncanny independence” (Cohen, 1996: 4), therefore it signifies not itself, but the society that possesses such feelings that would cause the creation of the monster. “Medieval thinkers were troubled by monsters but also recognized their aesthetic and symbolic power”, since “...the idea that freakish beings, in combining familiarity and difference, provide platforms for self-definition” (Bildhauer & Mills, 2003: 18). Therefore, Medieval monsters and the monstrous such as, demons or hybrid creatures, and people with birth defects could have been added to the list of monsters from early history. But still, “[m]onsters are polysemous entities, functioning in a wide range of situations and to a variety of ends; no singular discourse of the monstrous can be discerned in this period, and hence there can be no singular conclusion” (Bildhauer & Mills, 2003: 20)

After the emergence of the Gothic genre, which can be considered as one of the most important milestones in the evolution of monsters throughout literary history, monsters have gained different aspects and features as well as functions. Famous works such as Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1987), Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), and Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) represented monsters in human form, compared to the gigantic monstrous creatures of early literary periods. Monster in the body of a human, strengthened the cultural body of the monster as it would reflect society’s understanding of human as an “embodiment of something that is both familiar and foreign, disturbing and reassuring” (Bildhauer & Mills, 2003: 19). And it also shifted the focus from outer to inner perspective, since the monster represents inner struggles and moral dilemmas of society that creates it, instead of the threats at its geographical boundaries. The hybridity of such monsters is argued by Cohen as follows:

> “This refusal to participate in the classificatory "order of things" is true of monsters generally: they are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. And so the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions” (1996: 6).

In other words, hybrid reflection of the monster is designed to invoke an inquiry of the existing category definitions in the specific society by representing something that cannot be included in any previously established categories of normativity. It also cannot be examined through pre-existing norms of the society that created the monster, therefore is elusive and a breaker of categories: "[n]o matter how many times King Arthur killed the ogre of Mount Saint Michael, the monster reappeared in another heroic chronicle" (Cohen, 1996: 4). Compared to the previous classical and medieval examples, Gothic literature also allowed monsters to be the protagonists of their own stories instead of being an obstacle or a challenge in another hero's journey. Monsters in Victorian and Gothic literature have their own struggles and journeys that allows readers to empathize with, and since their struggles are mostly inner and moral, the concept of monster and monstrous has become much more than a sign or a border that should not be crossed by an ordinary individual. This feature of the monster makes use of Freud's definition of the uncanny since it is "...nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression" (Freud, 2020: 85). Bildhauer and Mills also argue that, "[f]rom this it might be argued that monsters are the embodiment of something that is both familiar and foreign, disturbing and reassuring" (2003: 19). In *Skin Shows*, Halberstam refers to the Gothic era monsters as follows: "Slowly but surely the outside becomes the inside and the hide no longer conceals or contains, it offers itself up as text, as body, as monster. The Gothic text, whether novel or film, plays out an elaborate skin show" (1995: 7). Although there are many examples of personification among the monsters of the classical period, inclusion of human characteristics and the body made significant differences to the understanding of the archetype. As one of the pioneers to this change, Shelley's *Frankenstein* could be the greatest example since Halberstam states that:

> "Frankenstein not only gives form to the dialectic of monstrosity itself and raises questions about the pleasures and dangers of textual production, it also demands a rethinking of the entire Gothic genre in terms of who rather than what is the object of terror. By focusing upon the body as the locus of fear, Shelley's novel suggests that it is people (or at least bodies) who terrify people, not ghosts or gods, devils or monks, windswept castles or labyrinthine monasteries." (1995: 28)

Therefore, through the monster's personification, human and monster becomes "coincipient, mutually constitutive, monstrously hybrid" (Cohen, 1996: xi), and Victorian monsters "...produced and were produced by an emergent conception of the self as a body which enveloped a soul, as a body, indeed, enthralled to its soul (Halberstam, 1995: 2). From this point on, monsters in modern literature have functioned as category markers for Cartesian dualities as Halberstam states, "...the monsters of the nineteenth century metaphorized modern subjectivity as a balancing act between inside/outside, female/male, body/mind, native/foreign, proletarian/aristocrat…" (1995: 1). Due to its category defying nature, the monster cannot be on either side of these dualities at the moment of its observation. The monster as Cohen points out is "the harbinger of category crisis", therefore it "...notoriously appears at times of crisis as a kind of third term that problematizes the clash of extremes" (Cohen, 1996: 6). But due to its *uncanny* appearance, however the monster resembles human, it is also different through abjection. Kristeva's definition suggests that:

> "Abjection, on the other hand, is immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady: a terror that dissembles, a hatred that smiles, a passion that uses the body for barter instead of inflaming it, a debtor who sells you up, a friend who stabs you…" (1982: 4).

As an addition to the concept of abjection, societies used other means to declare the alienation of the familiar stranger. Mittman & Hensel summarize the concept of "abnormal" in Foucault's 1975 lecture as follows:

> "Arguing for the importance of the body, and for notions of power as a strategy rather than a fixed fact, he traces the absorption of the monster into the judicial and medical systems of Europe, where it eventually becomes what Foucault calls a "pale monster" that can be either punished (assimilated into the legal and cultural complex) or treated (assimilated into the medical complex)." (Foucault, 2016 as cited in Mittman & Hensel, 2018: xi)

The monster's difference then, is made through abjection and alienation but its nature stems from human differences such as political, cultural, sexual, religious or racial and so on. Cohen also argues that:

> "The monster is the abjected fragment that enables the formation of all kinds of identities—personal, national, cultural, economic, sexual, psychological, universal, particular (even if that "particular" identity is an embrace of the power/status/knowledge of abjection itself); as such it reveals their partiality, their contiguity" (1996: 7).

Therefore, this alienated cultural body of the monster also becomes a subject of desire through fear. Cohen also elaborates the desire towards the monster as the experience of mortality and corporality through fear and argues that besides the fear of the monster there is an envy to its freedom, rebellious nature and possibilities it signals (Cohen, 1996).

Displacement or alienation of the monster either through the body image or other means does not mean its departure to other boundaries that are recognized by its creators since the *outside* and *beyond* are places that usually only belong to or that house the monster, and the monster itself does not have any proprietorship. Therefore monsters are also biologically, ethnically and geographically forced into the borders, to an in between space. Victor Turner comments on such places and creatures as *liminal* and explains:

> "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon" (1991: 95).

Considering Victor Turner's definition, liminality can be understood as another conceptual tool that is used to create and in other words, cast monsters. As its last feature according to Cohen, the monster also "stands at the threshold of becoming" (1996:21). As the society's creation, the elusive and category breaking monster is always pushed to the margins and liminal spaces outside of either side of binary categorizations of the culture that creates itself. But monster also has the power to question the same categorizations it was alienated to, as the harbinger of the problem in the making of those binaries. As Cohen states:

> "These monsters ask us how we perceive the world, and how we have misrepresented what we have attempted to place. They ask us to reevaluate our cultural assumptions about race, gender, sexuality, our perception of difference, our tolerance toward its expression. They ask us why we have created them" (1996: 20).

Through monsters then, societies have discovered vulnerabilities in their binaries and categories which were previously hidden. Through the centuries, the monster has functioned as a warning for the unknown, or yet to be discovered, as the reflection of fears and prohibited and unthinkable possibilities and desires, errors in categorizations and definitions, and so forth. As Halberstam argues:

> "The monster, in various readings then, is literature, women's creativity, Mary Shelley herself; the monster is class struggle, the product of industrialization, a representation of the proletariat; the monster is all social struggle, a specific symbol of the French Revolution, the power of the masses unleashed; the monster is technology, the danger of science without conscience, the autonomous machine" (1995: 29).

Ultimately, monsters are the reflection of humankind's differences onto others. Considered from a larger point of view, they are cultural, religious, physical others that fall beyond the observer's categories. In addition, personal monsters represent fears, anxieties, doubts on the observed, whether on another subject, or within. Every monster embodies the observer's contrasts reflected on itself.

1.2. What is a Hero ?

"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself." (Campbell, 1988: 156)

Heroes have long been central figures in literature, serving as embodiments of cultural values, ideals, and societal concerns throughout history. The concept of heroism has evolved over time shaped by varying literary traditions, perspectives, and methodologies. In contemporary literary discourse, the definition of heroes and villains encompasses a wide spectrum of interpretations, influenced by diverse readings and critical approaches. But the real meaning of the title is hidden in its etymological background. As Harper states, the word *hero* stems from "Greek hērōs" meaning "demi-god", and Latin "heros" meaning " hero, demi-god, illustrious man" (Harper, n.d). The meaning later evolves into a "man of superhuman strength or physical courage" in fourteenth century French (Harper, n.d.). In literature, The Hero is practically the protagonist of the narrative in most cases, and it serves as the focal point of both the narrative and the journey. As Campbell summarizes, this journey or narrative of the hero is "...usually a cycle, a going and a returning" (1988: 157) emphasizing the round character of the hero who is supposed to undergo a developmental process.

Ancient civilizations gave rise to epic heroes such as Gilgamesh, Beowulf, Achilles, and Odysseus, who are foundational figures in the mythological traditions of their respective cultures. These characters, who are often of divine lineage, have embarked on heroic quests and confronted supernatural challenges, embodying virtues such as strength, bravery, and honor. But the hero must use these features for a higher purpose, or for someone else since heroes are "...courageous individuals who risk life and limb to protect both their own honour and that of their people…" (Allen, 2017: 36). Their legendary exploits and journeys played a crucial role in shaping the mythologies and cultural narratives of their societies, but more significantly in rendering them heroes and setting the foundations of the hero archetype. Anabelle Nelson states that, "The hero's journey is of service to humankind" (2024: 2). As Heiner asserts, a hero's motivation should originate from service to others which again is characterized by courage and voluntary action instead of personal expectations (Heiner, 2019), to which Campbell also comments that "...giving yourself to some higher end, or to another …is

the ultimate trial" (Campbell, 1988: 159-160). Through their journeys, heroes must be tested, and put to a trial as Campbell explains that "...the trials are designed to see to it that the intending hero should be really a hero. Is he really a match for this task? Can he overcome the dangers? Does he have the courage, the knowledge, the capacity, to enable him to serve?" (Campbell, 1988: 159). But these trials do not always have to be in the form of fights against epic monsters or gigantic creatures. Campbell also argues that the hero could embark on a spiritual or physical journey: "Well, there are two types of deed. One is the physical deed, in which the hero performs a courageous act in battle or saves a life. The other kind is the spiritual deed, in which the hero learns to experience the supernormal range of human spiritual life and then comes back with a message" (Campbell, 1988: 157). He also adds that the type of journey is related to both hero's characteristics and their background since "...the adventure that the hero is ready for is the one he gets. The adventure is symbolically a manifestation of his character. Even the landscape and the conditions of the environment match his readiness." (Campbell, 1988: 164). But since the journey is a service for the society that the hero emerges from, the obstacles which the hero faces along the way are also situational and related to the society. In other words, the obstacle the hero needs to overcome is the situational problem that surrounds and affects their society: "[f]or the mythological hero is the champion not of things become but of things becoming; the dragon to be slain by him is precisely the monster of the status quo" (Campbell, 2004: 311). Therefore, the hero portrays what his society should follow in order to overcome the current problem. The classical hero image then, is one that portrays an individual with almost superhuman qualities in addition to human values such as courage and honor, who takes on unexpected journeys to serve and protect their people or to serve a higher purpose than themselves. Despite the demi-god or divine origins, the qualities they possess are usually a reflection of the society's understanding of the best human according to the moral and normative beliefs. Since Campbell also states that the hero "...evolves as the culture evolves" (Campbell, 1988: 172), the exploits of the hero could be understood as an ushering of a new era, or foundation of a new society, belief, etc. but often the hero is misunderstood: "[a]nd very often what they accomplish is shattered by the inability of the followers to see" (Campbell, 1988: 170).

One of the first examples of such heroes in literature is the Tragic hero as defined in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Aristotle posits that tragic heroes are not necessarily

eminently good or just but are brought down by some error or frailty, leading to their downfall. This tragic flaw, or *hamartia*, serves to evoke pity and fear on the audience, as they witness the hero's journey and ultimate fate unfold: “[o]ne of those sentiments, namely pity, has to do with undeserved misfortune, and the other, namely fear, has to do with someone who is like ourselves” (Aristotle, 2013: 68). Tragic heroes like Achilles or Odysseus are complex figures whose misfortunes stem not from vice or moral depravity but from inherent human flaws or mistakes, making their stories poignant and relatable to audiences across generations. As Anthony Kenny notes in his translation of *Poetics*: “Watching tragedy helps us to put our own sorrows and worries into proportion, when we observe the catastrophes that have overtaken people who were far superior to the likes of ourselves” (Aristotle, 2013: 25). The aim of these emotions to Aristotle is seemingly didactic as he argues that the “undeserved misfortune” of a man like his audience could also demonstrate that misfortunes can happen no matter the class of birth (Aristotle, 2013: 75). So depending on the didactic aim, one could argue that Tragic heroes are designed to teach the contrast between good and evil while showing flaws and qualities of human nature to the culture or circle they belong to throughout the Ancient and Classical periods. As a similar example, Epic heroes carry the features of the Tragic hero but the difference is in their journeys since tragedies are meant to conclude in *pity* and *fear* as Aristotle describes them, on the other hand, Epic meant to portray the hero victorious and brave in dire situations. As Strechie points out, “[t]he adventure, conquering the unknown, overcoming the human borders, the fight for the good would not have been possible in human history without daring souls who would dare, precisely their daring made the heroes to be people-gods” (Strechie, 2010: 10). Classical heroes influenced their societies to overcome boundaries, to explore, to conquer, to civilize, to colonize, to rule and became role models through their superior sense of power, beauty, courage and honor. As Nelson also summarizes:

> “Heroes undertake undergo serious tests either through choice or through the inevitability of life’s circumstances. They display bravery, stamina, courage, humility and fear, vulnerability, and a range of other human emotions. They find helpers through their own generosity or the generosity of others, through cunning and their wits, and through their openness to accept help and through inspiration, sometimes from spiritual realms. They endure or succeed sometimes to change themselves or sometimes as service to others” (2024: 5).

The Romantic era introduced iconic heroes with rebellious characteristics such as Victor Frankenstein, title name protagonist from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* followed by the archetype known as the Byronic hero, popularized by Lord Byron through his protagonists. Victor Frankenstein, the ambitious and tormented protagonist of *Frankenstein*, embodies the Romantic fascination with the pursuit of knowledge and the consequences of unchecked ambition. His desire to defy natural order and conquer death, and search for perfection leads to tragic consequences that haunt him throughout the novel. Frankenstein's inner turmoil, moral dilemmas, and isolation reflect the Romantic emphasis on individualism, introspection, and the exploration of human nature's darker aspects, yet he has heroic features such as courage for daring to pursue his scientific queries no matter the cost. As Albert Camus states; “[i]n order to combat evil, the rebel renounces good, because he considers himself innocent, and once again gives birth to evil. The romantic hero first of all brings about the profound and, so to speak, religious blending of good and evil” (1991: 27). The rebellious nature of the romantic and Byronic heroes as could be observed in characters like Dracula, Frankenstein, and Dr. Jekyll therefore could be taken into consideration as their differences from classical hero archetypes. Camus also argues as follows:

> “The heroes speak our language, have our weaknesses and our strength. Their universe is neither more beautiful nor more enlightening than ours. But they, at least, pursue their destinies to the bitter end and there are no more fascinating heroes than those who indulge their passions to the fullest… It is here that we can no longer keep pace with them, for they complete things that we can never consummate” (1991: 131).

After the rebellion that was started by Romantic and Byronic heroes, modern literature followed with similar examples, one of which being the Anti-Hero archetype. Anti-Heroes are characters that could be observed as deconstructions of traditional heroes with lack of some if not all traditional attributes. As character Kayla points out in the 2015 novel Anti-Hero:

> “Who the feck said anything about being good guys? Good guys are comic books and popcorn movies. They’re feckin’ fake. We don’t do the right thing, Arthur. We do the necessary thing. How the feck have you not figured that out yet?” (Wood, 2015: 150).

The above quotation of Kayla aligns with Camus's definition of Byronic hero who is "...incapable of love, or capable only of an impossible love, suffers endlessly. He is solitary, languid, his condition exhausts him. If he wants to feel alive, it must be in the terrible exaltation of a brief and destructive action." (Camus, 1991: 28). Evidentiary to Campbell's argument that suggests the hero evolves with the society, these heroes often portrayed a rebellious character who is stuck in some past deed or sin, or a love story as in Byronic heroes, or for anti-hero's case doing what is necessary for survival suggests a reevaluation of the sense of traditional heroism, as the society evolved. Following the Romantic and Gothic era, Byronic and Anti-heroes gained more popularity than their predecessors which was crucial for the evolution of the hero archetype. Victor Frankenstein for instance is also one of the first hero examples that strays away from the righteous path in search of innovation. His ambition drove him towards playing god, which shows the deviant quality of a Romantic hero, but towards the end of the novel as the monster gains conscience and questions his maker's intentions, the boundaries between the hero and the monster started to fade in a representative manner for the Hero's evolution throughout the literary history. Victor's self reflection in the novel also could be interpreted as a reference to this evolution considering the anti-hero archetype as he says: "...the beauty of the dream vanished…breathless horror and disgust filled my heart" (Shelley, 1818: 35-36).

Another example before the evolution of the Hero into an everyday archetype in psychology is Superhero. Often found in comics, superheroes have all the noble features of their classical predecessors with more superhuman qualities including a code of honor. But despite their comparable attributes, their non-human qualities set them apart from the classical hero image since the *super* in Superhero does not always belong to divine origins or gods of mythologies as classical heroes. Instead, Superheroes are often mutated or they are other-worldly beings with capabilities beyond human. Characters such as Superman or Spider-man could be given as the most popular examples to the hybrid natures of Superheroes. Examples like Batman on the other hand, carry similar attributes to anti-heroes or Byronic heroes, often stuck in some past memory or deed in forms of sin or injustice. Superheroes usually fight villains but due to their code of honor, they usually do not kill them, which leads to cyclical battle between hero and the villain that forms the majority of superhero fiction. Amongst the most significant arguments about Superheroes though, as a contemporary and popular descendant of

classical heroes, lies their similarities to the monster archetype through inhuman qualities and violence. As Marco Favaro argues in a comparative study of Superheroes and Monsters:

> “Superheroes show the same monstrous aspects …gigantism (Hulk, Gigantman), defects (Antman, Daredevil) and, above all, dualism. Superheroes destroy the boundaries between human beings and animals, but also between human beings and machines (Iron Man, Vision), or elements (Fantastic Four). Like mythological heroes they have a strong inhuman element, they are monsters too.” (2018: 4).

Favaro also argues that the moral code of not killing in Superhero narratives suggest an understanding of a need for a Villain, since without any threats Superheroes would be the monstrous threats for the society due to their inhuman qualities and super abilities:

> “It is also the society that defines who is a monster and who is a hero: As long as the hero fights the monster, as long as he is necessary, he is seen as a marvel, as a saviour. However, if the monster disappears, if it is killed, so the superhero takes his place.” (2018: 5).

Moreover, postmodern heroes often resist conformity to societal norms and expectations. They challenge conventional roles and stereotypes, embracing individuality and subverting established conventions. As postmodern society evolved, postmodern understanding has evolved heroes through their rejection of grand narratives, disrupting conventional heroic archetypes and exploring the complexities of existence in a manner akin to the monster's challenge to societal boundaries. For example, in Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club,* the Narrator and Tyler Durden's rejection of consumerist culture and their creation of an underground fight club highlight the fragmentation and disillusionment of postmodern existence, in his own words, “It's only after you've lost everything ...that you're free to do anything” (Palahniuk, 1996: 33). This rejection of overarching narratives and the embrace of personal, often contradictory, journeys underscore the blurred lines between heroism and monstrosity in contemporary literature. Also through their use of irony, parody, and nonconformity, the characteristics of heroes in contemporary media often exhibit remarkable similarities with the features of the monster. Heroes frequently employ irony and parody as

mechanisms for coping with a world they perceive as inherently absurd. Through an application of humor and sarcasm, they navigate the contradictions and absurdities of contemporary society, thereby highlighting the disconnection between ideals and reality. This mirrors Cohen's argument on the monster's function as a challenge and a crisis on established norms and categories (Cohen, 1996). For instance, in Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*, the protagonist Shadow Moon's encounters with gods and mythical beings reveal the absurdities and hidden truths of American culture as explicitly stated in Wednesday's words: "This is the only country in the world... that worries about what it is." (Gaiman, 2001: 105).

The evolution of society also gave birth to everyday heroes, through which the definition of the hero is also consolidated to less divine, more casual as even the magical environment that responds to the hero has turned into a mechanistic world. Campbell parallels the changes in society to the hero's as follows:

> "Earlier, though, it was not a mechanistic world in which the hero moved but a world alive and responsive to his spiritual readiness. Now it has become to such an extent a sheerly mechanistic world, as interpreted through our physical sciences, Marxist sociology, and behavioristic psychology, that we're nothing but a predictable pattern of wires responding to stimuli. This nineteenth century interpretation has squeezed the freedom of the human will out of modern life" (1988: 165).

Through such an evolution, the understanding of Hero has become an archetype in contemporary psychology and literature. As Campbell compares the Hero's journey to the struggles of everyday life, he argues that the journey itself is a transformation, an evolution:

> "This is a fundamental psychological transformation that everyone has to undergo. We are in childhood in a condition of dependency under someone's protection and supervision for some fourteen to twenty-one years -- and if you're going on for your Ph.D., this may continue to perhaps thirty-five" (Campbell, 1988: 157).

To Campbell, the challenges faced by each individual which require a transformation could be interpreted as heroic journeys, therefore these challenges bring

the definition of the Hero from a divine or superhuman state to a degree of a simple individual. He argues that motherhood is one of the best examples of a heroic deed, "[g]iving birth is definitely a heroic deed, in that it is the giving over of oneself to the life of another" (Campbell, 1988: 158), but states that through repetition, it has lost its significance:

> "You know the old saying: if a dog bites a man, that's not a story, but if a man bites a dog, you've got a story there. So the thing that happens and happens and happens, no matter how heroic it may be, is not news. Motherhood has lost its novelty, you might say" (Campbell, 1988: 158).

Regardless of the everydayness of the deeds, societies create heroes because "...they earn heroic status by handling these common challenges with uncommon courage and grace, setting them apart from most others" (Allison & Goethals, 2011: 29). Thus, the contemporary definition of the Hero and the deeds through which the archetype has been defined throughout centuries has also evolved and changed in a parallel way to the changes of the society that creates them. From the above quote of Campbell, it could be argued that as humankind has understood the reason behind the creation of monsters, heroes' conflicts have evolved into more internal or complex journeys rather than simply naming a monster and slaying it. But traditional narratives of classical heroes are still read to understand the human potential in facing the struggles of everyday life. Campbell also points out that:

> "So if you put aside for a while the myth of the origin of the world -- scientists will tell you what that is, anyway -- and go back to the myth of what is the human quest, what are its stages of realization, what are the trials of the transition from childhood to maturity and what does maturity mean, the story is there, as it is in all the religions." (Campbell, 1988: 175).

Hero's journey and characteristics are in line with the evolution of humanity, as "the themes they illustrate, the values they embody, the emotions they evoke, all seem to resonate to people at a deep level" (Allison & Goethals, 2011: 25). Therefore, with regards to the examples of Hero through literary history, the conclusion would be that the Hero cannot be defined without the journey that is, as a whole with the combination of the obstacles being whether the monsters, villains or inner struggles, as well as the society as the creator. As it is with the monsters, societies and cultures create heroes,

only this time to remind themselves that even in dire situations, there should be a way out and that each struggle is a beginning for another transformation.

1.3. From Monsters to Heroes

"Only in the living of it does life seem ordinary. In the telling of it we find ourselves strangers among the strange." (Winterson, 2019: 128)

With many given examples of the definitions and functions of both concepts through literary and historical periods, the main idea this study is trying to put forward is largely about the constant power struggle between the monster and hero archetypes and how the two concepts have collided into each other. Similar to the battles between good and evil or light and dark, hero and monster archetypes have been in struggle with each other since the beginning of narrative storytelling. Customs, boundaries, beliefs, norms and traditions created and followed by societies, which determine what is normal and acceptable, also create heroes and monsters to "both energize and guide their thinking and behavior" (Allison & Goethals, 2011: 206). And as Cohen argues the monster goes beyond these boundaries simply by not being included or being created especially at the opposite of them, since "the monster is… an embodiment of difference, a breaker of category…" (Cohen, 1996: p.x). Whether to be named as a power struggle or not, the definitions of both hero and monster concepts have shown similarities in every literary era, and contemporary literature and media has seen them getting even more closer to each other than being simply similar concepts, yet even more than being the opposite sides of a dualism. After commenting on whether a hero should be universal or local through the example of Napoleon, Campbell argues that one could be a local hero as follows:

> "Or you could be a local god, but for the people whom that local god conquered, you could be the enemy. Whether you call someone a hero or a monster is all relative to where the focus of your consciousness may be" (Campbell, 1988: 161).

And as both Moyers and Campbell respectively agree "The German soldier who dies –", "-- is as much a hero as the American who was sent over there to kill him" (Campbell, 1988:161). Campbell also adds that regardless of the change of perspective the deed remains heroic due to the moral objective behind the heroism:

"The hero sacrifices himself for something -- that's the morality of it. Now, from another position, of course, you might say that the idea for which he sacrificed himself

was something that should not have been respected. That's a judgment from the other side, but it doesn't destroy the intrinsic heroism of the deed performed" (Campbell, 1988: 162).

Moreover, as mentioned before in the definition of the Hero, Campbell also states that the hero "...evolves as the culture evolves" (Campbell, 1988: 172), in addition to stating that when the society becomes familiar with the deed, "no matter how heroic it may be, is not news" (Campbell, 1988: 158). With the fact that familiarity could not in any occasion make the said deed immediately monstrous, in the account of only Campbell's comments on how heroism could be perceived there are two factors that would make the transition from hero to monster possible. When societies become familiar with the journey and the deed performed, it may lose its epic qualities and when the observed perspective changes, the hero appears in the form of a monster. Marco Favaro argues about the similarities of monsters and heroes in his study as follows:

> "The monsters are hybrids that destroy boundaries between genres and species, creatures that challenge the difference between human and animal kingdoms, between big and small, between men and gods, male and female. Two universes that should remain separated are mixed in the monster… Yet, on closer inspection, the heroes who fight these monstrous creatures prove to be very similar, if not identical to them. Excess, uncontrollable forces, belonging to another world, dualisms, man-animal hybrids: all these aspects characterise the heroes of myth." (Favaro, 2018: 3)

The examination of heroes and monsters in the above quote, perfectly agrees with Campbell's argument on the change of perspective since, for an example society no matter how monstrous, violent and inhuman their heroes are it would signify their strength, power and bravery. From the opposite perspective on the other hand, the same heroes would appear as boundary disturbing monsters that have come to destroy their mead halls because they were being loud. Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman's explanation of the dichotomy as an exercise of power in meaning could help explain the change in perspective further as follows:

> "In dichotomies crucial for the practice and the vision of social order the differentiating power hides as a rule behind one of the members of the

> opposition. The second member is but the other of the first, the opposite (degraded, suppressed, exiled) side of the first and its creation. Thus abnormality is the other of the norm, deviation the other of law-abiding, illness the other of health, barbarity the other of civilization, animal the other of the human, woman the other of man, stranger the other of the native, enemy the other of friend, `them' the other of `us', insanity the other of reason, foreigner the other of the state subject, lay public the other of the expert. Both sides depend on each other, but the dependence is not symmetrical. The second side depends on the first for its contrived and enforced isolation. The first depends on the second for its self-assertion" (1991: 14).

Therefore, monsters and heroes created according to these social constructs could be interpreted as subjective dichotomies of each other. Depending on the critical point of view then, one may suggest that Victor Frankenstein is the hero of the novel *Frankenstein* as a compelling scientist who goes beyond the limits of his time for the sake of new discoveries, and his creature is the monster as it is stated by the many pages of the novel because of its grotesque physical features and unholy life spark, or; Frankenstein may be the actual monster for playing god through his hunger for power and the creature could be a sentient and intelligent one of a kind being who suffers from loneliness and aimlessness as the result of unacceptable behavior of a human sociopath. As it is also suggested in *Classic Readings on Monster Theory*:

> "We are all one another's monsters. This is because monsters are relative to the culture that produces them. In medieval Christian art and literature, demons are often dark-skinned; in medieval Islamic art and literature, demons are often white-skinned" (Mittman & Hensel, 2018: xiv).

Anne Prescott also notes on the subjective understanding of the monster as she connects it to the theory of relativity:

> "Giants and pygmies are ambiguously monstrous: strange "here" but normal "there," where their species is at home, whether Scythia, Africa, Brazil, Lilliput, or Brobdingnag. The fact of merely situational monstrosity was not lost on earlier writers, who could joke about spatial relativity" (Prescott, 1996: 75).

At this point, it is crucial to indicate that the aim of this study is not simply to accuse subjectivity alone of the transition between the concepts of monster and hero, but rather by acknowledging that subjectivity could partially explain the heroism and monstrousness from different cultural points of view and is in fact lies at the foundation of the arguments that have been stated so far, but it would not be sufficient in explaining the shift in the meaning of these concepts. As Alexa Wright states, "...the subjective position of the observer is always implicated in the construction of the *other*, whether monstrous or not" (Wright, 2020: 181), although crucial in the construction of a meaning, the constructed other is not always monstrous or heroic. Therefore, perspective, subjectivity or relativity is not enough to explain the shift in cultural definitions of the monster and the hero, since the transition or intertwining in meanings of two concepts could also happen in the same society without the need of another opposing culture. On the subject, René Girard points out that the concept of sacred violence plays a significant role in cultural conceptualisation of heroes and monsters by stating that, "the father figure is viewed as an oppressive monster during his life but is transformed at death into a persecuted hero. This operation is affected by the mechanism of the sacred—a mechanism Freud does not uncover, since he remains its victim." (Girard, 1977: 204). Later on, he also adds the example of Oedipus to explain the concept of sacred violence: "The episode of the sphinx shows Oedipus in the role of monster-killer or executioner. Later, a monster himself, he will assume the role of surrogate victim. Like all incarnations of sacred violence, Oedipus can and does play every part in succession." (Girard, 1977: 252). From this argument then, it could be stated that time and cultural evolution might and could help societies in redefining actions and notions as less heroic as well as less monstrous than they first appear. Cohen also argues; "Other or third-term supplement, the monster is an incorporation of the Outside, the Beyond—of all those loci that are rhetorically placed as distant and distinct but originate Within" (1996: 7) and this *other* cannot always be placed outside of self. In other words, anything new in terms of lifestyle, boundaries, definitions, ideologies, etc. that could be initially defined as monstrous or heroic until the society evolves to find it usual, or mundane. Also Campbell states that:

> "A legendary hero is usually the founder of something -- the founder of a new age, the founder of a new religion, the founder of a new city, the founder of a new way of life. In order to found something new, one has to leave the old and

> go in quest of the seed idea, a germinal idea that will have the potentiality of bringing forth that new thing." (Campbell, 1988: 172).

Cohen's seventh thesis also agrees and suggests that "The Monster Stands at the Threshold... of Becoming" (1996: 20). The resemblance of the quality of the both concepts as *harbingers*, *founders*, or *pioneers* of change becomes uncanny. Therefore, it could be understood that the future which is pointed by both heroes and monsters could be accepted or rejected by the societies depending on their interpretation of what has been found. Since from the moment that hero *leaves the old* and monster *stands at the threshold* both would turn into liminal entities for the said society. Campbell also states that "...very often what [heroes] accomplish is shattered by the inability of the followers to see" (Campbell, 1988: 170) in addition to Cohen's observation of the monster who always returns to "...ask us why we have created them." (Cohen, 1996: 20). To make the matter clearer, such an example may be helpful: for instance, as opposed to the Aristotelian definition of birds, Natalie Lawrence states that exotic bird species arrived in Europe "...in the 16th century that seemed to violate this definition" (Lawrence, 2015). Because these "birds of paradise" that " were brought to Europe in 1622 as trade skins with stunning, colorful plumes but no legs or wings" (Lawrence, 2015) have created awe among the Europeans of the time which also challenged their understanding. Since these exotic birds fell out of the categories of known avian species at the time, the current boundaries of normativity demanded them to be the other, therefore monstrous until they gained new categorizations and society has grown familiar with them.

Therefore, the monster can also be a hero for the correct audience depending on both the perspective and the familiarity because even as a concept, achieving the word's etymological meaning by being a *harbinger* is also a function of the monster. Any different idea or suggestion that defies the society's acceptable boundaries, or any new ground discovered by the hero would first be considered as a monster until it reaches a certain audience or supportive enough power that may allow it not to be considered as "new" and "unusual" anymore. In other words, monstrosity and heroism are highly connected with familiarity as well as perspective. What determines the certain title of a monster or a hero is then, directly connected to the power and support it achieves in a certain audience through any means, whether hegemony, dichotomy, biopolitics or postcolonialist school of thoughts. Another example of familiarity comes from Jeanette

Winterson in an interview on *Frankissstein* as she comments on the applications of Alcor Life Foundation facilities. She states that: “Everything is far-fetched until it's not... People looked at the sky and thought I'd love to fly for thousands of years and now we do, we don't even think about it... The first heart transplant was only seventy years ago, nobody could do it until then” (Maison de la Poésie, 2021: 35:10).

As discussed in Gramsci’s theory of hegemony, the ruling class maintains its dominance not merely through coercion but through the cultural and ideological consent of the masses (Bates, 1975). Weinstock also refers to the political usage of the monster as follows:

> “To understand monsters or to eradicate them is a succinct formulation of the difference between what we may refer to as the scholarly and political approaches to monstrosity, with philosophers, theologians, and academics seeking to explain monsters—what they are, where they come from, what they mean—and those in or aspiring to positions of power deploying the rhetoric of monstrosity as a tool to manipulate opinion and promote specific political agendas” (2020: 3-4).

Therefore, the concept of hegemony is also instrumental in examining how societal norms and values shape the depiction of monsters and heroes in literature. Moreover, Althusser argues that the ruling class or governments propagate certain ideologies through ideological apparatuses, such as “the religious, the educational, the family, the legal, the political, the trade-union, the communications, the cultural” (Althusser, 1971: 80) to create their ideological worldview. This worldview and the *ISA* as defined by Althusser, could be used to delineate acceptable behavior and attributes that could stand as a metaphor for what a hero should possess, and could categorize those who deviate from these ideological normativities as monsters. Since these are the same notions that define the boundaries of individuals from the smallest social constructs to the mass of societies and nations and the world is not unfamiliar to cartoon or realistic depictions of opposing political parties with all their monstrousness on the internet and the newspapers alike:

> “...seventy odd years ago, the German Nazi propaganda newspaper Der Stürmer published grotesquely caricatured images of Jews literally consuming “good” Germans. This noxious imagery is still alive and kicking, and was on display in

> Charlottesville at the Unite the Right rally. Your monster may be our friend; our friend may be your monster." (Mittman & Hensel, 2018: xiv)

From a more linguistic and cultural approach, while Saussure brought about the terms sign, signifier and signified, and pointed out the *arbitrary* nature of the relationship between them, Jacques Derrida's seminal essay *Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences* scrutinized the instability of their dynamics (Smith-Laing, 2017: 20). To think of Monster and Hero concepts as *signifiers* for each other, for they are also dichotomies and opposing sides of duality, the *arbitrariness* could be used as the tool to explain the constant shift in the definitions as the cultural boundaries are shaped through language. In this sense, what would fall beyond the normativities in a cultural point of view would fall under the name of monsters as *others* until it is understood, accepted and it becomes familiar. As stated in the following quotation;

> "Monsters, like periods of history, can become subject to linguistic and cultural resignification; as a process, this might be effected by using the term 'monster' against those who would deploy it in the service of dominant or hegemonic aims, but it might equally be achieved by conceiving monsters as identities, identities that are lived and performed and desired" (Bildhauer & Mills, 2003: 22).

Another striking example may be the tragic story of Saartje Baartman or Sarah Baartman who lived in 18th century Europe. As a Khoikhoi woman from South Africa, Baartman lived almost the entirety of her rather short life as a display object in circuses until she became a subject of scientific interest, just because her body was outside the boundaries of acceptable and normal for European societies. Through perspective then, one might unquestionably suggest that she is and was not by any means monstrous. But through familiarity, the same understanding of the time that most unfortunately used her as a display object, have learnt, practiced and advertised through plastic surgery that body parts come different in sizes. Thus, once caged, displayed and dissected, Sarah Baartman returned to her home two hundred years after her death and in the contemporary media, her life story is referred to with sadness even by the descendants of the same cultural point of view that imprisoned her (Crais, C., & Scully, P., 2008: 164).

Through poststructuralism, Derrida also criticizes the structuralist reliance on binary oppositions stating that; "One could then be led to speak of language as having no reference to signified meanings but rather as creating these meanings through the play of signifiers." (Derrida, 1978: 415). This continuous play destabilizes fixed meanings, showing that concepts like good and evil, or hero and monster, are not absolute but relative, subjective and context-dependent. Furthermore, his theory of *différance* suggests that the meanings are never fully present or complete since the relationship between the signifier and the signified is always subject to an endless process of interpretation and reinterpretation. This is also emphasized in Linda Hutcheon's argument on literary adaptations as she refers to subjectivity by stating "different knowing audiences bring different information to their interpretations of adaptations" (2013: 125). From the structuralist point of view then, fixed central focus determines the boundaries of the society and culture, since "marginality unintentionally reifies centrality because it is the center that creates the condition of marginality" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, 2013: 154) and therefore creating the monster since Cohen argues that monsters "police the borders of the possible" (Cohen, 1996: 12). But with Derrida's contribution famously suggesting that "the center is not the center" (Derrida, 1978: 378), structures have a tendency to allow what is previously seen as margin to disrupt and challenge the established order of meanings. So through this power attributed by poststructuralism to the margin, the monster could be seen in postmodern narratives which embraces its difference and marginalization while celebrating features once determined as monstrous, and challenges the heroic archetype. That is also evident in Cohen's definition of the monster as the one who "always return[s]" (Cohen, 1996: 20) and thus completes homecoming from the margin back to the center. For instance, a 2020 video game named *Assassin's Creed Valhalla* provides an alternative reading and adaptation for the legendary story of Beowulf in the form of an external side quest. In the game, players take control of a fictional hero named Eivor to hunt the Beast of East Anglia. Grendel is represented as a disabled individual "who kept growing in body, not in mind" and after he and his mother are killed, Eivor summarizes the deed to the quest giver abbess Wulfhilda to be reported to the abbey as follows:

> "I slew a monster that was but a man. Then I tracked his mother and killed her too. She struck at me in the dark, and I defended myself. But it was no hero's deed. Leave my name out of your tale. It is nothing to be remembered for. Give

> them a comforting one ... about heroes and monsters. For the truth, the bone-cold truth of everything is often hard to take." (Ubisoft, 2020).

Later, Eivor receives a copy of the legendary poem Beowulf, composed by Wulfhilda. Apart from some connotations and interpretations of how societies may have composed and understood such mythical tales, this short adaptation from a video game could be used to understand how postmodernism has changed the production and perception of heroic myths and monster tales, and how these interpretations contribute to constantly changing signifiers.

As a result of this constant battle over meaning, monsters and heroes in contemporary literature and media through postmodernist schools of thought, continuously reinterpret each other until the boundaries between the two concepts become almost invisible. While referring to the nature of monsters Cohen makes a striking statement about their power to disturb dualities and binaries as follows:

> "By revealing that difference is arbitrary and potentially free-floating, mutable rather than essential, the monster threatens to destroy not just individual members of a society, but the very cultural apparatus through which individuality is constituted and allowed" (Cohen, 1996: 12).

Undoubtedly referring to subjectivity and arbitrary relationship of meanings, the threat that monster poses in Cohen's statement also signals its aim to destroy the center. Moreover, if the *cultural apparatus through which individuality is constituted* is interpreted as postmodernist culture, the intention behind the monster's aim could be revealed as a unification with the same society or self that produced it in the beginning. Campbell and Moyer further evaluate the Hero's historical evolution as the society that creates and defines it has changed:

> "But when you think about what people are actually undergoing in our civilization, you realize it's a very grim thing to be a modern human being. The drudgery of the lives of most of the people who have to support families -- well, it's a life-extinguishing affair" (Campbell, 1988: 165).

As the monster starts its journey back to the center, the hero also starts to evolve into something less divine, parallel to the evolution of the individual in postmodern culture. Hero's recognition in society, which is essential in its definition as the hero

started to have shorter spans in the contemporary world, since the everyday struggle of the individuals and the meaning of heroism also started to be redefined over time. Popularity has shifted towards the everyday heroes, or social and political activists, the magical journey left its place to the everyday life as the unsung heroes have started to increase in number. Campbell connects the cause to the changing world as he comments, "But life today is so complex, and it is changing so fast, that there is no time for anything to constellate itself before it's thrown over again." (Campbell, 1988: 168). Considering that the fast change in the society Campbell refers to is technology and media, through which the definitions as well as the hegemony between the hero and the monster have drastically changed even almost four decades later than his interview with Moyer. As Moyer states "We seem to worship celebrities today, not heroes.", to which Campbell answers "Just to be known, to have fame-name and fame. It's too bad." (Campbell, 1988: 168). And as postmodern society has become dependent on technology and media as the main method of communication, the recognition of heroes and heroic deeds have also started to take place usually through media and popularity. The extent of the media's power in creating heroes and monsters is also noticed in psychology as follows:

> "It may be true that the media crave heroes more than anyone. Appealing heroic tales most definitely increase newspaper and magazine circulations, digital viewership, television ratings, and Internet site visits. For this reason, the media are motivated to turn ordinary people into heroes. The popularity of the television show American Idol attests to this fact. One moment a person may be toiling in obscurity, and the next moment her face may don the cover of People magazine. But the media don't stop there. They are aware of the phenomenon of schadenfreude—the tendency of people to enjoy the misfortune of successful others. And so the beneficiary of media generated heroism one day may be the victim of media-generated schadenfreude the next. The media ensure that what goes up must come down. And we, the audience, love it" (Allison & Goethals, 2011: 28).

Consequently, as culture has turned into popular culture in the postmodern era, the spiritualism and the divine in the hero's definition is bruised if not destroyed. Campbell also notes that through a reference by stating that there is no higher cause: "I would say, a more inward cause. 'Higher' is just up there, and there is no 'up there.' We

know that. That old man up there has been blown away. You've got to find the Force inside you. This is why Oriental gurus are so convincing to young people today" (Campbell, 1988: 186). Evaluated from a contemporary perspective, this quote could show how consumerist culture has turned the already individualized hero archetype into products as online sessions or psychology classes on leadership. Everyday and capeless heroes also have fallen into the mercy of the media as previously stated. Additionally, Allison and Goethals state that the survey they conducted for their research found %66 of the individuals who voted for their hero models amongst examples chose nonfictional heroes (Allison & Goethals, 2011: 26). From the research data, it could be argued that the postmodern societies' understanding of the hero image is not as divine as it used to be.

Diversity and consumerism are the key terms for postmodern individuals, therefore the boundaries shaped by societies are sacrificed for the sake of diversity and the hero archetype has lost its previous definition. After two world wars and a recent pandemic, postmodern fiction and media have started to deal with heroes who reflect human attributes even in most dire situations as well as monstrous villains who struggle with existential problems due to their differences. Postmodern hero is a divergent individual that struggles with their own adventure, periodically underlining their human side. Todd Phillips movie *Joker* (Philips, 2019), and the *Last of Us* (Mazin & Druckmann, 2023) tv series adaptation by HBO could be given as examples. Through the constantly shifting cultural paradigm of postmodernism, societies have continuously turned into multicultural communities. Moreover, postmodern text have become a tapestry of different texts interwoven with each other. In a manner akin to Shelley's *Frankenstein*, postmodern text represented the patchwork nature of the monster, as it has become "...a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another" (Kristeva, 1980: 37). Thus, subjective and specified moral values for societies have been replaced with an understanding of a universal good and evil in order to survive as humankind as a whole. Therefore, through this holistic understanding, mistakes and hamartias are accepted as a part of being human, and previously shunned differences are celebrated. Heroes have started to kill the monsters, and as a result, replaced them as the narrative became the human dream, protagonists also became human. Also owing to the fast-paced nature of contemporary technology and media, and through communities

even when the new ideas or individuals are rejected or otherized by the society, the acceptance is also imminent since anyone could reach an audience through social media. As a result, from the moment that hero is seen in someone, it almost immediately disappears into a monster for someone else and vice versa. As Halberstam argues:

> "We wear modern monsters like skin, they are us, they are on us and in us. Monstrosity no longer coagulates into a specific body, a single face, a unique feature; it is replaced with a banality that fractures resistance because the enemy becomes harder to locate and looks more like the hero" (Halberstam, 1995: 163).

Lastly, philosophical posthumanism as argued by Francesca Ferrando, provides an understanding of humanity without traditional dualisms and binaries. While differing from ontological posthumanism that suggests in order to become posthuman, humankind must evolve beyond material existence, Ferrando states that, "One of the main characteristics of philosophical Posthumanism is its emphasis on a post-dualistic understanding of existence" (Ferrando, 2016: 5), which suggests that an individual becomes posthuman when learned to think beyond the binaries[1]. Jeanette Winterson agrees by adding that religion read from a posthuman perspective, could give an idea about non-biological existence which is considered to be the future of the human and she states: "If you pray to a Sky-God, which, many people in the world still do, you know what it's like to have a relationship with a non-biological entity" (Maison de la Poésie, 2021: 26:15).

Thus, both the hero and the monster archetypes through subjectivity, familiarity and disturbance of their signifiers have disappeared into the postmodern individual. Until postmodernism allowed critics, readers as well as authors to raise the voice of the minorities through schools of thoughts like poststructuralism, postcolonialism and posthumanism for instance, inquiring any "what if?" questions would be the same as stepping out of the predetermined boundaries. Postmodernism even reshaped the language we speak. Cohen argues that "...language—the thing that speaks us, as speaking subjects—is inherently inhuman" (Cohen, 1996: x). Adaptations and readaptations and rewritings of classics have brought Derrida's *différance* into literature

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[1] Although transhumanism and its post-human idea also contributes to the discourse of monsters and heroes, its tendency to create new discriminating categories such as cyborgs and artificial intelligence, renders transhumanism insufficient in explaining the merge of monsters and heroes.

and media where anything that could get the popular culture's attention is imitated until it became unrecognizable. Moreover, with rejection of binaries and metanarratives, postmodernism itself has almost become "...a problem for cultural studies, a code or a pattern or a presence or an absence that unsettles what has been constructed to be received as natural…" (Cohen, 1996: ix), through which, critical theory had new methodologies to redefine the monster and the hero. However, redefining the monster is challenging as the following quotation suggests:

> "What truly makes a monster? The answer then, is an obvious one: We do. Because the monster is never the monster" (Morawitz, 2020).

To conclude, through a monstrous cultural, literary and philosophical movement of postmodernism, critical understanding of the language and binary structures are disturbed until dualities have been continuously redefined by each other to the degree either to be destroyed by a posthumanist understanding, or the definitions intertwine with each other through multicultural interpretation. The notion of subjectivity has helped societies and individuals to understand relative concepts and their observations through different perspectives throughout human history. In addition, the fast-paced nature of postmodern society allowed familiarities with and redefinition of previously otherized concepts. Thus, while the remaining descendants of the hero and monster continuously battle each other inside stories and characters act as a reminder of everyday struggles of the postmodern individual, suggesting that each individual is a life story as reflected in literature; the traditional definitions of the monster and the hero has disappeared into the self, therefore the individual. Although the representations of these concepts in literature or media continue to reflect the better and the bitter reflections of the self, due to the disturbance of metanarratives and moral boundaries, the concepts of hero or the monster are neither divine, nor supernatural as they used to be. For the disturbed and already alienated posthuman individual, the only monster and hero is human, therefore postmodern literature reflects these monstrously heroic protagonists.

CHAPTER II

CHARACTER ANALYSIS IN *FRANKISSSTEIN*

Frankissstein by Jeanette Winterson is a multi-layered rich novel that intricately deals with the past and the present while exploring profound themes in both timelines. Although the title suggests that the novel is a love story, Winterson deals with themes such as identity, creation, existence, transformation and the relationship between humanity and technology. While the narrative is woven into nonlinear chapters, each story follows an individual progression. The novel starts with the past narrative of the 19-year-old Mary Shelley, the author of the esteemed novel Frankenstein, right before she starts writing her masterpiece, and follows the contemporary narrative of Ry Shelley, who is a transgender doctor in pursuit of knowledge on artificial intelligence and technology as well as the modern counterpart of Mary Shelley in a non-linear fashion.

In the beginning, Mary Shelley, voiced by Winterson, narrates her own story in Lake Geneva with her husband Percy Shelley accompanied by Lord Byron, Dr. Polidori and Claire Clairmont. This part of the novel is based on real-life events centered around these people in Lake Geneva, in the summer of 1816. At that time, as later described by all the companies, the weather was unseasonably cold and stormy, and the incessant rain kept them indoors over three days throughout which the group kept reading and creating horror and mystery stories together. The same events also led to the creation of legendary masterpieces such as Shelley's Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus as well as Polidori's Vampyr, which is known as the progenitor of Romantic Vampire genre. In addition to the dialogues between Shelley and others, Winterson also vividly depicts Shelley's life, focusing on the purpose of her iconic novel along with the turbulent background of her personal tragedies, including the loss of her children and her relationship with Percy Shelley. Mary Shelley, as a character in the novel, is portrayed as a pioneering thinker, delving into the philosophical and ethical implications of creating life through artificial means, which becomes a central theme of her novel Frankenstein. By taking even the smallest details to an unsuspecting mind, Winterson creates an illusion of reality, in which the reader gets lost between the concepts of reality and fiction.

As it is indicated by the opening lines of Shelley's part in the novel, "Reality is water-soluble", followed by Shelley's thought process stating that everything that they "...could see… had lost their usual definition…" (Winterson, 2019: 8). Mary starts her narrative in a marginalized and existential state that gets the character to question the reality as well as her existence. In a vivid scene that resembles the image of a womb, Shelley and others find themselves alienated by choice from society in the summer of 1816 in Geneva. In a place called Villa Diodati where "the chimneys poking through the damp cloth of steaming rain like the ears of a giant animal" (Winterson, 2019: 9), Shelley and the others are observed from a distance by the representatives of the society in the town across the lake:

> "At least the weather allows no staring at us from the farther shore either. In town I heard the rumour that a guest had spied half a dozen petticoats spread out to dry on Byron's terrace. In truth, what they saw was bed linen. Byron is a poet but he likes to be clean." (Winterson, 2019: 11)

As more details are revealed about the background, the scenery serves for all the characters' state in the margins of society. Although the detailed descriptions of Mary about the scenery around her might be read as the perspective of the artist from a marginalized point of view at first glance, through Cohen's argument about the monster and the monstrous which indicates that the monster "…[d]wells at the [g]ates of [d]ifference" (Cohen, 1996: 7) and "[s]tands at the [t]hreshold …of [b]ecoming." (Winterson, 2019: 20), all of the characters in Shelley's narrative become not only marginalized artists but also monsters from the society's point of view as she names the locals in the town as "innumerable gaolers, each formed out of a drop of water" (Winterson, 2019: 11). The perspective employed by the town's people is also emphasized in the author's fourth wall breaking note on the same page about the real events that took place in Geneva as:

> "*Such was the notoriety of the households that an hotel on the farther shore of the lake set up a telescope for their guests to watch the antics of the supposed Satanists and Sexualists who held their women in common.*" (Winterson, 2019: 11)

Other characters also agree with this idea when they share their thoughts on the weather and their conditions in the house and Percy Shelley states that "[they] are like

the drowned" to which Mary adds "this is [their] Ark… peopled here, afloat, waiting for the waters to abate" (Winterson, 2019: 12). Both comments on the weather not only refer to their creative nature but also act as a foreshadow for the changes they would face, as they keep drinking wine and talking about political and social matters in their still secure building.

In this background, Winterson's word choices and descriptions of the character through her thought process also add to the idea of a monstrous and alienated Shelley. Naked in nature, in a scenery that might indicate a post humanistic bond, she starts alienating herself from the human image as she states in the following lines:

> "Here I am, in my inadequate skin, goose-fleshed and shivering. A poor specimen of a creature, with no nose of a dog, and no speed of a horse, and no wings like the invisible buzzards whose cries I hear above me like lost souls, and no fins or even a mermaid's tail for this wrung-out weather. I am not as well-found as that dormouse disappearing into a crack in the rock. I am a poor specimen of a creature, except that I can think." (Winterson, 2019: 9)

Her alienation from the self and human species reaches a state where Shelley describes herself as a poor specimen of a creature, that is to say; not human, not animal, but something else. In addition to the previous lines where she describes her naked body as inadequate, the word choice creature becomes more significant when added to the character's environment. She goes on describing her "decorated nakedness" and likens her nipples to the "teats of a rain-god" as well as her "pubic hair" to "a dark shoal" to further indicate the alienation which would become more significant later when Lord Byron and others start talking about their ideas around gender roles (Winterson, 2019: 9). But coming back to Shelley's introductory narrative, another detail in her descriptions of herself under the rain, which creates a womb imagery supported by the lines; "the rain increases steady as a waterfall and me inside it. My eyelids are drenched. I'm wiping my eyeballs with my fists" (Winterson, 2019: 9), is her comment on the state of the world in her time. The narrative continues as she states that "the world is at the start of something new. We are the shaping spirits of our destiny", she refers to the transitive nature of the Industrial Revolution while describing herself as "...not an inventor of machines…" but "...an inventor of dreams" (Winterson, 2019: 9). Shelley's description of herself is certainly in harmony with Cohen's idea of the monster. In his

seven theses, through clear examples Cohen explains the existential and marginalized state of the monster as well as the ideological differences which societies tend to designate monsters from. He argues, "[a]ny kind of alterity can be inscribed across (constructed through) the monstrous body, but for the most part monstrous difference tends to be cultural, political, racial, economic, sexual" (Cohen, 1996:7). Shelley, then, even in the first pages of the novel, through her own narrative and Winterson's as the author, already becomes the monster. She ponders over "how we perceive the world, and how we have misrepresented what we have attempted to place" and decides that we need "to reevaluate our cultural assumptions about race, gender, sexuality, our perception of difference, our tolerance toward its expression" (Cohen, 1996: 20).

Moreover, as later questioned and provoked by Lord Byron, Shelley's thoughts on giving life and her potential role as a mother strengthens her archetypal image as a monster. While they are having a discourse on "life spark", as Byron calls it, he states that "for a man, love is of his life, a thing apart. For a woman, it is her whole existence" (Winterson, 2019: 13). Although Shelley goes against the idea by stating her "mother…would not agree with [him]..." (Winterson, 2019: 13), in her stream of consciousness she gets disturbed by the idea of not being able to have children as well as not being able to have any connection with her own mother, who had died in childbirth. When the party starts talking about her mother, she easily refers to her feelings of being hurt as well as her discomfort which she believes was also felt by her husband. And her thoughts on motherhood make her resentful thoughts clearer as she exclaims:

> "If a single one of you carried a life in his womb for nine months, only to see that child perish as a baby, or in infancy, or through wont, disease, or, thereafter, war, you would not seek death in the way that you do." (Winterson, 2019: 13)

To her protest, Byron replies with only a couple of sentences, truly ignoring her feelings about not being able to become a mother whose children are lucky enough to survive. When Mary later refers to her mother's death, she emphasizes the connection with the mother and the fetus by stating that "[t]he loss was inside of [her] as [she] had been inside of her [mother]. [She] lost something of [herself]" (Winterson, 2019: 15). Additionally, her discomfort becomes once more visible when she relates her first experience as a mother:

> "Our first child died when he was born. Cold and tiny I held him in my arms. Soon after I dreamed that he was not dead, and that we rubbed him with brandy and set him by the fire and he returned to life." (Winterson, 2019: 18)

In both experiences she concretely relates in sorrow, her discomfort is vivid for the readers. Shelley is also aware of the other character's thoughts about her. When the party is discussing the "life spark", she reminds them that men are born of women and at the same time she becomes aware of a fact: "The gentlemen laugh at me indulgently. They respect me, up to a point, but we have arrived at that point" (Winterson, 2019: 16). The gentlemen's reaction reveals their disrespect for Shelley as well as their belief on the creation of humankind. She further states that "...if two gentlemen agree that must be enough to settle the matter for any woman" (Winterson, 2019: 16), which proves her invisibility not only for his friends but for the whole society also. From the perspective of gender studies, Shelley seems to be ignored as a woman by the men's world. However, from the perspective of this study, Shelley's dilemma and incompleteness as a mother and a child, as exemplified by her references to traumatic experiences, adds up to her features of an otherized and excluded individual, therefore a monster. Shelley's lack of a connection with her mother and inability to become a mother herself distances her from the expectations of the society from a woman. Moreover, her claim for authority as an author in the literary world is the indicator of her attempt to find a place in the men's world, which is probably perceived as a threat by these gentlemen. J.J.Cohen on this point, argues, "the woman who oversteps the boundaries of her gender role risks becoming a Scylla, Weird Sister, Lilith" (1996: 9). Thus, Mary Shelley becomes another Weird Sister or Lilith for the rest of the party. Not until the end of the story when she comes full circle after her loss of Percy and Byron afterwards, the reader is introduced to her thoughts about Byron and Polidori as she comments on the male-driven society that surrounds her:

> "There is scandal wherever Byron and Shelley go, but they remain men. They are not dubbed hyenas in petticoats for living as they please. They are not called un-men when they love where they will." (Winterson, 2019: 199)

And her recalling of the discourse about the male and the female principle in the opening chapters of the novel will later on reflect her real thoughts on the matter as the following paragraph reveals:

> “Neither man seemed to consider that being refused an education, being legally the property of a male relative, whether father, husband or brother, having no rights to vote, and no money of her own once married, and being barred from every profession except governess or nurse, and refused every employment except mother, wife or skivvy, and wearing a costume that makes walking or riding impossible, might limit the active principle of a female.” (Winterson, 2019: 219)

Society’s evaluation of Mary Shelley as a woman, incomplete and lacking the rights, talents or opportunities employed by men, is the main cause of her alienation from the vision of herself and her talents as a creative author. Instead of her supposed role as a woman to procreate, her desire and claim for literary and philosophical creativity is found out of place. She is left barren for she cannot become a mother and is not allowed to write. By the end of her story, Mary Shelley reveals her sorrow for motherhood desperately by the lines: “When I dream I dream of dead children. Monsters. What have I created that I have killed?”(Winterson, 2019:174) and “Here I am, indifferent to life, and three months pregnant – again. With what? Another death?” (Winterson, 2019: 199). Even though pregnant, Shelley’s hopeless words depending on her earlier experiences of her inability to give life reflect the monstrosity of her fears.

As Shelley is about to come up with the idea of her masterpiece Frankenstein, the monstrous figure she imagines or sees in Winterson’s narrative can be interpreted as the embodiment of her creative imagination that comprises her other side. The monstrous figure is first mentioned right after she expresses her self-reflection in her naked state in the wilderness. This figure will later be the base idea for the monster Shelley’s character Victor Frankenstein creates in her story, but in Winterson’s narrative, it clearly is a reflection of Shelley’s most powerful fears about life and death as well as her own in-betweenness which she describes as “a being neither dead, nor alive” (Winterson, 2019:10). Her first description of the figure also reveals stark contrasts when compared to her vulnerable existence:

> “A figure, gigantic, ragged, moving swiftly on the rocks above me, climbing away from me, his back turned to me, his movements sure, and at the same time hesitant, like a young dog whose paws are too big for him. I thought to call out but I confess I was afraid.” (Winterson, 2019: 10)

Her expression of the figure, when added to her expressions “I see it. I think I see it.” (Winterson, 2019: 10) in the previous lines, composes an imaginary birth scene, as she is naked in the wilderness and surrounded by rain symbolizing a womb image. Again, in contrast to her still stance, the “figure” moves “hesitantly” but at the same time “surely”, to which she will later refer to as “...something at work in [her] soul which [she] do[es] not understand” (Winterson, 2019: 20). Therefore, her vision could both be interpreted as a reference to her groundbreaking creation, as well as a part of herself that would like to roam the wilderness of life since the line “like a young dog whose paws are too big for him” (Winterson, 2019: 10) could also be read as a young woman whose responsibilities are too big for her. Since she feels the guilt or resentment of being incomplete in her feminine duties from a patriarchal point of view, her creative side that wants to do male business is reflected as a male figure, a monster in her imagination. Considering that she starts focusing on this figure and her story right after the group has conversations about life, death and their fears around these subjects, her imagination of a male figure creating a monster becomes more significant. She explains as follows:

> “I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantom 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.” (Winterson, 2019: 21)

The man Shelley describes as the pale student of unhallowed arts, who will turn into the character she decides to call Victor Frankenstein in her story later, is also the same character in Winterson’s narrative. He will state also later that his creator, he and the monster are the same in his exclamation to Shelley in the Bedlam chapter: “We are the same, the same, answered Frankenstein” (Winterson, 2019: 151). His exclamation supports the idea that Frankenstein could be interpreted as Mary Shelley’s creative side that wants to write stories, but she is also fearful of the fact that as she cannot fulfill her duties as a woman, she might not be as successful as her mother in a man's world. But the monster inside her wins as she creates one of the best stories in literature, which she later refers to as; “what terrified me will terrify others” (Winterson, 2019: 154).

However, what makes this quotation from real-life Shelley significant in Winterson’s book is much deeper than it brings to the readers’ attention at first glance.

Her words represent Shelley's own fears of life and death as she feels she belongs to neither realm, and her thoughts on not being able to fulfill one's existence as an individual. She confesses that "[a]ll [her] life [she has] feared such a state" (Winterson, 2019: 11) which allows Winterson to bring an intertextual discourse between the two texts where the monster's existential crisis in the original work goes in parallel with Shelley's own in *Frankissstein*.

As for the other characters in the *ark* of Villa Diodati, Shelley's expressions and the word choices of her husband Percy Shelley are among the most important. Her lover's body is described as a ghastly, slender but neat figure by Mary. He has "long, thin arms" and "long thin legs", his skin color is emphasized in the line "How pale he is!" with an exclamation under the moonlight (Winterson, 2019:16-17). He also has a gothic taste as Mary explains "Shelley is fascinated by moonlit nights and the sudden sight of ruins" (Winterson, 2019:11). Physical attributes that are used to describe Percy add up to his relation with the monster since paleness can be associated with death or with a connection to the undead which is also discussed in the novel. These attributes may also symbolize his detachment from the vibrancy of life, as they evoke a sense of otherness, as Percy Shelley himself would deny only being attached to his "body" which he also thinks cannot be "...the truth of what we are." (Winterson, 2019: 17) And as he refers to the impossibility and inevitability of death he argues that "the spirit will not return to a ruined house" (Winterson, 2019: 17). His belief in the continuity of "memory, or memories" (Winterson, 2019: 12) and the power of spirit as "...all that we do that shapes the world – is that the body or the spirit? It is the spirit." (Winterson, 2019: 17) are disagreed by Polidory and Byron, which creates further detachment for Percy Shelley from his environment.

Additionally, there is one feature of Percy Shelley that is attributed later to characters Victor Frankenstein and Victor Stein as well as Frankenstein's creature, along with a very similar set of physical attributes as later on Mary passes his lover's inspiration and description to them, although there is no clear indication that none of them are look-alike to Percy. But they all have "wild, nocturnal eyes" (Winterson, 2019:236). As her husband and lover, it is clear in the beginning from her expressions that Percy, despite their hardships, is a muse for Mary. She adores her lover's body as the male body she knows and as the source of her inspiration. She describes her admiration and states: "He had removed his clothes but for his shirt. The whiteness of

him glistened in the moonlight. The male body is the perfect form, I believe. And such is the travesty of my monster. In proportion but monstrous" (Winterson, 2019:93).

But later in their story, especially after the loss of their second child, Percy's loss of interest in Mary as well as his lack of understanding of the human condition as an indicator of his detachment from the consequences of his actions, is indicated in the lines; "He wants to sail his new boat. She's like a witch, he says. He must always be under a spell. I was his enchantment once. But that is done. I wish I could break my chains and leave this dungeon." (Winterson, 2019:201)

At first glance "She" who is "like a witch" may be understood as Percy's new boat but it can be interpreted as a reference to an affair with a "new 'friend'", which Mary thinks he is having (Winterson, 2019: 200). Shelley's despair is vividly described in her words when she refers to her husband's behavior, which is another indicator for his indifference:

> "Shelley does not go whoring. No. He falls in love with every new female dream that seems to offer him freedom. He stays with me at the same time as leaving me. And I allow it. And I turn away from him. And every dead baby makes it harder to turn back to him again. And even now, carrying this child, I avert my eyes and my embrace is cold. We have separate rooms. I hear him stealthily down the corridor at night, padding towards Jane's room like a summoned dog. Does she enjoy that thin white body that moves as if it were an imprint from another world?" (Winterson, 2019:200)

As she loses her hopes after the untimely death of her husband, Percy is but an imprint she keeps looking for in every living or dead thing since he believes that "[he] would, if [he] could, when [his] body fails, cast [his] mind into a rock or a stream or a cloud. [His] mind is immortal – [He] feel[s] it to be" (Winterson, 2019:18). Another quote from Percy later in the novel on this matter explains his view further: "We are many, he said. Many Shelleys, many Marys. Many stand behind us tonight in spirit, and we shall do the same when we are done here" (Winterson, 2019:180).

This aethereal presence and transcendental belief would also represent itself in both Victor Frankenstein and Victor Stein, which makes Percy more significant as a representative of the monster archetype. Percy Shelley gets reimagined in both

characters through the archetypal pattern that Winterson wants to create between the characters that are indirectly referred to as reincarnations of each other, as well as adding another interpretation to Mary’s story. That is, as argued in Francesca Ferrando’s philosophical posthumanism, a spiritual ever-presence and transcendental belief which would help humanity to understand what it means to be posthuman better (Ferrando, 2016:1). Thus, Percy, Victor Stein and Frankenstein as being reincarnations of each other, also become the embodiment of Mary’s creativity, portrayed in the likeness of the attractive image and characteristics of her husband, which could be understood as he is almost the only man that Mary does not disdain until the very end of the novel. Therefore, Percy Shelley represents a monster in two different ways: one is Mary's creativity in male form as the suppressed side of her identity and it is revealed by both Frankenstein and Victor Stein. The other emerges from Percy's qualities such as his distinction, marginalization, indistinct nature towards the human condition, as well as his aethereal presence from the lover's and his own perspective. Supported by vividly described sexual intercourses and Mary’s word choices while describing Percy’s body, his symbolism becomes more significant since the love between the couple can be read as the desire towards the monstrous body. In this connection, Cohen argues that “the [f]ear of the [m]onster [i]s [r]eally a [k]ind of [d]esire” and he continues as follows:

> “When contained by geographic, generic, or epistemic marginalization, the monster can function as an alter ego, as an alluring projection of (an Other) self. The monster awakens one to the pleasures of the body, to the simple and fleeting joys of being frightened, or frightening—to the experience of mortality and corporality.” (Cohen, 1996:16-17)

As a result, Percy’s body becomes the symbol of *mortality and corporality* and *projection of self* for Mary, as well as being the subject of her desire. These can be respectively read through the couple’s *mind and body* dualism that is reflected in Mary’s earlier response to her husband “How would I love you, my lovely boy, if you had no body?” (Winterson, 2019:17) as well as Percy’s reflections on Victor Frankenstein and Victor Stein.

Another detail that applies to Percy as well as to the other characters in the novel is, as argued by Cohen, that the monster’s body is *cultural*. In his Seven Theses, he states that:

> "Like a letter on the page, the monster signifies something other than itself: it is always a displacement, always inhabits the gap between the time of upheaval that created it and the moment into which it is received, to be born again." (Cohen, 1996:4)

That is acknowledged by Mary Shelley when she learns about the *Analytical Engine* at the very end of the novel by the line: "Read us back to life?" (Winterson, 2019:236) which refers to the idea that the *Analytical Engine* could read humans if they were presented as language. Although the scene includes clear references to machine learning and mind-uploading technologies which are also stated in the novel, the uncanny word choices link the ending back to Shelley's thoughts on Percy and Victor even unclearly. Mary thinks on the matter and comments:

> "He would enjoy that; to be read back to life. Imagine it; his poems in my pocket, and him too. I feed the punch-card into the machine and what comes out is Shelley." (Winterson, 2019:237)

Thus Mary's late husband, Percy becomes "... a letter on the page" that can "be born again" (Cohen, 1996: 4) or as Shelley states he can be read "back to life" (Winterson, 2019: 236). Even though it was probably meant as a reference to transhumanism and technological advancements, the imaginary dialogue that follows Shelley's assumptions of her husband coming back to life strengthens the link between Cohen's definition and Percy's ideology and characteristics:

> "Mary! he says.
> (Victor! Is that you?)" (Winterson, 2019:237)

Even though it is unclear and uncanny with the lines and parentheses in the excerpt, the exclamation "Victor!" underlines the connection between Percy and both Victor(s) in the novel while adding up to their characterizations as the monster. Another evident reference to the collusion of Percy's identity and Frankenstein's monster is revealed after Percy's death by Mary when she mentions her husband's funeral: "And so we will burn him on the beach. Is it not strange how life imitates art? That this is the end my monster chose for himself after the death of his maker? His funeral pyre." (Winterson, 2019:201). The similarity in the manner of death in both characters symbolically completes Percy's image as the monster and is underlined by Shelley's last

comments as she states, “What is left of his corpse is a dark and ghastly indigo colour.” (Winterson, 2019:201)

In addition to their artistic and marginal positions in society, their reappearing characteristic natures are also an underlining feature that allows each character in the Villa Diodati to be interpreted as monstrous archetypes. Although all of the characters may not have the same significance as the protagonists and the narrators of both timelines, Lord Byron, Doctor Polidori, and Claire Clairmont also show important characteristics that can be of a monster. Starting with Lord Byron, his unclear and dichotomous political ideas, general opinions about women, behavior, and though not as detailed as Percy's, his physical appearance are the qualities that make his character stand out among the others. When commented by Shelley through a dialogue with his daughter Ada Lovelace, the narrator describes Byron’s appearance as “Monstrous” (Winterson, 2019:222) in addition to her earlier comments on his walking: “His limp is more pronounced in the damp.” (Winterson, 2019:15)

So from the narrative perspective, Byron’s physical descriptions portray a monstrous, mostly drunk, dangerous, and limping man, yet Shelley “...loved him” (Winterson, 2019:222). In fact, Shelley describes some of the male characters including Byron in her life as “remarkable men” who lack an understanding of the human condition and emotional sufficiency:

> “Your father, Byron, and my husband, Shelley, were remarkable men, my own father, William Godwin, was a remarkable man (she nodded), yet, my dear, being remarkable is no guarantee of human feeling.” (Winterson, 2019:222)

In a further quote, Mary describes him as “sardonic, cynical”, and she adds “A great poet, truly, yet unkind. The gifts of our nature seem not to modify the manner of our behaviour.” (Winterson, 2019:46) and in a similar quote Shelley criticizes that his artistic qualities do not affect behavior by stating that “Byron is a poet but he likes to be clean” (Winterson, 2019:11). Furthermore, in his philosophical point of view and behavior, of which there are a few expressions interspersed throughout Shelley’s interactions with the character, Byron appears to be indecisive. He is an “atheist and does not believe in life after death” (Winterson, 2019:12) and argues that “[t]he male principle is readier and more active” (Winterson, 2019:12-13) than female, yet he believes that creation myth in the Bible “...is a metaphor for the distinctions between

men and women" (Winterson, 2019:15) in addition to being "...on a diet for his corpulence, and besides, he is insomniac, and idle." (Winterson, 2019:44). His behavior appears to be somewhat hypocritical and is clearly seen in his political comments as well. For instance, he believes that "every advance of thought or invention must be paid for" (Winterson, 2019:100) but he also supports mechanical inventions because he believes that "hierarchies of men" are acceptable while machines cannot take over their jobs (Winterson, 2019:100). After it is revealed in the novel that Byron leaves his daughter in a convent, Shelley comments on the matter: "His lordship upholds the law when it suits him" (Winterson, 2019:199).

But among all of his qualities, one is more visible from the narrative perspective of Mary Shelley. Byron's idea on the "life spark" (Winterson, 2019:16), women's place in the marriage, and his behavior towards Claire and Shelley, as he states at one point: "Read to us a little, won't you? To pass the hour? Then I shall go to bed and spank your sister." (Winterson, 2019:101) clearly shows that he is a man of patriarchal belief. Shelley comments on his philosophy with disappointment: "Byron is of the opinion that woman is from man born – his rib, his clay – and I find this singular in a man as intelligent as he" (Winterson, 2019:15). That is to say; the rebellious nature of the charismatic poet conflicts with the more traditional part of his character.

The women in the party are only bearable as long as they serve any of his purposes getting into a dialogue, which is mostly for his amusement. Not until after Percy Shelley dies, Byron is represented in good behavior through his help and sympathies towards Mary. But even then he is described as "[t]he mad, bad and dangerous-to-know Lord Byron" who "...was disappointed to have sired a daughter" (Winterson, 2019:219-220). Similarly, his respect towards Mary starts from the point where Percy intervenes in their dialogue to warn him of his manners:

> "Women are weak, said Byron.
> Or perhaps men need to believe it is so, I said.
> Hyena, said Byron.
> I must protest! said Shelley.
> Joke, said Byron." (Winterson, 2019: 96-97)

Although his patriarchal behavior could be acceptable for the society of his time and could be interpreted as historical accuracy, what makes Byron monstrous for

Shelley and contemporary view is his crook and wry behavior towards people. Probably as most of the matters, Byron sees women as objects that would entertain him either intellectually or sexually. Despite his hedonistic approach to casual matters in Villa Diodati, Byron's behavior also appears to be controlling. He starts and finishes arguments, sets challenges and gets dangerous for others when he is bored. In one political argument after he gets offended by drunk Claire he "[takes] her shoulders in both hands" and sends her into her room in an orderly voice, "*Get to bed, madam!*" (Winterson, 2019:99). Added to his not so traditional set of mind on politics and topics concerning the society, through which renders Byron as a representation of the Romantic ideal of the individual who stands apart from society, challenging its values and pushing the boundaries of acceptable behavior, this hypocrisy and objectification becomes even more significant for the purpose of this study. Cohen on the matter, argues that the monster "[p]olices the [b]orders of the [p]ossible" (1996:12) stating that the monster archetype is able to isolate the boundaries of the relations that is called culture, and to bring the borders that cannot be crossed:

> "Primarily these borders are in place to control the traffic in women, or more generally to establish strictly homosocial bonds, the ties between men that keep a patriarchal society functional. A kind of herdsman, this monster delimits the social space through which cultural bodies may move, and in classical times (for example) validated a tight, hierarchical system of naturalized leadership and control where every man had a functional place." (Cohen, 1996:13-14)

Therefore, the controlling and traditional nature of Byron on that matter renders him a monster that separates the borders of possible behavior in his social circle if not his society. Considering the dual nature of the character, his rebellious side on sociopolitical matters and identity as an artist also put him in the margins of society, which is another reason to interpret Byron as a monster. And more prominently his objectification of women, which will be discussed in his future counterpart, adds up to his monstrous qualities.

As another character in the past narrative, Dr. Polidori also has some of the qualities that others have. In addition to having some of the sociopolitical stand points as Byron and being a "lovesick dog" (Winterson, 2019:11) as Shelley describes in her narration, Dr. Polidori has the mad scientist archetype that is also ideologically

represented in other characters like Percy, Byron, and more importantly Victor Stein and Frankenstein. Since writing ghost stories was a *challenge* that Byron put the others in the Villa, the influence of the dialogues and the company of the people is not negligible. In the lines where he was referring to the dissection of the corpses for scientific purposes, Polidori states that "[t]he light of science burns brightest in a blood-soaked wick" (Winterson, 2019:21) which can be interpreted as one of his many features that would make Dr.Polidori the mad scientist on the margins of his time and society whose ambitions in the pursuit of scientific knowledge put them in morally gray areas. Considering Mary's comment on what Polidori says about dissection and the facial expressions on the corpses: "Have you no conscience? …No scruples?" (Winterson, 2019:21) that underlines society's view on scientists, in this case, Polidori as morally problematic individuals. Although his Seven Theses does not directly mention the mad scientist archetype, Cohen on the matter argues that the monster's body is the embodiment of culture, that consists of fears surrounding the experimental developments in science particularly its ability to transgress natural and moral boundaries of the society. He also states that "[f]rom its position at the limits of knowing, the monster stands as a warning against exploration of its uncertain demesnes." (Cohen, 1996: 12), which matches with Polidori's desire to explore new scientific horizons as well as his traditional stance that forms a duality in his character. Cohen also argues that the monster stands at the borders to "...declare that curiosity is more often punished than rewarded"(Cohen, 1996: 12), which is also a recurring characteristic in both Lord Byron and Dr.Polidori in the novel. Polidori states:

> "The deadness of the dead, said Polidori, is not what we fear. Rather we fear that they are not dead when we lay them in that last chamber. That they awake to darkness, and suffocation, and so die in agony. I have seen such agony in the faces of some new-buried and brought in for dissection." (Winterson, 2019:21)

Clearly his fears about the bodies on the dissection table analysis stems from societies moral boundaries, yet his character as a science-person does not allow him to suppress his curiosity. Therefore, the recurring fear in both Byron and Polidori can be interpreted as a fear of stepping outside of the moral boundaries rather than corpses coming back to life. On another note, where Mary Shelley mentions her hopes that "… one day there will be a human society that is just," Polidori's response also shows that he has no hopes for a just society by stating "That will never happen …" (Winterson,

2019:13), which also could be read as a proof of his alienation from the society of his time as a part of his academic persona.

The last character from Shelley's narrative is her step sister, Claire Clairmont. Born of an "ordinary woman of no imagination" (Winterson, 2019:48) as Shelley states in the novel, Claire shows a promise of heroic action in a male dominant world, because she "changed her name to Claire" which Shelley comments on as follows: "I did not disapprove of this. Why should she not remake herself? What is identity but what we name it?" (Winterson, 2019:48). Apart from her represented choice to rename herself in the novel, Claire appears to be a simple character except some parts where she almost robotically bursts into dialogue and ends up being scolded by Byron:

> "And what about Pandora and her bloody box? said Polidori. Another woman who wouldn't do as she was told. Something of you there, Claire, said Byron, poking her with his lame foot." (Winterson, 2019:96)

Even in the authorial note that appears on page eleven, the narrator mentions Claire as a woman who "would have slept with anyone – on this occasion she slept only with Byron, to which Shelley adds that "… [she] avoid[s] Claire, who can talk about nothing." (Winterson, 2019:11.) Usually a quiet character, perfectly mirroring the expectations of the men around her as well as the society of the time, Claire "sits sewing in a corner" or even though she is upset, keeps "stitch[ing] viciously at her cushion cover" (Winterson, 2019:44-46). Yet, Claire's personality hides a rebellious part within, which seems to be hidden behind short passages as a passing reference as in her decisions to change her name as well as to run away with Shelleys as she states that "... she could not be left behind…" (Winterson, 2019:48). In Bradford Booth's article on Claire Clairmont where Booth quotes from her letter to a friend, Claire mentions the hardships of growing up in a circle of talented people by stating:

> "But in our family, if you cannot write an epic or novel, that by its originality knocks all other novels on the head, you are a despicable creature, not worth acknowledging." (Booth, 1938:2)

Her words are significant as the sign of her dilemma affected by both society's and her own expectations regarding her identity. Considering that even Mary Shelley does not seem to take her seriously, Claire, outside of her momentary bursts of dialogue,

becomes a marginalized woman even in the small circle of characters in the novel. Her decision to elope with Shelleys render her away from the center of society at that time, since she simply did not want to stay with her family; but in the small circle of artists and scientists they have at Villa Diodati she stands out as a simple woman without any talents whose existence or company is forgotten:

> “We are a little half-ark here ourselves, are we not? observed Byron. We four in our watery world.
> Five, said Claire.
> I forgot, said Byron.” (Winterson, 2019: 14)

Therefore her body and identity becomes a liminal space, stuck in between her attributed identity and the one she wants to have, similar to Mary Shelley. Considering that both of these personalities are reflected on her future counterparts, since Claire appears both as a sexbot and a person in the future narrative of Ry, her representation of a quiet woman reveals more than the eye could see at first glance. Liminality as argued in Turner’s study can cause individuals to fall out of cultural categories:

> “The attributes of liminality or of *liminal personae* ("threshold people") are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space.” (Turner, 1991: 95)

Turner’s comments are in harmony with Cohen’s. They both agree that liminality, which is caused by the characters' identities or ideologies, could be interpreted as the very reason what makes them monsters. In this case, though in different ways, liminal identity applies to almost all characters in the past narrative. Going back to Claire, another feature of hers that may support the ideas of liminal identity therefore monstrous character is her seemingly random bursts of dialogues in which she actually expresses meaningful and surprisingly sarcastic statements. In one of such moments, labeled as simple or “not worth acknowledging” may she be, it is clear that she is aware of others’ views of herself as well as her own since the rebellious side of her wants to improve:

> “I wish to know, said Claire.
> God help us, muttered Byron.

> I wish TO KNOW why all that ails mankind must be the fault of womankind?" (Winterson, 2019: 96)

Even supported with the author's fourth-wall breaking note that undermines and praises her expression at the same time; "THIS IS THE MOST PROFOUND THING CLAIRE HAS SAID IN HER LIFE" (Winterson, 2019: 97). Claire also makes sarcastic statements even though the clarity of her consciousness is not certain.

> "Show me that pig! said Claire. I shall marry that pig! Why must life be suffering?" (Winterson, 2019: 97)

But the most iconic of these outbursts comes later at the same night when she "... was drunk to the gills with wine …" while expressing her *MOST PROFOUND* idea to Byron. As Shelley recounts that night later on in the novel to Byron and Claire's daughter, Ada, stating that Claire was "... sick to the stomach of Byron's indifference towards her …" (Winterson, 2019: 221). While Byron was boasting about how "Man is the apex of creation … Poetry is the apex of Man" (Winterson, 2019: 99), Claire in her drunk state bursts into a monologue of sarcastic mockery of what she could understand from the conversation:

> "She said, Machines that mimic a mind! Oh! Suppose such a thing should happen one day! Yes! Yes! Imagine, gentlemen, how you will feel when someone invents a LOOM that writes poetry!
> HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!" (Winterson, 2019:99)

Besides foreshadowing and connecting the past and present narratives together, her expression here, even while drunk to a comical effect, shows how powerful she really is to be able to mock Byron. Since Poetry is a form of writing she believes to be a male business in their society as well as being something that she is not allowed to do because of both unworthiness and of her gender, her mockery in these lines are significant to portray the rebellious side in her identity. Even Shelley does not pity or scorn her while describing the scene in this part:

> "Her laughter overtook her. Her bare shoulders shook. Her curls swirled. Her breasts in her dress were jellies of mirth. She could not contain it. A POETICAL loom! An abacus of words. A rote poet. The poem I rote …" (Winterson, 2019:99)

And after Byron takes her in her shoulders to put an end to the mockery, as Shelley states, “She face[s] him …She open[s] her mouth, [thinks] to defy him, close[s] her mouth” (source). Although Claire is aware of what and who she is facing here, she is “[s]ubdued, and not a little fearful” while she “grab[s] her sewing from the chair and [runs] from the room” (Winterson, 2019:99). The importance of her confrontation with Byron creates a clear portrayal of her liminal identity, showing that she is aware and has the power to face her abusers despite the belief of others around her.

Before moving onto the future narrative in the novel, another timeline and narrative that is intertwined into the novel towards the middle gains significance for both past and future narratives. This time, Winterson surprises the reader with a new narrator, Mr. Wakefield, overseer of Bedlam. Despite showing similarities with Percy and Mary in ideology and his comments on life, death and madness, Wakefield apart from some short background information seems to have no effect on the plot of the novel. Yet he is a significant narrator with the tale he tells and his comments that would be repeated many times in the other parts of the novel. To start with Wakefield’s Bedlam as a location is a marginalized place of alienation where the authorities keep “poor lunaticks” for the “publick to visit” because “[t]he most the captive tyger and the captive man can hope for is a square of sky” (Winterson, 2019:126). Additionally he states that Bedlam does not offer “cure” but they only “seek to care and to console” for madness is “a disease of the soul” (Winterson, 2019:127), implying that it is impossible to cure one’s soul. Thus Bedlam becomes Mary Shelley’s most powerful fear, a place for the people who are neither dead nor alive, only confined and secured in a place away from the society. In this background, Wakefield narrates the story of Captain Walton who brings a man that calls himself Victor Frankenstein, and arranges a meeting with Mary Shelley and Victor Frankenstein in his study. What makes this chapter worth mentioning is a repeated notion of a problematic body and eternal soul from Wakefield and the Victor Frankenstein characters, who elaborate other characters like Percy Bysshe Shelley, Victor Stein, Mary Shelley and Ry Shelley. Since the idea that argues “The body fails and falls. But the body is not the truth of what we are. The spirit will not return to a ruined house” (Winterson, 2019: 17) belongs to Percy Shelley at the beginning of the novel, which is repeated by both Wakefield; “The soul does not return to a house in ruins” (Winterson, 2019: 137) and Victor Frankenstein; “This body! he

continued. I scarcely recognise it. I am Mind. Thought. Spirit. Consciousness" (Winterson, 2019: 151) in the Bedlam chapter.

Victor Frankenstein, as included in the Bedlam chapters and narrated by Mr. Wakefield shows starking similarities to Percy and Victor Stein's physical appearance as well as acting as a correcting agent for their ideologies in the novel. Apart from being a direct reference to Victor Frankenstein of Shelley's original novel, his first words in Bedlam are very significant in understanding his counterparts: "I gave him wine. What is your story, sir? I said.
That is the dilemma, he replied. I do not know if I am the teller or the tale." (Winterson, 2019:138)

In Winterson's cleverly crafted narrative of Mr. Wakefield, Frankenstein is a lost man who is looking for his creator for a solution to his dilemma. His physical description is narrated by Wakefield;

> "The man, Victor Frankenstein, was sitting up, his face solemn. He had moved away from the fire into the shadows. His body, so lean and pale, was hidden. His head, fine and well-shaped, the hair still dark, gave the impression of speaking by itself - a head without a body." (Winterson, 2019:137-138)

In addition to carrying similar physical features to Victor Stein and Percy Shelley, what is more significant in Wakefield's description is the pictured image of a head without a body since it refers to Victor's mind uploading experiment and Percy's transcendental approach to the soul. Frankenstein also believes that "if [he] leave[s] [his] body, still [he] shall return" because his "...form … is temporary" and "[he] exist[s] for all time, unless [his] creator frees [him]" (Winterson, 2019: 151). As Frankenstein continues to address Mary, the lines that contrast the characters of the novel from each other are gradually blurred:

> "I wish to disappear! I do not belong in this body. This gross body!
> My husband would understand you there, sir, she said.
> This body! he continued. I scarcely recognise it. I am Mind. Thought. Spirit. Consciousness." (Winterson, 2019:151)

Although Mary states that her husband would agree with Frankenstein, his displacement in his own body and his belief of transcendental consciousness show

similarities to not only Percy and Victor Stein, but also Mary's and later Ry's situations. Frankenstein further comments on his body by stating that he is "trapped" in it and he is "the same" with the creature in the original novel, which is also significant because as mentioned before, both Frankenstein and his creature, although has been analyzed from many different literary points of view throughout centuries, bear similarities to Mary's own identity crisis and they represent her inspiration from her husband. Therefore, in the line where Frankenstein states; "We are the same, the same…" (Winterson, 2019:151), the pronoun "We" could be interpreted as him in partnership with any other character, in this case more likely Mary, since it does not clearly address the creature and utters the sentence directly to Mary. Victor's last words in the chapter support this interpretation.

> "If I am here, then he is there, replied Victor Frankenstein. That you cannot see him means nothing. You cannot see God but by his effects. Believe me, you will see his effects. The monster once made cannot be unmade. What will happen to the world has begun." (Winterson, 2019:153)

Indeed, what he means is more than likening God to a monster in its context. It directly refers to the elusive and category defying natures of the monster along with the monster's attribute of being a harbinger, and "being at the threshold of becoming" as he states:

> "Monsters are our children. They can be pushed to the farthest margins of geography and discourse, hidden away at the edges of the world and in the forbidden recesses of our mind, but they always return." (1996:20)

He also adds that when monsters return to the center, they bring knowledge of humankind from outside society's boundaries, may these be cultural, racial, sexual, ideological, scientific or technological.

Narrator of Winterson's future timeline Ry Shelley[2], a transgender doctor who studies robotics and their possible effects on mental and physical health, comes forward almost as a reincarnation of Mary Shelley. The link between these characters are mostly observable in narrative focal points, repeating lines and characteristics in the novel. When first addressed as "Mr. Shelley", Ry hails the reader with a correction in her

[2] From now on, the non-binary inclusive pronouns "they/them" will be used to refer to and analyze the character of Ry Shelly, who is presented as non-binary character.

introduction as "Dr. Shelley"; a correction that serves as a foreshadowing for her powerful character and her established body image (Winterson, 2019:24). Though not self-expressive like their predecessor Mary Shelley, they share similar experiences and thoughts. In contrast to Ron Lord's misinterpretation according to their looks, their name "Ry is short for Mary" and they choose to describe themselves as "...liminal, cusping, in between, emerging, undecided, transitional, experimental, a start-up (or is it an upstart?) in [their] own life" (Winterson, 2019:27).

Although a lot different in terms of timeline and technology from Mary's environment, Ry is introduced to the reader at a tech expo in Memphis on the two hundredth anniversary of the city and the novel Frankenstein where "reality bends in the heat" (Winterson, 2019: 24).

In their narrative, Ry also paints a blurry image with not so sharp lines even in background descriptions, similar to their predecessor. As themes of organic creation fantasies and galvanism leave their places to technology and artificial intelligence, liminal identities and crises also get exchanged with more visible dilemmas. In contrast to Mary Shelley's ideological and existential alienation, Ry's represents itself in their body as an alienation to the society's binary gender standards. The expressions are clearer, as Ry states that they are "hybrid" and "transgender" (Winterson, 2019:63) but they are an individual who is forced to "cry at night for what you can't understand in yourself or others. Cry at night. Don't you?" (Winterson, 2019:171). Ry Shelley is a character who stands at the borders of gender binary by choice, and their alienation or displacement is living in a world that is still getting used to nonbinary genders as there are still societies in which gender correction surgeries or homosexuality are crimes punishable with death. In Victor Stein's words they are "... future-early" (Winterson, 2019:88), As Cohen argues, Ry are both a woman "... who oversteps the boundaries of her gender role…" (Cohen, 1996:7) and a harbinger of category crisis that is summarized as, in different words also stated by Victor Stein in the novel, "the here and now, and a harbinger of the future" (Winterson, 2019:110). Even with the word choice *harbinger* Winterson signals the level of monstrous she represents in the novel. As Cohen argues:

> "This refusal to participate in the classificatory "order of things" is true of monsters generally: they are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent

> bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. And so the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions." (Cohen, 1996:6)

Ry is a dangerous hybrid that refuses to be included in the preset categories as a harbinger of what is new and different. But this time, like Shelley's monster, Ry is "... difference made flesh, come to dwell among us" since their rebellion against categorization is carved into their "flesh" (Cohen, 1996:22). Their decision to remake their body also turns Ry's body into a cultural one, instead of mere flesh and bones, which Cohen ironically likens to Frankenstein's creature:

> "Because it is a body across which difference has been repeatedly written, the monster (like Frankenstein's creature, that combination of odd somatic pieces stitched together from a community of cadavers) seeks out its author to demand its raison d'etre—and to bear witness to the fact that it could have been constructed Otherwise." (Cohen, 1996:12)

Ry also suggests as follows: "The paradox is that I felt in the wrong body but for my body it was the right body" (Winterson, 2019:215), where they bring the creation of the body into question while referring to the liminality of their body. Therefore, Ry's body joins the other characters as a cultural body. Their observations and other characters' opinion on them, while shedding light to probable experiences of a transgender individual, reflects their alienation and cultural displacement in a society that is yet to get used to the notion of non-binary gender, which Jessica Wädt refers to as follows: "... their self-expression of non-binary identity challenges those external attributed norms and explores liminal spaces of identity" (2021:5). Since their appearance is male, the expressions of the other male figures Ron Lord and Victor Stein on Ry's body, especially when they state that Ry is short for Mary instead of Ryan as it is widely misunderstood, are significant for understanding their marginalized, if not monstrous existence in the novel. Ron Lord's first "processing" when he learns their name is reflected in the lines:

> "You're a woman, then? says Ron.
> No, Ron. I am a hybrid. My name is Ry.
> You're a bloke, then? says Ron.
> I'm trans.

Like, transhuman?

Transgender.

You look like a bloke, says Ron. Not a serious bloke, but a bloke. I wouldn't have given you that interview at the Sexpo if you was a girl.

I'm trans, I say again." (Winterson, 2019:63)

After the surprised comments on their gender and identity, Ry usually needs to explain themselves at least a few times to most of the characters to get at least the slightest notion of understanding which is sometimes not enough for people to ask unexpected questions. For instance Ron Lord keeps looking at them "...with even more doubt and even more dismay" and asks: "I'm not being personal, but have you got a dick?", to which they answer with another question: "Is manhood dickhood?" (Winterson, 2019: 64). Even this question makes it clear that Ry's understanding of gender concept goes beyond the body, yet their body is their own making and unique but also problematic for them as well. This is also underlined by the author with a nice allusion to the famous folk tale Little Red Riding Hood, when Ry answers one of Ron's expressions with a joke:

"What big hands you've got, he says.

All the better to amputate you with." (Winterson, 2019:66)

Through this passing reference, Ry is likened to the wolf character in the tale which reflects their monstrosity from the point of view of a cisgender individual. Right after, the narrative continues with Ry's inner dialogue, where they remember their mother "...had big hands" and "she died giving birth to [them]..." and "…she's strong and clear-eyed and unafraid" (Winterson, 2019:66), which also adds up to Ry Shelley's connection to their past counterpart, Mary Shelley.

Coming back to Ry's body image as another common point of Ry and Mary, they are a monster to the others. That is to say, for Ron they are a person that cannot be trusted to the male circle due to a lack of male genitalia but they look like a "bloke" (Winterson, 2019:63). Or for the more sympathetic Victor they are both outside of society's norms as he tells them that "[they]'re both freaks" (Winterson, 2019:122). And Poly D, Polidori's future counterpart and a reporter, wants to do an interview with Ry, just because "trans is hot right now" (Winterson, 2019:73) and lastly, in a horribly vivid scene where Ry falls victim to a rape by a man using the toilet, again they are called a

"FREAK!" (Winterson, 2019:170). Despite misunderstandings, namings and insults by other characters, Ry's elusive nature refuses to be a part of any categorization as they keep repeating with a strong sense of identity that "[they are] trans" (Winterson, 2019: 63). Therefore even in a first meeting with Ry Shelley, they become a category crisis for the other characters, and evoke fear, astonishment or hate, which adds up to Cohen's argument on the monster's elusive nature where he states that "the monster always escapes because it refuses easy categorization" (Cohen, 1996: 6). Such argument is clearly reflected in Ry's many definitions of themselves in contrast to the attempts of categorization, since the dualism and the liminality of Ry's body becomes even more significant after the reader is introduced with Ry's first physical definition of themselves, first time in detail:

> "I am not especially tall at 5 foot 8. My build is slender. Narrow hips, long legs. When I had top surgery there wasn't much to remove, and the hormones had already altered my chest. I never wore a bra when I was female. I like my chest the way it is now; strong, smooth and flat. I wear my hair tied back in a ponytail like an eighteenth-century poet. When I look in the mirror I see someone I recognise, or rather, I see at least two people I recognise. That is why I have chosen not to have lower surgery. I am what I am, but what I am is not one thing, not one gender. I live with doubleness." (Winterson, 2019: 67)

Another connotation to their liminality is where Ry states that they are "...part of a small group of transgender medical professionals" and continues; "Some of us are transhuman enthusiasts too. That isn't surprising; we feel or have felt that we're in the wrong body. We can understand the feeling that any-body is the wrong body" (Winterson, 2019: 78). Ry supports their argument further: "I am a woman. And I am a man. That's how it is for me. I am in the body that I prefer. But the past, my past, isn't subject to surgery. I didn't do it to distance myself from myself. I did it to get nearer to myself" (Winterson, 2019: 90). Their displacement in the time and society they are a part of is even indicated in their comment on Victor's company logo: "Optimal's logo reads: The Future Is Now. That annoys me because if the future is now, where is the present?" (Winterson, 2019: 63). Even though Victor calls Ry "future-early" (Winterson, 2019: 88), last quote of Ry indicates that their reasons to take surgery is to get nearer to themselves, which underlines the fact that their body is a cultural body. Cohen on the matter states that:

> “The monstrous body is pure culture. A construct and a projection, the monster exists only to be read: the monstrum is etymologically "that which reveals," "that which warns," a glyph that seeks a hierophant.” (Cohen, 1996: 4)

Just like Mary who “overstep[ped] the boundaries of her gender role” (Cohen, 1996: 9), Ry too becomes cultural and monstrous because “"Deviant" sexual identity …” is also “similarly susceptible to monsterization” (Cohen, 1996: 9). Character Victor Stein also comments on the matter as he states that “[they (Ry and Victor) are] freaks according to the behaviour of the world” because being alone is an “anti-evolutionary position” and since they would not like to have “long marriages and well adjusted kids”, they would only be “different people” not “more productive or wiser or saner or happier” (Winterson, 2019: 122). Victor’s statement and comments on their place in society clearly shows how distant both Victor and Ry are from society’s center, and how they are aware of their marginalization. Moreover, Ry’s explanation of their body as a doctor in the later parts of the novel expands on the duality they have:

> “I’m trans, and that means a lifetime of hormones. My life will be shorter and it’s likely I will be sicker as I get older. If I were male-to female, and I had lower surgery to remove my penis, my body would thereafter view my new vagina as a wound. A wound I would have to clean and tend. As it is now, for me, female-to-male, I keep my maleness intact with testosterone but my body knows it wasn’t born this way.” (Winterson, 2019: 215)

Retracing to the connection between Mary Shelley and Ry, Ry’s loneliness and displacement becomes more significant in their relation to each other as it is revealed by both characters in parallel chapters. Although it is continuously stated that Ry’s body is their own making and choice, in different passages readers can observe that they show similarities to Mary Shelley and Frankenstein’s creature. This becomes more evident especially when they comment on the individual state of their world in a descriptive passage where Ry states that “[they are] alone” (Winterson, 2019: 71). The existence of rain and blurred scenery in both Mary and Ry’s narratives take a transitive role in bringing two parallel timelines together as natural while village landscapes of Mary leave their place to Ry’s modern environment consisting of “...Horns. Traffic noise. Ceaseless. Comforting.” and where “the rain increases. On the street, under hoods and umbrellas, people are walking quickly, going somewhere, leaving somewhere,

earphones in, their faces lit by phone light, atomised and alone" (Winterson, 2019: 71). What makes these descriptive passages from each timeline and character significant is their loneliness and alienated states. Loneliness and alienation surface especially when Ry completes their circle after Victor's disappearance in a fourth-wall breaking paragraph:

> "Here I am. Anonymous, unnoticed, walking through the streets, and I am present and invisible. The riot in my head is unseen. What I am thinking, what I am feeling, are private Bedlams of my own. I manage my own madness just as you do. And if my heart is broken it keeps beating. That is the strangeness of life." (Winterson, 2019:234)

The word choices "Anonymous, unnoticed…" and "Bedlam" carry great significance in reference to other parts and chapters in the novel. Mary also describes her life as a "…punishment, after all, for the way [they] have lived? Outsiders and strangers" (Winterson, 2019: 177) although her definition of stranger takes a different form depending on the time period she lived:

> "Rome. Venice. Livorno. Florence. We have returned to Italy because we cannot live in England. Small-minded, smug, self-righteous, unjust, a country that hates the stranger, whether that stranger be a foreigner or an atheist, or a poet, or a thinker, or a radical, or a woman. For women are strange to men." (Winterson, 2019: 173)

Both Ry and Shelley are displaced and alienated women for they wanted more from their lives, bodies or talents than a traditional and patriarchal society could allow. But through their narrative, what makes these passages and word choices more significant is not only the fact that both characters progressively collide into one another in a sense of reincarnation but also with Ry's fourth-wall breaking comment on life, they collide into the reader as well, stating that every individual could create their own monsters inside. This similarity created by Ry's and Mary's narratives is also supported by the aforementioned narrative of Victor Frankenstein's expressions in Bedlam, bringing into argument that all of the characters as reincarnations of each other might be interpreted as "the same" (Winterson, 2019:151), especially in terms of their alienation and monstrous natures.

Second most important character in Ry's narrative is their love; Victor Stein. As it is implied by the name, Victor is a reincarnation of both Shelley's Frankenstein and Percy Bysshe Shelley. A charismatic scientist, Victor, as described by Ry, "has natural authority" (Winterson, 2019: 57). He works on artificial intelligence, for which he is both questioned and loved by his audience at the tech expo consists of tech geeks, activists and people from any kind of social circle.

> "Victor Stein has a big following on Facebook and Twitter. His TED talk has netted six million views. He's on a mission, that's certain.
> Some people wonder: whose side are you on?
> He'd say there are no sides – that binaries belong to our carbon-based past. The future is not biology – it's AI." (Winterson, 2019: 55-56)

His evolutionary project and opinion on the *binaries of our carbon-based past* portray him as another mad scientist archetype since no matter how good he is a leader there are supporters and haters.but there is more to Victor's character than only to be a reincarnate Percy or Frankenstein. According to his opening talk at tech expo, and as a posthuman enthusiast, he believes that "the human race is not a best possible outcome" (Winterson, 2019: 57). Percy Shelley's dream and Frankenstein's ambition in transcending the human body and limitations are reflected in Victor Stein's character. But even for his world, he still stands at the margins of society since what he suggests is "THE END OF THE HUMAN" (Winterson, 2019: 58).

But both Victor and Winterson are aware of the consequences and meaning of their ideas shared through the lines of the novel. His quotation from Albert Camus in the tech expo points at the responsibilities of our thoughts and actions since "to name things wrongly is to add to the misfortune of the world" (Winterson, 2019: 60). Then he goes on explaining that "naming is power" (Winterson, 2019: 60). His reference to Adam's task of naming things narrated in the Bible becomes allegorical when his situation in front of the audience is considered:

> "...the Bible story of the Garden of Eden, and that Adam's task was to name his world. If you believe, as I do, that religious texts – like myths – are texts we create to mirror the deeper structures of the human psyche, then yes, naming is still our primary task. Poets and philosophers know this – perhaps science has confused naming with taxonomy. Perhaps, in our early efforts to distance

> ourselves from the alchemists who came before us, we forgot that naming is power. I cannot conjure spirits, but I can tell you that calling things by their right names is more than giving them an identity bracelet or a label, or a serial number. We summon a vision. Naming is power." (Winterson, 2019: 60)

Winterson does not let Victor simply use the Biblical creation myth to correct a misunderstanding in his presentation. His reference to Adam's task becomes more significant considering his AI program and its effects on the audience, which is both supported and protested, Victor's reference here could be interpreted as a criticism towards society's tendency of categorizing or naming anything that is new in their environment as he states "...naming is still our primary task" (Winterson, 2019: 60). And through this task, societies and individuals alike, continue to create boundaries of moral, ideological or economical and anything that stands out of those boundaries is made into a monster. As Cohen argues, these "...manifold boundaries (temporal, geographic, bodily, technological) that constitute "culture" become imbricated in the construction of the monster…" (Cohen, 1996: ix.) Considering that Victor is also in the position of a harbinger who stands in front of an audience, heralding a new age of artificial intelligence, his reference to Adam's task doubles his qualification as a monster. He is aware of the distinction between *margin* and *normal*. As Alcor Foundation's CEO suggests "new is frightening…" (Winterson, 2019: 155). However, Victor's explanation for his new and frightening method of studies reveal his point of view as a harbinger: "Heart transplants weren't possible fifty years ago. In fifty years from now, brain emulation will be the new normal" (Winterson, 2019: 195). His explanation reveals his belief that new is uncharted territory and it will always be a monster until it becomes normal.

Victor Stein has another side unknown to the audience, which is narrated by Ry Shelley as a mad scientist who forces the boundaries of monstrous. He works on actual body parts supplied by Ry who says that "...Victor Stein needs more body parts than his research allowance allows" (Winterson, 2019: 67) for his programmable prosthetics project while running a parallel mind-uploading project in secret. Future for Victor is without organic human bodies where humans are *pure data*:

> "Once you are pure data you can download yourself in a variety of forms. A carbon body will allow you all the independence you once enjoyed, but at

super-strength and super-speed and without fear of injury. If your leg falls off we will fix you another one. If you prefer wings, we can give you a super-light shell and off you go." (Winterson, 2019: 185)

His whole characteristics and ideology are an embodiment of Frankenstein and Percy Shelley in terms of believing the mind's transcendental quality and pushing the limits of existent technology and science. Also Victor himself is aware of the fact that he is "... disrupting everything [he] take[s] for granted about the mind, about the body, about biology, about death, about life…" for "…a personal, social, global utopia" (Winterson, 2019: 83).

Victor Stein's ideas on the so called end of the humans as we know also show his posthumanist characteristics, as he evidently supports philosophical posthumanist point of view:

"If data is the input and the rest is processing, then humans aren't so special after all.
And is that so terrible a piece of knowledge? Perhaps it comes as a relief. We haven't been wonderful as Masters of the Universe, have we? Climate change, mass extinction of fauna and flora, destruction of habitat and wilderness, atmospheric pollution, failure to control population, extraordinary brutality, the daily stupidity of our childish feelings …" (Winterson, 2019: 59-60)

Victor Stein appears as a posthumanist scientist starting from the very pages he enters the reader's gaze in the novel with his arguments clearly expressed in his tech-expo presentation. He expresses his belief of humanity not being the center of the universe of creation in contrast to the humanist school of thought. His studies on mind-uploading technologies and smart prosthetics put Victor on both sides of posthumanism as in technological and non-technological. Kurzveil states on the matter as follows:

"A more controversial application than the scanning-the-brain-to-understand-it scenario is scanning the brain to upload it. Uploading a human brain means scanning all of its salient details and then reinstantiating those details into a suitably powerful computational substrate. This process would capture a person's entire personality, memory, skills, and history." (Kurzweil, 2006: 138)

Additionally, from a non-technological posthumanist point of view, Victor's belief in the insufficiency of the human race when added to aetherial understanding of the mind that is passed onto Victor from Percy Shelley underlines the posthuman understanding as Francesca Ferrando explains:

> "The notion of spirituality helps us answer these questions, as it dramatically broadens our understanding of the posthuman, allowing us to investigate not only technical technologies (robotics, cybernetics, biotechnology, nanotechnology, among others), but also, technologies of existence." (Ferrando, 2016: 1)

So, his mind-uploading study becomes a reincarnated belief of Percy's. Yet, this time it is explained with technological experiments instead of mind and body dualism which also applies to Ferrando's thoughts.

In addition to all that has been said about Victor, his relationship with Ry, besides resembling Mary and Percy Shelley's relationship, also scrutinizes the question of what if Frankenstein's creature found itself a companion. He defines Ry as a "[d]elicious new data" who "....will affect the outcome" (Winterson, 2019: 90) and who "have unbalanced the equation" (Winterson, 2019: 112), which may indicate that his interest in Ry is based mainly on their difference as in being non-binary on a superficial understanding. His idea of love is also different from Ry's and shows similarities with Percy's thoughts on the subject as he states that "love is not a pristine planet before contaminants and pollutants, before the arrival of Man. Love is a disturbance among the disturbed" (Winterson, 2019: 123). Before his disappearance, he also states that, "All of that. More than that. There is the shape of you inside me, amulet-size. The Ry of my heart. My heart. Carbon-based human in a silicon world" (Winterson, 2019: 208). And more importantly, his description of Ry as "a harbinger of the future" (Winterson, 2019: 110) because of their interference with their body on an evolutionary level, indicates that Victor sees his relationship with Ry as a meeting of monsters. Ry's comment on Victor's appearance also emphasizes his transitive existence; "Sometimes when I look at Victor his face blurs… but it is as though he is disappearing. Perhaps I am superimposing onto his body his state of mind" (Winterson, 2019: 140).

Moreover, his inexplicable disappearance towards the end of the novel, which is also concurrent with Percy's death and Frankenstein's mysterious last appearance in

Mary's narrative, emphasizes the reincarnation theme in all three characters. Considering the apparent characteristics and roles, Victor Stein therefore could be interpreted as a monster from even the contemporary point of view; with regards to his mad scientist personality as well as his posthuman approach to mind and body dualism.

Another important character in Ry's narrative is Ron Lord, as the reincarnated version of Lord Byron from Mary's narrative in the novel. Ron is strikingly introduced to the reader as an entrepreneur, who owns a robotics company named "XX-BOT" (Winterson, 2019: 33). His company produces robots that realistically resemble human, especially female bodies for sexual purposes. His objectification of female body is shockingly horrible at first glance, since in his first meeting with Ry, he mistakes them for an advertiser instead of a critic and heartily describes his robot models with example usage scenarios:

> "Torso comes through first, swinging on the overhead wires, complete with two holes, user-ready, and F-cup moulded tits. I am working on a model with detachable tits, for variety, but they don't make that in China yet, too specialist. Anyway, torso, torso, another torso (he swipes impatiently). Here we are! See how they attach the arms? Lovely slim arms. Then the legs. Look at the length! The shape! Slightly longer than they would be if she was human. This is fantasy, not nature, so you can have what you want. Hair goes on last, after the eyelashes. See the eyes? Like Bambi for boys." (Winterson, 2019: 32)

His utilitarian approach to the female body also perfectly resembles Lord Byron's sexually abusive behavior towards women around him, while reducing the female body to tools that need mechanical care: "bring her in for a service once or twice a year, depending on wear and tear. Online you can order spare parts, if any of her gets damaged, or is too messy" (Winterson, 2019: 33). As the subjects in question are synthetic bodies, the usage of the female pronoun "her" becomes significant in emphasizing Ron's view towards women. He sees the opposite sex in stereotypes that every man wants to try more than one: "Different models too, blonde and busty, brunette and sporty. Whatever." (Winterson, 2019: 33). For him, his robots are "Barbie[s]" for "grown-up[s]" (Winterson, 2019: 34).

But from a neutral perspective, the language Winterson gives Ron could be interpreted as a sarcastic approach to the sex-robot industry and its objectification, since

Ron's stereotypical classifications of the robots actually make the reader question how and why there are such classifications; because he's not inventing a new method to do so. Instead, he sees himself as a businessman, an entrepreneur, who can make the most out of these already existing categorizations through the supply and demand curve of the market. He acknowledges his target audience and merchandise as he states: "...I am on the side of the women, I am." and "Some men want more than sex. I get that." (Winterson, 2019: 38).

As he goes on explaining his *business model*, Ron refers to class distinction: "Economy doesn't wear shoes. It's cute, like that French musical, Les Misérables" (Winterson, 2019: 37), racism: "This model only comes in white. My sister-in-law's a lovely black woman… she said to me …Don't you dare do an Economy black woman" (Winterson, 2019: 36), "…Racy is taller than the others …We make them smaller for the Chinese and Asian markets. These are the US and UK models" (Winterson, 2019: 37), religion: "Do you realise what sexbots could do for the Catholic Church?… There'd be no adultery, no fornication…" (Winterson, 2019: 164), and so forth. He even refers to violence towards women, especially sex workers, by stating that a lot of his "XX-BOTs get their faces bashed in" (Winterson, 2019: 42) through one of his pending designs which he describes a tougher design; "...Sorta Lara Croft …Dominatrix. Spanking …The Chinese won't touch it. Brits will like it, I think. I'm in talks with Caterpillar and JCB" (Winterson, 2019: 42). He sees his job as a "public service" (Winterson, 2019: 39) which strengthens his sarcastic tone. Winterson gives Ron Lord a Swiftian voice that addresses problems in pornography and robotics industry of today's society through monologues, exaggerated and stereotypic body part descriptions in a satiric tone. Even his political and linguistic background could be interpreted as a reference since he is of Celtic origin:

> "Also, I want to put something back into the community. There's no jobs in Wales, Ryan, not since Brexit. They voted Wales for the Welsh, like everyone in the world was just killing themselves to get over the border and open a new coalmine." (Winterson, 2019: 41)

Similarities between the tone of his monologues and Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" are uncanny since he thinks of his business project as a community service for every kind of individual taste but in fact he is a synthetic trader who deals on

objectified woman body parts in a literal sense. His resemblance to Lord Byron is also not only limited to the names of two characters, considering Byron's *limp* that is clearly mentioned more than once in the novel in Mary's narrative, and both characters' larger than life confidence, together they resemble *pimp with the limp* expression, which is rooted in American urban culture, combining the idea of resilience or toughness with a certain swagger. Ry's comments on Ron Lord's appearance underline his look: "He's got the body and build of a nightclub bouncer: broad chest, overweight, short legs, thick arms, sweaty in a crumpled suit" (Winterson, 2019:31) and Mary's comments on Byron's show similarity; "His limp is more pronounced in the damp." (Winterson, 2019:15).

Except for his mentions about existing and new model projects for his business model, Ron's approach to women around him seems to be somewhat respectful. Although his understanding with even broader concepts is limited to female body parts and objectifying every one of them as he seems to be in his descriptions of his robots, on the contrary, he is afraid of real body parts. When Ry mentions amputation they describe Ron's fear which is visible on his face: "Ron looks paler now." (Winterson, 2019:66). In addition to early comments, Ry describes Ron Lord as shy for he tends to *sweat* in almost any uncomfortable environment. Victor Stein sees him as a "...maverick, an outsider." (Winterson, 2019:70) whose first love was a sexbot for he says "my first sexbot, really, I suppose, the love of my life …" (Winterson, 2019: 167). He is also very respectful and loving towards his mother, who, as he states, is doing much more for his business than he does: "Oh, yeah, my mum is a big part of the business. From day one." (Winterson, 2019: 34). According to his expressions about his mother, she is a sunday school teacher and does all the marketing research for the job since Ron does not read but instead "mum read[s] it and she explain[s] it to [him]" (Winterson, 2019: 216). So behind the public service business model as he describes it, there is a shy and less intelligent Ron Lord who believes that he does the right thing by serving the private needs of the people, which adds up to the effect of sarcasm that Winterson wants to create in Ron's monologues.

Moreover, Ron's detailed retellings of his past and his *dream* underlines his image as the outsider as Victor describes him:

> "When my wife kicked me out – couldn't happen with a bot – could not happen – I had to go back to live with my mum, but I couldn't get in with any of the locals. I'd go down the pub and they'd all turn their backs and start speaking Welsh. I was an outsider and everyone was married.
> So I bought myself a love-doll. Yes, I did. Mail-order. She was basic but she was mine.
> I have always been a lonely man." (Winterson, 2019: 164)

After his rejection, Ron becomes alienated from the traditional society as his evolution from a simple man with a small family to a lonely outsider begins. Then after his experiences with sex workers he states that he "...felt sorry for those girls…" (Winterson, 2019: 165). And he had a *vision* in his words:

> "I saw armies of lonely men walking along a ruined road. Men with their heads bowed and their hands in their pockets. Nobody was talking. Each one walked alone.
> Then, coming towards the men, suddenly, down the same ruined road, were all these beautiful girls. Girls who would never get old or ill. Girls who would always be saying yes and never saying no." (Winterson, 2019: 166)

Even though Ron's vision, business, relationship with his mother and his former wife could be interpreted as an unhealthy attachment or dependence to his mother from the perspective of psychoanalysis due to his understanding of women only as providers who will never say no; Ron's background and character is also meaningful when his detachment from traditional society and return as a hero, or one of the pioneers of the future is considered. He defines himself as a pioneer and feels proud of it while talking to Max More in Alcor: "Same in my business, said Ron. Pioneers-R-Us" (Winterson, 2019: 155). Regardless of his psycho critical state, Ron Lord is able to stimulate sympathy and disgust through his sarcastic comments on how his market works and how society views sexual intercourse, as well as his so-called heroic purpose on its foundation. In these terms, Ron Lord is Winterson's transhuman Frankenstein, as he creates a humanoid body with detachable and customizable parts that is both viewed as monstrous and as a subject of desire in the society.

In Ron's business journey, there is another significant mention of a character that is also worth mentioning. Claire Clairmont from Shelley's narrative appears as both a

sexbot and a human with the same name in Ry's narrative of the novel. As Ron Lord first mentions, Claire is his "...first sexbot" and "the love of [his] life…" (Winterson, 2019: 167). She is also a line of production in his sexbot business as the Franchise model: "Out comes a sex-doll, folded in half. Her denim jacket has CLAIRE written on it in sequins" (Winterson, 2019: 68). In addition to these two appearances, Claire as a person welcomes Ry to the tech-expo at the beginning of their narrative: "Claire was tall, black, beautiful, well-dressed in a tailored dark green skirt and pale green silk shirt. I felt glad that she was my point of contact today" (Winterson, 2019: 24).

Her representation as a sexbot more than once refers to the author's first notes in Mary Shelley's narrative, where she mentions Claire Clairmont as a woman who "would have slept with anyone" (Winterson, 2019: 11). In this perspective, Claire's appearance as an object of sexual desire without will or consciousness represents one side of the doubleness that is portrayed in her liminal character in the past narrative which is previously mentioned in the analysis of Claire Clairmont. To add this connection, Clairmont's drunken outburst of monologue with repeated expressions is placed in a consecutive chapter where Ron's franchise model sexbot Claire is discovered through a malfunction by the audience at tech-expo. Placed in a bag, the robot Claire starts talking as the audience panics and calls the security. In Ry's words, Claire becomes "... a parrot on heat. Her programming allows her to pick up and repeat words" (Winterson, 2019: 68). Capitalized sentences and repeating expressions show distinct similarities in each chapter. Since Claire the sexbot could take any word that she could hear and ridiculously turn it into a sexual expression with no context, the scene creates a comical effect that is also produced in Claire Clairmont's outbursts. Furthermore, Ron's comments on the event as, "...Claire is a sex-therapy aid. This model isn't sophisticated, but she will do what you tell her." (Winterson, 2019: 68) underlines the connection between the relationships of Ron and sexbot Claire, and Lord Byron and Claire Clairmont.

The other side of Clairmont's character is also portrayed in Claire, Ry's *point of contact* in tech-expo as a woman struggling to find power in a men's world similar to her predecessor. Claire is a religious woman who is not actually interested in technology or AI as she states that she "...[is] not even supposed to be [t]here… [She is] emergency support." (Winterson, 2019: 28). She refers to angels when non-human intelligence is mentioned. She claims that "Angels are non-human intelligence" (Winterson, 2019: 26)

and on the subject of mind-uploading and posthuman technologies, her response to an endless life is limited to traditional Christianity: "I'm going to be with Jesus, but you can suit yourself" (Winterson, 2019: 28). Ry's comments on her personality completes her portrayal as a powerful and intelligent woman as they state "She wasn't an educated woman, but there was nothing artificial about her intelligence." (Winterson, 2019: 28) but Claire's statements and progress as a character in the narrative emphasize her limitations since her struggle to understand the context of Ry's questions and references is visible:

> "It's why we are here today. (There was a look of confusion on Claire's face as I said this, so I explained.) I don't mean existentially Why We Are Here Today – I mean why the Tec-X-Po is here. In Memphis. It's the kind of thing organisers like; a tie-in between a city and an idea. Memphis and Frankenstein are both two hundred years old.
> Your point?" (Winterson, 2019: 25-26)

Another nod to Clairmont in future Claire is the fact that even at the first pages of her mentioning in the novel, Claire always seems to have a connection of a male figure behind her ideas or beliefs. Although this seems to be an insignificant detail at the beginning, this connection or need of a connection to a male figure becomes more significant as Claire comes full circle. She starts her journey in Ry's narrative as a woman who is "not even supposed to be [t]here" (Winterson, 2019: 28) which is an expression that underlines her existential crisis similarly to the liminal characteristics of Claire Clairmont. Her first figures of power are God and Jesus through which she tries to explain everything: "I wouldn't call it life. We're fooling ourselves if we call a robot alive. Only God can create life." (Winterson, 2019: 29). In the following chapters, Claire appears in Alcor Life Extension Foundation, as an assistant to company's CEO, Max More. She defines her second appearance in a job she would not like to do as an undercover mission "As an envoy of my Family in the Lord. I am hidden in the cleft of the rock to discover the Soul" (Winterson, 2019: 162). And not until she meets Ron Lord, another power figure to stand beside as she struggles to survive in a patriarchal environment, she comes full circle. The sexbot Claire and assistant Claire collide into each other as a reincarnation of Ron's love of his life. As he states that Claire "...sitting [t]here now, it's like [she] ha[s] come back to [him] in human form." (Winterson, 2019: 167), to which Claire reacts by joining Ron's vision of sexbots. Ry's surprise is present

in their reaction. She says; "I mean, one minute you hate bots, and they're all part of Satan's plan to enslave humanity, and now you want to partner with a sexbot king." (Winterson, 2019: 168) but Claire is certain of her decision as she says "I go where the Lord leads me… and I believe that my Lord has led me to Ron Lord" (Winterson, 2019: 167).

As it is evident in the last quote from Claire, Winterson's word play with the names and expressions of her characters carry more than a hint of reincarnation. The irony in Claire's statement as she addresses God as Lord, is revealed in Ron's surname as another leading male character in power in Claire's life. Thus, her religious belief becomes a symbol for her struggle to adapt in a male dominant society. Additionally, after she learns Ron Lord's vision and his purpose, Claire decides to join him with a design:

> "I am talking about a Christian Companion, said Claire. Yes! It's coming to me now! For the missionary, for the widower, for the boy tempted by the flesh. A Sister in Christ who could also …" (Winterson, 2019: 167)

Her design could also be interpreted as another symbolic connection to Claire Clairmont, as she even tries writing a story to survive. After joining Ron Lord, Claire's vision of Ry also changes when she explains her choice to Ry, as Claire decides to address Ry as *Ryan* for the first time in the novel, under the influence of Ron Lord: "Ryan, man proceeds by the arrogance of his intellect and his ego. I follow the path of revelation and inspiration. I change my mind when the Lord tells me to change my mind." (Winterson, 2019: 168). This rapid change emphasizes the indecisive nature of her liminal character that must do whatever it takes to survive. Also her definition of *man* as another indication of her situation, creates an ironic impact on the reader. Apart from adding to the monstrous qualities of Claire Clairmont and metaphorically being referred to as a robot, future Claire's religious belief and expressions also underline Winterson's posthuman view since she agrees with the idea of a transcendental soul and immortal life after death like Percy, Victor Stein and Frankenstein. Her expression of "God made the world and Jesus is our saviour, said Claire. I know that when we die we will be eternal and immortal" (Winterson, 2019: 205) indicates that the belief of afterlife in religions could be interpreted as philosophical posthumanism. Moreover, when she

refers to having a relationship with a nonhuman entity, Claire argues that it could be better than a relationship with a human in a critical monologue:

> "Ron is right, said Claire. I have come to realise that, as my most important relationship is with an invisible being – God – I don't need a human being in the old-fashioned way. And you know, a bot is never gonna leave me to raise the children on my own. Never take my cash to clear his gambling debts. I won't be tiptoeing round the house trying to keep out of his way. Cleaning up after him. Worrying about him. Worrying about what he'll do next. Let me tell you this: love has many faces – but none is bruised. Love has many lives – but none is beaten to death on the stairwell. This gentle thing of circuits, silicon and wires will suit me very well." (Winterson, 2019: 229)

Above quote evaluates the idea of god as an alternative intelligence, a nonhuman entity and as Claire compares it to AI through love, spirituality in philosophical posthumanism is underlined in terms of a salvation for humankind's problems surrounding organic life. In addition to all, another important aspect of Claire is hidden in not the characteristics or attributes but her progression from the beginning to the end of the novel. As if a realization of Victor Stein's comment on progress and his example of heart transplants, future Claire starts the novel with no interest for the robots and detests robotics instead suggesting that "robots can be used by the Devil… …to undermine the sanctity of being human." (Winterson, 2019:163), but changes her perspective in time. Rather than describing robots as the tools of Devil, her later position in Ron's life designing her *Christian companion* shows a fast-paced example of the progression Victor refers to, in a wider sense how societies tend to normalize the values or ideas they used to marginalize, in other words, monsterize.

The last character in the contemporary narrative of the novel is Polly D, a reporter from the magazine *Vanity Fair* who is represented as the successor to Dr. Polidori from Mary's narrative. Although not a detailed character with a context as the others, Polly D. with her short background story catches the eye through situational comedy and moments of awkwardness in the novel. Her first introduction to the reader is at tech-expo, after Ry meets Claire. Polly appears as an individual with a problem with her *teledildonics* experience, that is "sex-play with your partner, or partners, from separate locations. It feels like they are in the room – doing things to you" through

intelligent sex toys (Winterson, 2019: 30). Polly describes her unusual problem in Ry's words:

> "The woman shuddered inside her leather and buckskin as she said, I have accidentally posted pictures of myself, mostly naked, except for two tassels, using the Intelligent Vibrator, on my Facebook page." (Winterson, 2019: 30)

Although, Polly's appearance seems to have a situational comedy effect and a critical approach to technological devices used for sexual purposes, when seen from the larger perspective of Polly's intrusive characteristics as well as the name of the magazine she works *Vanity Fair*, it creates a deeper understanding of Polly than just a comic relief for the reader. She is an attention seeking character who always appears where she is not supposed to be, for the sake of fame and fortune; similar to the characters in the 1848 novel by William Makepeace Thackeray with the same name as the magazine she works for. Polly violently wants to interview Victor Stein on his project, Ron Lord and Claire in their business and even Ry just because "[t]rans is hot…" (Winterson, 2019: 62). Even when the characters are exposed to Victor Stein's blood-curling experiments on mind uploading and AI technologies, her only response is "I get the Pulitzer Prize" (Winterson, 2019: 196). Considering her short appearances and intrusive behavior that constitutes her inquisitive journalist image in the novel, Polly's success as a journalist is also questionable because she always asks untimely and wrong questions to reach her goals, for instance she loses her best chance to ask questions about Victor to Ry, she loses their interest with unrelated questions: "Are you in love with him? Do you say whatever comes into your head?" (Winterson, 2019: 74). Therefore, Polly's curiosity seems to be "more punished than rewarded" (Cohen, 1996: 12), yet she returns to ask her questions. Through this unreliable character who would try anything to find her place through fame in society, despite enough background to analyze, Polly's character could be read as an emphasis to Dr. Polidori as they share similar qualities. Because in addition to their comical reliefs, Polly's problems scrutinize the possibilities regardless of how ridiculous they are, and her questions represent fears of the society. Moreover, her appearance as a reporter portrays a character who "always return[s]" to ask "...us how we perceive the world…" and demands "...to reevaluate our cultural assumptions about race, gender, sexuality, our perception of difference, our tolerance toward its expression" (Cohen, 1996: 20).

In conclusion, each character in the novel possesses features that could be interpreted as characteristics of a monster or monstrous behavior in addition to their heroic features since they are all protagonists of stories that intertwine with each other. As supported by Mary's questioning of her own character when she says; "I will call my hero (is he a hero?) Victor – for he seeks victory over life and over death" (Winterson, 2019: 52) and by Victor and Percy's thoughts on the repeatedly emphasized eternity of human soul like in the following quote "the body that must fail and fall is not the end of the human dream" (Winterson, 2019: 180), Winterson's purpose in telling the stories of these characters is to question the human condition. Through these questioning however, each character scrutinizes the constructed boundaries starting from physical to much larger structures as social, moral and existential. As Winterson brings the human condition into question through philosophical and technological posthumanist perspectives, the characters become harbingers of difference and signs of warning of what is to come, corresponding to their distance from the binary centers and limitations which are created by societies they belong to. Although the organic and binary human as in its current form is criticized spiritually and technologically through the lens of posthuman school of thought, Winterson's heroes create a new understanding of the postmodern individual through assimilations neatly placed into the novel such as Ry's fourth-wall breaking comment "I manage my own madness just as you do" (Winterson, 2019: 234) and in Mary's authorial voice "and in truth, I enjoy the people and the streets. The lives that appear and vanish. Each one a story in human form" (Winterson, 2019: 220), or Percy's question "...what if we are the story we invent?" (Winterson, 2019: 44). The repeated idea of each life is a story that is being written by the hero or the monster that it originates around is critical in terms of reflecting Winterson's perspective as the author whose voice is repeated in each narrative and character in the novel. Even in seemingly small details such as Victor Stein's signet ring that has an imprint of "a snake swallowing its own tail", the idea of the same human condition being retold in different cycles is emphasized: "We come full circle. Whether we know it or not" (Winterson, 2019: 147). Since the tail-eating snake, serpent, or Ouroboros which has appeared across so many cultures for so long and considered as the icon of one of the primordial archetypes of the human psyche through its representation of cycles, eternal return, infinity, completion, self-containment on a cosmic scale, humanity is scrutinized in cycles of past and future characters. Moreover, through Wakefield's authorial comment on Frankenstein's journal, the familiarity and

strangeness of individual lives from different perspectives brought into question: “Only in the living of it does life seem ordinary. In the telling of it we find ourselves strangers among the strange” (Winterson, 2019: 139). To conclude, through Winterson’s characters, postmodern individual’s tendency to exist both inside and outside of social boundaries, or in other words both in the center and at the margins, as well as to create and to become new or different reshapes the understanding of binary oppositions of hero and the monster, colliding them into one in each character in addition to reflecting both concepts to the reader who is a postmodern individual. Therefore, Winterson’s characters represent stories each invented by individuals, which according to their relations to new and old constructs of their society, originate around a character that consists of coexistent monstrousness and heroism.

CHAPTER III

THE TEXT AS A MONSTER

"[W]hat if we are the story we invent?"
(Winterson, 2019: 44)

In addition to its non-linear narrative style that represents the postmodern defiance of the meta-narratives and linear plot styles, Winterson's novel creates a patchwork monster that re-enacts Frankenstein's creature through an intertextual discourse of novels, poem and popular culture references. Through meticulous attention to detail, Winterson weaves fiction and reality together thus creating a monster that plays around the boundaries between the fact and the fiction, foreshadowed in the very first page of the novel with an italic line: "Reality is water-soluble", followed by Shelley's thought process stating that everything that they "...could see… had lost their usual definition…" and is like "...an image in a dream" (Winterson, 2019: 8). Character names are carefully chosen for instance Ry for Mary, Victor Stein for Victor Frankenstein, and Ron Lord for Lord Byron; to indicate their timeless reappearances, as an emphasis of reincarnation, and the repetitive nature of the human condition as Winterson scrutinizes notions such as reality, humanity, life, death, mind, body and love. Cycles have a significant presence in the narration; lives, memories, characters and even some parts of the plot follow a cyclical path. And lastly, the stages and sceneries show transformed similarities as another emphasis of recurrence and liminality, as the time and color of the backgrounds change while the structures seem to remain.

Starting with the narrative, even before the novel is presented through the voices of its narrators, introductory sentences used as titles to each chapter blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction. From the first chapter narrated by Mary Shelley, "Reality is water-soluble" (Winterson, 2019: 8) which is followed by Ry Shelley's first chapter "Reality bends in the heat" (Winterson, 2019: 24), Winterson prepares the reader for an understanding of reality that is constantly shaped, illusive and unpredictable. In the following chapters of the book, reality is described progressively and in parallel to the events and to the questions in reader's mind until again it becomes a controversy; "Reality is now" (Winterson, 2019: 106), or "Reality is not now" (Winterson, 2019: 140), only eventually to turn into a question: "Reality is … what?"(Winterson, 2019:

219). Victor Stein later describes reality as a dream previously had, that has come true, "What we dreamed is in fact the reality" (Winterson, 2019: 205). Through such titles and expressions, the reader is prepared to have an experience that is in between fact and fiction.

In addition to its postmodern atmosphere, historical retellings and explanations as well as intertextual facts on artificial intelligence, biotechnology or analytics contribute to the construction of a liminal understanding of reality throughout the novel. Fourth-wall breaking historical explanations or journal excerpts as in Shelley's chapters in the past are weaved into the narrative to underline the reality that is embedded into fiction, which distorts the boundaries of reality constructed:

> "In the summer of 1816 the poets Shelley and Byron, Byron's physician, Polidori, Mary Shelley and her stepsister, Claire Clairmont, by then Byron's mistress, rented two properties on Lake Geneva in Switzerland. Byron enjoyed the grand Villa Diodati, while the Shelleys took a smaller, more charming house, a little lower down the slope." (Winterson, 2019: 11)

Winterson creates her characters and narrators with similar qualities and stories, which she refers to as a recreation or reincarnation in her interview with Maison de la Poésie (2021). Through her association with Mary Shelley's life and works, Winterson's retelling of her real life experience in Lake Geneva in first person creates a historiographic and metafictional narrative through a mixture of reimagination of the real life events and fictional dialogues. All three narrators including Mary Shelley, Ry Shelley and Mr. Wakefield use first person narration in journal style, which adds up to the construction of a reliable historiographic story telling. In the authorial note at the end Winterson explains as follows; "Some characters in this story existed, or still do. Others are fictions. None of the conversations took place in the way that they appear here – or perhaps at all" (Winterson, 2019: 238).

But on the other hand, Victor Stein as a character created by Winterson, while sharing information on his studies, reflects the author's presence through explanatory passages of research material. Thus he emphasizes the effort and research done by the author and more importantly, enforcing the liminal reality that is constructed. For instance his sentence; "All right, well, the Reverend Thomas Bayes 1701–1761 was a mathematician and a philosopher. He worked out equations to manage probability…"

(Winterson, 2019: 90) reveals such historical information, which causes suspense for the readers to question what is fact and what is fiction.

Another example is from Mary's narrative, where she directly quotes a passage from real-life Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to Byron in a dialogue, "I am fearless and therefore powerful" (Winterson, 2019: 102). Although the significance of the quoted passage to their dialogue is open to interpretation, Winterson's Mary also supposes that her "story has a life of its own" (Winterson, 2019: 102) before quoting an excerpt for Byron, which makes the scene more significant from the perspective of a liminal reality. Thus quotations and flashbacks from Mary Shelley's life and works make Winterson's Shelley a reliable and grounded narrator despite the fictional effort that was put in by Winterson.

But this attention to detail is not limited to Shelley's character only, since as another intertextual aspect of narrative that adds up to the liminal reality, the novel includes many references to earlier works, songs, poems, popular culture which are meticulously placed in the character's narrative or the pages in between chapters. For instance; a line from an Eagles song *Take it Easy*, "We may lose and we may win though we will never be here again" (Winterson, 2019: 7) is seen on the waitress's tshirt towards the end, a passing reference and line quotation from the famous epic *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Coleridge, or another direct quotation from Socrates as follows; "I know that I am intelligent because I know that I know nothing" (Winterson, 2019: 103), and so forth. Among all, there is one significant quote from Shakespeare's *Sonnet 53* that is repeatedly used as a question by both Mary and Ry, as well as Winterson:

> "What is your substance, whereof are you made,
> That millions of strange shadows on you tend?" (Winterson, 2019: 10)

Appearing a total of five times in the novel after its first quotation by Mary in her narrative, Shakespeare's lines acquire further significance for their questioning nature because of their usage in passages of existential or moral queries of the characters and the author, regarding humanity. When added to Shelley's specific from *Frankenstein*; "There is something at work in my soul which I do not understand" (Winterson, 2019: 20), which appears in a sense of revelation as Shelley struggles to put her story together in the novel, the substance in question becomes both Shelley and the

text itself as a creation, which adds more importance to the metaphor of *millions of strange shadows* as inexplicable thoughts in the author's mind. Therefore, the appliance of intertextuality not only helps the novel to re-enact the patchwork nature of Frankenstein's original monster, but also helps Winterson to create a liminal plane of reality in which, all the subjects including the reader is drawn into the inquiry put forward by the novel regarding the human condition. Winterson also openly expresses the fractured and blurred lines between the reality and fiction in one of her authorial intrusions between the chapters, as follows;

> "Story: a series of connected events, real or imagined. Imagined or real.
> Imagined
> And
> Real" (Winterson, 2019: 23)

Regarding the patchwork nature of Winterson's novel, besides intertextual references from sonnets to magazines and songs as well as its relationship with the original text of *Frankenstein*, Winterson also uses metafiction to remind the reader that they are a part of the discourse. Fourth wall breaking notes are repeated in the same tone and nature as follows:

> "Author's note: THIS IS THE MOST PROFOUND THING CLAIRE HAS SAID IN HER LIFE" (Winterson, 2019: 97),

> "Author's note: THIS IS THE MOST PROFOUND THING RON HAS EVER SAID" (Winterson, 2019: 158).

Capitalized sentences underline the intention to include the reader which empowers the author's call for participation. In agreement with Barthes's statement of modern text which "...is very much a score of this new kind: it asks of the reader a practical collaboration" (Barthes, 1997: 163). Thus the text calls the reader to believe the fictional creation with support of intertextual references, research data, but at the same time reminds that the act of reading is an ongoing discourse. This alone could be interpreted as the text's call to the reader to, in a sense, "read" it "back to life" (Winterson, 2019: 236). Added to the patchwork qualities that are constructed through intertextuality, this call from the text completes its figurative image as the monster. Winterson comments on the text's monstrous qualities through Shelley's narrative as

Shelley states: “My story has being. I must continue it, for it cannot end without me” (Winterson, 2019: 93).

Moreover, as the nonlinear nature of the novel mirrors two stories in mutual progression and respectful attention to character progression through different narrators and timelines in first person journal style, settings in the narrative also follow a liminal pattern. Time and again characters visit real-life places such as Lake Geneva, Memphis tech-expo, Alcor Foundation, and fictional places that are more private or personal as Victor Stein’s secret laboratory in the hidden tunnels under Manchester. Despite the fact that all settings could not be directly interpreted as liminal, there are some scenes and backgrounds that resemble the gothic atmosphere of the original text of *Frankenstein* and reflect the liminality of the characters. For instance, Villa Diodati and its surroundings is a marginal setting from the point of view of the villagers as it is stated in the novel through both the authorial notes and Shelley’s narrative. What adds to its liminal value is narrator Shelley’s comment on the situation of the group. “This is our Ark…” (Winterson, 2019: 12) she says, which gains meaning especially when it comes full circle in the last chapter of the novel. Victor Stein, after the future versions of each character in Diodati meets again in the secret tunnels under Manchester, repeats the same metaphor as a reference to Shelley’s and says: “You are now in your own little ark” (Winterson, 2019: 206). Therefore, both spaces acquire alternative meanings as liminal planes of Ark(s) which could be interpreted as a place in the margin of an ending, and harbinger of another beginning. Additionally, the existence of water in both scenes in some form, rain and flood respectively, emphasizes the fluidity of the transition between reality and fiction. Moreover, Bedlam chapters narrated by Mr. Wakefield show signs of liminality as a place that exists outside the margin as a mental institution. In the narrator Wakefield’s own words; “The mad do not share our world. Their own is equally vivid. More so. The mad are actors on a different stage” (Winterson, 2019: 152). That is to say; Bedlam houses individuals are somewhat incohesive to society. Also, Bedlam appears as a place in which time and reality are disturbed as well. The narrator, Mr. Wakefield starts his description of Bedlam as follows: “We are, I admit, in disarray in this place… We began. How did we begin? A hospital called Bethlehem …” (Winterson, 2019: 125), which portrays a chaotic environment and emphasizes the disruption of past and present as the title of the chapters sets the time to 1818 which is the year *Frankenstein* was published. Since

Bedlam is the setting where Mary Shelley meets Victor Frankenstein, "the monster [she] created" (Winterson, 2019: 150) in Frankenstein's words, the reality is also disturbed by fiction as in the rest of the novel. Lastly, Bedlam as a mental institution lacks sanity, the absence of which is described as "gloomy tunnels unfathomable by any map, and what hides there is a beast in human form, wearing our own face. We are what we fear" (Winterson, 2019: 126). Therefore Bedlam becomes the liminal space in between the center and the margin that houses the monster. Wakefield's quote on the lack of sanity shows structural similarities to Victor's secret laboratory under Manchester. The tunnel carries over qualities from Wakefield's definition, features like having *gloomy tunnels unfathomable by any map* due to its secret existence, as well as *what hides there is a beast in human form* being Victor Stein working on his top secret experiments. In addition to that, narrators Ry and Mary Shelley observe the world around them as a blurring, distorted reality as mentioned before. Especially in their existential state when both narrators do not only recount the events and dialogues but relate to their personal streams of consciousness or memories even the solid environments seem to dissolve, blur and bend. Besides contributing to the disturbed reality that the novel constructs, narrators' comments reflect their inner conflicts of not being able to be a part of their environment.

Winterson also describes her characters as a "translation across time between one character to the other" in one of her interviews (Maison de la Poésie, 2021, 25:02). This theme of *translation across time* is clearly visible for each character transferred from Lake Geneva to the future narrative in terms of their characteristics and ironically referenced names. The theme also affects the style of narration. Mary Shelley as the author of the past timeline shares her journal-like narrative style with her future counterpart Ry, as both narrators relate to the events in their stories. Both of their narrations are enriched with postmodern techniques such as streams of consciousness and often with intertextual references that provide in depth exploration of characters, flashbacks that explore both characters's backgrounds as well as foreshadowings of dialogues especially about recurring themes like life, death and love.

What is more significant in this style of narration though, the authorial "I" loses its reliability through the expressions of both narrators and other characters. In addition to Mary's references of her own immersions into the characters and worlds that she imagines, she also states that "[i]n the progress of [her] story [she is] educating [her]

monster. [Her] monster is educating [her]" (Winterson, 2019: 93). Considering Percy's comment on storytelling "[W]hat if we are the story we invent?" (Winterson, 2019: 44), Ry's question "Is [Victor] the teller? Am I the tale?" (Winterson, 2019: 134), and Frankenstein's expression in Bedlam "I do not know if I am the teller or the tale" (Winterson, 2019: 138), it is clear that all add up to the elusive nature of the authorial expression and unreliable mixture of fact and fiction in the novel. Another conversation that supports the idea of an elusive author is between Mary and Frankenstein, as a meeting of the author and a character who is another narrator from another story. Victor Frankenstein quotes from Shelley's *Frankenstein* to address fictional Shelley that is created by Winterson:

> "Shall I quote our book? My heart was fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy. She said, Those words are spoken not by Victor Frankenstein, but by his creature. We are the same, the same, answered Frankenstein." (Winterson, 2019:151)

Possessive pronoun "our" that Victor uses to refer to Frankenstein, the novel, is important to understand his last expression that suggests the monster and Victor Frankenstein are *the same* since his reference would apply to all the characters as well as narrators in Frankissstein as Winterson's creations. Combined with the aforementioned quotes, the novel suggests that the story cannot be interpreted outside the narrator, or vice versa, which is an idea that puts both the narrator and the text into a liminal space. Additionally, in Mary and Ada Lovelace's conversation about the analytical engine, the power of the reader in the narrative is also brought into question as follows:

> "Ada Lovelace said to me last week that if we could represent ourselves in a language that the Analytical Engine could read, then it could read us.
> Read us back to life? I said. Why not? she said." (Winterson, 2019: 236)

The notion of being read back to life is also presented as a repetitive action since Winterson's Frankissstein is also a postmodern re-reading of Shelley's classic. But more importantly, when the reader is included in the act of creation like the other characters, this time, the same attributes shared by the characters and narrators in the novel are passed down to the reader as well. Prof. Dr. Mojca Krevel also argues:

> "Within this multiplicity, the literary character is an identity variant of the narrator who is an identity variant of the author as inferred by and assimilated into the identity variant of the reader. In other words, within the framework of fractal literary subjectivity, each narrative agent is involved in the manifold identities that constitute that subject." (2021: 11)

Furthermore, Winterson also states in the aforementioned interview that re-reading Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* made her realize that the creature could be interpreted as an alternative life form with respect to the futuristic vision of Mary Shelley for her own time. In a recognition of their similar family and childhood experiences and similar worldview as artists, she states that she wanted to use her book for her own vision about the future and to pay respects to the visionary writer:

> "When people have a vision, when they really see something in the future that isn't in the present, and they work towards that change. So it was with that spirit that I wanted to take her book and, as you say, to use her own sensibility and to make a book of my own that would respect hers. But yet be something new for the times that we live in now, just as she had made something new for the times that she lived in"
> (Maison de la Poésie, 2021, 8:32).

Therefore, it could be understood that she intentionally put the authorial *I* into a liminal space to be able to reflect her vision and thoughts as they are in unison with Shelley's in addition to the characters in the novel. She also states that she wanted to reflect on the change that started with Shelley's time, which is the Industrial Revolution, still continues and her book reflects her thoughts on the future of that same change (Maison de la Poésie, 2021). Such an attempt could be interpreted as, in this manner, Winterson also wants to create empathy for the readers to actively understand and agree with her vision of humanity and demands their participation in this vision: "It's a vision of the future, copying Mary Shelley's in the sense that well, what will happen?..." (Maison de la Poésie, 2021, 25:43).

Furthermore, the meaning of the word *story* is used in many aspects in the novel. In contribution to the transitive relationship between the author, narrators and the reader, the concept of the story also forms a significant relationship with the concept of human throughout the novel. First referred to as *imagined and real* by the author, the word

story refers to memories, myths, excerpts from other sources and more significantly, to lives and people. In many parts, characters refer to their past memories as stories, for instance Ron Lord in his interview with Ry says; "My dad kept donkeys – yeah – it's a long story" (Winterson, 2019: 35), and Mary states when recounting their elopement; "Claire, who returns to this story like a bookmark…" (Winterson, 2019: 48). Even in these examples, the usage of the word *story* in reference to individual memories brings the meaning of the notion closer to reality. But Winterson challenges the boundaries of the notion more by adding myths, and tales to the equation. Different myths are referred to as stories in the novel, starting from Mary's conversation with Byron in the villa when she says; "... creation story we read in the Bible …" (Winterson, 2019: 15). She later on reminds of "[when] Byron declared Prometheus to be a serpent story…" (Winterson, 2019: 96) and says that "[Percy] Shelley read out to [her] from Ovid the story of the sculptor Pygmalion…" (Winterson, 2019: 47), which would later be completed through Victor Stein's words that redefine myth as follows:

> "And from here follows the story that we all recognise in some form or another. The story told by every religion in some form or another; the earth is fallen, reality is an illusion, our souls will live forever. Our bodies are a front – or perhaps more accurately, an affront – to the beauty of our nature as beings of light." (Winterson, 2019: 205)

His reference to creation and apocalypse myths across the world as *stories* further blur the boundaries between cultures and refers to subjectivity, since he also states that it is the same story *in some form or another*. As a consequence of his definition, the meaning of the notion of story becomes intertextual as well as cross-cultural, and refers to the story of humankind which is also referred to as "the human dream" (Winterson, 2019: 62) by Winterson. Furthermore, the word *story* is used to refer to tales as in Ry's expression: "Don't forget the story of Bluebeard" (Winterson, 2019: 116). In addition to its mythical and intertextual qualities, the notion of story is also transformed into a living being in Mary and Percy Shelley's expressions as Mary states; "My story has being. I must continue it, for it cannot end without me" (Winterson, 2019: 93), and "My story haunts me. It is the master of my mind." (Winterson, 2019: 105), or furthermore in Percy's comment; "You are father and mother to this tale. What will you name your creation?" (Winterson, 2019: 95). References to parents here emphasize the idea that the text is a living creation. Thus, the story, or in

this context the text, becomes alive and tells many stories about humankind across cultures and centuries.

Moreover, to contribute to the individual aspect of the meaning, the notion of story is used in day to day experiences as well. For instance, Victor Stein's comment on a single occasion; "That depends on whose story you believe… Or whose story you want to believe. It's always a story, you know." (Winterson, 2019: 84), added to Ry's thoughts on being with Victor; "Already we are crossing the street together, moving through this passing time and our own story." (Winterson, 2019: 146) emphasize the idea that individual experiences could also be named as stories, therefore life itself becomes a story as well. Over and above all, Ry's question to Victor "Is this a love story?" (Winterson, 2019: 115) in regard to their relationship, and their comment on Polly D. "...looking for a story" (Winterson, 2019: 104) also uses the word in the same meaning. The notion that life itself is a story is also apparent in Mary Shelley and Wakefield's narratives as Shelley refers to her husband's death later in the novel; "Who brought the story to this place?" (Winterson, 2019: 202). She also indicates as follows: "Yet I cannot rewrite what has happened to him. What has happened to us. Here is where I shall return. This end" (Winterson, 2019: 202). Her usage of the word is very similar to Wakefield's comments on Shelley meeting Frankenstein in Bedlam. "There are passages of time that tell more like text than time, when we sense we are a story we repeat, or a story that is told" (Winterson, 2019: 152) he says, which suggests that individual life experiences could be referred to as stories.

What's more, Winterson's narration is characterized by cyclical qualities parallel not only the story cycles in literature but also life cycles in nature. In Mary Shelley's words; "My story is circular. It has a beginning. It has a middle. It has an end" (Winterson, 2019: 102) as well as in her question; "Shall we begin again? The human dream" (Winterson, 2019: 237) similar to Victor Stein's signet ring and his explanation, circular natures of both stories and life are emphasized. Mary also underlines the individuality of stories in terms of lives as she refers to people on the streets: "The lives that appear and vanish. Each one a story in human form" (Winterson, 2019: 220).

To conclude, Winterson initially blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction which creates a liminal dimension of reality that questions binary metanarratives such as reality and fantasy, humanity and monstrosity, life and death, mind and body dualism

and love with an emphasis to subjectivity through many individual perspectives. By doing so, through many intertextual and popular culture references the body of text becomes a patchwork in a way that is similar to the body of the monster that Frankenstein put together. And through the inclusion of the reader and the author, the text is attributed monstrous qualities in a manner that Mary Shelley describes her worst fear; “A being neither dead nor alive” (Winterson, 2019: 10). Winterson also hints at the monstrosity of the text through Mary’s narrative where Percy and Mary discuss a title for her novel; “We wondered together about the title for my story. We agreed that it should not contain the word MONSTER” (Winterson, 2019: 94). The capitalized word *MONSTER* indicates the author’s intervention since there are other examples in the novel where fourth wall breaking notes are capitalized. The individualization of the notion of story also indicates that this patchwork and haunting monster exists in each individual as Percy also states: “Frankenstein in the monster. The monster in Frankenstein?” (Winterson, 2019: 95). Lastly through Wakefield’s comment “Only in the living of it does life seem ordinary. In the telling of it we find ourselves strangers among the strange” (Winterson, 2019: 128), it is appropriate to suggest that in the fractal frame of postmodernism each experience could seem strange and monstrous from a different perspective. Considering the author’s note at the end of the novel, where Winterson reveals the significance in blurring the boundaries between reality and fiction and states; “This story is an invention that sits inside another invention – reality itself.” (Winterson, 2019: 238), it seems possible to claim that her work crosses the threshold to turn into a text; alive and unstable. Thus, reality becomes a story that has haunting and monstrous qualities, and an invention through the interpretation of the storyteller and the reader both of whom are also potential stories. Therefore, the structure and context of Winterson’s novel show how postmodern text has turned into a monster.

CONCLUSION

The research and the analysis have proved that although the concepts of monster and hero have had many different meanings and functions throughout human history, each of these concepts have been created and defined through certain social cultures in regard to their understanding of dualities such as good and evil. Both concepts have served the societies which created them by portraying the fears, moral values, boundaries, understandings, ambitions, desires, and dreams of the relative society. Starting from the ancient narratives, the hero and monster shared similarities as well as contrasting features that presented them as dualities, and both concepts have been subjected to cultural and political hegemony across cultures. Various examples from critical theory have suggested that monsters and heroes have been used for cultural, racial, sexual, religious, physical, and ideological definitions of self as well as the alienation of others. Through critical reading of various definitions provided by different critical standpoints, it is observed that these concepts have evolved with the societies that created them, until intertwined with each other through subjectivity and familiarity. Moreover, as postmodernism disturbed metanarratives and boundaries that are defined by the same societies therefore contributed to the construction of the concepts of monster and hero, poststructuralist theory of *margin* and the *center* as well as *différance* helped to conclude that through continuous battle over meanings and definitions, the hero and the monster have disappeared into each other. Additionally, the consumerist approach of postmodernism, mass media production and popular culture have monetized these concepts and turned them into archetypal symbols through which postmodern individuals and societies have elaborated everyday struggles. Finally, it is concluded that popular culture and media also used monstrous and heroic in short time spans for the alienated individual to see that both monster and hero coexist inside the human, who in turn, is the main protagonist of postmodern literature and media since the literary subjectivity disturbs the boundaries between the author, narrator, character and the reader.

Through a detailed reading and character analysis of Jeanette Winterson's *Frankissstein*, it is stated that each character, including the narrators of the novel played around the boundaries of the hero and the monster as almost all of them possessed heroic features such as authenticity and leadership, concurrently carrying monstrous aspects from different cultural and moral standpoints. Through an analysis of the

narrative of the novel, it is also concluded that through application of intertextuality and a liminal narrative subject, Winterson formed a relationship between the author, narrator and the reader. Fourth wall breaking notes and various intertextual excerpts and references have been used to disturb the barriers between the reality and fiction, in a similar manner with monster and hero concepts. As a postmodernist method, the author also ensured the participation of the reader through awareness and figurative speech. In the end, it is observed that Winterson has disturbed the boundaries of fact and fiction as well as time and space to demonstrate that the story belonged to the reader as a human being since every individual life is a story on its own. The intertextuality of life stories and the individual's place in the story as a protagonist regardless of its monstrous and heroic attributes are emphasized throughout the novel. Finally, close reading has proved that Winterson's novel aligned with philosophical and ontological posthumanism in terms of its understanding of the human condition. Therefore, through philosophical posthumanism's post duality understanding, the monster and the hero intertwines with each other until these concepts disappear into the individual in the novel. Winterson's *Frankissstein* also proves that through intertextuality and postmodernist style of pastiché, the postmodern text has also turned into a monster.

As a result, this study helped to answer the question if the monsters have turned into heroes of postmodern literature while additional research data helped to name postmodernism as a monstrous movement, and the text composed through postmodern writing techniques as monstrous, hopefully being helpful in naming the next step in the hero's journey and in the monster's escape, as well as in the human dream. In the light of the study, other examples from postmodern literature could be examined for future findings for a better understanding and proving that at least fictionally humankind has learned to be friends with monsters and be in touch with heroes since we are all monsters or heroes in someone else's story.

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