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Ziqi Jin 12/10/18

Rereading *Frankenstein*: A Cautionary Tale on the Imbalance between Literature and Science

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Abstract

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In my thesis, I argue that instead of depicting Victor's artificial reproduction or the advancement of technology as problematic, Shelley portrays the underdevelopment of literature— the way literature fails to develop a capacious mindset in Walton, Victor, and the other people in her fictional society who discriminate against the Other— as dangerous. Also, by endowing the "monster" with an innately healthy and sympathetic mind and rewarding the male mother with kind-hearted offspring, Shelley exemplifies the literary value of capaciousness.

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Introduction

I

The Romantic poet, Percy Shelley, in his *A Defense of Poetry* written in 1821, argues that poetry is of paramount importance even in the age of rapid industrialization. Shelley's essay was a response to Thomas Love Peacock's *Four Ages of Poetry*, in which Peacock states that scientific development has rendered poetry no longer useful. At the beginning of the 19th century, England experienced incredible benefits brought by technological advancement. For example, "average income and population began to exhibit unprecedented sustained growth…[and] the general population began to increase consistently for the first time in history" ("Industrial Revolution"). However, many English people struggled with the changes brought by industrialization. As Shelley states, "to what but a cultivation of the mechanical arts in a degree disproportioned to the presence of the creative faculty… is to be attributed the abuse of all invention for abridging and combining labor, to the exasperation of the inequality of mankind?" ("A Defense of Poetry"). In this passage, Shelley points out that people's view has been limited by England's booming manufacturing culture, and poetry is necessary as to expand their horizons. Also, he stresses that many underprivileged people have suffered from unemployment and from the ruling class's repressive measures, and poetry functions to bring them justice. The role of poetry, in Shelley's view, is to help people navigate changes brought by technology.

While Percy Shelley highlights the importance of poetry, his contemporary, the scientist, Humphry Davy, advocated the incorporation of more science into contemporary culture. As he expressed in his lecture at the Royal Institution in 1802, "a scientific institution ought no more to be made an object of profit than a hospitable, or a charitable establishment…It ought rather to be, 'We have endeavored to apply your funds to useful purposes, to promote the diffusion of science, to encourage discovery, and to exalt the scientific glory of your country'" (Thorpe 81-82). In explicating the charitable purposes of science, Davy spotlighted the necessity for England to value scientific developments.

Notably, although Davy primarily promoted science and Shelley promoted literature, their ideas both implied the possibility that literature and science can work together. Shelley presented literature as capable of helping people cope with changes brought by scientific development, while Davy considered humane values, the core element of literature, capable of guiding the application of scientific discoveries.

Mary Shelley was Percy's wife and Peacock's friend, and she consciously alludes to Davy's 1802 lecture at the Royal Institution in her novel, *Frankenstein*. Because of these relationships, we can infer that she was almost certainly aware of the contemporary debates about the importance of literature and the relationship between literature and science, and she appeared to enter these debates through *Frankenstein*, a science fiction novel published in 1818. As its genre, a combination of "science" and "fiction," demonstrates, this novel acknowledges both the value of science and that of literature. Like Percy Shelley, Mary Shelley proposes the necessary balance between literature and science. Like Humphry Davy, Mary Shelley considers humane values crucial for guiding the application of science. Revising Anne. K. Mellor's canonical reading of *Frankenstein*, which appears to view the novel as a cautionary tale against technology itself, I will argue that this novel is in fact a cautionary tale against the imbalance between literature and science.

II

Is Mary Shelley's creation of Victor Frankenstein an attempt to revive the Faust myth to warn readers against getting too comfortable with technology? According to critic Marilyn Butler, in Shelley's 1830 edition of the novel, Shelley "added remorseful passages which made Frankenstein a more… religious character," and "pared away details of his scientific educations and … changed all those facts about Frankenstein family's marriages that in the first edition touch on genetic concerns" (Butler 319). By pointing out that Mary Shelley purposefully withheld her interests and beliefs in materialist science for fear of public censorship, Butler implies that Anne. K. Mellor's canonical reading of *Frankenstein,* which views this novel as a cautionary tale on the inherent danger of technological development, is lacking, thereby necessitating a new, refreshing reading.

In my first body chapter, I will prove that, rather than positing the essential falsehood of technology, Shelley focuses on the way the development of literature, including literary works— edifying fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction—, and self- and formal literary education, lags behind that of science. Although it took the natural sciences a long time to surpass the humanities in social prestige, and unbounded respect for science is a recent phenomenon, possibly Mary Shelley and Percy Shelley had concerns about what was coming. During the 19th century, the rising reputation of natural philosophy, though not outweighing the study of philology, did exert a negative impact on the status of philology (literary and language studies). Seeming to anticipate the way science might outweigh literature in a future British society and foreseeing the possible consequences, Mary Shelley sets up a hypothetical scenario in which the development of science exceeds that of literature. In doing so, Shelley advocates for reforming and accelerating the development of literature in order to prevent literature from lagging behind science in the foreseeable future.

First of all, Shelley defines literature's main missions through the creature's learning experiences with literature as well as the novel's narrative sequence. The creature learns to ask philosophical questions and critically reflect upon his state of existence after reading Wolfgang von Goethe and John Milton. His experience demonstrates literature's potential to foster people's ability to question established lines of thinking and think critically on their own. Similarly, based upon Paul Ricoeur's reader-response theory, the narrative sequence of the novel prompts readers to rethink their presumptions about physical abnormality. By reading Victor's narrative first, readers first sympathize with him and identify with his assumption on which his description of the creature is based, that horrifying outward appearance indicates repulsive character. However, after readers encounter the creature's narrative, they start to sympathize with the creature and realize that they have been deceived by Victor, an unreliable narrator. By disorienting readers, Shelley allows them to critically reflect on Victor's, as well as their, collective discrimination against the creature. Thus, Shelley demonstrates the way literature has the potential to challenge discrimination and bigotry and promote human sympathy.

Building upon the missions of literature, Shelley illustrates that literature can only fulfill its missions – namely, fostering reader's sympathy and overcoming their bigotry – when people are able to grasp its core meanings. Given that the creature's self-education, while portrayed as invaluable by Shelley, is not enough for him to grasp the fullness of the great literary works he reads, Shelley suggests that people need both self-education and formal higher education, which are potentially able to help them understand edifying lessons of literary works.

In this way, Shelley elucidates the two crucial criteria for judging the extent to which literature is developed. The first criterion is how many literary works containing edifying ideas that could potentially foster readers' sympathy and challenge their bigotry exist and are

available to the public. The second criterion is whether readers' self- and formal education can enable them to grasp and understand the essences of these literary works.

However, in Shelley's society, literature fails to fulfill its missions, and the development of science far outpaces that of literature. Highlighting these themes and embodying Mieke Bal's theory of frame narratives, Shelley's use of nested narratives draws parallels among different narratives of Walton, Victor, and the creature. While the scientist, Victor Frankenstein, is able to create life, contemporary European people in Shelley's fictional society are not yet prepared to accept the life created by him. In other words, although science is developed enough to create a kind-hearted creature, people's mentalities are too underdeveloped to sympathize with him and to accept his physical appearance. In Walton's narrative, he despises the creature. In Victor's narrative, he abandons the creature. In the creature's narrative, he describes the way everyone who sees him disowns him. Moreover, not only does Victor name the creature "monster" in his narrative, but the creature also names himself a "monster" in his own narrative, proving that everyone in the society is influenced by linguistic conventions. This repeated motif of the rejection of sympathy throughout the narratives and the creature's subsequent transformation from a kind-hearted being into a murderer accentuate the destructive outcomes of the imbalance between literature, which is supposed to foster human love and guide human behavior, and science.

In order to deepen my analysis of the lagging development of literature, I will bring up Lennard J. Davis' *Enforcing Normalcy* to illustrate that it is inappropriate to describe the creature as a hideous monster. According to Davis, society inappropriately constructs one's indelible identity based upon one's physical deviation from the standard or norm. In the case of the creature, people in Shelley's society, through their everyday language, collectively construct the creature's monstrosity based upon his abnormal physical appearance. In other words, language delivers and fosters this problematic way of labeling difference or

abnormality as heinousness or monstrosity, which fails to reflect reality but unwittingly makes people accept a false reality. The creature is not in fact a monster, but because language ascribes a negative connotation to physical deviation, and everyone is an apprentice of linguistic conventions, the creature becomes a monster in the eyes of everyone. As a result, Shelley suggests that the underdevelopment of literature, rather than the characters themselves, should be primarily blamed for the creature's tragedy. Literature fails to challenge the discrimination against difference ingrained in language, which renders people's minds unable to sympathize with someone who looks different before Victor successfully invents the creature.

In addition to critiquing the failure of literature to enlighten people about the acceptance of physical difference, Shelley critiques their failure to cultivate privileged people's sympathy for those different from them in terms of social class before Victor invents the creature. Again, employing and expanding on Mieke Bal's narrative theory and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic*, I will argue that Walton's narrative, Victor's narrative, and the creature's narrative all work in parallel in that in each narrative, the narrator experiences a Satanic fall from Eden to a loveless hell. In doing so, Shelley not only points out Walton's, Victor's, and the creature's desires for others' sympathy and compassion but also accentuates that this desire is shared by the three of them, rendering Victor's and Walton's failure to identify with the creature ironic. Notably, both Victor and Walton refuse to identify with the creature at least partly due to the creature's social status, as manifested by the resemblances between their respective narratives. They both view the creature's eloquence as sophism, because they are inflexibly aligned with their presumption and the dominant culture's dictation that one's social status, like one's outward beauty, determines one's worth and respectability. By suggesting that Victor and Walton fail to

sympathize with individuals of other social classes, Shelley posits that literature has failed to achieve its goals.

Literature fails to fulfill its missions because the two criteria for determining the extent to which literature is developed are not met. First, many English people were not exposed to literature in the 19th century, for many literary works were not available to people living in rural areas. Second, formal education and people's self-education in literature fail to help them grasp of fullness of meaningful literary works. Thus, Shelley suggests that to develop its literature, society should launch reforms and increase people's, especially country people's, exposure to meaningful literary works. She also suggests that contemporary educational systems should not exclude underprivileged people from attending university.

While Shelley does imply that everyone should receive formal and higher education in literature, she does not refer to philological studies in their current form. Rather, perceiving that contemporary literary and language studies are unable to help literature achieve its missions, she suggests that students should study philology at universities where reforms have been made.

In 19th-century England, the study of philology mainly involved classical literature, lexicology, and comparative investigation of different languages, and the main mode of research was historical approaches. Accordingly, Mary Shelley implicitly proposes three ways of improving contemporary study of philology. Firstly, Shelley suggests expanding the scope of literary studies. She recommends that the study of literature and language should also include post-classical literature and works in the human sciences. She also implies that literary studies should include women's books by representing Elizabeth Lavenza's potential to become a great writer. Secondly, Shelley suggests that philologists should also focus on the aesthetic and moral dimensions of literature and language. By stressing the problematic connotations of the words "monster" and "wretch," Shelley implies that scholars of

lexicology should also study social implications of words in order to challenge biases ingrained in words. Besides, Shelley's use of nested narratives provides readers with clues for interpreting her major themes in the novel, which indicates that aesthetic aspects of literature, like theories of narrative, are worthy of scholars' attention.

As a result, Mary Shelley proposes cooperation and harmony between literature and science. From her perspective, the development of literature should run slightly ahead of that of science. Before scientific developments bring about rapid changes to the world, literature should have already rendered people well-prepared to handle these changes and rendered scientists capable of judiciously exercising their power. Thus, Mary Shelley thinks it urgent for contemporary English society to accelerate the development of literature.

III

In my second body chapter, I will offer a defense of the technological pursuits in *Frankenstein*. In doing so, I will revise Anne K. Mellor's critique of science. While acknowledging that the novel is interested in the relationship between moral responsibility and technological development, Mellor characterizes technology as bad science and characterizes the scientists in the novel as overreachers who usurp God's prerogative of creating life and women's prerogative of giving birth. In this way, Mellor also implies that technological pursuits are inherently mistaken, as if Victor should not have given birth to a child and performed artificial reproduction, and scientists should not make technological advancements and change the way nature functions, regardless of their purposes. In this chapter, I will argue that Shelley does not depict technological pursuits as inherently blasphemous and disrespectful. Rather, such developments only lead to dangerous consequences when they are not directed by humane ideals like open-mindedness and sympathy, the ideals that are ought to be promoted via edifying literary works.

I will open the chapter by discussing some possibilities as to why critics have considered *Frankenstein* as a tale that cautions readers against mastering technology and have missed the point that technology is not inherently dangerous. First, in the 1831 edition of the novel, Shelley has Victor express religious remorse for making a monster. However, as Butler points out, Shelley may only make Victor apologize for being blasphemous to avoid press censorship. Second, Victor's creation of a deformed creature would possibly lead some readers to conclude that Victor fails in his plan because of the blasphemous nature of his pursuit. I argue, however, that Victor is in fact very successful in his creation, which indicates that artificial reproduction and the use of technology are not inherently mistaken.

Aside from spotlighting the underdevelopment of literature, Mary Shelley's use of nested narratives also offers clues regarding her attitudes toward science. Specifically, the resemblances among Walton's and Victor's narratives reveal that these scientists' intentions behind their scientific pursuits, rather than their scientific pursuits themselves, contribute to the tragic denouement of this novel. In Victor's narrative, he desires to utilize technology primarily due to his desire for glory. Although he has some intentions to benefit the human species, his primary reason lacks the necessary responsibility and altruism. As a result, his deficient humane values make him abandon the creature. Likewise, in Walton's narrative, his thirst for scientific knowledge and his desire to make scientific discoveries primarily stem from his pursuit of glory, which may lead him to abuse his power and mistreat those living in Arctic regions.

Because of the lagging development of literature in *Frankenstein*, the two major scientists in the novel, Walton and Victor, fail to realize the burdens on their shoulders when they apply their scientific knowledge and exercise their power. As Victor's refusal to care for his "deformed and inferior" creature contributes to the novel's tragic denouncement, Shelley attributes the tragedy to the imbalance between literature and science. In Walton's case, by

stopping his investigation and making him come home with his ambition unfulfilled, Shelley thwarts his glory-seeking adventure. In doing so, Shelley offers a solution to a society in which scientific development outdoes literature, indicating that scientific discoveries should be slowed down until the development of literature catches up with that of science.

Furthermore, the novel displays positive aspects of science, which suggest that the problem is scientists' misguided applications of science rather than science itself. The creature learns to make fire, which helps him combat hunger and coldness; the heartrending death of Victor's mother justifies Victor's study of physiology and the practice of medicine; Walton's Arctic expedition has the potential to discover new sea routes and foster international networks; Victor's command of electricity creates a kind-hearted and intelligent creature.

In conclusion, allying with Humphry Davy, Mary Shelley acknowledges the necessity for scientific development and the benefits of it. Shelley also agrees with Davy that literature and science should harmoniously cooperate with each other. From her perspective, scientific development is desirable, as long as it is in cooperation with humane values, the values often brought forth by literature.

Chapter One Monstrosity: The Lagging Development of Literature in *Frankenstein*

Anne K. Mellor's canonical reading of *Frankenstein* views the novel as a cautionary tale against technological application. However, Mellor misses the point that Shelley does not represent technology as inherently harmful. Instead, she ascribes the novel's tragic denouement to the imbalance or the lack of cooperation between literature and science.

In the society Shelley depicts in the novel, the development of science far outpaces that of literature. While science and technology are advanced enough for the scientist, Victor Frankenstein, to create life, people in this society, including Victor himself, have not been sufficiently enlightened by literature to sympathize with his creature. This tragedy ultimately culminates in the heart-rending deaths of both Victor and the creature. Appearing to predict the development of science over literature in future Europe, Shelley creates tragedies in her hypothetical society in order to spur her contemporaries to accelerate the development of literature. By "literature," I refer to edifying fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction that have the potential to foster people's sympathy and challenge their bigotry and discrimination against the Other. In a broader sense, I also refer to literary education that is capable of helping readers understand literary works.

Before we investigate the imbalance between literature and science and its destructive consequences, it is necessary to first explore the way Shelley represents the missions of literature in her novel. What are the criteria for judging the development of literature in a society? Why does the development of science need to be balanced by the development of literature? Through employing a frame narrative in the novel, Shelley defines the missions of literature, the goal of studying literature, and in turn two possible criteria for determining the relative extent of literature's development. *Frankenstein*'s composition utilizes three layers of narration with three narrators— Victor, Walton, and the creature. Jeanne M. Britton notes,

"sympathy itself produces the impetus for narrative to be both told and recorded, to be spoken and then transcribed" (Britton 5). Walton writes letters to his sister, for imagining her sympathetic responses to his letters enlivens and consoles him. As he writes, "I may receive your letters...on some occasions when I need them most to support my spirits," and "be assured, that for my own sake, as well as yours, I will not rashly encounter danger" (Shelley 11). Luckily, Walton meets Victor, who sympathizes with Walton and transcribes his own story to warn Walton against seeking knowledge. As Victor says, "you will hear of powers and occurrences, such as you have been accustomed to believe impossible: but I do not doubt that my tale conveys in its series internal evidence of the truth" (Shelley 17). The most memorable narrator of the innermost layer of narration— the kind-hearted yet physically unpleasant creature— also narrates his story in search of sympathy. Believing that Victor may be able to sympathize with him after hearing his story, the creature entreats Victor, "listen to my tale: when you have heard that, abandon or commiserate me, as you shall judge that I deserve. But hear me" (Shelley 78). Yet, in making the creature a stark contrast to Walton, Shelley highlights the creature's repeated failure to find the sympathy he seeks. People in his society uniformly spurn and ostracize him. For example, the cottagers, whom the creature befriends, fail to sympathize with him because of his "abnormal" appearance. As the creature laments: "who can describe their horror and consternation on beholding me? … Safie, unable to attend to her friend, rushed out of cottage. Felix… dashed me to the ground, and struck me violently with a stick" (Shelley 110). As opposed to the characters in Shelley's fictional society, "*Frankenstein*'s readers, from the Romantic period to the present, have uniformly sympathized with the creature" (Caldwell 42). Presenting the creature's story in the form of an ingeniously crafted novel, Shelley demonstrates the ability of literature to redefine "sympathy as an active reception of difference, rather than a passive transmission necessitating similarity" (Caldwell 42). In teaching readers to sympathize with someone who

looks different, *Frankenstein* manifests the mission of literature to foster sympathy and advocate humane ideals.

Literature's capacity for evoking sympathy is further emphasized through the creature's experience of reading post-classical works, including *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. As the creature narrates:

> In *the Sorrows of Werther*…the gentle and domestic manners it described, combined with lofty sentiments and feelings… accorded well with my experience among my protectors…The disquisitions upon death and suicide were calculated to fill me with wonder. I did not pretend to enter the merits of the case, yet I inclined towards the opinions of the hero, whose extinction I wept. (Shelley 103)

In this passage, Goethe's novel encourages the creature to identify with Werther, the character whom he does not resemble. He appreciates Goethe's depictions of gentle manners, but he also weeps for Werther, feels Werther's sorrows, and appears to understand why Werther chooses to commit suicide, even though he neither agrees with nor understands Werther's general philosophies of death. In other words, by reading literature, the creature learns to sympathize not only with those who think like he does but also with those who think differently.

Frankenstein redefines sympathy through Shelley's manipulation of the novel's narrative sequence. Gregory O'Dea references the narrative sequence in the novel by writing, "the narrative sequence in *Frankenstein* is yet a deeper structural arrangement: it is the chronological order in which the narrative acts take place" (O'Dea 4). O'Dea's analysis is meaningful in that he points out the necessity of analyzing Shelley's use of frame narrative in terms of *Frankenstein*'s narrative sequence and, accordingly, readers' "reading sequences" (O'Dea 4). Employing his definition of narrative sequence, I argue that this technique functions to overcome bigotry and discrimination in readers' minds, thereby enabling them to

sympathize with the creature. To achieve this goal, Shelley first lets readers read Victor's narrative before reading the creature's, making readers sympathize with Victor and even identify with his discrimination against the creature. In volume 3 of *Time and Narrative*, Paul Ricoeur states that in a literary work, the implied author — "the personage assumed to be responsible for deciding what kind of narrator will be presented to the reader ("Implied Author") — sometimes controls the unreliable narrator to deceive readers through the story's "verisimilitude"— "the alleged faithfulness to life" (Ricoeur 161). In other words, the real author disguises himself or herself in the form of the implied author; the implied author, in turn, lets the narrator portray life in the fictional world as faithfully and accurately as possible, whether this life be "social reality, individual behavior, or the stream of consciousness" (Ricoeur 161). Due to the resemblance between their actual world and the fictional world described by the narrator, readers may believe in the unreliable narrator so completely that they may be fooled by him or her (Ricoeur 161). If Ricoeur's reader-response theories hold true, readers of *Frankenstein* will believe in Victor's description of his disgust and fear after the birth of his creature. In the following well-known passage, Victor says, "his [the creature's] yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath…[Breathless] horror and disgust filled my heart…[If] eyes they may be called, were fixed on me…[One] hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me" (Shelley 40). In this scene of the creature's birth, it is extremely difficult for readers to resist their identification with Victor, for Victor's panic and loathing very much resemble the actual responses of people in the 19th century to physical deviations. In 19th-century Europe, "the appearance of physical abnormalities within society was a rampant cause for panic…To be freak or deformed was cause for ridicule and spectacle" (Falk 1). Because of the verisimilitude of Victor's experience, readers may be convinced by the implied author that Victor's "horror" and "disgust" are indeed brought by someone "demoniacal," who wants to seize Victor and

harm him (Shelley 41). In this sense, readers, subconsciously or consciously, also associate physical deviation with an evil character, thereby identifying with Victor's discrimination against the creature.

However, after reading the creature's narration, readers may find that they have been deceived by Victor, the unreliable narrator. Consider the passage wherein the creature recollects his birth, "I saw, felt, heard, and smelt, at the same time; and it was, indeed, a long time before I learned to distinguish between the operations of my various senses…I felt cold…I knew, and could distinguish, nothing; but, feeling pain invade me on all sides, I sat down and wept" (Shelley 80). In reading this passage, readers, who previously identified with Victor, may now feel disoriented by the discrepancies between Victor's and the creature's narratives. According to the creature's tale, rather than fixing his eyes on Victor and trying to "detain" Victor, he in fact has not yet been able to refine his senses. Rather than resembling a cruel monster who attempts to hurt Victor, the creature resembles a harmless and helpless infant. By "disorienting the reader," the implied author of this novel "[frees] him [the reader]" (Ricoeur 165). In other words, by letting readers realize that a narrator can be deceptive, the implied author teaches *Frankenstein*'s readers not to unconditionally trust any narrator. Instead, they engage in "reflective reading," or "what allows the act of reading to free itself from the reading inscribed within the text and to provide a response to the text" (Ricoeur 166). In this way, readers may learn to critically reflect upon Victor's and the creature's different perceptions of the same event and be able to ask the question: how can the newborn infant-like creature, who can neither process nor apply the information given by his senses, deliberately perform the act of detainment? After realizing that Victor's narration lacks logic, they may choose to sympathize with the creature. Consequently, they may be able to understand that the crucial reason behind the discrepancies between Victor's and the creature's fabulas is discrimination. Furthermore, since they initially joined Victor's

discrimination against the creature, they may be able to infer that discrimination is not merely Victor's fault on an individual level but is, instead, a collective or structural social phenomenon. As a result, rather than failing to understand the reasoning behind Victor's abandonment of the creature, readers may instead learn to rethink the prevailing opinion that physical abnormality denotes evil character.

If readers read the creature's narrative before Victor's, they would identify with the creature and sympathize with him first because of the resemblance between his experience and physically disabled people's experience in 19th-century Europe. Then, after reading Victor's narrative, they would realize the inconsistencies between his narrative and the creature's. Since it would be less likely that they would realize that the creature's suffering stems from structural dysfunction, they would be prone to blame Victor alone for the suffering of the creature. In that case, they would be unable to realize and accept Shelley's redefinition of sympathy. Therefore, Shelley's nested narrative highlights what she perceives as the mission of literature— teaching readers to alter their preconceptions.

The power of literature to challenge readers' discrimination is further evinced by the creature's reading experience of post-classical works, such as John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. As the creature reads this work, he reflects upon how he resembles both Adam and Satan:

> Like Adam, I was created apparently united by no link to any other being in existence; but.. [he] had come forth from the hands of God to a perfect creature… I was wretched, helpless, and alone. Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition; for often, like him, when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me. (Shelley 105)

Also, the creature reads other literary works and brings up questions as he reads: "Who was I? What was I? Whence did I come?" (Shelley 104). By motivating the creature to compare and contrast his state of being with that of others and prompting the creature to ruminate on

philosophical questions, Shelley demonstrates the ability of literature to encourage readers to question their surroundings and environment. This ability to question fuses with both the creature's and the reader's understandings of prevailing social mores. With England's overwhelmingly Christian majority at the time, it would have been considered inappropriate for most individuals to commiserate and identify with Satan ("Victorians: Religion"). It is very likely that the creature is familiar with this rule of propriety, for he learns many contemporary social norms from the cottagers. For example, he knows that people cannot be respected unless they have "immense wealth" or "noble blood" (Shelley 96) and that "gentle manners" and physical "beauty" are superior to "harsh manners" and "rude gait" (Shelley 89). Well-informed about the norms of his society, the creature nevertheless deduces his similarity to Satan from identifying with Satan's loveless condition and his envy. Rather than relying on the preconception that associating oneself with Satan is unseemly, the creature chooses to rely on his own logical reasoning, although doing so may cause others to perceive him as evil. Consequently, literature manifests its ability to prevent readers from being inflexibly aligned with their preconceptions.

Shelley illustrates that literature can only fulfill its missions— namely, fostering readers' sympathy and challenging their bigotry— when people are able to grasp its core meanings. When reading great literary works, the creature acknowledges that he cannot completely understand the meanings and significance of these works. As he says, "I sympathized with and partly understood them [characters in literary works], but I was unformed in mind" (Shelley 104). Although Shelley, who was self-educated, acknowledges the value of self-education, she confesses that self-education is lacking in some respects. In stressing the way he only "partly" understands literature and that his mind is "unformed," the creature appears to imply that his self-education alone does not enable him to grasp the fullness of literary works, and that he needs formal higher education to understand literature.

Moreover, Henry Clerval, who loves studying literature and writing plays, also acknowledges the value of formal higher education. Victor articulates Clerval's regret at being thwarted from going to a university, saying, "he believed that a man might be a very good trader, and yet possess a cultivated understanding" (Shelley 28). In this sense, Shelley defines the mission of studying literature as being necessary to shape readers' understandings of the edifying lessons of literature, clarifying also that studying literature should consist of both self- and formal education.

Opponents of my view would possibly argue against the value of studying literature by stating that while the creature receives a literary education, he ends up becoming a mass murderer. However, it is not literature that teaches the creature to become a mass murderer. It is the people who shun the creature make him desperate and cold-hearted. Thus, the creature's murders serve as a mirror that reflects society's lack of humane values, which in turn stems from their lack of exposure to or misunderstanding of literature. In describing the way the creature transforms from kind-hearted into vicious, Shelley in fact shows a strong social need for more study of literature.

Therefore, Shelley elucidates two criteria for judging the level of development of literature in a society. The first criterion is how many literary works containing edifying ideas that could potentially foster readers' sympathy and correct their bigotry exist and are available to the public. The second criterion is whether readers' self- and formal education can enable them to grasp and understand the essences of these literary works.

Unfortunately, however, in the society Shelley represents fictionally, the development of literature lags behind that of science. Her society fails to meet these criteria, as some people do not have access to literature, and other people's self- and formal education fail to help them grasp the fullness of the literary works they read. Drawing parallels among different narratives of Walton, Victor and the creature, Shelley's use of frame narratives

highlights the imbalance between literature and science, which is reflected through the way people have not yet been rendered sympathetic and understanding enough to accept the creature, when the scientist, Victor Frankenstein, has already been able to employ technology to create the creature. According to Mieke Bal's *Narratology*, in a frame narrative, "different fabulas"— "raw material of story events as opposed to the finished arraignment of the plot"("Fabula")— sometimes "parallel one another" (Bal 55). Also, as she puts it:

> we speak of resemblance when two fabulas can be paraphrased in such a way that the summaries have one or more striking elements in common…An embedded text that presents a story which, according to this criterion, resembles the primary fabula may be taken as a sign of the primary fabula (Bal 56).

By "primary fabula," Bal only refers to the text of "the narrator [of the primary narrative] as opposed to the text of the actor [the narrator of the embedded text]" (Bal 52). The word, "primary" does not imply "priority" or "primacy" (Bal 52). In the case of *Frankenstein*, the fabulas— the story events of Victor's, the creature's, and Walton's narratives— all work in parallel. The first parallelism manifests itself through the way that Walton, Victor, and other people all discriminate against the creature because of his physical abnormality. In Walton's fabula, which is the primary fabula of the novel, Walton associates the creature's physical ugliness with an evil character. He expresses his repugnance by saying, "never did I behold a vision so horrible as his face, of such loathsome, yet appalling hideousness" (Shelley 187). Similarly, in Victor's fabula, he loathes the creature due to his physical appearance. When he beholds the creature, he describes his reaction as "breathless horror and disgust" (Shelley 39). Likewise, the creature recounts, "but I had hardly placed my foot within the door, before the children shrieked, and one of the women fainted. The whole village was roused; some fled, some attacked me" (Shelley 83). In the creature's fabula, every villager who sees the creature hates him because of his appearance.

Based upon Bal's narrative theory, the resemblance among Victor's, Walton's, and the creature's fabulas indicates that Victor's and the creature's fabulas signify Walton's primary fabula. In other words, Walton's fabula is repeated thrice. Thus, it is reasonable to infer that in dividing her novel into different narratives, Shelley highlights the motif present in all three narratives— people's refusal to sympathize with the Other and their preconception that physical deviations signify monstrosity. Unfortunately, people in Shelley's hypothetical society collectively construct the creature's indelible identity as a monster through their everyday language. The second resemblance among the three narratives in the novel is manifested through the way the creature is referred to as a monstrous figure. In Walton's fabula, he names the creature "wretch" (Shelley 188). As he curses, "wretch! ...You throw a torch into a pile of buildings, and when they are consumed you sit among the ruins, and lament the fall. Hypocritical fiend!" (Shelley 188). In this context, "wretch" most likely means "a despicable or contemptible person," ("Wretch") a synonym for the word "monster," which means "an inhumanely cruel or wicked person" ("Monster"). Walton scorns the creature, partly because he is ugly and frightening. Similarly, in Victor's fabula, after he sees the creature at the first sight, he calls the creature a "wretch" for the same reason (Shelley 39). Likewise, in the creature's fabula, Victor's little brother, William Frankenstein, disdains the creature. As he addresses the creature, he cries, "'monster! ugly wretch! you wish to eat me, and tear me to pieces" (Shelley 117). While the creature does not intend to harm William, William assumes that the creature is a devil due to his unpleasant appearance. Notably, even the creature calls himself a monster when he laments upon seeing his body reflected in a pool, "I was in reality the monster I am" (Shelley 90).

The repeated motif— the signification of the creature as a monster— is ingrained in the conventions of the novel's language. The creature labels his atypical appearance as

monstrosity, because he learns the conventional uses of language and connotations of words from the cottagers. As the creature describes his learning experience: "I learned and applied the words *fire, milk, bread*, and *wood*. I learned also the name of the cottagers themselves… I cannot describe the delight I felt when I learned the ideas appropriated to each of these sounds, and was able to pronounce them" (Shelley 89). In this passage, the creature not only learns the meanings of these words but also the implications of them. Thus, he must also have learned the meaning of "monster"— a "large, ugly, and frightening…creature" and the connotation of this word— a cruel and wicked being ("Monster"). As the monster becomes conscious of the way others view him, he reiterates the connotation of "monster": "Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled, and whom all men disowned?" (Shelley 96). Likewise, Victor, Walton, and William must have also learned what "monster" means and connotes, thereby simultaneously attributing an evil character to someone who looks "different." In this way, language constructs the creature's "unchangeable and indelible identity" based upon "marks of physical difference" (Davis 31-32). Consequently, "the idea of a norm is less a condition of human nature than it is a feature of a certain kind of society" (Davis 24). Overall, through constantly repeating these two motifs, namely people's discrimination against someone physically different as well as problematic ways of utilizing language to construct meanings, Shelley hints that these deficiencies are social and structural phenomena deeply rooted in the underdevelopment of literature.

The other two forms of resemblance among the fabulas highlight the imbalance between literature and science by accentuating the inability of Victor and Walton to sympathize with the creature, who is also different from them in terms of social class. First, Victor's, Walton's, and the creature's falls from an Edenic, happy state to a hellish, lonely state all work in parallel. According to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, the three narrators

"appear to be trying to understand their presence in a fallen world, and trying at the same time to define the nature of the lost paradise that must have existed before the fall" (Gilbert and Gubar 225). In Walton's fabula, he once lived in a happy and carefree state. For example, Walton writes, "I also became a poet, and for one year lived in a Paradise of my own creation" (Shelley 7). However, later, he desperately desires to be loved as Satan does in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. As he complains, "I have no one near me…How would such a friend repair the faults of your poor brother!" (Shelley 9). Similarly, at first, like Adam, Victor enjoys his life as a beloved child of privileged parents. As he recounts, "I am by birth a Genevese; and my family is one of the most distinguished of that republic… no creature could have more tender parents than mine" (Shelley18-19). However, later, as desperate as Satan in hell, he is chased by the creature into the far north. Likewise, at first, the creature, "like Adam… recalls a time of primordial innocence, his days and nights in 'the forest near Ingolstadt,' where he ate berries, learned about heat and cold" (Gilbert and Gubar 235). However, later, the creature becomes desperate and bitter as Satan in hell. As he learns that he is abandoned by his creator, he fumes, "'Cursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even you turned from me in disgust?'" (Shelley 105). The creature is disowned by Victor, just as Satan is disowned by God. Therefore, the resemblance among the three narrators' fabulas spotlights the repeated motif: that Walton, Victor, and the creature all share similar experiences and all try to seek sympathy and love. This brings up the question: why don't Victor and Walton sympathize with the creature, considering that their experiences are very similar?

As discussed above, they certainly refuse to sympathize with the creature, as other people in this fictional society do, because of the creature's outward appearance. Yet, they refuse to do so also because of the creature's social status and class. In Walton's fabula, he does not make any friends, since he seems to scorn the manners of the "seamen and

merchants," including those of the noble lieutenant on his ship, which, as he claims, are not refined and elegant. As he describes, "yet some feelings…beat even in the rugged bosoms" (Shelley 9). His condescending attitude towards someone who does not share his social position is further reflected in the 1830 edition of the novel, in which Shelley describes Walton's attitude towards the lieutenant on his ship in detail. As Walton depicts the characteristics of the lieutenant, "he is wholly uneducated: he is as silent as a Turk, and a kind of ignorant carelessness attends him, which, while it renders his conduct the more astonishing, detracts from the interest and sympathy which otherwise he would command" (*Frankenstein*). In this passage, Walton claims that he chooses not to sympathize with the lieutenant due to his lack of cultivation and eloquence. Ironically, when he meets the creature, who educates himself and becomes strikingly eloquent, Walton still despises the creature. As Walton reflects on the creature's eloquence: "I was at first touched by the expressions of his misery; yet when I called to mind what Frankenstein had said of his powers of eloquence and persuasion… 'Hypocritical fiend! … you lament only because the victim of your malignity is withdrawn from your power'" (Shelley 188).

In Walton's opinion, the creature's eloquence is sophism. His expressions of misery are manipulative; they are employed to belie his evil nature. Although the creature is as eloquent as Victor, whose speech flows with "rapidity and unparalleled eloquence," Walter does not grant him the same respect as he does Victor (Shelley 15). Thus, it is reasonable to infer that Walton does not really judge people based upon their level of cultivation, as he claims. Rather, he judges them according to their birth and bloodlines. The core difference between Victor and the creature is that Victor is a wealthy and privileged "European," the identity Walton very much favors. Conversely, the creature, just like "a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island" (Shelley 13), is generally considered to be "a vagabond and a slave," because he has "no money," no "noble blood," and "no kind of property" (Shelley 96). The

critic Criscillia Benford also comments on the creature's inferior social status. She considers the creature's identity to be that of a member of the "proletariat," who "has no possessions of his own and uses his physical strength to produce 'goods' for the DeLaceys" (Benford 326). Overall, what prevents Walton from sympathizing with underprivileged people is his presumption, which matches the prevailing presumption of the majority of 19th-century European people, that one's descent and property determine the extent to which one should be respected. Walton's inability to think beyond his preconceptions demonstrates literature's failure to fulfill its missions of fostering people's sympathy and correcting their bigotry.

In Victor's fabula, he also presumes that the creature's expressions are "sophisms," which parallels Walton's discrimination against the underprivileged. After hearing the creature narrate his story, Victor "compassionated [him, and] sometimes felt a wish to console him; but when [Victor] looked upon [the creature], when [he] saw the filthy mass that moved and talked, [his] heart sickened, and [his] feelings were altered to those of horror and hatred" (Shelley 121, 138). In this passage, while the creature's appearance contributes to Victor's distaste for his story and his eloquence, the creature's social class also contributes the same distaste. In her article, "The Nature of Otherness: Class and Difference In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," Margo V. Perkins states that "the issue of class determines how characters relate to one another and seems to be the major factor in Victor's inability to sympathize with the monster's situation" (Perkins 30). While agreeing with Perkins that the issue of class prevents Victor's sympathy for the creature, I do not agree that Victor is not able to sympathize with the creature, because he "cannot even imagine the injustices the [creature] endures" (Shelley 30). On the contrary, Victor has listened to the creature's tale and learned all the forms of injustice the creature suffers before *choosing* not to sympathize with the creature. He intentionally persuades himself that the creature is evil and justifies his abandonment of the creature, because he refuses to acknowledge that the creature is his

descendant. In other words, what unsettles him is not what the creature says or does but the fact that the creature exists. The fact that he exists as an offspring of the Frankenstein family blurs the strict division between the supposed superiority of upper-class people and the inferiority of lower-class people. If Victor acknowledged the creature's identity and fostered him as a family member, he would have to confess that upper-class men can be inferior in physical beauty and thus can be disrespected by others. What underlies Victor's fear of losing his class privilege is his presumption, or the dominant culture's dictation, that people's worth is defined by their social position, which is tied in with the presumption that being physically ugly is something to be ashamed. As a result, Victor's fear suggests that he is unable to define himself without using the dominant culture's criterion, which prioritizes physical beauty and social ranking. This deficiency in Victor's mindset simultaneously demonstrates his narrow-mindedness and his stubborn inability to accept difference. Therefore, like the other three motifs previously discussed, the repeated motif of the upper-class scientists' negative reactions to the creature's eloquence also indicates that the potentials of literature in Shelley's fictional society are not realized, as bigotry and discrimination are not overcome and sympathy for people who are different is not cultivated.

Notably, society's discrimination against those who are different is also reflected through its dismissal of female authorship. Responding to the contemporary norm that prevented women from publishing literary works, in her 1831 preface to the novel, Shelley calls *Frankenstein* "my hideous progeny." Far from considering her novel repulsive, Shelley compares her literary progeny— the novel—to Victor's progeny, the creature; in doing so, she expresses her concern that her novel will be discriminated against by the patriarchal dismissal of female authorship, just as the creature's eloquence and physical appearance are dismissed by social norms. While actual English society discriminates against Shelley's authorship, Shelley's fictional English society discriminates against the authorship of

Elizabeth Lavenza, a minor character in this novel. Elizabeth has great potential to be a talented writer, as Victor describes: "her imagination was luxuriant, yet her capability of application was great" (Shelley 20). However, rather than being allowed to pursue a literary career, Elizabeth fulfills female obligations as she has been taught, devoting her life to comforting and taking care of others, "entirely forgetful of herself" (Shelley 27). In criticizing society's dismissal of female authorship, Shelley recommends that the literary canon should be enlarged; underlying her recommendation is her belief that her proposal can be achieved once literary works successfully correct people's refusal to accept differences.

As literature has not yet achieved its missions, and the development of literature lags behind that of science, the two criteria for evaluating the level of the development of literature are not met. First, many English people were not exposed to literature in the 19th century, for many literary works were not available to people living in rural areas. During that time, although an increasing number of people, including some working class people, benefited from the growth of print culture and were able to read literature ("Print Culture"), "in rural areas printed matter was largely confined to religious material" (Mitch 287). This fact possibly explains why the villagers cannot sympathize with the creature. Although many great masterpieces exist in their era, such as *Paradise Lost* and *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, they are most likely never exposed to them, and their bigotry, in turn, has no chance of being challenged by literature. In this way, Shelley suggests that to develop its literature, society should launch reforms and increase people's, especially country people's, exposure to meaningful literary works.

Additionally, in failing to help readers fully understand the works they read, formal education in literary and language studies and people's self-education in literature fail to help meaningful literary works achieve their potential beneficial effects. Although Shelley acknowledges the value of self-education, she also points out that self-education has

limitations through the resemblance among Walton's, Victor's, and the creature's respective fabulas. In Walton's fabula, he reads Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," but he does not seem to understand this poem on a deep level and thus fails to apply the ideas of this poem to his own life. In his letter to his sister, Margaret, he declares, "I am going to unexplored regions, to 'the land of mist and snow,' but I shall kill no albatross" (Shelley 10). Apparently, Walton educates himself and successfully grasps some ideas of this poem. He knows that this poem tells a tale of the sea expedition and that it warns readers against being cruel to the albatross— a bird who acts kindly towards sailors and brings luck to other people. In comparing his situation to the mariner's and swearing not to shoot an albatross, he seems to imply that he will not be cruel to others. Indeed, Walton acts respectfully towards his lieutenant, who assists in his enterprise. He acknowledges that the lieutenant has "an excellent disposition" and "retains some of the noblest endowments of humanity" (Shelley 9). However, Walton does not seem the grasp the deeper implications of the mariner's murder of the albatross, as the event hints at the abuse of scientific knowledge to mistreat underprivileged people. In her article, "Discoveries and Domestic Affections in Coleridge and Shelley," Michelle Levy argues that "the Mariners' sufferings and guilt cannot be divorced from the expansionist project that culminated, by the end of the eighteenth century, in the slave trade, the plantation system, and imperial culture" (Levy 694). Based upon Levy's analysis, Coleridge implicitly connects the killing of the albatross to the potential consequences of scientists' world exploration. Though Walton does not mistreat his kind and helpful lieutenant, Walton presumes that he, an European, is superior to his sailors, whom he considers to be "savage [inhabitants] of some undiscovered island" (Shelley 13). Because he harbors contempt for those he views as lesser than himself and fails to understand the deeper implications associated with killing the albatross, Walton is set up to likely mistreat the inhabitants of the north region. As a result, literature and science fail to cooperate

effectively in Walton's society. While the scientist is already able to command an expedition to the North Pole, he does not fully understand the edifying lessons of literary works, and thus fails to realize the danger inherent in his sense of superiority, which would and did, in many cases, instigate explorers to abuse their power.

The creature's fabula repeats the theme of people's inability to understand literature and the subsequent imbalance between literature and science. In this fabula, the cottager, Safie, is familiar with Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, but she is unable to analyze this work in depth. Although this work is not a work of fiction or poetry, Shelley appears to include it in the literary canon by attributing literariness to it. Namely, she emphasizes the way Volney is conscious of the art of writing and employs "a declaratory style…framed in imitation of the eastern authors" (Shelley 95). Also, by "giving [the creature and the cottagers] an insight into the manners, governments, and religions of …different nations" and "the discovery of the American hemisphere" and evoking the creature's and Safie's sympathy for "the hapless fate of [America's] original inhabitants," Volney's work exemplifies the role of literature (Shelley 95). The creature's use of "hapless" further accentuates his pity for Native Americans. In this way, Shelley appears to promote a capacious sense of what literature is and views creative non-fiction, such as some works of history and human sciences— social sciences in the 19th century— as edifying literary works that have the potential to foster readers' sympathy and challenge their bigotry. Like the creature, Safie weeps for the American Indians' suffering from Europeans' mistreatment of them, evincing that she does feel their pain. However, she fails to deeply understand that the Indians represent not only themselves but also people who are underprivileged in general. When it comes to the creature, who is as marginalized and disrespected as American Indians, Safie refuses to sympathize with him. Upon seeing the creature, Safie "rushed out of the cottage," seeming to consider the creature repulsive (Shelley 110). She rejects the creature, the fruit of scientific knowledge and technological

application, because of her deficient training in literature. Although Safie does not solely rely on herself to study literature and learns Volney's work from Felix, another cottager, her education can be best classified as self-education, for she receives no formal schooling, and Felix is neither an intellectual nor a schoolmaster. As a result, Shelley suggests that her education is not effective enough to allow her to analyze literary works in depth and achieve deep, layered sympathy.

Similarly, in Victor's fabula, he demonstrates that he is familiar with Arthurian romances, but he does not seem to grasp the meanings and the implications of the works he knows and fails to apply them to real life. In the 1831 edition of the novel, Victor discusses the plays he acts with Clerval in detail, "he [Clerval] tried to make us act plays, and to enter into masquerades, in which the characters were drawn from the heroes … of the Round Table of King Arthur, and the chivalrous train who shed their blood to redeem the holy sepulchre from the hands of the infidels" ("*Frankenstein*"). Based upon Victor's immersion in chivalric romance, it is reasonable to assume that he is familiar with chivalric virtues, such as friendship, fraternity, politeness, and pity. Yet, Victor's lack of formal and higher education in literature prevents him from developing a full understanding of these and other lessons from literature (Shelley 22). Even if he knows the chivalric virtues by rote, he does not absorb and digest their meanings, being unable to exercise these virtues himself by acting politely, lovingly, and sympathetically towards his offspring and his family—the creature. Therefore, through paralleling Safie's, Victor's, and Walton's failures to understand literary works by themselves, Shelley presses the need for everyone, including underprivileged immigrants like Safie and privileged people like Walton and Victor, to receive formal and higher education in literature. Meanwhile, she presents the contemporary educational system, which excludes underprivileged people from attending university, as problematic.

While Shelley does imply that everyone should receive formal and higher education in literature, she does not refer to philological studies in their current form. Rather, perceiving that contemporary literary and language studies are unable to help literature achieve its missions, she suggests that students should study philology at universities where reforms have been made. Although Shelley did not attend a university herself, her "formative years were spent with her father [William Godwin] and his many learned friends" (Girard 1). Also, "in 1815, Mary and Shelley moved to Bishopsgate, England… during the period, [Lord Byron, Claire Clairmont, Mary Shelley, and Percy Shelley] formed a lifelong friendship" ("Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley"). Since Mary Shelley was always surrounded by intellectuals, it is reasonable to infer that Shelley must have been familiar with university-level education, including philological studies. At that time, philological studies included historical investigation of words, studies of "ancient languages," "comparative investigation of non-classical languages," and studies of "classical literature" (Momma 1, 30, 105). Philologists adopted "historical approaches" to study words, ancient languages, and non-classical languages. In doing so, they attempted to explain "why some words had multiple meanings that seemed disparate and sometimes even contradictory with each other" and to "catalogue differences among similarities among historical languages and to establish their mutual relationship" (Momma 1, 30). Even for the study of literature, "the use of history" is the major "mode of analysis" (Momma 100). Besides historical approaches, philological studies also included "textual criticism," which aimed to analyze literary works and determine the original content of texts like "Plato's *Republic*" ("Textual Criticism"). A related branch, "higher criticism," "[studied] the authorship, date, and provenance of text," which were inseparable from "issues of [textual interpretation]" ("Philology").

Overall, philology in the 19th century did not include a focus on the moral and aesthetic dimensions of literature and language and restricted the literary canon to classical

works. For instance, in a 19th-century article published in the *Philological Society*, the author explored word meanings and word relations, aiming to figure out "the signification of Greek works as they stand" (81). Also, the author strived to find "Plato's object and meaning in introducing the calculation into his Dialogue on the State" (81). In investigating Plato's perception of numbers in his *Republic*, the author translates certain words from Greek to English, probing their technical denotations rather than their ethical and social connotations. In addition, the author attempts to decipher the original meanings of Plato's Number. In this way, the methodology the author adopts seems to be "higher criticism," which involves hermeneutic interpretation of the text. However, the author only explores the ideas Plato tries to convey, forgetting the moral implications and the potential social applications of Plato's ideas. Neither does the author discuss Plato's aesthetic choices in writing *Republic*. The author discusses the way Plato links his theory of numbers to his "theory of harmonics," but does not discuss what narrative choices enable Plato to craft this linkage (88). The author explains Plato's conception of the "four…cardinal virtues," the three parts of "the human soul," and the "three classes of citizens" and elucidates his idea that "harmony keeps [the virtues, the parts, and the classes] all in due subordination," but does not explain how to apply Plato's theory of harmony to contemporary social and cultural issues (88). The author restricts the analysis solely to Plato's text and ignores its edifying influences on readers' minds. In ignoring the aesthetic and moral aspects of literature, this article on Plato's *Republic* reflects the areas often left out of 19th-century philological studies.

These deficiencies in literary and language studies are reflected in the scenes where Clerval is unable to understand the deep, layered meanings of literary works, despite the fact that he receives formal and higher education in philology at the University of Ingolstadt. In the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*, Clerval invests himself in reading literary works and studying Eastern languages, but his formal education does not enable him to thoroughly

understand literary texts, and his philology classes neither enable him to incorporate the ethical connotations of languages into his study, nor teach him to explore the moral and aesthetic aspects of the literary texts ("*Frankenstein*"). As a result, rather than growing sympathetic after learning literature, Clerval seems to discriminate against Indians, whom he considers to be inferior to himself. He is inclined to abuse his knowledge to mistreat underprivileged people, or the Other. As Victor shows, "his design was to visit India, in the belief that he had in his knowledge of its various languages, and in the views he had taken of its society, the means of materially assisting the progress of European colonisation and trade" ("*Frankenstein*"). Clerval's inability to absorb the essences of literature—sympathy and open-mindedness— demonstrates that contemporary philological studies need reform and development.

To address the deficiencies in literary and language studies, Shelley suggests three possible reforms. First, by stressing the way negative connotations of monstrosity and discrimination against the Other are ingrained in language, Shelley appears to suggest that language studies cannot be detached from studies of moral implications of language and subtle connotations of words. Only when readers study and discover the associations and effects of these connotations are they able to question them and challenge the bigotry ingrained in them.

Second, Shelley implies that the subfield of philological studies, higher criticism, should focus on aesthetic and moral dimensions of literature. Through paralleling Victor's, Safie's, and Walton's failures to understand the moral implications of what they read and their subsequent failures to apply these ideas and sympathize with people who are different, Shelley emphasizes that it is necessary for literary studies and education to help readers critically analyze the enlightening themes of literary works. Moreover, by manipulating narrative sequence and resemblances among different fabulas to provide readers with clues

for interpreting her major themes in the novel, Shelley points out that narrative techniques and choices can foster readers' understandings of literary works. Thus, she appears to urge philologists to incorporate aesthetic aspects, such as studies of narratives and readers' responses, into their studies.

Shelley's third suggested reform for literary and language studies would happen naturally once the first two reforms are achieved. When philological studies incorporate moral and aesthetic dimensions, and when everyone is able to receive a higher education in literature, readers will grasp the essences of literature and thus become more open-minded and understanding. They will be able to question the presumption that philological studies should mostly include classical literature. In other words, both college students and philology scholars will be able to develop a broader view of the realm of literature and will be able to discover the literary value of works in the human sciences, appreciate women's works, and consider post-classical works for the literary canon.

In conclusion, as both readers' minds and the literary canon widen, new ideas will emerge and be accepted, social prejudices will be subverted, and literature, while constantly developing, will achieve more and more of its missions. By forecasting the future of the novel's fictional society, in which literature and science will develop in tandem, Shelley urges her contemporary English society to accelerate its own development of literature. In that way, English people's minds will continuously be replenished with new ideas, which will prepare them for facing the ever-changing industrial world.

Chapter Two

A Defense of Science in *Frankenstein*

In *Mary Shelley, Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*, a book that has influenced many literary critics and still has merit today, Anne K. Mellor offers a canonical reading of *Frankenstein* by indicating that this novel cautions readers against making technological advancements without harboring a sense of responsibility. Yet, Mellor's argument is not always consistent throughout her work. By indicating that Victor is punished for his usurpation of nature's prerogative of creating life, as well as for his usurpation of women's role of giving birth, Mellor seems also to suggest that it is Victor's artificial reproduction that contributes to the novel's tragic denouement. However, I will challenge her argument by demonstrating that Shelley does not present technology as inherently dangerous, and she only presents the imbalance between literature and science as problematic. Victor's artificial reproduction, far from being essentially blasphemous and erroneous, proves to be a successful and potentially beneficial technological achievement. The creature is born to be a kind-hearted and intelligent being, and it is Victor's and other European people's lack of sympathy and open-mindedness that contributes to the novel's disastrous denouement.

In characterizing technological development as bad science and characterizing Victor's artificial reproduction as essentially blasphemous and inappropriate, Mellor appears to suggest that technological pursuits are inherently problematic. She argues that Shelley distinguishes between "good" science, "a careful observation and celebration of the operations of all-creating nature," and "bad" science, which "[changes]…the way nature works" (Mellor 95). By "good science," Mellor appears to refer to scientific research and concrete knowledge, such as Erasmus Darwin's "work on evolution and the growth of plants," which is theoretical in nature and does not necessarily involve much practical application (Mellor 95). By "bad science," Mellor appears to refer to technological

applications of science, such as Walton's expedition and Victor's reproduction of the creature. Since every technological application changes the way nature works, Mellor implies that every type of technological exercise is to some extent disrespectful. Her idea of the essential falsehood of technology is also reflected through her criticism of Victor's artificial creation. She perceives his reproductive act as an usurpation of God's and women's prerogative. As Mellor asserts, "the destruction of the female implicit in Frankenstein's usurpation of the natural mode of human reproduction symbolically erupts in his nightmare following the animation of the creature should never have mastered electricity to create the creature" (Mellor 115). By criticizing Victor for reproducing offspring and creating life artificially by himself, Mellor appears to suggest that Victor's alteration of the natural way of reproduction is inherently problematic. Similarly, by charging Victor for "overthrowing the established, sacred order of both earth and heaven" and stealing the reproductive prerogative "reserved only to nature and chance," Mellor indicates that Shelley attributes the novel's tragic denouement to Victor's interference with nature's way of reproduction. To back up her point that male reproduction is erroneous in nature, she cites the creature's abnormal physical appearance as evidence: "can the creature, born with a grotesquely oversized and unsound body, ever develop a sound mind?" (Mellor 51). Though in her analysis of Shelley's novel, Mellor wisely points out that Shelley seems more concerned with the social and moral consequences of unregulated scientific investigation, she includes the birth of a physically abnormal *but kind-hearted creature* as an example of *the negative consequences* of technological development. As a result, she somewhat weakens her own argument by suggesting that technology is inherently problematic, male reproduction should not be performed, and the way nature works should not be altered at all. Rather than holding on to her idea that Victor's refusal to mother his child is morally lacking, she somewhat contradicts it by also suggesting that the creature's birth *itself* is morally lacking. Therefore, not only

does Mellor criticize scientists' lack of moral responsibility, but she also tends to criticize technological advancement *itself* and label it as immoral and blasphemous.

Aside from the creature's appearance, the changes Shelley made to the 1831 edition of her novel may also have contributed to the way this novel is often perceived as "an awful warning: don't usurp God's prerogative in the Creation-game, or don't get too clever with technology" (Butler 307). The critic Marilyn Butler points out that in the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*, Shelley compromised her faith in science and pretended to warn readers against defying God's orders due to her fear of "press censorship" (Butler 308). Based upon Butler's article, "*Frankenstein* and Radical Science," in the contemporary vitalist debate between two scientists, John Albernethy and William Lawrence, Shelley took Lawrence's side. While Albernethy "sought to unite religious and secular opinion with a formula acceptable to both" and believed that materialist science alone cannot explain life (Butler 309), Lawrence "openly [ridiculed] the idea that electricity … could do duty for the soul" (Butler 311). Identifying with Lawrence's view, Shelley portrays Victor, who adopts a superseded method to "impart the spark of life," in the image of Albernethy, who aimed to reconcile the dated belief in spirituality and the recent faith in technology (Butler 312). In this sense, far from promoting conservative approaches to technology through her portrayal of Victor, Shelley in fact depicts them as being too religious and spiritual. Far from categorizing technological advancement as blasphemous and radical bad science, Shelley implicitly supports it. Shelley "made Frankenstein a more sympathetic as well as a more religious character" and hid her personal interests in scientific topics and contemporary debates in the 1831 edition of the novel in order to avoid being charged as blasphemous by the press (Butler 319, 308). Therefore, Shelley herself does not seem to view technological development as inherently inappropriate or profane, and she certainly sees some desirable aspects of technology.

Shelley's idea is that technology can be *made* either dangerous or beneficial by human intentions. This idea is developed throughout Victor's, the creature's, and Walton's respective fabulas. In Walton's fabula, he commands an expedition to the North Pole in order to discover the magnetic force— "the wondrous power which attracts the needle"—, a potentially habitable region "never before imprinted by the foot of man," and "a passage [sea route] near the pole to [different countries]" (Shelley 6). Walton's expedition may lead to either dangerous or beneficial consequences, depending upon his purpose. If Walton's purpose were altruistic, his discovery of a new world could potentially provide both Europeans and non-Europeans another place to live, and his discovery of magnetic force and his seafaring experience would provide people with invaluable knowledge. If his conjecture were wrong, and he discovered that some inhabitants or countries already occupied the areas near the North Pole, his discovery of a new sea route could foster communication and cooperation among different parts of the world. Unfortunately, Walton is preoccupied with selfish purposes. As he writes:

> You [his sister] cannot contest the inestimable profit which I shall confer on all mankind to the last generation, by discovering a passage near the pole to those countries, to reach which at present so many months are requisite; or by ascertaining the secret of the magnet (Walton 6).

In this passage, Walton articulates that his main motive for his expedition is pursuing glory and satisfying his vanity. Although it is true that his discovery of magnetic force, a new land, and a sea route would potentially bring many benefits to mankind, it is also true that, as discussed by my last chapter, with his sense of superiority in mind, he has the potential to mistreat possible inhabitants living near the North Pole. As a result, Shelley stops Walton's expedition. As Walton recounts:

> How all this will terminate, I know not; but I had rather die, than return shamefully, —my purpose unfulfilled. Yet I fear such will be my fate; the men, unsupported by ideas of glory and honour, can never willingly continue to endure their present hardships … I have consented to return … I come back ignorant and disappointed (Shelley 184).

By ending Walton's expedition and leaving him humbled by his failure, Shelley thwarts his vain and pompous ambitions. However, Shelley does not seem to thwart Walton's obsession with science *itself,* and she only seems to prevent him from abusing his scientific knowledge and skills. It is undeniable that Walton's expedition, if successful, would change the way nature functions; he would discover a new sea route and a new land considered to be the secrets of nature's closet. Yet, allowing Walton to go back home peacefully and choosing not to let nature punish him for his interference, Shelley does not portray Walton's expedition as inherently blasphemous. Instead, by making Walton go back home shamefully, Shelley only presents his lack of moral consciousness as dangerous.

Similarly, in Victor's fabula, Shelley further represents technology as inherently innocuous and only represents Victor's lack of maternal responsibility in his technological application as dangerous by allowing him to be very successful in his creation. Though deformed in physical appearance, the creature is born with a soul that "glowed with love and humanity" (Shelley 78). For example, at the beginning, the creature knows how to sympathize with others and restrain his selfish impulses. For example, he recounts his early days by saying:

> I had been accustomed, during the night, to steal a part of their store for my own consumption; but when I found that in doing this I inflicted pain on the cottagers, I abstained, and satisfied myself with berries, nuts, and roots, which I fathered from a neighboring wood (Shelley 88).

Even though the creature stole the cottagers' food when he was ignorant of the morality of stealing, he quits this behavior immediately after he comes to understand that stealing food makes the cottagers suffer. In this sense, the creature prefers his own suffering over making others suffer, demonstrating that the product of Victor's scientific creation, the innately kind and sympathetic creature, would be a blessing to society. Since Victor's progeny is sympathetic and humane, the creature's technological origins are not the origins of his later violence. Instead, Victor's failure to take care of his creature, his selfish intentions, and his lack of moral consciousness lead to the novel's disastrous denouement. Though the creature is born with a kind and sympathetic heart, he grows bitter and malicious after being abandoned by his father, Victor. The creature explicates why he became desperate and bitter, "yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us … If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace" (Shelley 77). In this passage, the creature explains that he became cold-hearted, not because he was born with an evil heart, but partly because his own father denied him love, sympathy, and companionship. Rather than realizing his responsibility to care for the life he creates, Victor only dreams of personal glory and gain. As he indicates, "no father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserves theirs [his potential creatures']" (Shelley 36). Since Victor creates the creature primarily to satisfy his vanity, he fails to give parental love to the creature. This failure *makes* the creature evil and *makes* Victor's mastery of electricity dangerous.

Besides the creation of the naturally kind creature, Shelley also hints at other potential benefits of the application of science in Victor's fabula. At the University of Ingolstadt, Victor is obsessed with chemistry and physiology which later enable him to create life. Victor describes his obsession with these fields of knowledge, by saying "my attention is fixed upon every object the most insupportable to the delicacy of human feelings. I saw how the fine

form of man was degraded and wasted; I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the wonders of the eye and the brain" (Shelley 34). By committing himself to studying physiology and other related branches of science, Victor possibly aims to make contributions to physicians' medical practices, since he once dreams of "[banishing] disease from the human frame, and [rendering] man invulnerable to any but a violent death" (Shelley 23). Furthermore, Shelley presents medical practices as necessary and beneficial to society through the death of Victor's mother and Victor's own illness. The way his mother dies of scarlet fever truly exemplifies the way death is "insupportable to the delicacy of human feelings" (Shelley 34). As Victor narrates the tremendous pain of losing someone who died of illness:

> She died calmly; and her countenance expressed affection even in death. I need not describe the feelings of those dearest ties are rent by that most irreparable evil, the void that presents itself to the soul, and the despair that is exhibited on the countenance. It is so long before the mind can persuade itself that she, whom we saw every day, and whose very existence appeared a part of our own, can have departed for ever… (Shelley 27).

Through "despair," "irreparable evil," and "void," Shelley, whose mother also died of illness at a quite young age, accentuates how sad and undesirable it is for humans to be unable to combat illness and watch their beloved ones die. As a result, Shelley highlights the value of and necessity for the medical application of physiological knowledge. She also spotlights these themes through Victor's own illness by depicting the way Victor's nervous fever "[alarms] and [grieves] Clerval" and would make Elizabeth extremely miserable (Shelley 43). Thus, Shelley appears to suggest that humans should employ technology to cure patients, even though curing someone alters nature's plan of letting that person die.

Likewise, in the creature's fabula, Shelley also represents the way technology can be made either dangerous or beneficial by different intentions. Not only are Victor and Walton obsessed with technology, but the creature is also obsessed with a primordial form of technology — the utilization of fire. After the creature is created, he wanders in the forest and feels extremely cold. He says:

> I felt cold also… Before I quitted your [Victor's] apartment, on a sensation of cold, I had covered myself with some clothes; but these were insufficient to secure me from the dews of night… I knew, and could distinguish, nothing; but, feeling pain invade me on all sides, I sat down and wept (Shelley 80).

Through highlighting the creature's coldness, despair, and physical pain, the creature's narrative enables one to comprehend the essential character of the fire, which he learns to make later in the novel. He "found a fire which had been left by some wandering beggars," "examined the materials of the fire," and "busied [himself] in collecting a great quantity of wood, that he [dried] it, and "had a plentiful supply of fire" (Shelley 81). In addition to accentuating the way fire helps the creature cope with cold weather, Shelley also describes the way it helps the creature to eat healthier and tastier food. He finds that by placing the "nuts and roots" on the "live embers," they are "much improved" (Shelley 82). In this way, Shelley indicates that fire, when directed by reasonable purposes, is beneficial and desirable, and she only finds fault with evil intentions behind humans' use of fire and technology. For instance, after being spurned and deserted by the cottagers, the creature grows so angry and disappointed that he "[fires] the straw, the heath, and bushes" and eventually destroys the cottage (Shelley 113). The creature's act of destroying the cottage marks his transformation from a kind-hearted being into an evil one. In this way, it is only the creature's newly formed evil character that *makes* the fire dangerous, which demonstrates that fire, the symbol of technology, is not inherently dangerous.

Again employing Mieke Bal's work on frame narratives, I will argue that the repeated motif throughout Walton's, Victor's, and the creature's fabulas— the double-sidedness of technology— highlights Shelley's attitude towards the imbalance between literature and technological development. Rather than denouncing technology outright, Shelley suggests that the technological advancement is desirable and even necessary, as long as it is balanced by the advancement of literature, including the extent to which people are exposed to edifying fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction, and the extent to which they are able to grasp the fullness of these works. In Victor's fabula, he lacks the sense of responsibility required for a parent, because neither his self-education nor his college philology courses are able to help him thoroughly understand the literary works he reads. In Walton's fabula, he does not possess the moral consciousness required for a scientist, because his deficient self-education and his lack of high-quality formal and higher education in literature [the type of reformed education described in my first chapter] render him unable to understand Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Likewise, in the creature's fabula, Victor's abandonment is not the sole reason that the creature becomes a murderer. The creature is shunned and mistreated by all the villagers he encounters, as they have not encountered or understood enough literature to grow sympathetic and open-minded. When the creature is "spurned and deserted" by the cottagers whom he treats as "friends," he, for the first time, feels "revenge and hatred" (Shelley 113). At that time, though he grows very disappointed with the lack of reciprocity for his kindness, and he starts to take revenge by destroying the cottage, his kindness has not been entirely extinguished by anger and despair. Then, he saves a little girl from drowning but gets shot as the reward for his kindness. His physical pain makes his mental pain more acute than ever, and he "[vows] eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind" (Shelley 116). After being severely injured both physically and mentally, the creature loses the hope that his kindness will receive any kind return, and he

comes to realize that his kindness is meaningless. As the creature's hatred develops out of others' mistreatment, Shelley represents the creature as a mirror that reflects society's discrimination against the Other. Therefore, in turning the creature into a mass murderer, Shelley points to the whole society's lack of moral consciousness; in presenting the creature's *abuse* of technology, Shelley indicates that the narrow-mindedness of people in his society, rather than his technological origin, is the origin of his newly evil character.

In conclusion, instead of characterizing Victor's artificial reproduction as an inappropriate usurpation of God's prerogative and women's ability to reproduce, Shelley instead characterizes the underdevelopment of literature— the way literature fails to develop a capacious mindset in Walton, Victor, and other people in her fictional society who discriminate against the Other— as dangerous. Capaciousness, the essential value that literary works and literary education ought to be capable of instilling in people's minds, also characterizes Shelley's view of the kind-hearted "monster," the male mother, and the female author. By endowing the creature with an innately healthy and sympathetic mind, Shelley evinces that physical abnormality does not necessarily indicate monstrosity, and it is the inflexible, stubborn adherence to the unreasonable concept of normality that is truly monstrous. By letting Victor successfully fulfill his dream of creating a life and rewarding him with a kind-hearted offspring, Shelley does not portray him as a disrespectful usurper of female's reproductive prerogative; she only portrays him as an irresponsible parent who fails to mother his child. Not only does she generously allow Victor to become a mother, but she also implies that Victor should fulfill more maternal obligations. In turn, Shelley also disrupts the binary opposition between the private sphere and the public sphere. In naming her book "hideous," as discussed in my last chapter, Shelley does not believe that female authorship is indeed despicable. Rather, she makes an ironic statement in order to criticize the patriarchal norm, the inflexible presumption, that women should not write and publish their works. Far

from urging females to guard their reproductive functions and place their self-value overwhelmingly on their biological functions, Shelley appears to blur gender boundaries, allowing men to mother children and encouraging women to take on the typically-masculine role of public authorship. As a result, Shelley subverts the difference between the normal and the abnormal, as well as that between the gender roles of the female and the male. Therefore, overcoming various social norms and preconceptions, Shelley indicates the vast possibilities of the ever-changing industrial world and the ever-renewing literary canon and ideas and proposes the harmony, balance, and cooperation between them.

Conclusion

Potential Interactions between Creative Writing and Literary Criticism

In *Frankenstein*'s representation of the danger and consequences of the imbalance between literature and science, Shelley indicates the necessity for European society to accelerate its development of literature by increasing the number of available literary works and by fostering readers' capabilities of grasping the fullness of these works. In this way, Shelley both suggests the inseparable relationship between literary works and literary studies and the similar relationship between authors and readers. By providing clues for her readers to interpret *Frankenstein* and successfully making them sympathize with the creature, Shelley herself exemplifies an intimate relationship with her readers and the importance of this intimacy. However, according to the narrative theorist Peter J. Rabinowitz, the intimate interconnections between readers and authors are often thwarted, and readers often misunderstand authors' implications and ideas (Rabinowitz 174). Likewise, creative writers may also fail to grasp the way readers interpret literary works and thus fail to express their ideas effectively. In this conclusion, I will argue that facilitating interdisciplinary interactions between literary criticism and creative writing may provide a possible solution for these problems. The use of craft analysis— master writers' theories on writing fictions—to interpret *Frankenstein* results in interpretations that are strikingly similar to those guided by literary theory. This strong correlation indicates that literary theory has the potential to guide creative writers' writing processes, and craft knowledge has the potential to serve as the theoretical framework for literary scholars' criticism. As authors become familiar with readers' responses to narrative conventions and generic patterns, and readers learn authors' writing techniques and methods, the author-reader relationship may be more effectively fostered, and readers may develop deeper and more thorough understandings of literary works. Furthermore, as creative writers study literary theory, they may discover blind spots in

their ideas and themes and may find that using literary theory to guide their writing process may help them refine their thinking and write more edifying works. As a result, when interdisciplinary conversations are fostered between craft analysis and literary theory, contemporary literature may develop much faster to balance the dazzling, rapid technological development in today's society.

In *Frankenstein*, Shelley exemplifies the way an intimate author-reader relationship is able to help literature achieve its missions of fostering sympathy and challenging bigotry. As I have discussed in my first chapter, Shelley employs frame narratives to highlight the repeated motifs of discrimination against the Other and the underdevelopment of literature in her society. She also manipulates narrative sequence, which may foster readers' sympathy for the creature, challenge the presumption that ugly people are monsters, and help them overcome the preconception that the creature's suffering is only Victor's fault. While interpreting these themes, I primarily employed narrative theory and reader-response theory. However, I will also prove that genre theory is able to shed light on Shelley's narrative choices, especially her manipulation of narrative sequence. Readers encounter Victor's narrative first, in which he narrates that, in a bleak night, he creates a supernatural, grotesque monster who seems to seize, detain, and harm him, and he runs away in breathless horror. The gloomy, horrifying, and mysterious atmosphere, the supernatural and inexplicable deformity of the monster, and the overwrought and highly sentimental emotion of the character make Victor's narrative resemble a Gothic story and create the illusion that *Frankenstein* is genre fiction— the type of literary work that has stereotypical characters and plot and that lacks philosophical depth. Then, readers encounter the creature's narrative, in which they realize that the seemingly horrible and evil monster is in fact a kind-hearted creature. In this way, they may also realize that this novel is actually literary fiction, or a literary work with complex characters and a plot that involves deeper implications and ideas.

While Victor's narrative somewhat resembles genre fiction, the creature's narrative embodies literary fiction, the seeming discrepancy that presents a form of "generic mixture" (Fowler 232). Thus, Shelley cultivates readers' sympathy for the creature, challenges their expectations about the novel and the creature, and establishes an intimate relationship with readers through combining different generic elements.

In Shelley's preface to the 1818 edition of *Frankenstein*, she describes the purpose of writing this novel: "I have thus endeavored to preserve the truth of the elementary principles of human nature… I am by no means indifferent to the manner in which whatever moral tendencies exist in the sentiments or characters it contains shall affect the reader" (Shelley 3). Even though communicating with readers is not Shelley's primary aim for writing, she is nevertheless aware of the interconnected relationship between authors and readers and establishes a strong one through her narrative choices. The narrative theorist Wayne C. Booth confirms Shelley's idea and also suggests that authors and readers are at least to some degree interrelated. He says:

> But, regardless of how we define art or artistry, the very concept of writing a story seems to have implicit within it the notion of finding techniques of expression that will make the work accessible in the highest possible degree… We think of the writer as someone who addresses us, who wants to be read, and who does what he can to make himself readable (Booth 105).

Based upon Booth's analysis, creative artists write in a way that makes the inaccessible literary world more accessible to readers by giving them textual clues. This idea is also verified by two creative writers, Robert Boswell and Charles Baxter. Boswell argues that writers should use the accessible surface story to gesture toward the less accessible inner story and guide readers to discover literary works' deeper implications and hidden themes. He states:

> To accomplish this [the creation of a half-known world], the writer must suggest a dimension to the fictional reality that escapes comprehension. The writer wishes to make his characters and their world known to the reader, and he simultaneously wishes to make them resonate with the unknown (Boswell 5).

Likewise, Baxter also argues that writers should use various clues, such as "inflections," or "the tone with which the wording is conveyed," to direct readers to dig beneath the surface (Baxter 93). According to Shelley, Baxter, Boswell, and Booth, the extent to which readers understand the meanings of literary works depends upon the extent to which writers effectively convey their ideas and readers catch the clues provided by writers. Therefore, mutual understandings between readers and authors prove to be crucial to the development of literature.

However, in reality, many readers fail to grasp what authors express, which is a failure that necessitates readers' exploration of craft analysis. In *Before Reading*, Rabinowitz states that narrative conventions "[serve] to illuminate some of the relationships between [readers and authors]" (Rabinowitz 43). These conventions are rules that "govern operations or activities that, from the author's perspective, it is appropriate for the reader to perform when transforming [paraphrasing and understanding] texts" (Rabinowitz 43). While acknowledging the value of narrative theory, he also confesses that readers can "misapply the rules" or even apply "the wrong rules" due to the complex nature of creative writers' creative processes (Rabinowitz 175). For instance, a novel's genre usually tends to be ambiguous. Generic conventions are often packaged in novel, complex, and distinct ways, and "genre categories" can even "overlap" (Rabinowitz 177). Thus, systematic generic studies and approaches may be insufficient to explain authors' manipulation of generic conventions. Even though Paul Ricoeur's reader-response theory and Alastair Fowler's genre theory may be sufficient to explain how Shelley uses narrative sequence to cultivate readers' sympathy

for the creature, in other novels and cases, literary theory may not be enough to foster intimate relationships between readers and authors. Consequently, it appears necessary for readers not only to study literary theory but also to study craft, interpreting novels from authors' perspectives, in order to grasp the fullness of literary works and enable literature to achieve its missions.

A crucial question then arises: can literary critics employ craft-based approaches to analyze literary works? The answer may be yes. Let us first employ Baxter's and Boswell's craft analyses to interpret Shelley's use of a frame narrative and her manipulation of narrative sequence. Based upon Boswell's craft analysis, when writers use stereotypical descriptions for genre fictions, they prevent readers from inferring deeper themes of the literary works they read, for these descriptions and characters are "too literal for the medium" to guide readers to find out literature's hidden implications (Boswell 7). In this way, authors thwart readers' ability to "break out of… imaginative restraints" and move beyond the literal level of stories (Boswell 9). On the other hand, Boswell stresses that in making the complex characters and creative descriptions that characterize literary fictions, authors "alter the vision of [their] audience" and challenge readers' preconceptions (Boswell 105). As Boswell also draws the negative correlation between readers' sense of familiarity and their level of critical thinking, using Boswell's advice on craft to interpret *Frankenstein* results in an interpretation that is strikingly similar to those derived from Ricoeur's reader-response theory and Alastair Fowler's genre theory. Under Baxter's craft analysis, the popular gothic elements, especially the overwrought and horrified major character and the supernatural deformity of the creature in Victor's narrative may render readers only capable of performing surface reading, perceiving nothing more than how scary the monster is and how unsuccessful Victor's creation is, thus joining Victor's discrimination against the creature. In contrast, as they encounter the creature's narrative, they come to realize that the kind-hearted creature is not

the monster he appears to be, and Victor's creation is in fact successful. The readers may come to understand that the story is a tale of structural discrimination against the creature. As a result, both literary theory and craft analysis lead readers to develop sympathy for the creature and challenge their preconception that one's appearance indicates one's character. In other words, studies of writing craft may be able to provide a theoretical framework for literary criticism.

Moreover, both Baxter's craft analysis and Mieke Bal's narrative theory may draw readers' attention to the problematic connotations of the word "wretch," further proving that craft analysis may be suitable for guiding literary scholars to analyze literary works. In my first chapter, I used Bal's theory to show that calling the creature a monster throughout Victor's, Walton's, and the creature's respective fabulas demonstrates the underdevelopment of literary education, which overlooks the moral aspects of languages, and the failure of literature to foster people's moral consciousness. Similarly, using Baxter's advice on craft, I will be able to lay out Shelley's accentuation of the problematic labeling of the creature as a wretch in Victor's and Walton's fabulas through juxtaposing them with the creature's fabula. As Victor and Walton call the creature a "wretch," they accuse him of being contemptible and despicable. Yet, in the creature's fabula, he also refers himself to a "wretch," for instance, when he laments, "I was a poor, helpless, miserable wretch" (Shelley 80). Based upon the context, "wretch" in this situation means "an unfortunate or unhappy person" ("Wretch"). According to Baxter, writers manipulate inflections of words and phrases to provide clues for readers to interpret works and to elicit their different responses to these words and phrasings. As he writes, "shifts in tone alter the meaning, from sincerity to irony or exasperation to incredulity" (Baxter 94). Walton's and Victor's uses of "wretch" have a contemptuous tone that may disturb readers, whereas the creature's expression of "wretch" has a melancholy tone that may deeply touch readers. In this way, Shelley uses the inflection

of "wretch" to highlight the fact that the discrimination against the Other is ingrained in people's problematic connotations of language. This fact, in turn, highlights the necessity for reforming studies of language to foster people's moral consciousness. Therefore, it appears that craft analysis and literary theory may be both capable of guiding literary critics' interpretation of literary works.

Furthermore, since Bal's theory seems insufficient to cultivate readers' understanding of the nuances of Shelley's inflection of "wretch," it appears reasonable for literary scholars to use craft analyses to interpret works where systematic literary theory alone may seem insufficient. While Bal's theory may well draw readers' attention to Victor's, Walton's and the creature's repeated pronunciations of the word "monster" and its synonym, "wretch," it may not alert readers to the nuanced meanings of "wretch" itself, which instead can be properly explained by Baxter's theory. As a result, in some cases, it would be reasonable for literary scholars and readers to utilize advice on writing craft to interpret literary works from authors' perspectives.

Similarly, it also appears reasonable for creative writers to learn literary theory to foster their intimate relationships with readers. Let us imagine this hypothetical situation: a creative writer aims to design a horror story, using Boswell's study of craft as a guide. The writer decides to create literary fiction, centering a complex and nuanced major character to help readers realize that society's structural discrimination against the disabled is unfair and unreasonable. To achieve this goal, the author lets a physically hideous creature, created by a contemporary scientist narrate his own story, in which the creature recounts the way he is abandoned by the scientist due to his ugliness, revealing both his harmlessness and his helplessness. However, the author would run the risk of not achieving his or her goal, for readers would find the creature to be a reliable character, completely identify with him, join in his misery at being abandoned, and thus tend to blame the scientist solely for the type of

discrimination the creature suffers. To let readers realize that the discrimination against the Other is a structural phenomenon, the author would find it helpful to consult Ricoeur's reader-response theory and Fowler's genre theory, and combine their works with Boswell's as guides. In that way, the author would learn to manipulate narrative sequence and mix elements of literary fiction and genre fiction. Specifically, the author would first stereotype the scientist in his narrative by modeling him after "Frankenstein," "the dominant image of the [mad] scientist in twentieth- century fiction and film and the media" and then reveal the creature's harmlessness and misery in the creature's narrative (Haynes 1835). As a result, readers would first get stuck at the surface level of the novel and join the scientist's discrimination against the creature. Then, they would become shocked by the unreliability of the scientist as a narrator, begin to identify with neither character, critically reflect upon the discrimination the creature suffers, and finally realize that discrimination is a structural phenomenon. This hypothetical situation suggests that using literary theory as guidance may help creative writers to refine their narrative techniques and convey their themes and ideas more effectively. As a result, they may achieve "artistic success," which "depends on [writers'] shrewdness…on the degree to which actual and authorial audience [the hypothetical audience for whom writers rhetorically design their books] overlap" (Rabinowitz 21). Therefore, creative writers may need reader-response theory to learn readers' reading patterns, and they may accordingly need narrative theory to learn scholars' interpretation methods to communicate with them in the most productive ways.

Not only may literary theory be able to improve creative writers' narrative techniques, but it may also enable them to improve upon their ideas. In another hypothetical scenario, a male writer aims to write a horror story in which a male scientist creates but ultimately abandons a disabled male creature in order to criticize the scientist's lack of moral consciousness. To evoke readers' sympathy for the creature, the author consults Baxter's

study of craft and decides to let the creature narrate the story, express his frustration with the scientist, and serve the necessary role of an "explainer," given that the male scientist's view is highly biased (Baxter 41). Then, the writer accidentally reads Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*, and Ricoeur's prediction of readers' potential to think beyond the perspectives of narrators, to mistrust them, and to reflect on texts only by themselves might be inspiring to the writer. He might now consider that, rather than making readers completely identify with the creature and letting them blame the male scientist solely for the creature's suffering, he could also invigorate readers' critical thinking skills by presenting the creature's view as biased and unreliable and attributing the scientist's fault to the underdevelopment of literature that fails to render the scientist open-minded and responsible. At the same time this writer presents his fiction in a more edifying manner to readers, he deepens his theme in the novel. Therefore, in addition to helping creative writers express the meanings of their works more effectively, literary theory may also spark creative writers' thoughts and ideas that bear thematic importance.

In *Frankenstein*, by spotlighting many characters' inabilities to understand literary works and exemplifying an intimate author-reader relationship that helps this novel achieve its missions, Shelley points to the necessity for mutual understandings between readers and authors. These mutual understandings may be improved by interdisciplinary interactions between creative writing and literary theory. I hold that as creative writers learn literary theory to refine their ideas and themes, more great literary works will be produced to foster readers' sympathy and challenge their bigotry. When the strict boundary between literary theory and creative writing is disrupted, reforms can be made at universities, and as literature develops faster and faster in today's society, we may be able to handle the rapid changes brought by today's technological advancement in a much wiser way.

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