The Creature Becomes a Monster: Using Feminist Disability Studies and the Politics of Recognition to Read Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

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Abstract

In my paper, I employ the framework of feminist disability studies to critically examine how the intersecting factors of disability, gender, and the politics of recognition weave an interpretation of the narratives of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Victor Frankenstein creates a creature in his lab and is frightened afterwards because the creature looks different from what is perceived as "normal." He immediately recognizes the creature as a monster," "fiend," and "devil." After being rejected by his creator, the creature interacts with other characters and receives similar reactions because society conforms to a certain set of ableist norms about physical appearance. Frankenstein's misrecognition has a damaging effect on the creature's understanding of himself as he emulates the socially induced behavior of misrecognition and behaves monstrously. I argue that though the creature is artificially created by Frankenstein, the disabled monster is the byproduct of sociocultural stigma and oppression. Drawing from feminist disability studies, I demonstrate how societal norms and expectations shape the experiences of disabled individuals, particularly in relation to gendered expectations. By conducting a thorough textual analysis of the novel, I also argue that Shelley's narrative serves as a powerful commentary on the marginalization of those perceived as different.

Keywords: feminist disability studies, Frankenstein, monster, politics of recognition, stigma, gender

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) showcases how early 19th century society viewed and treated those who looked different from the conventionally accepted non-disabled individuals. Shelley ingrains herself in the textuality because her position as a woman writer resembles the social condition of the creature which Victor Frankenstein artificially created in his lab, but society refused to recognize him and stigmatized him not for being in able-bodied shape, but for looking different and deviant. The creature opens his eyes to see the denial in Frankenstein's eyes and to later deal with a collective societal denial and misrecognition which leads him to form an identity of his own. The creature's social and self-identities

collide when the monstrous identity is projected onto him. I argue that the creature's disability is a social stigma which begins with his first encounter with its creator Victor Frankenstein. I proclaim that the creature is not born, but becomes a monster due to societal denial, stigmatization and misrecognition. Mary Shelley's authorial inculcation makes it a gender issue. Thus, I will use the intersectional lens of feminist disability studies to read the novel.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* has been read and interpreted from various theoretical perspectives. Barbara Johnson views Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as an "unsettling formulation of the relationship between parenthood and monstrousness" (2). She considers the book as an autobiographical documentation of monstrousness and selfhood as Shelley claims her feminine authorship through a first-person narrative. In the novel, three characters – Walton, Victor Frankenstein, and the creature – are seen to be using the pronoun "I" while narrating the story in three different autobiographical voices. The author, like her characters, narrates the story of her writerly life.

Mary Shelley's 1831 introduction proves her attempt to inculcate her story into her fictional work. Cynthia Pon writes that the attempt to create and then destroy the incomplete female monster is significant to understand Shelley's own literary evolution in a society dominated by male writers. Pon compares the destruction of the female monster with Shelley's writerly birth as she writes, "Out of the dismemberment of the female creature, something 'unnatural' came into being – Mary Shelley the artist – who likewise resists representation" (43). However, Shelley textually gives birth to a multiplicity of female discourse which create a pathway towards a feminist figure of humanity.

On a similar note, Bette London claims that "The narrative that the painting details thus binds Shelley's preeminence (public and private) to the lasting rites of masculinity" (253). Mary Shelley's self-presentation as an author in the realm of male dominated authorship is like the monstrous representation of the creature. London further claims that since Frankenstein created the monster by collecting body parts of men, his creation remains incomplete, "facilitating its installation in the feminine economy" (256). Though the novel does not represent a single whole voice, but rather presents a constellation of three voices, Eleanor Salotto claims that it is the single voice of the author herself that is infused in the narratives of the characters. She suggests that Shelley "resuscitates the dead voice or body of the traditional narrative of woman, and in its place creates a feminine voice or body that speaks in many different voices, thereby upsetting the notion of a single feminine identity" (191).

Barbara Johnson also refers to Mary's 1831 introduction where she discloses the process of the writing of the story of Frankenstein. In that case, it is safe to say that "*Frankenstein* can be read as the story of the experience of writing *Frankenstein*" (Johnson 7). *Frankenstein* is a story of a man who "usurps the female's role by physically giving birth to a child" which Johnson equates with a female's desire to write (Johnson 8). The conventional viewpoint was that when a man gives birth and a woman writes, they produce monsters. Though Johnson mentions that monstrosity and femininity do not go together, Shelley's attempt to write at a time when male writers were dominant proves her atypical nature of femaleness. Also, being a daughter of two writers, Shelley "usurps the parental role and succeeds in giving birth to herself on paper" (Johnson 8). *Frankenstein*, thus, becomes Shelley's autobiographical story in a way.

Amber Knight, on the other hand, finds a problem in how Frankenstein and other characters in the novel (mis)recognize the creature. Knight sees Frankenstein's creature through the lens of recognition politics. She comments that the creature is recognized as visibly disabled and monstrous by its creator. Other characters of the novel also recognize him as a monster and disabled creature. This misrecognition cognitively affects the creature for which it could "never see himself as anything other than a monster since he is never afforded the positive recognition he desires" (Knight). Knight analyzes the novel through the lens of feminist disability studies to show how disabled individuals are tragically treated. The creature's tormented language in "I desired love and fellowship" shows how he experiences the politics of recognition as a "form of social oppression." Knight explains, "The Creature may have been artificially and unnaturally created by Victor, but the monster he becomes is the artificial and unnatural byproduct of social oppression." Eleanor Salotto, in her "'Frankenstein' and Dis(Re) Membered Identity," writes how Victor Frankenstein creates the creature first through his project and then through his narrative. Therefore, it is the language of conventionally "normal" people that others and stigmatizes those who do not conform to the traditional idea of "normal."

On this note, Lennard J. Davis states that "To understand the disabled body, one must return to the concept of the norm, the normal body" (1). He further writes, "When we think of bodies, in a society where the concept of the norm is operative, then people with disabilities will be thought of as deviants" (3). Victor Frankenstein's fear that his creature, which he labels as a monster, might mate and produce more monsters, emphasizes "the terror with which the 'normal' beholds the differently abled" (Davis 4). Therefore, Victor destroys the half-completed female creature.

Taking Frankenstein as a tool to understand the crucial positionalities of disabled

individuals, Knight, like Davis, shows how disabled individuals are often victims of the ever-damaging oppressive politics of misrecognition. I build my argument mostly on the scholarship of Amber Knight because I agree that misrecognition leads the creature to form a deformed identity of his own.

Martha Stoddard Holmes claims that the creature in Shelley's *Frankenstein* is "physically a super-sized adult, but experientially a baby with no past history" (372). Victor Frankenstein aimed to create a new life from the dead bodies of humans and animals. In that case, the creature, as Holmes claims, is not a purely "new" being. She suggests that readers should read the novel using the lens of disability studies. Victor Frankenstein, after encountering the creature as a living presence for the first time, experiences a sense of incongruence. He considers himself a failure for giving birth to a disabled creature. The creature is identified as deformed because its physical appearance conforms to the social construction of deformity. The creature experiences multiple rejections from the society he is manufactured into. Holmes argues that disability is treated as a form of "spoiled" identity of the scientist Frankenstein in the novel (380). What horrifies Frankenstein is not the creature's unlikeliness with the human form, but "the intensity of its humanness" (Holmes 83). So, he stigmatizes and marginalizes the creature and corrupts its ability to identify its social and individual identity positively. Therefore, the theoretical framework of feminist disability studies becomes the most suitable lens through which to examine the text.

Feminist disability studies provides an intersectional lens consisting of feminism and disability studies. It "reimagines disability" (Garland-Thomson 1555). Disability can be understood as a system of oppression and exclusion that stigmatizes individuals with physical or mental impairments. It is a "cultural interpretation of human variation" (Garland-Thomson 1555). Alison Piepmeier, Amber Cantrell, and Ashley Maggio, in ""Disability is a Feminist Issue: Bringing Together Women's and Gender Studies and Disability Studies," trace the links between disability and feminism. In their conversation, Amber notes that "Feminist disability studies allows us as scholars to really thoroughly examine how our world is physically and socially constructed in incredibly tangible ways" (Piepmeier, et al.). Regarding the concept of "interdisciplinary bodies," Amber again commented that "Disabled bodies are socially constructed, stigmatized bodies. That's a lot of bodies. Women's and gender studies does have tools to engage with embodiment, but disability studies offers a different perspective" (Piepmeier, et al.). It is important to note from their conversation that disability studies validates our bodies whereas "gender studies supports our choices and self-expression" (Piepmeier, et al.). Using an intersectional lens consisting of feminism and disability studies imply that the analysis of the text begins with

disability but does not end with it. Rather, the lens investigates the link between gender and disability.

Before exploring and locating the link, it is important to see how the literary world depicts disability in textual spaces. In "Disability and Representation," Rosemarie Garland-Thomson writes about the importance of representation of disabled bodies in literature, art, film, and popular culture. She writes, "disability is a story we tell about bodies" whereas "representation structures rather than reflects reality" (Garland-Thomson 523). The aim of disability studies is to challenge the conventional representations of disability and problematize its nature of oppressiveness. She claims that an inclusive understanding would "alter our sense of what is beautiful and proper" (Garland-Thomson 525). It challenges conventional ideas. It relocates disability to social, cultural, economic, and political registers (Goodley 84). Dan Goodley further argues that "having an impaired body does not equate with disability. In contrast, disability was a problem of society" (84). Where the idea of disability as a social stigma and social oppressive system works to exclude individuals from the mainstream, feminist disability studies move from exclusion to inclusion.

In *Frankenstein*, Shelley depicts a society that does not accept a creature such as the one Frankenstein has built. The disability theory lens is used here as "an attempt to break down the dualism [of] impaired/non-impaired and explore how these dualisms have obscured connections between people with and without impairment" (Watson 197). The creature's unacceptance in the "normal" society resembles Shelley's hesitant existence as a woman writer in the male dominated writing circle.

The Politics of Recognition and Identity Formation

In "Politics of Recognition," Charles Taylor argues that our identity is shaped by recognition or misrecognition. He further writes that "nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being" (Taylor 25). Taylor gives evidence of how women in a patriarchal society, people of color in a white-dominated social structure, and non-European people in a colonial world are misrecognized. Similarly, disabled bodies in the world dominated by abled bodied individuals are also misrecognized, stigmatized, and unacknowledged. As a result, disabled individuals are influenced to form a marginalized identity which they themselves often disregard and even hate. Where misrecognition leads people to self-hatred, Taylor argues, "Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need" (Taylor 26).

Taylor further writes that the importance of recognition is intensified by the

notion of individual identity. Also, the ideal of authenticity is related to the idea of Herder: an idea that "each of us has an original way of being human" (Taylor 30). Taylor confessionally writes, "being true to myself means being true to my originality, which is something only I can articulate and discover" (Taylor 31). He also claims that in earlier societies where identity and dignity were a matter of social hierarchy, people's identities depended on their social positions.

Pachan Markell differs from Taylor by expanding the idea of the "politics of recognition." He writes that we cannot control how our identities will be perceived by others, so the pursuit for recognition is elusive and should be abandoned (Markell 38). He further argues that demands for recognition overlook the reality that identity construction is an ongoing and unpredictable enterprise. One cannot give a guarantee of being recognized by others in a desired way. Rather, people recognize the identity of the self and the individual in a dynamic way. As Knight writes, "identities are not fixed, and we often cannot control how someone will receive us. The dialogical process of subject formation is unpredictable and malleable, which makes it impossible to require someone to recognize another for who they *really are"* (Knight).

Though, according to Taylor, recognition and identity should ideally come from within, the human condition has a dialogical character to be influenced by the "rich human languages of expression" (Taylor 32). By language, Taylor refers to both verbal and nonverbal modes of language. Humans understand themselves and their identity through the dialogue they have with their significant others in the "intimate sphere" whereas "the politics of equal recognition" plays bigger roles in the "public sphere" (Taylor 37). In *Frankenstein*, the creature is misrecognized by other characters which shaped the way he thinks of himself. The creature is artificially created in the lab, but misrecognition gives birth to the monster.

Textual Analysis

Textually, the story's significance begins with Mary Shelley's introduction in the 1831 edition of the novel. Upon being asked by the publisher of Standard Novels to "furnish them with some account of the origin of the story," Shelley writes an introduction in the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein* ("Introduction"). Johnson writes that "Mary Shelley herself makes the repression of her own autobiographical impulse" (4). There, in the introduction, Shelley explains her journey as a writer. Shelley has been to many places in her childhood. Her spatial presence is reflected in her way of writing. She explains, "It was beneath the trees of the grounds belonging to our house, or on the bleak sides of the woodless mountains near, that my true compositions, the airy flights of my imagination, were born and fostered" (Shelley, Introduction). Thus, she becomes a constellation of stories of a woman writer coming from a writers' lineage in a

male writer-dominated literary world.

However, it is interesting to note that Shelley does not "make myself the heroine of my tales" (Introduction). There is a subtle, yet direct connection between the author and the creature. Also, Mary Shelley was impacted by her mother's death due to childbirth while she was pregnant with Mary. Later, after her birth, Shelley was raised without a mother, and so "she shares with Frankenstein's monster some of the problems of coming from a single-parent household" (Johnson 4). The creature is not born naturally, but artificially in the young scientist's laboratory because Shelley had a fear of induced labor pain. She shares the story of how she creates the monster while passing a ghost-story night with Lord Byron and P.B. Shelley. She writes,

> My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie. I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision, —I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, showed signs of life, and stirred with an uneasy, half vital motion. Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavor to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. His success would terrify the artist; he would rush away from his odious handywork, horror-stricken. He would hope that, left to itself, the slight spark of life which he had communicated would fade; that this thing, which had received such imperfect animation, would subside into dead matter; and he might sleep in the belief that the silence of the grave would quench forever the transient existence of the hideous corpse which he had looked upon as the cradle of life. He sleeps; but he is awakened; he opens his eyes; behold the horrid thing stands at his bedside, opening his curtains, and looking on him with yellow, watery, but speculative eyes. (Shelley, Introduction)

A creature, artificially created without any involvement of a woman, is born with an unconventional appearance. After creating the creature in her imagination, Shelley goes on narrating the story in three male autobiographical voices. Shelley chooses a unique narrative style to craft the text.

Beginning as an epistolary novel, Frankenstein echoes the voice of Captain Robert Walton who shares his journey to the North Pole in the form of letters to Mrs. Saville. He finds a nearly frozen Frankenstein and feels connected with him. He begins to "love him as a brother; and his constant and deep grief fills me

with sympathy and compassion" (Shelley, Letter IV). Walton takes care of him and nurses him back to health. As Frankenstein feels better, he finally says, "Do you share my madness? Have you drunk also of the intoxicating draught? Hear me, —let me reveal my tale, and you will dash the cup from your lips!" (Shelley, Letter IV). Thus, Victor Frankenstein unfolds the pages of his life-story in his first-person narrative.

Victor Frankenstein, an aspiring scientist, is interested in natural philosophy as he claims, "Natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated my fate" (Shelley, Chapter II). To fulfill his dream of pursuing more expertise and knowledge in natural philosophy, he joined the University of Ingolstadt where "natural philosophy and particularly chemistry, in the most comprehensive sense of the term, became nearly my sole occupation" (Shelley, Chapter IV). Later, he is fascinated with "the structure of the human frame" and becomes interested in physiology and anatomy. His ardent desire to see life happening leads him to experiment with the corpses of animals and humans. He says, "Although I possessed the capacity of bestowing animation, yet to prepare a frame for the reception of it, with all its intricacies of fibers, muscles, and veins, still remained a work of inconceivable difficulty and labor" (Shelley, Chapter IV). Depriving himself of "exercise and amusement" (Shelley, Chapter IV), Victor works rigorously for months to complete his creation.

On a November night, when his candle is dimmed, Victor "saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs" (Shelley, Chapter V). Before the creature comes to life, Victor praises its features and beauty. He says,

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

Victor shifts between a third person masculine "he" and a third person unidentifiable pronoun "it" while talking about the creature. The inconsistency in his word choices shows his impulsive attitude to see the creature coming to life. He seems to be proud of his creation on which he has worked for nearly two years to infuse life into a lifeless body. However, the description Victor shares is

how he looks at the creature, not how it looks like. As soon as the creature comes alive, "the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart" (Shelley, Chapter V). The opening of the eyes metaphorized the birth of the other. The other is born, the self, which is the creator, disregards his existence. He is "unable to endure the aspects of the creature" (Shelley, Chapter V) because the outcome is not what he expected it to be. He recognizes it as "the miserable monster" (Shelley, Chapter V). As he describes,

> He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped, and rushed downstairs. (Shelley, Chapter V)

Frankenstein's gaze becomes the gaze of the readers. Still, it is a subjective perception of the creature because of Frankenstein's use of the autobiographical "I". The narrator Frankenstein does not only describe the creature but also gives attributes and judgements. The creature becomes a monster because it is identified and recognized as such. Since Frankenstein created it at the cost of rest, sleep, and social interactions, he does not want others to see it and his failure to create a normal life. When Henry visits him, he "dreaded to behold this monster; but I feared still more that Henry should see him" (Shelley, Chapter V). The creature becomes a social shame for the creature. He, in a way, un-members it from his family and friends' circles.

Throughout Frankenstein's narrative, whenever he refers to the creature, he calls it "wretched" and "monster". He expresses his negative impressions and tense thoughts about it. The creature has been hiding from his vision for a long time till in chapter X Frankenstein witnesses someone "advancing towards me with superhuman speed" (Shelley, Chapter X). When he clearly sees it,

> as the shape came nearer (sight tremendous and abhorred!) that it was the wretch whom I had created. I trembled with rage and horror, resolving to wait his approach, and then close with him in mortal combat. He approached; his countenance bespoke bitter anguish, combined with disdain and malignity, while its unearthly ugliness rendered it almost too horrible for human eyes. (Shelley, Chapter X)

His heart is full of hatred and terror. He is unable to utter a word after seeing the "devil" and "dæmon" (Shelley, Chapter X). As the voice shifts to the creature's first-person narrative now, the readers, for the first time, come to know how the creature feels. He knows that he is hated by others but does not know why. He asks his creator, "All men hate the wretched; how, then, must I be hated,

who am miserable beyond all living things! 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" (Shelley, Chapter X). Frankenstein keeps on cursing him saying, ""Abhorred monster! fiend that thou art! the tortures of hell are too mild a vengeance for thy crimes. Wretched devil!" (Shelley, Chapter X). As he recognizes the creature by all these words, the creature internalizes the qualities of the monster.

The creature, without reacting, tries to persuade Frankenstein and reminds him of his duties as his creator. He says to him,

> Remember, that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous. (Shelley, Chapter X)

The creature claims that the abhorrence and hatred of humankind leaves him alone and detested. He convinces Frankenstein to go to the mountains with him and listen to his stories of survival. The way the creature narrates the story proves that he is his creator's other who possesses a keen interest in science and invention. As soon as he explores various functionalities of fire, he finds the necessity to long for food and shelter. When he goes up on the mountain, he finds a small hut and an old man preparing breakfast. The old man looks at him and runs away. This behavior again otherizes the creature. He encounters a young girl and a young man followed by the cottagers whom he develops wonderful amiable relations with. Another old man, De Lacey, is blind and cannot see the deformity in the creature's body. So he offers him a warm space of empathy and friendship. The creature's first-person narrative proves him to be an empathetic individual who values family and community, understands people's struggles and laments over poverty, and appreciates love and friendship.

However, De Lacey's family members, Felix, Safie, and Agatha, who are all visually fit people, are frightened to see him. Later, the creature develops self-hatred as soon as he looks at his own reflection in the water. He narrates,

> how was I terrified when I viewed myself in a transparent pool! At first I started back, unable to believe that it was indeed I who was reflected in the mirror; and when I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am, I was filled with the bitterest sensations of despondence and mortification. Alas! I did not yet entirely know the fatal effects of this miserable deformity. (Shelley, Chapter XII)

The terror the creature experiences after looking at his body, which he now identifies as deformed, is the result of abhorrence he has received from the people who do not accept him for his unconventional physical attributes. As the creature learns more from the conversations he has with Felix and other cottagers, he notices that he looks and behaves differently from others. He gradually becomes curious of his own identity as he asks himself,

> What was I? Of my creation and creator I was absolutely ignorant; but I knew that I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property. I was, besides, endued with a figure hideously deformed and loathsome; I was not even of the same nature as man. I was more agile than they, and could subsist upon a coarser diet; I bore the extremes of heat and cold with less injury to my frame; my stature far exceeded theirs. When I looked around, I saw and heard of none like me. Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled, and whom all men disowned? (Shelley, Chapter XIII)

The "reflections" of others' stares and gazes induce an agony in the creature. Knowing about parental relationships with children from the book and De Lacey, he feels more tormented and asks introspective questions recurrently. He is disowned and dis-membered by everyone including his own creator who should have fathered him. At this stage, he cannot perceive himself as anything other than a monster. He internalizes the perspective of others and becomes a monster. His narrative proves the ever-damaging effects of misrecognition.

Burdened with hatred and misrecognition, the creature asks Frankenstein to create a female partner for him. He says, "You must create a female for me, with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being. This you alone can do; and I demand it of you as a right which you must not refuse to concede" (Shelley, Chapter XVII). Frankenstein first refuses and then is persuaded by the creature because the creature promises to leave Europe and man's society as soon as he gets a female partner with whom he can share the similar emotions of his own being.

After working in his lab for months to create a female version of the creature, Frankenstein thinks that it will be a dreadful mistake to create another "fiend." He thinks to himself, "I was now about to form another being, of whose dispositions I was alike ignorant; she might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate, and delight, for its own sake, in murder and wretchedness" (Shelley, Chapter XX). The creature has promised to leave Europe, but the female creature has not. If the male and female creatures consummate and beget a race of monsters, it will bring more disasters to the human world. So, Frankenstein

breaks his promise and says, "never will I create another like yourself, equal in deformity and wickedness" (Shelley, Chapter XX). The creature is again misrecognized and assumed to be monstrous.

The continuous misrecognition, especially from the creator, shapes the self-understanding of the creature. He becomes a monster and acts monstrously. As Victor Frankenstein dies in Walton's boat wishing to destroy the monster he created, the monster runs away from the boat wishing to kill himself. It is the self-hatred caused by misrecognition that kills both the creator and the creature. Though the creature's death is not confirmed in the text, his suicidal narrative proves his self-hatred.

Discussion and Conclusion

Eleanor Salotto suggests that Shelley "resuscitates the dead voice or body of the traditional narrative of woman, and in its place creates a feminine voice or body that speaks in many different voices, thereby upsetting the notion of a single feminine identity" (191). In this way, Frankenstein becomes Shelley's autobiographical narrative of struggle to give birth to a woman author. Shelley's mother Mary Wollstonecraft's literary greatness and father William Godwin's exceptional writing persona were two of the major obstacles for Mary Shelley to claim her authorship. Shelley uses language of identification in her novel to emphasize how language becomes a tool to oppress the other and stigmatize one's body.

As human condition is influenced by the "rich human languages of expression," the creature's monstrous conditioning largely depends on how he is verbally called and nonverbally meant to be a monster (Taylor 32). He is not born a monster, but rather becomes one when Victor Frankenstein and other characters in the novel induce the identity in it. Walton and Frankenstein use their language to recognize the creature as "monster," "fiend," "devil," and so on. However, when the creature shares its narrative in the first-person account, he "reveals the disjuncture between the creature's own sense of self and the misrecognized identity of 'monster' that is foisted upon him by his father's and society's negative reactions to his physical features and visible impairments" (Knight, Disability). The misrecognition leads to the mis-formation of the creature's identity. Also, Frankenstein disowns the creature and leaves him feeling lonely and miserable. The feeling of misery and loneliness dis-members the creature from the human world and gives birth to a desire of having a female creature of his own race. The destruction of the half-done female creature strengthens the politics of misrecognition and firmly establishes the creature's monster-identity.

However, Frankenstein's destructive behavior only proves the society's

conventional idea and treatment towards the concept of normalcy. Elizabeth A. Morales writes, "Society's discomfort with the creature serves as a reflection of its own disability as a social body; exploring this aspect of the connection between the creature and society, reveals society's limited critical self-awareness, denying its own humanity and allowing for hatred of self, perpetuating violence and stereotypes" (Morales 1-2). Davis comments that "Dr. Frankenstein's fear that his monster might mate and produce a race of monsters emphasizes the terror with which the 'normal' beholds the differently abled" (4). Looking at the text through the lens of feminist disability studies discloses the abnormality of the 'normal' society to exclude individuals possessing differently abled bodies.

Feminist disability studies shows disability "as a significant human experience" which needs to be accepted by general people (Garland-Thomson 524). Disability, like gender, is a social justice issue. When we read and teach literary texts considering social justice issues to be a vital inclusion in literature, we can dream of building a better and more inclusive future for disabled people. This reading of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* reiterates the concept of "becoming." One is not born, but rather becomes a monster. Therefore, it is possible to undo the monsterization process by becoming more accepting of disabled people in society.

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