

Desire for Inclusion: The Monster's Resistance to the Patriarchal Oppression in *Frankenstein*

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Mary Shelley's first novel, *Frankenstein: Or the Modern Prometheus*, has a complicated narrative structure with three narrators, of which critics have pointed out the importance in interpreting the novel.¹ This novel takes the form of a collection of letters from the naval adventurer, Robert Walton, to his sister, Margaret Saville. In the letters, Walton records concentrically the story narrated by the scientist, Victor Frankenstein, and the story narrated by the monster himself.

At the beginning of the story, Walton, the outermost narrator, assures the readers of his being a reliable narrator who resolves "to record, as nearly as possible in his [Victor's] own words."² However, a careful examination of each narrative betrays the inconsistencies among them, and the readers cannot trust Walton's explanation completely. For instance, the description of the monster's creation is discrepant between Victor's narrative and that of the monster, who later reads Victor's journal about the scene: though Victor narrates that his horror comes *after* the completion of the monster's creation, the monster refers to the creator's horror *during* the act of the creation described in his journal. Victor retrospectively calls his act of creation as "profane" and "filthy" in narrating his story to Walton, though he does not notice his profanity during his actual attempt to create a life. In fact, Victor's characterization itself bears inconsistency between Walton's admiring description and the impression of his irresponsibility made on the readers through his own narrative.

What should be noticed in Walton's narrative is that Victor makes

inspection on it. Walton, who knows his lack of “keeping” (19) and desires to have a friend to “regulate” (19) his mind, uncritically finds Victor the senior and superior benefactor to human beings. Romantic and ambitious, Walton has some affinity with Victor when he declares that “[o]ne man’s life or death were but a small price to pay for the acquirement of the knowledge which I sought; for the dominion I should acquire and transmit over the elemental foes of our race” (28). In fact, Victor impresses and spellbinds Walton as well as other sailors, when the adventurer feels fear of his “mad scheme” (212) to explore for the North Pole. With this influential power, Victor reads and censors what Walton writes about his story, especially the monster’s part: “Frankenstein discovered that I made notes concerning his history: he asked to see them, and then himself corrected and augmented them in many places; but principally in giving the life and spirit to the conversations he held with his enemy [the monster]” (210). In short, it is Victor, not Walton, who tries to unify and govern the three narratives in the novel. The censorship, however, does not completely function, as it lets the readers notice the narrative inconsistencies. The text shows us that there lies difference between what Victor narrates and what the monster narrates.

My main concern in this paper is to search for the reason why this narrative inconsistency remains in the text of *Frankenstein*. For that purpose, individual examinations into both narratives of Victor and of the monster are necessary. First, Victor’s censorship originates in his sense of guilt for his act of creation and in his terror of the consequence of his deed, and as a result, it functions as his self-justification. By his self-justifying distortion, the story of the “sensitive and rational animal” (211) Victor creates turns to be a horrific story of the purely evil monster. On the other hand, the monster’s narrative actually functions as a resistance against Victor’s obliteration, and conveys the indelible inconsistencies of

Victor's censorship to the readers. In addition, the outermost narrator, Walton, allows the inconsistencies to remain in front of the readers. Ultimately, the reason why this inconsistency remains should be discussed in dealing with Walton's narrative.

What is distinctive with Victor's narrative is that he highly estimates the patriarchal social value. His story symbolically begins with his national and patrilineal identity, and he implies that he is the first son to inherit his father's name and property.³ He is born in a bourgeois family and spends an ideal happy childhood in bourgeois society. As Friedrich Engels points out that accumulation of property has produced the patriarchal social system, Victor's standard of value is highly patriarchal and bourgeois. His androcentric view is most evident in his description of female characters. Actually, the female characters in Victor's narrative are described as mere tender and helpless angels in the family. What is common among them is that they do not have mothers, or if they have, only weak, unsatisfying ones.⁴ The matrilineal genealogy does not exist in Victor's narrative, and, because the female characters do not have any ideal model for themselves, they cannot establish their own individual identity, and cannot help ingratiating themselves with patriarchal society as weak, idealistic existence.

At the beginning of his story, Victor describes the marriage of his father and the daughter of his father's friend, Caroline Beaufort, who is left as "an orphan and a beggar" (32) after her father's death. Utterly sheltered by her husband, Alphonse, Caroline devotes herself to him and his children, and to the beneficence. When she finds a fair girl in a poor peasant family and hopes to protect her, it is because Elizabeth Lavenza is a daughter of "a Milanese nobleman," though now left as "an orphan and a beggar" (35) just as Caroline was, that Alphonse permits her to

bring up the girl. His bourgeois view is clear when we compare her with the case of Justine Moritz, another beautiful and poor orphan, who stays in the Frankenstein family as a servant. The parents adopt Elizabeth in order to educate her as an ideal female figure, and to give her to Victor as his bride. Given her by his mother, Victor regards this “cherub” (35) literally as “a possession of [his] own” (36) and tries to shelter her as his father does: “when, on the morrow, she [Caroline] presented Elizabeth to me as her promised gift, I . . . interpreted her words literally, and looked upon Elizabeth as mine—mine to protect, love, and cherish” (35-36).

In fact, as a woman placed inside patriarchal society, Caroline cannot but play a role of what men expect from her. She is the ideal daughter for her father, wife for Alphonse, and mother for Victor. It is, in this sense, natural that she cannot bear a daughter, however ardently she wishes; for, since patriarchal society estimates only the birth of a son who inherits the father’s name and property, all that she is required in the society is to bear legitimate sons. As an ideal mother for the society, then, she educates her daughter-figures, Elizabeth and Justine, to make them ingratiate with the expectations of the society. The education works well. When she dies, Elizabeth is compelled to substitute for Caroline, and the description of Justine is thus: “she paid the greatest attention to every gesture of my aunt [Caroline]. She thought her the model of all excellence, and endeavoured to imitate her phraseology and manners, so that even now she often reminds me of her” (65). Indeed, this ideal motherhood brings Caroline death: the devoted care for her child-figure, Elizabeth, makes the mother sacrifice her life, as Victor says, “Elizabeth had caught the scarlet fever; her illness was severe, and she was in the greatest danger. . . . when she [Caroline] heard that the life of her favourite was menaced, she could no longer control her anxiety. . . . Elizabeth was saved, but the consequences of this imprudence were fatal

to her preserver" (42).⁵ He successively narrates her death as follows:

On her death-bed the fortitude and benignity of this best of women did not desert her. . . . "Elizabeth, my love, you must supply my place to my younger children. Alas! I regret that I am taken from you; and, happy and beloved as I have been, is it not hard to quit you all? But these are not thoughts befitting me; I will endeavour to resign myself cheerfully to death, and will indulge a hope of meeting you in another world."

She died calmly; and her countenance expressed affection even in death. (43)

Even the time she is about to die, Caroline is aware of, and endeavors to play, her role as an ideal woman, forcing her role of a mother on Elizabeth after her death. And the daughters carry out Caroline's will perfectly: Elizabeth becomes a substitute for her in the family, and Justine also becomes a maternal figure for the little William.

For Victor, however, the death of Caroline means the indelible destruction of his ideal childhood, as he calls it "an omen . . . of my future misery" (42), and he abandons his "secluded and domestic" (45) life and leaves for the outside world, separating himself from the family life that Elizabeth devotes herself to. Later in his narrative, Victor recollects his whole life as follows: "I repassed, in my memory, my whole life; my quiet happiness while residing with my family in Geneva, the death of my mother, and my departure for Ingolstadt" (183). Actually, he claims that his departure for the university is motivated by his impulse to recover the perfect cosmos of his childhood, which is lost by his mother's death. He implies that, in studying at the university, what he primarily aims is to resurrect his lost mother: "I thought, that if I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might in process of time (although I now found it

impossible) renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption" (54). Nevertheless, in spite of his implication in his narrative that his aim is only to recover the dead mother, what he indeed does is to become a mother-substitute himself by creating a male monster. It is nothing but the usurpation of a mother's function of procreation, and as a result of it, he ultimately expels the mother, and the female, from his world.⁶

It is necessary for Victor to repudiate his mother in order to enter the father's world, as Adrienne Rich suggests: "Through the resolution of the Oedipus complex, the boy makes his way into the male world, the world of patriarchal law and order" (197). Indeed, in creating a creature, he identifies himself with God the Father: "A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No *father* could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs" (54, my italics). Victor here implies that he is doing a "complete" creation without intervention of a mother, a female. Moreover, it also means that he completes his detachment from, and rejection of, the mother. The desire to resurrect the mother, which he asserts in his narrative, is, then, nothing but his self-justification later added by himself: this is why he creates a *male* monster. His creation is, in this respect, quite an androcentric attempt to expel and usurp the mother, the female, by becoming himself a mother-substitute to fulfill the "perfect" procreation.

However, the very essence of the Oedipus complex is a son's love for his mother. A son must repress his love in order to become a member of patriarchal society, as Juliet Mitchell points out: "The myth that Freud rewrote the Oedipus complex and its dissolution epitomizes man's entry into culture. . . . It is specific to nothing but patriarchy which is itself, according to Freud, specific to all human civilization" (377). Therefore, in

creating the monster away from home, Victor tries to repress his love for the mother. His repression, however, does not function well enough: his love for the mother is so irrepressible and powerful as to cause his sense of guilt for expelling and usurping the mother's *raison d'être*. As a result, because of his failure in the perfect elimination of her, Victor must suffer from the mother's horrific return.

Feeling horror by the result of his creation, Victor deserts the creature and runs away. The nightmare Victor experiences immediately after the creation of the monster is symbolic:

I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; . . . when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. (58)

The substitute for the mother, Elizabeth, first turns to be his own mother, Caroline, and then, the corpse of the dead mother infested by worms is linked to the “bodies deprived of life, which . . . had become food for the worm” (51) that Victor collects for his creation, and finally, the monster is animated. The linkage among them is distinctive: when the dead mother literally revives, she becomes the monster and returns to him, as a result of Victor's transgressing procreation. It is the very moment that the love for his mother he tries to repress and eliminate returns, only to cause an utter horror in Victor's mind.

Luce Irigaray remarks that the female has the capability to accept the

complete Other, the fetus, even inside her own body. Victor, on the other hand, cannot accept the Other, the monster, inside his world, and represents his horror as follows: "Oh! no mortal could support the horror of that countenance. . . . I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then; but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived" (58). That, as soon as the monster opens his eyes, the collection of "beautiful" parts transforms into something too hideous to look at parallels with that, in Victor's nightmare, the beautiful females such as Elizabeth and Caroline transform into the horrific monster.⁷ Victor desperately endeavors to exclude and obliterate the monster, though it means to exclude and obliterate the females he loves. Norman Holland, exemplifying Gothic castles, defines horror in Gothic novels as fear for invasion of the outside into the inside. Considering this, what the monster-mother does, when it opens its eyes, is not only the horrific "return" to him but also the actual attempt of invasion into Victor's world: the collection of dead corpses, the utter outsider, transgresses the border of life and death, and therefore, the creator recognizes the horrific consequence of his art and desperately endeavors to expel the Other outside again. The horror compels Victor to eliminate and obliterate the monster's existence. He never confesses the monster's existence to anyone, and even the readers cannot be convinced of his existence until at the last of the novel when Walton confirms it. Victor's sense of guilt for his usurpation of the mother's function, which also is an act of transgression of the natural order, brings about the utter horror in Victor and leads him to his self-justification that it is absolutely right to exclude the outsider, the monster.

Nevertheless, a mother's capacity of procreation, which Victor usurps and tries to eliminate because of his sense of guilt, returns again with

frightful power in the horror of Victor when he begins to create the female monster. Moved by his creature's plea, Victor agrees to create the monster's companion, but is startled in horror in approaching its completion. The description of Victor's horror that "she . . . might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation" (165) implies here his identification of the female monster with Eve, the mother of human beings. In fact, the horror of Victor originates in the female monster's maternal capability of procreation: "one of the first results of those sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth, who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror" (165). It is the "uncanny" invasion of the expelled female, who can produce the other "chain of existence and events" (147) in which the monster will be involved.⁸ His horror for the female power is so intense that he considers it might invade and supplant his own society. Therefore, all he can do hereafter is to eliminate and exclude the maternal, or the female, thoroughly, and he perforce begins to narrate his story of self-justification based on his sense of guilt.

What, then, does the monster wish to convey to the readers? His story is persuasive and pitiful for us, and succeeds once in persuading even Victor to feel compassion toward his monstrous creature. The monster explains that he comes to hold "malice because [he is] miserable" (145), as he is continuously excluded and hurt by other people. In fact, what the monster narrates is the history of his plight brought by people's prejudice, just as Victor ends his narrative with the remark to implant his judgement in Walton: "His soul is as hellish as his form" (209). However ardently the monster desires to be included inside society, his ugly, monstrous appearance prevents people from penetrating his "good disposi-

tions" (134). Victor narrates: "His [the monster's] words had a strange effect upon me. I compassioned him, and sometimes felt a wish to console him; but when I looked upon him, when I saw the filthy mass that moved and talked, my heart sickened, and my feelings were altered to those of horror and hatred" (147). The tragedy of the monster is clear when we compare it with his moan: "a fatal prejudice clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster" (134). The monster's narrative clarifies the reason why he determines to exact vengeance on his creator. It is his strong desire for inclusion and his intense despair by expulsion from society that motivates and weaves his narrative.

After the monster is abandoned and left by the creator and is persecuted by other town people, he literally escapes outside society and finds an outcast family, the De Lacey's. It is the De Lacey's, whom the monster observes and favors, that influence and educate him. In truth, however, what brings the plight to the monster is the education by them. Though the monster regards them as an ideal family, the De Lacey's are a motherless, typically patriarchal family, and even if they are ostensibly expelled from society, they are in reality firmly placed inside the social order which excludes the monster. Observing them unseen, the monster pretends to be a member of the family, and educates himself to adjust to their value judgement. He even finds his deformity as monstrous in comparison with their figures: "I had admired the perfect forms of my cottagers—their grace, beauty, and delicate complexions: but how was I terrified, when I viewed myself in a transparent pool! . . . I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am . . ." (114). Moreover, through their education based on the patriarchal social value, the monster realizes that he is really a heterogeneous outsider:

While I listened to the instructions which Felix bestowed upon the Arabian, the strange system of human society was explained to me. I heard of the division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty; of rank, descent, and noble blood.

The words induced me to turn towards myself. . . . And what was I? . . . I knew that I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property. . . . Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled, and whom all men disowned? (120)

He is a complete Other and outsider, and never can overstep the border which is symbolized by the wall of the cottage that separates the family (inside) from the monster (outside). The monster's attempt to enter inside the house is, then, regarded by the De Laceys as the act of invasion of the heterogeneous and results in their horror: for the family is involved firmly inside patriarchal society and has the same "prejudice" as Victor and other people inside. While the monster does not show his deformed figure, they are delighted with his help, thinking that he must be a "good spirit" (115).⁹ Ironically, as soon as the monster emerges in front of them, his plea not to desert him lest he should be "outcast in the world" (133) does not move their mind. At first, quite naturally, the blind De Lacey listens to the monster's plea and encourages him, but it should be noticed that his first words are an interrogation about the speaker's national identity: "By your language, stranger, I suppose you are my countryman;—are you French?" (133). Here the affinity between Victor and De Lacey is clear. De Lacey is never free from the patriarchal prejudice: he simply *cannot* see the appearance of the monster. As he narrates that "I am blind, and cannot judge of your countenance" (134), his compassion is a limited one. In spite of his encouragement of the monster, therefore, when the monster refers to the desire for inclusion inside his family, the old man exclaims to clarify the monster's identity: "Great God! . . . who

are you?" (135). Finally, they exclude the monster through expelling themselves out of his narrative.

In fact, all that the monster craves for is merely to be included inside society: he calls it "the desire . . . of becoming one among my fellows [meaning the De Lacey's]" (121). The desire, however, is regarded as a fearful invasion of the Other and can never be attained, and it is this agony that makes the monster intend a desperate vengeance on the society from which he is excluded, though Victor impresses us that the monster does evil for its own sake. The monster begins his vengeance with firing the cottage of the De Lacey's. This act symbolically dissolves the border which separates the outside monster from the inside society and enables him to overstep the border into Victor's world. Yet, the monster's agony still continues: on the way of searching for Victor, the monster sees a beautiful child and thinks that "this little creature was unprejudiced, and had lived too short a time to have imbibed a horror of deformity" (142). However, the boy is the younger brother of Victor and is firmly placed inside patriarchal society, as Elizabeth formerly writes to Victor: "He has already had one or two little *wives*, but Louisa Biron is his favourite, a pretty little girl of five years of age" (66). Young as he is, William is the representative of patriarchal society that exploits the female, and therefore, he expels the monster in the name of the father: "Hideous monster! let me go. My papa is a Syndic—he is M. Frankenstein—he will punish you. You dare not keep me" (142). Despaired by his remark, the monster murders the boy. The murder of William is thus the act of vengeance for being excluded.

The murder of Henry Clerval, Victor's childhood friend, is also an act of vengeance for being excluded. Primarily, it happens as the monster's vengeance for Victor's exclusion of him through his refusal to create the female companion. It is interesting, however, that this incident is narrat-

ed only by Victor's voice, and therefore, we cannot hear the monster's self-defense nor can compare their stories to know the truth. Nevertheless, when we take into consideration the characterization of Clerval, the reason why the vengeance of the monster is aimed at him seems to be rather convincing. When Clerval comes to the university to master the oriental languages, he intends to "pursue no inglorious career" (69) just as Victor formerly intended. Indeed, the affinity between Victor and his friend is explicit in Victor's narrative: "in Clerval I saw the image of my former self. . . . He was also pursuing an object he had long had in view. 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" (158). What Clerval plans is to colonize the outside world and to oppress and exclude the Oriental as the Other. According to Gayatri Spivak, "what is at stake, for feminist individualism in the age of imperialism, is precisely the making of human beings, the constitution and 'interpellation' of the subject not only as individual but as 'individualist.' This stake is represented on two registers: child-bearing and soul making" (244). In short, Clerval's imperialist endeavor to educate the non-humans in non-Western society to make them "human" beings is symbolically similar to the endeavor of Victor to design childbearing by himself.¹⁰ This is why the monster, who is outside the society and consequently is the existence to be oppressed and excluded, must resist the imperialist, Clerval.

Why, then, must the monster always be excluded and expelled from society? What is the reason of the men's horror such as Victor, Clerval, De Lacey, and even Felix De Lacey? In fact, what the monster embodies is the femaleness that should always be oppressed and excluded in patriarchal society represented by them. In patriarchal society, which esti-

mates only the first son to inherit the father's name and property, the illegitimacy of the monster can be associated with the female that should be excluded from the central genealogy. In considering the monster's vengeance on Victor, what should be noticed is that the monster murders the imperialist Clerval and the patriarchal William, resulting from their exclusion. It is interesting, on the other hand, that Victor does not refer to the survival of Ernest, the second son in the Frankensteins, who plans to "enter into foreign service" (64). Since he is, as a second son, outside the patrilineal genealogy and also hopes to be outside the patriarchal world of the Frankensteins, Ernest can survive the horrific revenge of the monster.

If the monster can be associated with the female in being oppressed and excluded, his vengeance aims at patriarchy and its representatives. In this sense, the death of Elizabeth and Justine can be distinguished from the murder of William and Clerval. While the monster positively murders William and Clerval cast in despair of being excluded, it is Victor that brings, though indirectly, the death of Elizabeth and Justine: they are also victims of the patriarchal value judgement. In the case of Justine, primarily Victor's conscious silence about what he knows sentences her to death. Though Victor reproaches the monster as the murderer of Justine, the monster does not even know who Justine is. It is the monster's "madness" (144) of fear about being expelled by the young woman that makes him leave the miniature which the murdered William had. When Justine is brought to trial, what leaves the strong impression to us is her utter helplessness. As an ideal angel in the society, she does not protest anything and resigns herself to what the society decides: "God knows," she said, "how entirely I am innocent. But I do not pretend that my protestations should acquit me: . . . I hope the character I have always borne will incline my judges to favourable interpretation" (83).

After condemned as guilty, she even “tried to comfort others and herself” (88), just as Caroline, her ideal, did in her deathbed. In the case of Elizabeth, she is also kept ignorant of the information Victor himself keeps and misinterprets, and is helplessly murdered. Though the actual murderer is the monster who determines vengeance for the scientist’s destruction of his bride, it is Victor that let him attain the revenge. Elizabeth cannot survive the wedding night, for Victor promised to confess to her about his usurpation of the femaleness, which Victor desires and feels necessary to be left secret. Therefore, Victor’s self-justification to preserve his own patriarchal world causes the death of female victims.

There is, in fact, a remarkable resemblance between the victimized angels, Elizabeth and Justine, and the monster, which testifies to the monster’s position as female. Justine regards herself as “the monster he [her confessor] said I was” (87), and Elizabeth’s assertion that “I looked upon the accounts of vice and injustice, that I read in books or heard from others, as tales of ancient days, or imaginary evils” (92) perfectly accords with the monster’s remark, “I looked upon crime as a distant evil” (127). There is, however, a distinctive difference between them: namely, the monster does not have a model of the ideal mother in patriarchal society, such as Caroline Beaufort. Sherry Ortner clarifies that, in patriarchal societies, the female is considered nearer to nature because of her ability of procreation and her role to bring up children, while the male creates culture because of his inability to create anything naturally. However, she also emphasizes another important role of the female: the female becomes a patriarchal mother and helps and educates children, near nature, to access the society, culture. In this sense, a patriarchal mother educates and domesticates daughters to be safely included inside the society, just as Caroline does for Elizabeth and Justine. Compared with them, no maternal figure domesticates the utter Other, the mon-

ster, into an ideal, or at least, safe figure for the society. Therefore, however desperately the monster desires to enter inside the society, or the “chain of existence,” his desire is regarded merely as an act of horrific invasion of the Other. The tragedy lies here: Victor frantically tries to exclude and eliminate the heterogeneous monster, though what his creature aspires to is only to be included inside.

What, then, is the role of the outermost narrator, Walton? Ironically, in spite of Victor’s inspection, Walton literally records, in the form of narrative inconsistencies, the endeavor of Victor to exclude the existence of, and simultaneously to inspect the voice of, the monster. In reality, Walton’s attitude toward Victor and the monster is somewhat ambivalent. Although it is true that Walton respects and admires Victor as his senior success in ambition, he at the same time feels toward the monster “a mixture of curiosity and compassion” (219). As a result, his narrative comes to include narrative inconsistencies and shows them to the readers. In fact, Walton himself is an ambivalent character: while he resembles Victor because he also is romantic and ambitious, he has some affinity to the monster as well, in respect of his being orphan and self-educated. At the beginning, the ambitious Walton plans to conquer nature for the benefit of human beings, just as Victor did, and leaves for the North Pole. However, unlike Victor, he gives up his “mad schemes” (212), giving his ear to the other sailors’ opinions at the end, though Victor attempts to persuade him to achieve his ambitious goal. While Victor is alive and spellbinds him, Walton’s narrative is successfully censored by him and excludes the monster’s existence. Nevertheless, with Victor’s death, his censorship turns to be ineffective, and the monster invades the narrative of Walton.

In addition, *Frankenstein* has another person outside the concentric

narratives of three male narrators. It is Margaret Saville in England, to whom Walton sends his letters, who ultimately presents this story to the readers. Indeed, Margaret Saville has a strong influence on Walton the outermost, ambivalent narrator, as he writes to her: "my best years spent under your gentle and feminine fosterage, has so refined the groundwork of my character" (20). Margaret Saville, who has the initial of M. S., strongly reminds us of Mary Shelley herself. Thus, it is Mary Shelley that finally censors the novel and presents it to the readers, and Walton's ambivalence that he cannot take the position of either Victor or the monster shows most clearly the ambivalence of Shelley herself about writing this novel.

In the introduction to the 1831 version, with a strong consciousness of her position as the daughter of the philosopher, William Godwin, and the famous feminist, Mary Wollstonecraft, and as the wife of the great poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley expresses her hidden conflict as follows:

It is not singular that, as the daughter of two persons of distinguished literary celebrity, I should very early in life have thought of writing. . . . My husband . . . was, from the first, very anxious that I should prove myself worthy of my parentage, and enrol myself on the page of fame. He was for ever inciting me to obtain literary reputation, which even on my own part I cared for then, though since I have become infinitely indifferent to it. At this time he desired that I should write, not so much with the idea that I could produce any thing worthy of notice, but that he might himself judge how far I possessed the promise of better things hereafter. (5-6)

Her ambivalence is clear here: we can see her desire to demonstrate her literary talent as the daughter and wife of the distinguished literary people, but the opinion of her husband is not so appreciating nor encourag-

ing, which aroused her anxiety about her talent. In short, both pride and anxiety concerning her own creative talent are revealed here. Asserting repeatedly the originality of her story, she at the same time emphasizes the influence of the distinguished literary men who surrounded her then. She especially appreciates her husband, though insisting that the idea is of her own: “[Percy] Shelley urged me to develop this idea at greater length. I certainly did not owe the suggestion of one incident, nor scarcely of one train of feeling, to my husband, and yet but for his incitement, it would never have taken the form in which it was presented to the world” (10). Of course, it is right and significant to see in her ambivalence the anxiety of the “female authorship,” as Gilbert and Gubar do. However, what is more important in considering her conflict is her desire to be recognized as a member of the literary as well as social circle.

When she wrote the novel in 1816-17, she was the disowned daughter of her admiring father, and the unmarried wife of Percy Shelley, though in 1831, when she revised the novel, she was the established author, legal wife of the great poet, and mother of the entitled son. At social level, on the one hand, she drastically felt the tragedy of being illegitimate in writing the novel: her illegitimate half-sister, Fanny Imray, committed suicide in October, 1816, and Percy Shelley’s first wife, Harriet, also had a suicidal death in December, being pregnant of an illegitimate child. At psychological level, on the other hand, she ardently desired to enter the famous and distinguished literary circle of her own parents, husband, and friends, just as the monster of her novel desires to enter Victor’s society. Her talent, however, was not recognized by either her husband or her father, by whom especially she longed to be appreciated. In addition, to be accepted as an author in patriarchal society, Shelley must ingratiate herself with the society and exclude the heterogeneous.¹¹ This is what Victor does, and Shelley therefore makes Victor censor other

narratives. Nevertheless, she could not help feeling sympathy with the monster, who is, just like herself, always excluded and desires to enter, and she ultimately allows him to survive Victor's inspecting elimination and to invade into Walton's narrative. In fact, it is Shelley's conflict that causes Walton's ambivalent attitude towards Victor and the monster, and in turn, Walton's presence is absolutely necessary for the author to complete her novel. As placed firmly inside the society and the literary genealogy as an established author, Shelley simultaneously succeeded in describing the conflicting desire of the monster, the female including herself. This is her "ghost story . . . which would speak to the mysterious fears of our nature, and awaken thrilling horror" (7-8): namely, her secret resistance toward the oppression of patriarchal society.

Notes

- 1 Beth Newman, for example, discusses the issue of textual voice, remarking that "a story can be cut off from its origin in a particular speaker and tell itself in other speakers, who to some extent are shaped by it instead of shaping it" (142). Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar regard *Frankenstein* as the retold *Paradise Lost* and research how each narrative corresponds to that of God, Adam, Eve, and Satan. Peter Brooks argues monstrosity as the issue of language, and, with the help of Lacanian theory, clarifies the difference of the linguistic view between the monster and Victor-Walton. Barbara Johnson links its narrative structure with women's autobiography and interprets in its complexity the "struggle for feminine authorship" (57).
- 2 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: Or the Modern Prometheus*, ed. M. K. Joseph (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.) p. 20. Except where otherwise stated, page references shown in this paper refer to this edition throughout. Though originally *Frankenstein* was published in 1818, the author made some significant revisions in the 1831 version, such as Walton's and Clerval's characterization, and the female characters' complete idealization. As to citations from the text of the 1818 version, I will mark "1818" in front of the page references.

- 3 In the 1818 version, Victor emphasizes more clearly that the purpose of his father's marriage is to have a son who inherits his name and property, and helps the prosperity of the nation: "it was not until the decline of life that he thought of marrying, and bestowing on the state sons who might carry his virtues and his name down to posterity" (1818, 18).
- 4 As Kate Ellis indicates, Safie alone has a good and independent mother who becomes an ideal model for the daughter. But she does not appear in Victor's narrative nor exist in the Western patriarchal society where Victor belongs. Then, Safie is finally expelled as a wife of Felix from the text.
- 5 Caroline's "feminine," thoughtless imprudence is the cause of her death in the 1818 version: "Elizabeth had caught the scarlet fever; but her illness was not severe, and she quickly recovered. . . . when she [Caroline] heard that her favourite was recovering, she could no longer debar herself from her society, and entered her chamber long before the danger of infection was past. The consequence of this imprudence were fatal" (1818, 26). In the 1831 version, Shelley revises this scene to emphasize Caroline's ideal motherhood, that is, the mother who sacrifices her own life for her child. Elisabeth Badinter indicates the connection between the bourgeois value and the ideal motherhood:
- It is certainly not a coincidence that the women who listened first to the masculine discourse about the motherhood were the bourgeois. . . . [T]he women of this class found in this new function [of motherhood] the occasion of a promotion and emancipation. . . . The motherhood became a rewarding role, because now it is charged the ideal. . . . The mother is now willingly compared to a saint The natural patron saint of this new mother is the Virgin Mary whose whole life shows her devotion to the child. (217-219, translation mine)
- 6 It is partly right to argue, as Gilbert and Gubar do, that the cause of Victor's tragedy results from his imitation of God the Father's act. However, according to Erich Fromm's discussion on the Christian male creation, the existence of God the Father makes the male a perfect being with the power of creation, and despises the female: "[i]t is not a woman, a mother, who creates the world, who gives birth to the universe, but a man [in the Old Testament]. And how does he create, how does he give birth? With his mouth, through the

word" (51-52). Fromm points out that Christianity emphasizes the creation by the words of God and gives pain of childbearing to the female. In consequence, Victor's painful act of collecting materials to create new life resembles maternal procreation rather than the creation of God the Father.

7 As to the monster's ugliness, Margaret Homans offers the remarkable argument, connecting it with the necessity of the monster's being male: "By making the demon masculine, Shelley suggests that romantic desire seeks to do away, not only with the mother, but also with all females so as to live finally in the world of mirrors that reflect a comforting illusion of the male self's independent wholeness" (106). She calls the male illusion "the romantic quest," defining it as *the tendency which "secretly resists its own fulfillment"* (107), and explains that the monster turns to be intolerably hideous with its completion. Denise Gigante's discussion on the monster's ugliness as the insisting and consuming chaos is also significant and persuasive. The interpretation of critics such as Ellen Moers and Barbara Johnson that Victor's rejection of the monster is based upon the maternal rejection of the newborn baby is also interesting.

8 Sigmund Freud defines the word "uncanny" as follows: "this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression. . . . the uncanny [can be defined] as something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light" (241). In fact, if the mother's ability of procreation is what Victor usurps and eliminates, his horror the female monster brings about is the very "uncanny" one: *the maternal* is something familiar for Victor, but now it returns in spite of, or as a result of, his repression.

9 The prejudice of the De Lacey's has some affinity with Victor's one. Their gratitude to a "good spirit," who in fact is the monster, reminds us of Victor's own gratitude to "a spirit of good" (203) in his pursuit of the monster. Immediately before the remark that the monster sometimes leaves some food for Victor, the latter blindly insists: "The fare was, indeed, coarse, such as the peasants of the country ate; but I will not doubt that it was set there by the spirits that I had invoked to aid me" (203).

10 Clerval's reaction against the outside of his world is obvious in his description of nature. Edmund Burke divides the notion of beauty into "the sublime" and "the beautiful": the former is associated with nature and defined as analogous to terror, and the latter is connected with society and love. While the monster always appears in "sublime" nature that brings terror to people in the society, the beauty that pleases Clerval is the lovely, "picturesque" nature. OED defines the term "picturesque" as follows: "possessing pleasing and interesting qualities of form and color (but not implying . . . sublimity)." The "picturesque" beauty was, indeed, estimated in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, and aligned with an aesthetic issue especially in the creation of gardens, according to Copley and Garside. What is characteristic in a "picture" is that it has a "frame": in other words, a picture produces beauty by enclosing a natural landscape inside a frame. Therefore, the "picturesque" nature that Clerval admires is the nature enclosed and domesticated inside a frame. Gilbert and Gubar claim that, in patriarchal society, the male has "framed" (13) the female in the ideal figure, insisting their authority based on the assertion that the male has produced the female. What Clerval supports is, therefore, associated to the attempt to enclose and frame the femaleness as the outsider, and to make it "beautiful" inside the society.

11 Shelley's dead mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, is, of course, a famous and established feminist writer. Many critics have pointed out the importance of their mother-daughter relationship, or the mother's influence on the daughter. In fact, as it is well known that Shelley closely read her mother's works when she was writing *Frankenstein*, she was by no means unconscious of her mother's status as a female author. Nevertheless, as U. C. Knoepflemacher stresses, there is no direct mention to Wollstonecraft in this novel, while the author dedicates it to her father and appreciates her husband's help.

Critics such as Marc Rubenstein and John Williams remark that Godwin deplored his extraordinary wife's death on the daughter's birth, and that Wollstonecraft was admired as a saint or a martyr in his family. He remarried when the daughter was just three years old, and the stepmother, Mary Jane Clairmont, was, quite naturally, not pleased with this idealization of the former wife. Shelley, who felt alienated from the father by an intervention of the

stepmother, came to feel connected with her mother more and more closely, according to Williams (33-34).

However, it is significant that, as an aggressive feminist, Wollstonecraft was also socially very notorious for her private life as well as her works. Gilbert and Gubar indicate that "she [Shelley] undoubtedly read most of the reviews of her mother's *Posthumous Works*, reviews in which Mary Wollstonecraft was attacked as a 'philosophical wanton' and a monster" (222). At the age when death in childbirth was regarded as "punishment that fit the crime of feminine forwardness" (Rubenstein 167), Shelley could not completely identify her ideal model of female author with her mother in order to become an established writer inside the society. *Frankenstein* was primarily published anonymously. Just as she tries to disguise the monster's desire for inclusion with Victor's censorship, she could not assert her female identity so undoubtedly as her feminist mother could: for, it meant for her to assert that she herself was a monster. Here we see Shelley's ambivalent feeling about her writing.

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