PSYCHOANALYTICAL ANALYSIS OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY’S NOVEL FRANKENSTEIN; OR, THE MODERN PROMETHEUS

ANÁLISIS PSICOANALÍTICO DE FRENKENSTEIN O EL PROMETEO MODERNO, DE MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

Isaac Gary Civilo Becerra
isaacgcivilob@hotmail.com
Universidad de Santiago de Chile

Óscar Alejandro Cerda Zamorano
oscar_cerda@hotmail.cl
Universidad de Santiago de Chile

María Paz Guevara Castro
mpaz_gc@yahoo.com
Universidad de Santiago de Chile

Colette Stephania Vargas González
colette.vargas@usach.cl
Universidad de Santiago de Chile


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ABSTRACT
This is a critical analysis of Mary Shelley’s novel Frankenstein. The main topics are addressed from two different psychological and linguistic approaches to prove the creature becomes the victim of Victor Frankenstein. During the first part of the novel, Ferdinand de Saussure’s Structuralism is employed to analyse it from a linguistic perspective. Sigmund Freud’s Psychic Apparatus is also employed, specifically the id and ego, to explain the relation between the main characters. During the second part of the novel, the characters are analysed through Jacques Derrida’s Deconstruction, and the theories of Jacques Lacan to find new meanings for the characters. Finally, a parallel between Dr Faust and Frankenstein is traced to clarify the circumstances that lead Frankenstein to his doom.

KEYWORDS
Id, ego, the real, the symbolic order, Faust.

RESUMEN
Éste es un análisis crítico de la novela Frankenstein de Mary Shelley. Sus temas son analizados desde dos enfoques lingüísticos y psicológicos para probar que la criatura es la víctima de Víctor Frankenstein. Durante la primera parte de la novela, empleamos el Estructuralismo de Ferdinand de Saussure para analizar la obra desde una perspectiva lingüística. También empleamos el Aparato Psíquico de Sigmund Freud, especialmente el ello y yo, para explicar la relación entre los personajes principales. En la segunda parte de la novela, analizamos los personajes desde la Deconstrucción de Jacques Derrida y las teorías de
Introduction

Originally published anonymously in 1818, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, is a novel written by the English novelist Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. It was later republished in France in 1823 where her name was, for the first time, included on the cover of the book. This novel tells the story of a young science student, Victor Frankenstein, who desires to discover the secret of life while studying at the University of Ingolstadt. After some years of research, he fashions a creature out of dead body parts but then refuses to look at the creature due to its horrifying appearance. Victor flees back to Geneva, his hometown, only to realise the creature has followed him in order to torment him. The novel is one of the landmarks of gothic literature and it has given rise to a plethora of adaptations on different media. *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* develops all the characteristic features of the gothic novel according to its conventions but it is also remarkable for the psychological depth of its characters, a trait that is particular to it and has made it a forerunner of other literary styles yet to come.

The novel presents classical topics such as the search for knowledge beyond any reasonable boundaries, the ambition of man, and the doom of the creator. In order to address these topics, we will resort to different psychological and linguistic approaches to account for the protagonists’ wishes and desires, and how they develop different features that demonstrate the way they are interrelated in very specific ways.
Since this is a critical analysis of Mary Shelley’s novel, we will approach it from the perspective of modern linguistic and psychological points of view. Ferdinand de Saussure’s Structuralism is an important part of our research as it gives us the possibility to analyse the novel from a linguistic perspective, especially through Saussure’s principle of the linguistic sign and the relationship between a signified and a signifier, and the arbitrary nature of it. Although not a literary critic himself, Sigmund Freud and his work has proven to be deeply influential over decades as a significant tool to analyse literary works. Our study employs his theory of the psychic apparatus as a starting point in order to carry out a thorough analysis of the conflict between doctor Frankenstein and the creature. This psychic apparatus consists of three theoretical constructs – id, ego, and superego – which define how our mental life behaves. For analysis purposes, we will focus only on the id and the ego. We will try to establish the relations between the creature and the id as the primitive, instinctive human drives, unresponsive to moral and ethical demands, and Victor Frankenstein and the ego, representing the reasoning dimension of the mind that attempts to please the id’s drives. De Saussure and Freud are the starting point from where we interpret the novel in a traditional vein. Structuralism was a linguistic approach which focused on contrast and comparison in a systematic way and exerted enormous influence on the literary analysis field. Freudian theories applied to literary analysis were employed similarly in terms of contrast and comparison, thus connecting both viewpoints.

On the other hand, we will try to reinterpret the novel through Jacques Derrida and his theory known as Deconstruction, and French psychologist Jacques Lacan. Derrida was one of the first to state there were other possibilities to interpret works of literature. He thought the classical interpretation was limited and there was a need to look for other approaches necessary to find different
meanings in literature. In order to attain this and identify alternative signifiers in the novel, Derrida reinterpreted Ferdinand de Saussure’s Linguistic Sign theory. Based on Deconstruction, Jacques Lacan developed its own interpretation of the linguistic sign from the perspective of the symbolic order which we will also include in our study since it is the stage where language and the formation of signifiers occur. This principle allows for a different interpretation of the novel and the various meanings and relations contained in it.

In regard to the topic of the doom of the creator, The myth of Faust will be employed and analysed to prove a direct relation between Dr Faust and Victor Frankenstein that can shed some light on the circumstances that lead Dr Frankenstein to cause his own doom by trying to use knowledge to achieve aims that are beyond human control. Dr Faust’s archetypical story bears a strong resemblance to Victor Frankenstein’s desire to gain unlimited knowledge of the world. In both of them, there exists the obsession of gaining ever more insight in order to understand the inner workings of the world and reality. We can appreciate this in Faust’s pact with the devil and in Frankenstein’s pact with science, which is usually deemed to have a direct relation with the devil.

In accordance to the statements mentioned above, our intention is to prove that the creature is the victim of Victor Frankenstein’s actions and obsessions emerging from his desires to discover the secret of life and create it by taking advantage of scientific methods. We approximate this dichotomy from a deconstructive/Lacanian analysis in opposition to a classical Freudian/Structuralist approach. We have set ourselves the task of defining the relation between Dr Frankenstein and the creature, and the circumstances that lead to Frankenstein’s doom.

- **Analysis**
In this section of our study, we will analyse the different events and circumstances we have based our hypothesis on. First, in the first part of the novel, we will approximate the story and its characters from a structuralist point of view based in the work *Course in General Linguistics* by Ferdinand de Saussure and his theory of the Linguistic Sign consisting of the relation between a signified and a signifier. Here the relation of Dr Frankenstein and his creation will be put into perspective according to the structuralist angle as a relation consisting of two different sides. The roles of both characters will be contrasted and compared from a Freudian perspective in order to establish what each of these characters stand for in the first half of the novel and how they are related. We will employ the concepts of id and ego, and draw parallels with the characters of Victor Frankenstein and the creature. In this respect, Victor Frankenstein assumes the role of the ego as the rational construct that must satisfy the wishes and drives of the id, personified by the creature and his untameable, passionate, irrational nature. This approach constitutes the structuralist part of our analysis, the first part, where we seek to explain the meanings available in the novel within a traditional analysis.

In the second part of our work, a critical analysis, Jacques Derrida’s Deconstruction will be employed in order to establish and assign new meanings to the relations between the characters in the novel. This analysis takes place throughout the second part of the novel in contrast to the first part. Derrida’s Deconstruction principles are essential as to open new fields of interpretation by not relying on a centre, a pivotal theme around which all the novel and the characters revolve. In this sense, it opposes the analysis carried out from a structuralist point of view, analysis that is grounded on the comparison between the two characters and the contrast perceivable between them. This approach is not based on
such concepts but on the reinterpretation of the relation of the two main characters.

This perspective is completed by means of The Real and The Symbolic Orders and the inversion of the signified/signifier construct by Jacques Lacan. Both orders are employed to depict the relation of Victor Frankenstein and the creature in a different way from that obtained putting into practice the Freudian concepts of id and ego. The creature becomes the victim of discrimination and isolation enforced on it not only by Victor but by human beings in general. The chain of signifiers, proposed by Lacan, performs a key function in this respect as the most effective method to grant a new perspective to the novel and comprehend the ties that bind Frankenstein and his creation cannot be explained only out of comparison and contrast but as two different signifiers whose meaning emerges out of the relation they bear to one another. When both stories are narrated and we have a clear understanding of what each character has experienced, we are able to recognise they are not opposites. They are two entities that are connected intimately and that it is impossible to understand one of them without the influence of the other as it is impossible to understand one signifier in isolation, disconnected from other signifiers in the signifying chain.

This reinterpretation of Mary Shelley’s novel is intimately connected to the historical figure of Johann Faust and his myth as both narratives converge on the role of a man who, in his pursuit of greater knowledge, causes irreversible damage and pain on those surrounding him.

Consequently, our analysis is developed in two parts: a structuralist/psychoanalytical approach on one hand, and, on the other, a deconstructive/Lacanian perspective. To finish our analysis, the latter one is linked to the literary motif originated on the Faustian myth.
Structuralist and Freudian Approach to Frankenstein and the Creature

Ferdinand de Saussure and Structuralism are employed in the first part our work as an approach to analyse the novel. In order to do so, it is necessary to return to the Linguistic Sign and its components, signified and signifier, and its arbitrary nature. According to de Saussure, the relations between the signifieds, the concepts, and the signifiers, the words people assigned such concepts is a convention we all agree to put into practice. The Saussurean approach was eminently comparative and contrastive since the meaning only emerged when two things were, in fact, compared and contrasted as Paul Fry explains (131).

In Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus, there seems to be a perfectly drawn line that separates many aspects of the novel: science and nature, beauty and monstrosity, the creator and his creature, among others. All of these topics seem to be perfectly divided into two parts of a whole, and the meanings materialise when they are compared. In the novel, monstrosity can be understood when it is compared to beauty otherwise it becomes a concept that is not easy to assess and describe. In the same and traditional way, the creature can only be understood with regard to his creator. The very event of creating an entity poses a clear division and elevates the subject who was able to accomplish such action over the subject which was created. It imposes a structure of subordination on the one created. Following the Saussurean logic of the Sign, there is one signifier and one signified and out of their relation meaning proliferates. This dichotomy is reinforced by Victor Frankenstein when he states

“To examine the causes of life, we must first have recourse to death.” (48)

This short sentence, which encloses two of the fundamental topics in the novel, emphasizes an analysis
that revolves around contrast and comparison. Such approach can certainly be employed to understand the relation between the two main characters in the novel: Victor Frankenstein and the creature. During the first volume of the novel, the creature, almost non-existing as a physical entity but as a figment of Victor’s imagination, is scarcely mentioned but every time its creator focuses on his own deeds and the result of his experiment, he refers to it as a monstrous entity who should have never come into existence as if we could only grasp the significance of the creature according to his feelings and thoughts as when he claims

“Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be as hideous as that wretch. 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.” (57)

Victor’s point of view is necessarily arbitrary, firstly, since he is the only one telling the story through the first volume of the novel and, secondly, because we, as readers, solely perceive the creature through his remorse and repentance. As in the Saussurean Sign, where the signifier only becomes meaningful according to the signified, the creature is provided with intention only in relation to the thoughts and words of Victor Frankenstein. As the novel progresses, not only do we learn the creature is a physically wretched being but we also learn it has murdered Victor’s younger brother. Frankenstein receives a letter from his father while still staying at the University of Ingolstadt. He reads in despair that his younger brother has been strangled to death and decides to return to his hometown of Geneva as quickly as possible. When he finally arrives, night has already fallen and it forces Victor
to spend the nighttime strolling about in the woods. Here, he sees the silhouette of the creature and realises it is the responsible for the murder of his brother.

However, when he arrives to his family house, he learns that Justine, a maid, has been accused of such heinous act and later on admits to have committed it. Victor does not understand how this is possible and becomes increasingly melancholic to the point of considering suicide. He restrains from these thoughts and takes a walk to the summit of Montanvert mount to find some solace and comfort. Unsuspectedly, the creature approaches him and confronts him for the first time. The relation between the two main characters starts to be fleshed out and they are presented as two opposites sides within that relation. Victor appears as the victim of the creature’s wretchedness and cruelty on the one hand, and on the other, the creature appears as an evil entity whose sole purpose is to inflict as much suffering as possible on Victor and his loved ones. Even as the creature attempts to approach its creator, it is rejected disdainfully as an antagonist

“Begone! I will not hear you. There can be no community between you and me; we are enemies. Begone, or let us try our strength in a fight, in which one must fall.” (114)

The creature constantly tries to break the wall that separates Victor from itself. It resorts to the ties that bind them from the very moment of its creation and render Victor’s reluctance useless. The creature attempts to convince Victor there is a bond that unites them and that such bond is much more powerful than all the differences they might bear physically. The creature even suggests both of them are joined in a way that can never be broken, in a deeply intimate way only terminated by death, when it claims,
(...) 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. You purpose to kill me. How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind. If you comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace, but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends.” (113)

Victor, however, does not accept the creature’s arguments. He maintains his position as an antagonist who not only sees no connection to the existence of the creature but also as someone who has been hurt and longs for the creature’s demise as a punishment for the crime it has committed and its consequences. The denial expressed in Victor’s speech reinforces the fact his relation to the creature is based on their differences and that their places in their relation are those of adversaries. It seems they can only exist in opposition to each other, that their lives can only be defined when measured against each other. The existence of the creature can certainly be defined in relation to its creator and despite the fact Victor enjoys numerous relationships both in terms of friends and family, his life is also drawn ever closer towards the conflict he experiences with his creation. This is evident when he cries

“Why do you call to my remembrance circumstances of which I shudder to reflect, that I have been the miserable origin and author. Cursed be the day, abhorred devil, in which you first saw light! Cursed (although I curse myself) be the hands that formed you! You have made me wretched beyond expression. You have left me no power to consider whether I am just to
you, or not. Begone! Relieve me from the sight of your detested form.” (115)

It is noticeable how the Saussurean theory of the linguistic sign and the relation between a signified and a signifier matches that of Frankenstein and the creature. The arbitrary nature of such a relation also acts as the basis for Freudian theories applied to literary analysis since they are already based on the systematic comparison and contrast between concepts, notions, and characters. The Freudian Psychic Apparatus consisting of the id and the ego is based on such foundations.

During the first part of the novel, the creature mirrors the Freudian id with surprising accuracy. According to Freud, the id is that part of the psyche where the psychic energy originates and is only concerned with the satisfaction of its own desires and needs (105-6). The id represents the most basic human instincts such as feeding oneself and sexual reproduction and it cannot be stopped from satisfying its desires. The ego, the rational part of the psyche, is the one in charge of providing the id with the fulfilment of such wishes and desires. It is the conscious part of the mind that mediates between the id and reality. It is the construct of the mind that functions as a bridge that saves the gap between the irrational demands of the id and what rationality and reality deem as morally correct (363-4).

The Freudian approach, based on Structuralism, and its components are resembled in the structure and the interplay of characters in Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus. During the first part of the novel, the creature appears as an entity that shows no purpose to carry out the heinous actions it perpetrates against Victor Frankenstein and his loved ones. Not only the creature constantly torments Frankenstein but it also murders his little brother. From its very first appearance, emphasis is made on the wretched, disgusting looking of the creature. The
descriptions in the novel make it resemble a monster from out of the worst human imaginations,

“He yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was 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 colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion, and straight black lips.” (55-56)

Such description brings to mind a creature that originates in the darkest corners of the human fancy, a chaotic set of monstrous shapes. This characterization is very close to Freud’s description of the id: “it is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality, what little we know of it we have learned from our study of the dream-work… and most of that is of a negative character… we approach the id with analogies: we call it a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitations… it is filled with energy reaching it from the instincts, but it has no organization, produces no collective will, but only a striving to bring about satisfaction of the instinctual needs subject to the observance of the pleasure principle.” (105-106)

From the descriptions provided by Victor Frankenstein, the creature appears as evil, murderous, and insatiable. As the Freudian id, it resembles an irrational entity that seems to find its sole satisfaction in the perpetration of suffering against its own creator. Victor does not mention the purposes of the creature to act in such hateful, vengeful manner as if there were none but Freud emphasizes that at times, when the id looks for the satisfaction of its desires desperately, it may produce behaviours that are indeed immoral and impulses that might present themselves as threatening like a hungry animal which will destroy everything in its path in order to
satisfy its hunger and thirst (366) Victor very much thinks of the creature in these terms as he is not able to find a rational explanation to the events provoked by the creature. He does not hint at any cause that might push the creature to commit the murder of his little brother and certainly he does not deem himself or any of his own actions as the reason why the creature torments him. During the first part of the novel, the creature does not even present itself before its creator but looms over him like a shadow. It approaches him as a presence which threatens to engulf Victor’s mental sanity in a chaos of sensations and guilt as the moment when he reflects,

“Alas! I had turned loose into the world a depraved wretch, whose delight was in carnage and misery…” (81)

Victor is not able to apprehend the motives behind the creature’s horrendous behaviour as if they were concealed beyond a rational explanation. Again, this resembles another important aspect in the Freudian psychic apparatus and its literary approach. The id is the construct of the mind that produces immense amounts of psychic energy, a cauldron of sensations, but it is not able to express itself through language; it is not able to put its desires and drives into words or symbols to make itself understood. Freud provided the example of a baby who could scream his lungs out until turning blue to explain the way in which the id irrationally demanded the fulfilment of its wishes but could not articulate them in any understandable manner. Likewise, over the first part of the novel, the creature only shows itself once when he leans over Victor while he is sleeping, and after that, its presence if only felt by Victor as an entity that looms over him, watching him. This fact reinforces the idea that the creature is incapable of articulating its desires, what it really wants, and how it can be satisfied, and that Victor is unable to grasp the reasons behind the creature’s actions.
Victor, on the other hand, is a perfectly learned human being and also a scientist. His level of education is very high and his surroundings have always been those of a family where literacy is highly regarded. He is the one who own the tools to establish communication with the creature but he recoils from time after time. Victor is an educated man who harboured morally superior intentions from his youth and has always sought ways of putting his knowledge at the service of his fellow citizens as when he reflects,

“I had begun life with benevolent intentions, and thirsted for the moment when I should put them into practice and make myself useful to my fellow-beings.” (101)

This speaks volumes of Victor, its rational nature, and his desire to be of use to society, morally correct as can be interpreted from Freud’s own words (363). His interests are purely of a scientific nature. He longed to understand nature and the inner workings of the world by travelling and experiencing nature, and then use such knowledge for the improvement of humans,

“I ardently desired the acquisition of knowledge. I had often, when at home, thought it hard to remain during my youth cooped up in one place, and I had longed to enter the world, and take my station among other human beings.” (41)

However, it is the very result of his most ambitious experiment that puts Victor in a position he can barely deal with. The actions of his own creation threaten Victor not only physically by chasing him everywhere he goes but also psychologically since Victor becomes haunted by a presence he is not able to comprehend. The pressure Victor is subject to constantly increases, page after page, and many times he finds himself on the edge of mental breakdown. The murder of his little brother is one of the
first steps in an escalation of terrible events that do nothing but increase the psychological pressure of guilt and remorse within him to the point he considers himself to be the real murderer of his own brother maybe not in action but in effect.

Freud theorised the ego and the id were in intimate relation and that the id was responsible for many changes the ego experiences, thus shaping the ego according to its desires and needs. (364) The common sense and reason that are part of the ego are constantly under attack of the immense irrational energy constantly spreading from the id, asking for satisfaction. Again, this draws a noticeable parallel in the bonding that unites the creature and Victor. The creature, who has not articulated any specific desire to be fulfilled, increasingly menaces Victor, tormenting him wherever he goes to the point of murdering a member of his family. In this way, the creature threatens to overcome Victor’s rationality by means of irrational, unexpressed demands on him. Victor feels the unbearable pressure of the creature’s actions increasing and reflects,

“Now all was blasted!: instead of that serenity of conscience, which allowed me to look back upon the past with self-satisfaction, and from there gather promise of new hopes, I was seized by remorse and the sense of guilt which hurried me away to a hell of intense tortures, such as no language can describe. This state of mind preyed upon my health, which had entirely recovered from the first shock it had sustained. I shunned the face of man; all sound of joy or complacency was torture to me; solitude was my only consolation – deep, dark, death-like solitude. ” (101-102)

Again, this resembles the Freudian theories with uncanny accuracy. During the first stages of the formation of the ego, it is bombarded by the irrational desires of the
id, one after the other. This makes it very difficult for the ego to withstand such a circumstance over a long period of time (364). There is certainly the danger it might be overcome by the id, thus producing unnatural, immoral behaviours such as the thought of suicide that crosses Victor’s mind more than once in the course of the story. In order to cope with this, in Freudian terms, the ego develops language so it can cope with the demands of the id. Language becomes the only option in which the ego can process and articulate the demands of the id in order to understand them and provide plausible, rational solutions that are not disconnected from the demands of reality (366). Language is the bridge that connects reality with the demands coming from the id.

In the same way, Victor, when taken by surprise by the creature’s approach at the summit of mount Montavert, finally decides to establish communication with the creature as to finally understand the desires that have caused the creature to act in such horrendous ways. The relation between Victor and the creature starts to be fleshed out as soon as the creature begins revealing its true purposes and Victor begins recriminating the monster for its behaviour. It is necessary to understand that despite the fact both characters start relating to one another directly from now on and they are both aware of each other’s intentions, this still takes place within a structuralist logic where both characters are separated within a horizontal axis, to put it in Saussurean terms, where both elements are associated in an arbitrary fashion (357). One the one hand, Victor Frankenstein is presented to us as the rational, reasonable character whose main purpose is to unveil the secrets of nature through experimentation, and, on the other, there is the creature, an irrational, unreasonable entity which brings torment and agony on Victor by means of its actions. Victor comes from a high-class, noble family from Geneva while the monster
originates from the union of dead body parts and cannot be more wretched. Thus, the relation between them is determined by a convention that did not take place in Victorian times only but has taken place in human society over the centuries in general and is still present today. According to de Saussure, this convention is stipulated and accepted as a set of norms and criteria by a group of people and we define all of the objects existing within that group according to that perspective, the perspective provided by the convention (357).

The exchange that is narrated in the story follows the same logic of contrast and comparison. Even the creature refers to the relation with Victor using the same traditional logic when he states,

“Remember, that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel, whom though 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.” (114)

In this quote, it is noticeable how the comparisons is full of contrasting elements: Adam and the fallen angel, joy and solitude, benevolence and misery. All of these comparisons reinforce and justify a structuralist approach to the novel. The creature is defined by its relation to Victor Frankenstein and to him alone. The monster is the creation and Victor Frankenstein is the creator, that is to say, there exists a subordinating relation where the creature is only understood in relation to his creator in the same way a tool is comprehended according to the function it performs for its creator. The creature could not exist and could not be comprehended if the creator was no more. This logic closely follows the structuralist approach where the signifier is determined by the signified, where the signifier could not exist on its own. There is an
organizing idea, as Paul Fry would say, that is necessary to organize our thinking (127) and in this case, that idea is the idea of a creator and the subordination of his creation to him. This perspective can be further appreciated in the following quote by the creature,

“Yet it is in your power to recompense me; and deliver them from an evil which it only remains for you to make so great, that not only you and your family, but thousands of others will be swallowed up in the whirlwinds of its rage. Let your compassion be moved, and do not disdain me. Listen to my tale: when you have heard that, abandon or commiserate me, as you shall judge that I deserve. But hear me. (115)

These words reinforce, from a structuralist point of view, the division that exists between the creation and its creation and the subordinating relation prevailing between them. In addition, from a Freudian perspective, it is also valid as this scene can be interpreted as the id placing further demands on the ego and its rationality in the hope they can be satisfied. From both viewpoints, the traditional approach based on contrast and comparison persists.

During the next pages, the creature narrates its own story and lets Frankenstein know what has happened to his creation during all the years that have passed. It tells the story of its departure from Victor’s side and how it has acclimated to the world by means of constant discovery of everything in it: food, fire, light, dark, hunger, and so forth. The creature tells of its first encounters with people and how it scared them all, and, most important, how it came to learn language by listening to the occupants of a cottage while living in the adjacent hovel. It can see into the cottage through a crack in the wall and observes that the occupants are a young man, a young woman, and an old man. It notices that they often seem unhappy, though he is unsure why. It eventually realizes, however, that
their despair results from their poverty, to which he has been contributing by surreptitiously stealing their food. Torn by it guilty conscience, it stops stealing their food and does what he can to reduce their hardship, gathering wood at night to leave at the door for their use. It is during this period of time that the creature catches sight of its reflection in a pool of water and is shocked at its own ugliness.

The recounting of the creature’s own story might, at first, disconnected from the rest of the novel since Victor Frankenstein does not take place in it. However, it is essential to understand the process the creature has experienced for many years and how such experiences have come to shape its relation to his creator. The creature not only learns how to read from eavesdropping at the cottage but it also learns the story of the cottagers and the tragedy that has befallen them. He is able to reflect upon its own situation and also about human condition. It notices not all human beings are as hateful as the ones it has encountered before and by watching the cottagers it starts harbouring some hope that communication could be established with them in the short term. Through the knowledge it has gained, however, the creature is finally capable of understanding how wretched its appearance is and why it has kept him distanced from human beings as when it reflects,

“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! 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.
Isaac Cívilo Becerra; Óscar Cerda Zamorano; María Guevara Castro; Colette Vargas González. *Psychoanalytical Analysis of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Novel Frankenstein; Or, The Modern Prometheus*

Alas! I did not yet entirely know the fatal effects of this miserable deformity.” (132)

The last line of this paragraph foreshadows what is yet to come and it already provides some hint about the creature’s remorse and its suspicion that it can never be accepted by humankind. Not only such reflections were painful for the creature but they also shaped its relation with Victor when they finally met at mount Montavert. When this event took place, the creature was already biased in its perception of human beings and its own thoughts,

“I was not even of the same nature as man. I was more agile than they, and could subsist upon 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?” (140)

This paragraph hints once more at the distinction existing between the creature and other human beings. Again the creature compares its own physical features with those of people and realises it can hardly be a part of them. It even compares itself to characters in *Paradise Lost* thus emphasizing the contrast between its loneliness and people’s joy of which he can never partake,

“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.” (153)

All these reflections notwithstanding, the creature decides to present itself to the old blind man, who lives in the cottage and has stayed alone in it, and befriend him and the rest of the cottagers as soon as they return from their trip. As soon as they do, nonetheless, the young man,
horrified by its appearance, attacks the monster, driving him away and expelling him from the worlds of human beings. Thus, we understand the dividing line that separates the creature from Victor Frankenstein has been based on the rejection the creature has previously experienced and has been further developed over time. It is crucial to comprehend that, in Freudian terms, all these years preceding the meeting of Victor and the creature, are the period of time in which the creature, in the same way as the id, has attempted to fulfill its most basic instincts of acceptance, recognition, and love. Unfortunately, these have all remained unfulfilled provoking the creature to react in a violent way exactly in the manner proposed by Freud when referring to the id and its unsatisfied needs and desires (106)

All these preceding years have been the period when the formation of the id took place. Only when the creature realises its wishes and basic drives are not satisfied, it resorts to Victor Frankenstein by putting him in a position of stress and exhaustion due to the urgency of its demands.

The creature has realised by itself, and in a very painful way, that it cannot be part of the human world. The differences between itself and the human beings are just too unmistakable, too tangible. When it compares itself to people, the creature realises there is no point where such differences can be met. The contrast is just too great and it can only relate to its own creator since its existence can only acquire some significance according to the actions of the man who gave life to it in a subordinating relation in the same way a signified provides meaning to a signifier.

Deconstructionist and Lacanian Approach to Frankenstein and the Creature
In the second part of our analysis, which corresponds to the second part of the book, we approach the novel from Jacques Derrida’s Deconstruction perspective complemented by Jacques Lacan theories on The Real and the Symbolic Order. The first part of our analysis was based on Structuralism and represented an approach that was founded on the contrastive and comparative nature of De Saussure’s theory and the Freudian studies on the id and the ego. Deconstruction is certainly connected to Structuralism since Derrida subverted the Linguistic Sign devised by de Saussure (127-128) For the Swiss linguist, one part of the linguistic sign, the signified has a direct relation with the other part, the signified. Meaning could only emerged from this relation in terms of comparison and contrast (357) Derrida rejected the arbitrariness of this relation and abolished the signified as the concept that organises the relation with the signifier. Thus, he transformed the signified-signifier relation into a signifier-signifier relation and changed the axis of the linguistic sign as proposed by De Saussure. In this way, the signifying chain is born and in it a signifier leads to another signifier that leads to another signifier endlessly (130) Meaning proliferates from these relations which are not arbitrary and are not organised by a transcendental signified. The signifier is no longer defined beforehand by a signified.

In the first part of the novel the creature and its intentions are defined according to his creator in a relation that emphasized the contrast between both of them. The creature appears as an irrational, cruel entity that torments Victor. He, in turn, is presented as a noble young man who is the victim of such hideous being. This relation, however, starts changing slowly in the second part of the novel, specifically after the creature is rejected by the cottagers.
It is true that after being banished from the cottage, the monster swears revenge on all humankind and especially on Victor, but during its escape he encounters a little girl who seems to be drowning in a river. The creature rescues the girl but the man who is accompanying the little child thinks the creature has attacked her and shoots it before it can react. This event hints at a different nature in the creature, one that was seems to be quite different from what was described before, a kind nature that has not been hinted at during the first part of the novel. The creature does not appear as irrational and cruel as first suspected, and this notion is reinforced by the request the creature asks of Victor Frankenstein when it has finished narrating its story. The monster asks Victor for a female companion so it can enjoy some of the happiness human beings find so delightful, joy that has been denied to it over and over again from the day it was given life as he expresses,

“You must create a female for me, with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies so necessary for my being. This you alone can do; and I demand it of you as a right which you must not refuse.” (172)

Here the monster clearly states his need for love and care. Not very often the creature had manifested its desire to be loved and cared for so explicitly. It might be argued these are further demands on the part of the id towards the ego but there is a significant difference that does not fit in Freudian theories. The id was a source of chaotic sensations that produced immense amounts of psychic energy and whose demands were always of an irrational, immoral nature. The id looked for immediate satisfaction of its needs and desires even if that meant destroying everything in its path. This description does not certainly match that of the needs and wishes of the creature. The desire to be loved and cared for, and the
need to feel some joy are not irrational or immoral, on the contrary, these desires and needs are not only reasonable but they are fundamental for the proper development of any human being. The creature states this,

“If any being felt emotions of benevolence towards me, I should return them an hundred and an hundred fold; for that one creature’s sake, I would make peace with the whole kind! But I now indulge in dreams of bliss that cannot be realized. What I ask of you is reasonable and moderate; I demand a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself: the gratification is small but it is all that I can receive, and it shall content me. It is true, we shall be monsters, cut off from all the world; but on the other account we shall be more attached to one another. Our lives will not be happy, but they will be harmless, and free from the misery I now feel. Oh! My creator, make me happy: let me feel gratitude towards you for one benefit! Let me see I excite the sympathy of some existing thing; do not deny me my request!” (173-4)

This distressing plea confirms that the creature is not the entity outlined during the first part of the novel by Victor Frankenstein but quite a different being. Frankenstein agrees on creating a female companion for the monster, one that holds the same monstrous features, in order to support each other and obtain some measure of comfort. Victor knows he must travel back to England to continue his research and gain the necessary knowledge to accomplish the creation of the female creature. He has heard there have been some discoveries that would enable him to carry out such prospect. He tells his father about his intentions to return to England but he conceals the true reasons for his returning under the wish to see and
experience the world before settling down in Geneva and marrying his cousin and fiancé Elizabeth.

Victor is terrified to leave Geneva without telling his relatives and friends about the monster lurking around the house but decides to leave and not tell them since the creature has vowed to follow him wherever he goes. His friend Henry travels with him but he too is unaware of the monster that is after them every minute of the day. During this period changes begin occurring within Victor. The immense amount of psychological pressure he has been experienced since the very first pages of the book is increasing but he cannot let it out without letting his closed ones know about the secret of the experiment and the creature he has brought to life. His relations start to deteriorate due to this secret. He conceals his feelings from his friend Clerval, from his father, and also from Elizabeth. He embarks on an adventure that can only produce further remorse and pain, but cannot deny the necessity of producing a female companion for the creature so it can finally abandon Europe and grant him some peace of mind. The influence the creature exerts on Victor is unbearable and he sets out to complete the creation with failing hopes,

“I looked towards its completion with a tremulous and eager hope, which I dared not trust myself to question, but which was intermixed with obscure forebodings of evil, that made my heart sicken in my bosom.” (202)

This quote exposes the process Victor experiences, a process of alienation that drives him further and further away from his family, friends, and interests. Victor keeps his intentions to himself due to the immense conflict that is taking over himself. He projects a race of monsters in his mind, monsters resulting from the union of the creature and its female companion and decides not to create such
companion even though this might result in catastrophic consequences for himself.

Victor slowly becomes alienated, an outsider. In the same way the creature has become an outsider, an entity that has not been accepted by human beings, Victor has become an outsider due to the workings of the creature. The relation that was outlined during the first half of the novel has changed. It is not the creature that is defined according to his creator; it is the creator that sees his life being defined by the actions of the creature. In this sense, the Saussurean dichotomy of the Linguistic Sign, where a looming signified arbitrarily defined its relation to a signifier, is deconstructed through Derrida’s perspective. What we now find in the novel is not a dominating character who defines another, minor character but, on the contrary, we find two characters who stand in the same ground and who define each other in a way that is not arbitrary. That is to say, this is a relation of two signifiers where they influence and shape each other equally in a temporal sequence. Contrast and comparison no longer are determining concepts that help us understand the relation between Victor and the creature since the meaning of their relation no longer stems from their differences but from what they have in common: their experiences, their desires, their conflicts. As the creature that wept over the lack of a female companion before, Victor now finds himself in the same situation as expressed in his reflection, “I will be with you on your wedding night – that then was the period fixed for the fulfilment of my destiny. In that hour I should die and at once satisfy and extinguish his malice. The prospect did not move me to fear; yet when I thought of my beloved Elizabeth, - of her tears and endless sorrow, when she should find her lover so barbarously snatched from her, - tears, the first I
had shed for many months, streamed from my eyes.” (208)

This paragraph echoes the sorrowful feelings expressed by the monster before. It is evident Victor does not hold a position of superiority provided by the notion of creator but is in the same position as the monster. Both have become outsiders in their own ways. On the one hand, the creature due to the rejection of people and, on the other, Victor due to his own secrets and intentions that cannot be expressed because they are too terrible for his relatives to endure. Victor is not as self-sufficient as he seemed to be during the first part of the novel but has been affected significantly by the creature and his actions. This logic follows closely the structure of the Linguistic Sign under the Deconstruction approach where signifiers do not stand still but are moving and changing constantly, and are also influencing each other within the chain of signification (135) This is exactly what has come to occur to Victor and the creature. None of them are static signifiers but they influence each other in different ways such as in the following dialogue,

“Slave, I before reasoned with you but you have proved yourself unworthy of my condescension. Remember that I have power; you believe yourself miserable, but I can make you so wretched that the light of day will be hateful to you. You are my creator, but I am your master: - obey!” “The hour of my weakness is past, and the period of your power is arrived. Your threats cannot move me to do an act of wickedness; but they confirm me in a resolution of not creating you a companion in vice. Shall I, in cold blood, set loose upon the earth a daemon, whose delight is in death and wretchedness? Begone! I am firm, and your words will only exasperate my rage.” (206)
This interchange serves to emphasize the relation of equals between Victor and the creature. This is proven by the use of words such as master and creator, and the quote “The hour of my weakness is past, and the period of your power is arrived.” These are very different concepts from the ones employed in the dialogues during the first part of the book where emphasized was made on comparisons and contrast, usually stressing Victor’s superiority as a creator and scientist, and the creature as being a monster incapable of attaining its goals due to fear and confusion.

Victor influences the creature by accepting and then refusing to create a female companion for the monster. The creature, at first, assumes a peaceful but expectant position which is later on altered by the denial of a female companion. Victor surrenders to the creature’s desire but then, after careful reflection, takes on a more active, defiant attitude towards the monster when denying it the female companion. Their relation is one that is constantly changing and consequently their meaning varies as well. It is not fixed by an existing tradition or cause.

In the same way, the Freudian analysis of the characters no longer appears as valid. As explained before, during the first part of the novel, the creature was given the role of the id due to the seemingly irrational, immoral actions it committed against Frankenstein and his relatives, and Victor was interpreted as the ego due to its rational, sensible nature and its role of fulfilling the creature’s primal desires. However, this analysis based, once again, on the systematic comparison and contrast of the two characters falls short of its premises. The Freudian approach is not able to explain the true intentions behind the creature’s actions. As it has become clear over the course of the novel, such intentions are not irrational nor immoral; they are perfectly sane and reasonable. The
creature needs to be recognised as a normal living being; it needs care and love as any other human being, but it is denied these basic cares over and over again. Hence, the monster does not turn but is turned into a vengeful creature. Exactly like a child, the creature comes into this world devoid of any moral or ethical guidance, and, like a child, it has to rely completely on the care, preoccupation, and love of its parents to make its way into the world as someone who can be accepted by its equals. In the context of any society, any child who lacks the guidance of his or her parents is almost certainly doomed to grow up as a misfit and never to develop the skills and abilities necessary to take his or her place in any given society. This is the process the creature has to go through. Its innocence and naivety cannot provide it with the tools required to make its own way into social life, and despite the fact the creature manages, not without toil and suffering, to grasp the social constructs that would enable it to fit into this group of people, it is the same group of people that drives it apart and dooms it to exclusion as the creature reflects,

"No sympathy may I ever find. When I first sought it, it was the love of virtue, the feelings of happiness and the affection with which my whole being overflowed, that I wished to be participated. But now, that virtue has become to me a shadow, and that happiness and affection are turned into bitter and loathing despair, in what should I seek for sympathy? {…} Once my fancy was soothed with dreams of virtue, of fame, and of enjoyment. Once I falsely hoped to meet with beings, who, pardoning my outward form, would love me for the excellent qualities which I was capable of bringing forth. I was nourished with thoughts of honour and devotion. But now vice has degraded me
Isaac Civilo Becerra; Óscar Cerda Zamorano; María Guevara Castro; Colette Vargas González. *Psychoanalytical Analysis of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Novel Frankenstein; Or, The Modern Prometheus*

beneath the meanest animal. No mischief, no malignity, no crime, no misery, can be found comparable to mine. When I call over the frightful catalogue of my deeds, I cannot believe that I am he whose thoughts were once filled with sublime and transcendent visions of the beauty and the majesty of goodness.” (272-273)

The features the creature makes reference to in this paragraph are certainly not the ones Freud infused the id with. The characteristics of the Freudian id have never been those of affection, happiness, honour, and devotion but the immediate satisfaction of the most basic drives, irrational as they are.

The Freudian approach also fails to account for Victor Frankenstein as the character who embodies the ego and its functions that provide a rational satisfaction to the id’s needs. As a matter of fact, none of the desires of the creature are fulfilled in the course of the novel. Victor even refuses to create a female creature who would have satisfied most of the creature’s needs. Thusly, Victor, once again, fails to realise what a merciful opportunity has been laid before him. He is given the chance to save the creature he has only endowed with suffering and solitude and, at the same time, preserving what is left of his own family. Nonetheless, he refuses to continue with the creation of a female mate, circumstance that gives the creature the final push that transforms it into a murderous monster, a transformation resulting from despair, solitude, and the bitter perspective that it will remain alone for the rest of its existence as it yells

“Shall each man,” cried he, “find a wife for his bosom, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone? I had feelings of affection, and they were requited by detestation and scorn. Man, you may hate; but beware! Your hours will pass in dread and misery, and soon the bolt will fall
which must ravish from you your happiness for
ever. Are you to be happy, while I grovel in the
intensity of my wretchedness? (206-207)

Victor is the one who has contributed greatly to the
creature’s suffering and ill-fate. During the first volume of
the novel, Victor appears as the character who is victim to
his own insecurities and urges first, and then to the
atrocities perpetrated by the creature. He seemingly is the
one who is bound to suffer the murders of his family
members and bear a constant aura of danger and fear. His
tribulations are evident as he claims,

“I had begun life with benevolent intentions,
and thirsted for the moment when I should put
them in practice, and make myself useful to my
fellow-beings. Now all was blasted: instead of
that serenity of conscience, which allowed me
to look back upon the past with self-satisfaction,
and from thence to gather promise of new
hopes, I was seized by remorse and the sense of
guilt which hurried me away to a hell of intense
tortures, such as no language can describe.”

(102)

However, he is not a victim of fears and worries
coming from the outside world; he is a victim of his own
guilt because he is aware of his unspeakable actions and
the horrendous consequences they have come to mean not
only to himself but to his loved ones. In this way,
Frankenstein not only fails to satisfy the desires of the
creature but he is also unable to understand the
repercussions of his doings. He fails to evaluate the
circumstances according to the reality of the situation
dooming his loved ones along the way. Again, these are
not the characteristics Freud defined the ego with, but they
are the total opposite since Frankenstein is neither able to
fulfill the creature’s wishes nor mediate between such
wishes and the actual world.
The traditional structuralist/Freudian analysis that we performed during the first part of our work is now replaced by a critical analysis since the Freudian concepts have been discarded and the Linguistic Sign dichotomy is no longer valid as a way of analysing the characters and their dynamic development through the story. Regarding the latter, we have already explained that the relation between Victor and the creature is not arbitrary and is certainly not defined by Victor and the subordinated creature, but it is one where both characters influence each other, changing their roles and the meaning of the relation itself in the same way meaning is created by the interaction of two signifiers. Jacques Lacan, however, goes one step further concerning the deconstructionist approach and the reinterpretation of the Freudian Psychic Apparatus.

Unlike Freud, Lacan considered that the unconscious – the id – which he named The Real is able of expressing itself through metonymy and metaphor; therefore, it can no longer be considered a speechless, undifferentiated set of instincts (172). It is the stage where language originates and with it, thought. The unconscious – The Real, the id – is the one that provides meaning to the relation of signifiers, to the signifying chain. Without it, meaning can never come into existence. Lacan also considered that the second order in the psychic structure which he named the Symbolic Order, the ego in Freudian terms, has a normative function related to The Real. This normative function lays down the rules for the The Real to express itself in a subordinating relation but with one important difference not devised by Freud. Due to the capacity for self-expression by The Real, the signification emerges from the unconscious and everything that has been formed after it – that is to say, all of the other stages of human development – obtains significance based on the language contained in the unconscious. Language
constitutes thought so without the unconscious nothing can ever gain any meaning.

This resembles the development of the novel and its characters with much more accuracy than the Freudian theory. Firstly, the creature is not only able of producing language, of communicating, but it is also able of rational thinking. Secondly, and more important, when the events in the story unfold, it is clear that the creature has been the one which has determined the course of Victor Frankenstein’s life. The creature has followed Victor, has committed acts that have changed the course of his life, and ultimately has sealed his doom. The creature has been the one which has provided meaning, albeit a tragic one, to Victor’s existence.

The subsequent murders of Henry Clerval and Elizabeth at the hands of the creature, and the death of Victor’s father prey to unsurmountable sorrow resulting from such murders, put Victor exactly in the position the creature has desired over the whole narration, a position where Victor is finally able to experience the same feelings of isolation, despair, and frustration the creature has experienced during its whole existence. The creature has steered Victor’s destiny according to its whims. This is clear to Victor as he recalls some of the events of his life while sailing back to Geneva after the murder of his friend,

“The past appeared to me in the light of a frightful dream, yet the vessel in which I was, the wind that blew me from the detested shore of Ireland, and the sea which surrounded me, told me forcibly that I was deceived by no vision, and that Clerval, my friend and dearest companion, had fallen victim to me and the monster of my creation.” (226)

Victor recognises his hand in the murder of this friend and the influence of the monster in the development
of such events. This is in direct relation to another theory devised by Lacan. The French psychologist took advantage of Derrida’s reinterpretation of the signified/signifier dichotomy, that is to say, its transformation into a signifier/signifier relation, and added a new element, a new perspective that converted it in an algorithm where the signifier takes on the dominant role and the signified assumes a less important role in the equation S/s (174). The signifier creates and defines the signified. This is a complete revision of the Saussurean theory and one that perfectly matches the real relation of Frankenstein and the creature in the story. Frankenstein, at first the dominant character who defined the monster in a Saussurean relation, is actually the one that has been manipulated by the creature. Victor’s fate is the one the creature has shaped with its actions, not the one Victor himself intended.

Not content with murdering all of his family and his dearest companion, the creature entices Victor to chase it through different countries. At this moment in the novel, when all has been lost, Victor’s sole purpose is to exert his revenge on the monster. This the creature knows and takes advantage of this circumstance, tempting Victor along every step of the way towards the North Pole. Victor is also aware of this fact, but there is nothing left for him to live for and all of his existence revolves around the purpose of murdering his own hideous creation as he himself tells,

“Sometimes, indeed, he left marks in writing on the barks of the trees, or cut in stone, that guided me, and instigated my fury. “My reign is not yet over,” (these words were legible in one of these inscriptions); “You live and my power is complete. Follow me; I seek the everlasting ices of the north, where you will feel the misery of cold and frost, to which I am impassive. You
will find near this place, if you follow not too tardily, a dead hare; eat, and be refreshed. Come on, my enemy; we have yet to wrestle for our lives; but many hard and miserable hours must you endure, until that period shall arrive.” (253-4)

The monster guides Victor towards the North Pole, even tempts him tauntingly since it knows that even now when everything Victor has cherished has been taken away from him, it can provide meaning to Victor’s life, shattered as it is. Again, this follows the theory Lacan devised where the signifier, now the dominant sign, exerts his influence and provides meaning for the timid signified. The creature leads Victor all the way into the deep North Pole, enticing him to go ever further until Victor has the creature within grasp but is ultimately unable to catch it due to an ice breaking that put an unconquerable distance between them. Victor is unable to obtain his vengeance and falls ill on a scattered piece of ice. Later on, Captain Walton rescues him. Victor continues to be ill, however, and both him and the Captain realise he is never to recover fully from his travellings in northern, icy lands.

Finally Victor’s life is extinguished after saying goodbye to Walton and telling him to find happiness in tranquillity, far from ambition. One night, however, when watching the night on the deck, Walton hears a hoarse human voice and returns to the cabin to find the monster leaning over Victor, mournful for the death of his creator. The creature recognises it has been responsible for the tragic ending of Frankenstein, that it has devised the mechanisms that ended his life and the path Victor had to tread to come to such a tragic finale,

“Oh, Frankenstein! Generous and self-devoted being! What does it avail that I now ask thee to pardon me? I, who irrevocably destroyed thee
by destroying all thou lovedst. Alas! He is cold; he may not answer me.” (270)

The creature has determined the course of Victor Frankenstein’s life. The creator has not determined the life of the creature; the creator has been driven to his doom by his own actions and the outcome resulting from those.

Before leaving his departed creator and Walton alone in the cabin, the creature reasserts his own existence and his purpose by declaring,

“...For whilst I destroyed his hopes, I did not satisfy my own desires. They were forever ardent and craving; still I desired love and fellowship, and I was still spurned. Was there no justice in this? Am I thought to be the only criminal, when all human kind sinned against me?” (273)

After accepting the purpose of its life is now fulfilled, the creature shows one last shred of its true nature, caring and loving, before deciding time has come for it to die in its own funeral pyre in the deepest north. Even now, though, when it has triumphed and stands in a position of complete victory, the creature is able to display its true feelings and express them in a beautiful farewell as if to emphasize that its true nature has not been the one that was apparent during the first section of the novel,

“I shall no longer see the sun or stars, or feel the winds play on my cheeks. Light, feeling, and sense, will pass away; and in this condition must I find my happiness. Some years ago, when the images which this world affords first opened upon me, when I felt the cheering warmth of summer, and heard the rustling of the leaves and the chirping of the birds, and these were all to me, I should have wept to die, now it is my only consolation. Polluted by crimes, and
torn by the bitterest remorse, where can I find
rest but in death? (273)

Despite the fact the creature has been the one that
has led the way in its relation with Victor Frankenstein
and has shaped Victor’s demise, the monster accepts its
own destiny in relative peace. After a life of struggle and
suffering, it is still capable of remembering those few
moments that brought it joy and serenity. Its true essence
is revealed close to the end of its journey knowing that it
is not a monster, as hinted in the first pages of the novel,
but it has been transformed into one by the rejection of
people, by isolation and discrimination, and by the
negligence of its own father.

**Faust**

To round off our analysis, we state that Victor
Frankenstein is linked in an indelible fashion to the
historical figure of Johann Faust and the concept of
Faustian Bargain as both of them, scientists of a sort, seek
to gain enough knowledge to discover some secrets that
seem to be beyond human grasp. Both Faust and
Frankenstein start as men of science, noble and
respectable, but are willing to sacrifice everything they
have in order to obtain more knowledge than what is
conceivable. On one hand, Faust makes a pact with
Mephistopheles himself and sells his own soul in
exchange for insight and expertise. On the other hand,
Victor Frankenstein does not strike a pact with the devil,
at least not in a literal way since in many cultures science
has always been connected to the workings of Lucifer, but
sacrifices his life and the lives of his closest family, his
best friend, and his fiancée as the price he must pay for
mastering the ability of sparking the flame of life from
inanimate matter.

Both of them have been ensnared in the obsession
of the creator who seeks to help and bring comfort to his
fellow human beings but lose sight of their original goal as they walk on a path that has no return. In the following quotation, Victor Frankenstein emphasizes this motif:

“When younger,” he said, “I felt as if I were destined for some great enterprise. My feelings are profound but I possessed a coolness of judgement that fitted me for illustrious achievements. This sentiment of the worth of my nature supported me when others have been oppressed; for I deemed it criminal to throw away in useless grief those talents that might be useful to my fellow-creatures. When I had reflected on the work I had completed, no less a one than the creation of a sensitive and rational animal, I could not rank myself with the herd of common projectors. But this feeling, which supported me in the commencement of my career, now serves only to plunge me lower in the dust. All my speculations and hopes are as nothing; and, like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence, I am chained in an eternal hell.” (260-261)

At the end of his journey, Victor describes the odyssey that has led him to lie dying in Captain Walton’s ship, how he started with the highest hopes, and the desire to help humanity knowing he was blessed with skills that were denied to others. As Johann Faust whose first steps in scientific practice gained him recognition from his peers and people due to his altruistic, charitable practice, Frankenstein realises he has lost its way at the very end of it. The bargain he has set with science has finally taken its toll on him, and like Faust who meets his destiny, mournful in bed, Victor departs as a weak shadow of what his former glory envisaged. This parallel is further explained by the words of Captain Walton as he reflects on Frankenstein in his dying moments.
“What a glorious creature must he have been in the days of his prosperity, when he is thus noble and godlike in ruin. He seems to feel his own worth, and the greatness of his fall.” (260)

In the same way Faust is able to see hordes of fiends coming for him at the moment of his death, and reflects on his past and mourns at the blindness which have prevented him from foreseeing his own doom, Frankenstein bids Captain Walton farewell with similar words, warning him against the ambition that has plagued his life,

“The forms of the beloved dead flit before me, and I hasten to their arms. Farewell, Walton! Seek happiness in tranquility and avoid ambition, even if it be the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries. Yet why do I say this? I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed.” (269)

The closing line reflects the bitterness of Frankenstein’s remorse and how he feels that nothing he has accomplished in his life has come to mean anything. Like Faust, whose life was ultimately engulfed by the knowledge he gained from his pact with Mephistopheles, Frankenstein realises he has been deceived by the mirage of success and that he has sealed a pact with science that has led him to his doom as well as the doom of all those who were close to him, condemning him to perish in sorrow and despair, and, most important, in remorse and neglect towards his only true child, his creation.

As a result of the events in the novel, it is possible to conclude that, despite the fact the creature led Victor to his own physical demise, the monster has done so due to the mistreatment it has been subject to. Years of isolation and discrimination have left an indelible mark in its spirit and have transformed it into an entity the creature never
had any desire to become. From the very first pages in novel, we were not in the presence of a monster, cruel and evil, nor were we faced with a malleable entity with a concealed, natural tendency towards irrational, immoral acts, as Freud states. We were, indeed, in presence of a lonely child who, after carrying out unimaginable efforts, is locked up in solitude and despair: a victim of the rejection and the cruelty enforced upon it. Therefore, there is no monster as such in the wretchedness and decaying pieces of dead flesh the creature consists of. There is only pure shyness and naivety as it states close to the end of the novel. On the other hand, and in spite of his tragic demise, Victor Frankenstein is the true murderer as he himself recognises when reflecting on the deaths of his loved ones. Over the course of the novel, Victor neglects the creature and the satisfaction of its most human needs in the same way a disregardful father abandons his own son and condemns him to isolation and discrimination on the part of those surrounding him. Thus, the creature becomes the true victim of Victor Frankenstein disdainful, selfish behaviour and ambition.

**Pedagogical Implications**

“Human beings are social creatures. We are social not just in the trivial sense that we like company, and not just in the obvious sense that we each depend on others. We are social in a more elemental way: simply to exist as a normal human being requires interaction with other people.”

**Atul Gawande**

From the moment we come into the world, we are defenceless children who cannot stand on their own. We need the help of caregivers to fulfill our most basic needs and desires during the first years of our lives. Then, a period of socialization and development takes place over many years where our identity is shaped by everyday interaction. Such
process is incredibly diverse and all of the people who cross our way is responsible for determining our personalities. Family, relatives, peers, co-workers, friends, teachers, media, technology and so many other factors are part of such a lifelong process. The importance of this is of such immense scope that comprehending it is a challenge. It spans most of our lifetime and involves most, if not all of the environments where we spend a significant amount of time.

However, the most important stage for the development of our personality takes place in childhood and adolescence. These two periods are the ones where we are most susceptible and more receptive to the influences of the external world. Every action that occurs in such a period of time can potentially leave a mark on our identity and define our future behaviour. Therefore, it is crucial to offer children and youngsters with environments and circumstances that help them develop positive attitudes towards themselves and other people. It is essential to aid them in building a solid self-esteem that enables them become citizens who can contribute to the development of society.

Children and youngsters, nevertheless, do not always face such circumstances. It is very often the case they must face troubling situations that undermine the sound development of their personalities and, unfortunately, many of such problems take place at school level where they are forced to deal with bullying, harassment, and discrimination on a daily basis. This is even worse when we realise most of these behaviours come from their peers, isolating them and preventing them from establishing meaningful relations with their classmates. In this regard, Sullivan, A. L. in the text “Addressing Discrimination in School Matters” states that “in every community and every school, discrimination exists in both intended and unintended ways.” (1) Taking this into consideration, discrimination and bullying take on an even more relevant dimension as they affect children and teenagers in a variety of ways, some of them surreptitiously.
Accordingly, in a school context, teachers are the ones who should highlight this issue for open discussion and reflection in order to raise awareness in students about the significance of fighting these demeaning behaviours and eradicating them. Human beings are not born with the in-born capacity to differentiate good from bad. These skills are only learned through a process where a child is able to observe such behaviours and understand them with the help of adults, teachers, and all sorts of people who can guide them. However, this process is of such intricate nature that the efforts parents and teachers are not always enough to prevent children and youngsters from internalizing prejudices and discriminating practices as they grow up in contact with them. Their attitudes are highly influenced by what people around them do and say. Diane Maluso, Professor of Psychology at Elmira College, explains that, among the various theories on the origins of prejudice, “social learning theory suggests that prejudice is learned in the same way other attitudes and values are learned, primarily through association, reinforcement, and modeling.” In this regard, children and teenagers are always receiving information concerning their environment, acquiring both positive and negative opinions regarding situations and people by simply observing how different factors interact with each other. A perfect example is a boy who stands between his parents and his friends, listening to both sides whose views are conflicting, antagonistic. It is a heavy burden indeed for the boy to process such different opinions and internalize them in order to make a judgement about what is right and what is wrong.

At school level, these type of situations occur every day. For example, a child may overhear that someone is made fun of by repetitive jokes. He may grow up thinking that this is a normal situation and that people who have been discriminated deserve this treatment because they are inferior in some way. As a result, the child internalizes such
stereotypes and prejudices, and behaves according to them, discriminating and bullying others. There are many ways of discrimination and they are all wrong and harmful. Cases of discrimination have been demonstrated to increase the level of loneliness in students. According to a study made at National Taichung University of Science and Technology in Taiwan, there is a relationship between the level of loneliness of a student and factors of learning burnout such as low sense of achievement and negative learning emotion. Hancock states that “since social isolation hinders a person’s psychological well-being, learners who either form poor relationships or have difficulty in forming sound relationships with their parents, peers or teachers, will inevitably suffer developmental restraints while others progress towards adulthood normally.” (3) These children and youngsters are likely to suffer from a variety of problems, including depression, anxiety, and social phobia among others. Some of them may even develop self-destructive conducts and become self-injurious, suicidal, and substance abusers. Others become bullies as they do not know how to respond to aggression in ways other than being aggressive, or simply because they feel that they must take revenge on the rest of people just like the creature in Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus did.

Regarding the necessary measures to eradicate discrimination, Mineduc provides the manual “Discrimination in the School Context”, which deals with different aspects of this issue. Firstly, it states that the origins of discrimination are generally linked to the stereotypes and prejudices that people hold about other people in certain circumstances. If a child holds a prejudices against another child, negative emotions such as pity, fear, rejection, and despise may arise, and such emotions might lead to violent acts and physical or emotional damage resulting in the social exclusion of the discriminated child. Secondly, the manual establishes that this problem must be dealt with during school
years since the school facilities are the main settings where
children relate to each other. These facilities constitute the
propitious sites for discrimination to take place as many of
such places are not always under the surveillance of school
authorities, giving children and teenagers carte blanche to
behave as they desire. Thirdly, the manual reflects upon the
fact that most of the discriminatory attitudes are originated,
internalized, and reproduced at school, and it is the
educational system’s responsibility to implement the
necessary formative measures in order to lay the foundations
for respectful and inclusive relations in the school
community. Finally, this manual presents a set of possibilities
to tackle discrimination. Beginning with our roles as adults
and teachers, we all are responsible for orienting and guiding
our students and children as well as being positive role
models for them, promoting values such as respect, tolerance,
and self-confidence. Putting an inclusive language into
practice and incorporating these issues into our lessons is
necessary to help our students reflect on these matters. We
think this document provides useful and practical information
for teachers and members of the school community, and we
encourage the reading and implementation of the ideas
expressed in it.

We believe that teachers of English must also address
the topics of discrimination and isolation in their classes. It is
often the case teachers tend to focus more on improving the
level of English in their students than making them reflect on
the moral and axiological aspects of the contents. It is
necessary to tailor the program according to the students’
needs to be consistent with the circumstances they face in
their own lives on a daily basis and, thusly, provide them
with a more meaningful learning experience. Taking into
consideration the Mineduc’s approach, we need to realise that
our educational work is not only teaching subjects such as
mathematics, Languages, History, or English, but also to
instil values in our students with the aim of forming
upstanding citizens who are able to strengthen integration and tolerance within the context of society. Eradicating discrimination is a fundamental step in order to achieve an inclusive, integrative educational environment where isolation does not affect children and teenagers. We must be conscious of our own actions, and set good examples in our attitudes, words, and behavior as a means to reinforce respect and trust in our students.

Regarding the teaching of English, we consider these topics must be included into the curriculum, and we firmly believe that the best method to reflect on such important matters through the teaching of a language is the use of CLIL (Content Language Integrated Learning). According to David Marsh, from University of Jyväskylä, Finland, CLIL (1994) “is a teaching approach that refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language.”

Sometimes, we, as teachers of English, focus so much on the structures of texts that we seldom stop to think about the real contents incorporated in them. Our purpose is to employ this approach in order to present the topic of discrimination in an elective class of English Literature using Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. The focus will be on the creature that becomes a victim of discrimination virtually from the moment of its creation, and the circumstances that transform it into a vengeful monster due to people’s despise and rejection. We can notice how society created his misery by rejecting him. Our aim is to present the story to students and have them reflect about the causes of its suffering and misery, and the consequences of such emotions on the creature. Simultaneously, students should attempt to relate this story to what other students, who have suffered the same type rejection, feel and how similar circumstances might affect them. Additionally, the CLIL planning encourages values such as diversity, tolerance, and respect.
towards each other. The target of this elective class will be third and fourth grades of secondary students in Chile as they already possess a high level of proficiency in English that makes them capable of reading, understanding, and reflecting on complex works of literature. As a result, the students will reinforce values they have learnt throughout their scholar lives and will be prepared for putting them into practice in future circumstances where they will interact with diverse groups of people.

In the light of all these considerations, it is clear that discrimination is a significant problem that must be analysed and discussed in order to raise awareness about its harmful consequences. Even though there exists plenty of information and a variety of texts addressing this topic, such as Mineduc manual “Discrimination in the School Context”, there is still much to do about it. We cannot rely on theory alone, but we must also put preventive measures in place to tackle acts of discrimination at schools. Even more important, since discrimination is the product of prejudices and stereotypes that we learn as children, it is only logical that children should be exposed to and taught positive values such as tolerance, respect, and trust during the same stage. Teachers of English can address these matters every day. The use of CLIL approach is immensely beneficial as it contributes to achieving the goals and learning the common contents of their linguistic and non-linguistic subjects, as it is proposed specifically in this research. Consequently, we use Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* in relation to the topic of discrimination, making a parallel between the creature and the millions of children and teenagers who face the same reality in everyday life at school level. As a result, we expect to contribute and participate in the creation of educational spaces that promote an integrative, inclusive educational community.
Works cited


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