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Fashioned by the Hands of Frankenstein and the Machines of Western Powers: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and the Dynamics of Terrorism

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Abstract

This article problematizes the construction and destruction of both the Self and the Other through an analogy between the motivation of Victor Frankenstein in creating a monster in Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* (1818) and the formation of the terrorist groups as both are the product of imperial, hegemonic Western powers. The premises of Edward Said's (postcolonial) theory of "Orientalism" and Michel Foucault's definition of the dichotomy of power and knowledge set the foundation of this analysis. The discussion corroborates with Said's contention that this convenient "Other" becomes a necessity in order to define and uphold the Self. This approach, which seeks to subvert reductive epistemological and ideological superimposed structures that sanction dualisms, engages with an examination of these ossifications inherent in hierarchies and in the creation of terrorism as a new exigency arisen with the collapse of socialism, the traditional Other of the West. *Frankenstein* poses ontological questions and depicts unusual occurrences that underline existential alienation and consummate a hegemonic belief (rooted in Western discourse) in the "Other" as monstrous/barbaric. Trying to transcend these propagated images and distortions of the Other may fill the vacuum of human understanding and allow for a rethinking of all social and cultural conventions, culminating in destabilizing patriarchal and exclusionist systems of oppression. People need to address the root causes of terrorism ingrained in injustice and the demonization of the "Other," issues that feed the spirit of antagonism toward the West. *Frankenstein* subverts the borderlines between the scientist and the monster through portraying an articulate, compassionate "monster," which explains why most people mistakenly refer to the

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monster as "Frankenstein." Likewise, it is often the case that oppression perpetrated by hegemonic powers creates the "terrorists" the West claims to resist.

Keywords: Frankenstein, Power Relations, Terrorism, Binaries, The Other, Knowledge.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818), through its unique narrative(s), themes, and dynamic tensions, sets out to delineate the paradigm of the marginalized "Other." It contests and subverts the logos and ethics of the universal which go hand in hand with imperial Eurocentric and andocentric subsumptions and reductions of the Other. Specifically, Shelley weaves a multifaceted, overlaid story into this tumultuous narrative creating a potent literary space that transcends the boundaries of the Self and the Other. *Frankenstein*, it is postulated, demonstrates that injustice and mistreatment, coupled with a thirst for power, ignite desperate acts of terror and violence by the periphery or disadvantaged part of the equation: The Other resorts to violence as a form of dissent when humiliated and subordinated.

Exploring insights from the interdisciplinary terrains of postcolonial theory, the article positions the basic bifurcated paradigm of *Frankenstein* within a postcolonial hierarchy of power relations, one that constitutes the binary oppositions of the oppressor and oppressed as both mutually defining and constituted. Within this framework, Edward Said's concept of "Orientalism," as a branch of postcolonial theory, sets the fundamental theoretical grounds and hermeneutics through which our primary work *Frankenstein* and other minor texts and relevant notions will be synthesized.

Anne K. Mellor states that Shelley "identifies Frankenstein's capitalist project with the project of colonial imperialism" (*Mary Shelley* 113). In this sense, profit and advantages get privileged over consequences and moral concerns. And Said argues that "The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, and of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (*Orientalism* 5). In particular, the argument pursues a range of postcolonial parallels between Victor's psychopathetic creation of his "monster Other," which leads to the demise of both, and the West's desperate need for a so-called inferior Other in order to define and sustain the power and prestige of the Self that hinges on the existence of the Other.

Many authors and critics approach the question of the intricate bond between the Self and the Other, yet the cultural critic Said and the Greek poet C. P. Cavafy are the most unequivocal about it. In his brief yet very thought-provoking poem "Waiting for the Barbarians," Cavafy delivers an unvarnished statement about the interdependence of the Self on a craved so-called barbaric Other. This poem, in the form of a witty dialogue between two unnamed speakers, poses a number of questions about the vibrant dynamics and underpinnings of the Self (i.e. political and legislative leadership) and gives the same answer – "Because the barbarians are coming today" – to these various questions. The fact that all the officials are suspended – "Because the barbarians are coming today" – proves the idea that the Self and the Other are bound together in an intricate maze of dependence and inter-dependence.

To illustrate, the coming of the "barbarians" serves as a pretext for manipulation and the abuse of power. However, the end of the poem offers a trenchant and witty analysis that the barbarians are essentially coming from within, not from outside, which brings to a crisis the Empire's attempts at self-definition and self-justification; imperial subjects are the ones who look for justifications to appropriate freedoms and thus secure their position at the top of the sociopolitical ladder. According to Cavafy, the imperial and colonial powers tailor an enemy as a "solution" to their sociopolitical and economic shortcomings. The most emphatic part of Cavafy's poem is its last four words, with the barbarians being "a kind of solution." Without a doubt, colonial adventures have brought much wealth and power to the West at the expense of a marginalized Other. Again, Said terms this complex involvement "Orientalism," which he defines as, "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western Experience. . . . the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (1). In a related line of thought, Peter Childs and R. J. Patrick Williams, in *An Introduction to Postcolonial Theory*, write that "One of the most influential aspects of Orientalism has been Said's examination of the way in which the West not only constructs the Orient, but constructs it precisely as its Other, the repository of all those characteristics deemed non-Western" (101). Likewise, the creature in Shelley's novel can be seen as an antithesis to human culture and civilization or simply as the ugly part of scientific progress for which we are responsible.

On the other hand, *Frankenstein* features a thorny correlation between the creator and the creature as the embodiments of intrinsically intertwined undertones of many forms of oppression because they all stem from the same quest for power and domination. To explicate, the creature is barred from the realm of the dignified human and is forced within the sphere of the commodified and demonized because of various dynamics and considerations. In line with the nameless creature, terrorism – which is an end result of injustice on local and global levels – has become an epidemic afflicting various parts of the world. Almost every day, we wake up to the sad news of places being blown up and people getting killed because of terrorist attacks. Terrorism is deeply rooted, and trying to address this troubling phenomenon requires a reconfiguration of the inherent injustices of the new global system. There should be a painstaking analysis of the roots of terrorism, one that strives to decipher terrorists' motives and objectives and explain why their numbers are rising. In a sense, it is a dependent relationship in which the more injustices are done to people, the bigger the numbers of individuals turning to terrorism become.

However, by accentuating these embedded divisions and tensions between the Self and the Other, one should not fall prey to the same ideological superstructures that should be subverted; rather, we are calling attention to looming dangers tormenting the world if paradigms of polarizations are not forged. That being so, a holistic approach is necessary to counteract and eliminate the root causes of terrorism, namely, injustice inflicted upon marginalized groups. Therefore, the needs of those who turn to terrorism must be addressed just as critics aspire to conceive of Victor's creature in order to undermine this affliction. In the creature's words, "If I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear!" (17). Those who feel oppressed, and those we

fail to accommodate, often join terrorist groups or simply adopt their aberrant ways of thinking.

As will be seen, the novel blurs the binary of the "Self" and the "Other" or the centre and the periphery; it entangles readers in myriad dynamic tensions – cultural and allegorical – and weaves a tapestry for them to unravel the real causes and ramifications of terrorism and violence. In a sense, it is both Victor and the US that created their monstrous counterparts in their attempts to manufacture a replica of the Self that would help maintain their godlike eminence and privilege. By giving voice to the voiceless creature, Shelley provokes readers' empathy which oscillates between the creature and his creator because the divisions between them dim, and thus it becomes problematic to decide who the real "monster" is, just as it becomes uneasy to identify the real "barbarians" in Cavafy's poem.

Terrorism is a universal phenomenon as old as the history of humankind, but the tragic attacks of September 11 mark a turning point in recent human history. Although terrorism is situational and elusive, the stigmas of "savage" or "terrorist" are primarily exclusive to the less powerful or so-called "less-civilized Other." This elusiveness of the label depends on the position and the center of power that has the right, because of its dominant discourse and media, to brand the Other as a "monster," "barbarian," "savage," or "terrorist." Paulo Freire asserts that the oppressor's consciousness tends to "transform everything surrounding it into an object of its domination" (40), thus constructing and marking its enemies or victims as such. In this sense, the Other is just like the "terrorist." Both categories are subjected to the discursive formation strategies and the epistemic violence of those in power.

Many scholars and institutions have tried to formulate a comprehensive and universally accepted definition of "terrorism," but the US has hindered any effort to formulate a universally accepted definition of terrorism until it made it seem a slippery and problematical term beyond definition, because of politics and power interests involved. The US did not allow the United Nations to define it, since they want terrorism undefined so that they can manipulate this term and use it to label others as best serves their policies and ideology. So, terrorism is defined by the powerful; it is not a matter of convention. Rather, it is a matter of power relations and hegemonic discourse. Those who have weapons and capital dictate the rules and create "monsters" like the creature in *Frankenstein* or Daesh (ISIS), and they also have the power to name, define, exclude, and decimate "these monsters" should the need arise.

Bruce Hoffman offers a broad definition of terrorism as "the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence" (43). Hoffman's wide-ranging characterization of terrorism manifests that it is convenient to accuse the other of being a terrorist, simply because this other does not share our values or principles. Hence, countries and regimes use terrorism as a pretext to fulminate against others who may be merely demanding their equal rights or resisting the hegemonic status quo. Terrorism, thereby, is not restricted to a specific ethnicity or ideology; rather, the label "terrorism" is reciprocal. For instance, the US stigmatizes many groups that struggle against various forms of sociopolitical oppression as "terrorists," and these groups think of the US as a state sponsoring and perpetrating terrorism. The

Palestinian militant organization Hamas, as a case in point, is viewed by the West, and the US in particular, as a terrorist organization, while its men and many Arabs and Palestinians view Hamas members as "freedom fighters." Still, the version of one party is more popularized than that of the other because of power dynamics, public relations, and global influence. The fluid nature of the label "terrorist" was seen in the wake of September 11 attacks when numerous Arabs and Muslims in the US would feel stigmatized or unwelcome, although they never sympathized with Bin Laden or condoned him for killing innocent people.

Driven by a desire to guard his masculine and racial supremacy, Victor in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, who describes himself "as always having been imbued with a fervent longing to penetrate the secrets of nature" (35), attempts to create "a new species [that] would bless him as its creator and source" (54). He predicts this "progeny" to be redoubtable and thus deify him and demonstrate devotion to him, thus helping him maintain a high status. Hence, forth Victor uses remains of aggregate and mismatched humans in order to convene his being, which is made of necrotic material. When he strikes life into his motionless creature, Victor declares that he becomes "capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter" (52). After he assumes life, the destitute creature is in a complete state of confusion: He neither knows who or what he is, nor does he know how to communicate with those around him. Victor himself could not construe the initial communication attempts of his being, and this failure to commune led to hostility and a wider hiatus between Victor and his creature. Victor tells us that the creature "muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin winkled his cheeks. Its one hand was stretched out" (59). The creature, conscious of his repugnant appearance that repulses his maker, demands to be heard. Yet, Victor refuses the pleas of the creature to be heard retorting: "Be gone! Relieve me from the sight of your deserted form" (65). The creature understands Victor's shock and thereby covers Victor's eyes with his hands: "Thus, I relieve thee, my creator, thus I take from thee a sight which you abhor" (101). Apparently, Victor, who is an embodiment of Western culture, fails to "home" his creature or respond to fresh anxieties and exigencies generated by the Other.

Terrorism is supported by disparate entities with their own whims and interests; they, much like Victor, know their creation and strive to guide it. They strategically control it to wreak havoc on behalf of their enemy. To restate, terrorism is created to perpetrate the image of the menacing Other and to legitimate the aggression of the so-called "center of civilization." Clearly, the impulses of Victor and the impetus of those who propagate terrorism are much the same in the sense that both are motivated by the same will to power and domination. So as to craft a superior race and regardless of the adverse effects of this adventure, Victor launches his experiments, and the US arguably bolsters and nurses terrorist groups to serve the interests of the American people regardless of the ramifications that might be detrimental to both Self and Other. Interestingly enough, there were some elements that are Hollywoodish in the sense of Daesh performances and executions and their videotaping of these executions. Victor's selfish and solipsistic view of the world and his demerit to identify with others transform Victor himself into a monster and preclude consideration for others' views of the world. Instead of succeeding to create beauty,

Victor creates a "filthy mass," a "monstrous body" (177), which might mirror the sickness of the very culture that produced scientists like Victor.

Just as the terrorist groups demand to be treated with respect as equal human beings, the nameless creature, unfaltering, insists on having human qualities by studying some of the best tomes ever produced by humans. Notwithstanding his desperate attempts to be heard, the creature deems it almost impossible to be integrated in a society that presupposes one's inferiority and prejudges him or her according to how one looks like, not according to who he or she really is. Similarly, the rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorist groups in society is not an easy task. There should be a comprehensive approach and a paradigm shift in order to solve this universal predicament. The design of this convenient other is a preemptive strike to the hopes and aspirations of those who may attempt to break free from the binary opposition and thus institutionalize democracy and human rights. The label of "terrorism" ossifies the Other once and for all, deeming the Other as an unworthy human being (or even stripping him or her of any humanity), thus legitimating colonialism or any act of aggression against a "vicious" primitive other of the sort we encounter in Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden" (1899), those "fluttered folk and wild," the "sullen people/Half devil and half child." In fact, the grotesque depiction of the "half devil and half child" wild natives does not markedly differ from the monstrous creation in Shelley's novel.

The targets of terrorism recruitment are mostly the impoverished youth who have no hope because of overmastering injustice and corruption. Such groups are vulnerable because they feel marginalized and excluded, both locally and globally. Just like the body of the creature, which is a combination of disparate limbs from different corpses, the terrorists do not belong to a certain country or place. Rather, they are a mixture of people cobbled together from ill-assorted groups from various parts of the world. Many of these terrorists become "monsters" because of factors that have to do with injustice, lack of education or fanatic education, and socio-political corruption, among other factors.

Middle Eastern scholars might particularly feel intrigued to draw a strong analogy between the solipsism of Victor and the egoism of some Western centres of power in perpetrating interrelated forms of terrorism. Here, the creature believes that he has a cause that he is fighting for, and, in the words of Hoffman, "The terrorist is fundamentally an *altruist*. He believes that he is serving a good cause designed to achieve a greater good for a wider constituency" (emphasis original 37). Deprived of familial and social ties, the creature runs amuck and almost destroys everybody around him, because there is no recourse to a reliable guide. But in the case of terrorism, there are two possible scenarios: Either these groups are created in reaction to certain local or global constituencies or they are established and monitored by the central powers through their intelligence departments, double-agents, and so on. The creature's attempts to tell his moving story to others are mostly in vain because they see him as a threat. This perception of the creature parallels the West's control of the media vis-à-vis how the world should conceive of this critical issue – the West is absolutist in that it only allows its voice and version of the story. Thus, the Other suffers from

both physical and epistemic harm and even erasure; its own image and voice are confiscated. In fact, the creature could have been a great treasure if he was not rejected by society and viewed as a monster to be abominated and trampled. Under colonialism, the subaltern – to draw on Spivak's famous article "Can the Subaltern Speak?" – cannot speak except with the voice/tongue of the oppressor. In the absence of this voice, the other is constructed according to the interests and paradigms of the dominant non-Subaltern.

The first "terrorist" cells that the US supported in Afghanistan in order to fight communism were praised for their "heroic acts" and for bravely fighting the Russians. After the war in Afghanistan was over, these groups could have been peacefully countered and integrated into society through dialogue and thus spared the world the wicked plague of terrorism that is sweeping the world and destroying whole nations. The Afghan fighters, as they are called, should not have been left grappling in darkness as outcasts and thus turning to terrorism as their only option. They could have been transformed into productive society members through education, mutual respect, and nurture. Rather than prisons and military bases, the US could have built education and health care facilities in their war-ravaged country. Indirectly, and unintentionally sometimes, the dominant powers help in the creation of the "monsters" who get labelled as "terrorists."

Unfortunately, just as with the fighters were deserted after the end of the Cold War, the creature in the novel was rebuffed by the very maker who fervently strived to create him. Physically, the creature turns out to be contrary to what Victor has envisioned, so he "rushed out of the room and continued a long time traversing [his] bed chamber, unable to compose [his] mind to sleep" (45). Likewise, the fighters' interests and existence conflicted with American interests; hence, they turned against the US and constituted a new enemy for it. Both Victor and the US created their opponents because of their hunger for power and supremacy. However, the essence of the terrorist groups and the creature remains a mystery; it is not clearly or fully defined. In Anne Kostelanetz Mellor's words, Victor's derelict antipathy to his being is "in Mary Shelley's eyes both a moral and aesthetic failure, one that appropriately results in the creation of a monster both hideous and evil" (126). The US is also morally accountable for terrorism that has permeated various parts of the world because it abandoned the "monster(s)" it created. Victor's failure to foster his creature hampers the growth or metamorphosis of both and results in internecine feuds between both parties. Paulo Freire states that "the oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves" (26). Victor abruptly accosts his creature and refers to him as a demon, but he is presented emotionally and intellectually as more than human. In *Frankenstein's Creation,* Ketterer concedes that "the reader is compelled to the recognition that the monster, in a real sense, is the corporeal world of human reality" (94). The monstrosity of this monster is a reflection of the barbarity and savagery we carry within ourselves, which again reminds us of Cavafy's poem already discussed.

Besides, the language of demonization and dehumanization is central to the discourse of "war on terror." The terrorist groups are frequently depicted as demons, and unfortunately this discourse pushes them to fight more violently to be heard and recognized as equal human beings. Likewise, Victor's stream of invective assails his creature describing him as a demon and monster in order to strip the creature of any dignity and to give himself the pretext to exterminate such a creature. This dismissive and reductive discourse of demonization and exclusion makes the creature taunt Victor and his family members. In Western media, verbal demonization has paved the way for military repression and occupation and stripped the suspects of terrorism of any human rights and personal freedoms.

The West's failure to respond to the demands of the "monsters" they created in different places is probably a direct source of the offshoots of terrorism infesting many regions these days. In the same way, Victor's failure to dialogue with and show respect for the uniqueness of his creature transforms the creature to a "terrorist" who develops antagonism rather than affinity and acceptance. The monster becomes desperate over his alienation from humans because they spurn him and coerce him to seek refuge in "desert Mountains and dreary glacier" (65). He explains to Frankenstein that he "was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy and I shall again be virtuous" (95). The menacing creature expounds that he has no choice but to deride and deal with his enemies in the same way they treat him: "Shall I not then hate them who abhor me? I will keep no terms with my enemies. I am miserable and they shall share my wretchedness." The monster ridicules his maker as a reflection of him, "My form is a filthy type of yours, made horrible even from the very resemblance" (95), which blurs the boundary between the self and the other just as the boundaries between the civilized and the primitive (the barbarian) get questioned and challenged in postcolonial rhetoric.

Thus, both Victor and the creature are reflections or mirrors of each other. Victor himself confesses to Walton: "I doubted at first whether I should attempt the creation of a being like *myself* or one of simpler organization . . ." (emphasis added, 81). The final product of Victor's inexorable replication of the self yields a monster! The creator and the creature have much in common. They bear a strong resemblance, and they can be taken for father and son. At times, they even mimic each other in speech. Frankenstein curses the moment and the hands that built the creature. In this regard, Paul Meehan asserts that

> The Monster and its creator are bound together by a similar fateful connection and are inextricably linked to one another as if they are matching halves of a single entity . . . Their actions mimic each other: the monster swears vengeance on his creator until Frankenstein destroys his mate, and the monster kills his bride, Frankenstein vows revenge and pursues the creature. When Frankenstein dies, the monster kills himself. (18)

In order to eliminate the roots of terrorism, much attention, it is assumed, should be paid to education and learning, not simply to offering facile solutions. Terrorist groups indoctrinate and recruit the desperate and the uneducated youth. Lack of education is a central factor in alienating young people who are more vulnerable to

being radicalized and inspired to violence. However, in *Frankenstein*, the self-learning that the creature receives makes him aware of his plight and the fact that his existence is controlled by others. From the benign De Lacey family at whose hovel he hides, the creature accomplishes his initial learning by watching and listening to this amiable and amorously connected family. He also begins to read and thus to formulate an identity and construct a narrative that raises questions about his identity and merit vis-à-vis his creator. The creature's linguistic acquisition inscribes him in a counter-discursive space and reshapes the narrative from the point of view of the overlooked, thus deconstructing and demystifying mainstream hegemonic discourse.

The creature overhears what he calls his "beloved cottagers" (102), and he declares that he found "a leathern portmanteau, containing several articles of dress and some books" (103). These sources (Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, and Goethe's *The Sorrow of Young Werther*) comprise integral pillars of Western culture, and reading them endows him with a counter-discourse, one that enables him to represent and speak for himself. Peter Brooks explains that these texts "cover the public, the private, and the cosmic realms, and three modes of love; they indeed constitute a possible Romantic cyclopedia universalis" (595). Reading these foundational texts, which stimulated in him "an infinity of new images and feelings" (103), expands the intellectual growth of the creature and makes him engage in a process of self-discovery and self-examination that provides the means to voice his grievances and sentiment of humiliation. In *Power/Knowledge*, Michel Foucault emphasizes that both power and knowledge emanate from observing others: "power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives" (1980: 30). In Foucault's words, power and knowledge are intimately interlinked:

> Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true.' Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice. Thus, there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations. (*Discipline and Punish 27*)

Foucault argues the discursive formation of power relations and the dispersion of power through state institutions. The general impression is that those with power can determine prevalent discourses and vice versa. Victor creates this monster and can present him in this fashion just as world superpowers can make their enemies the devil incarnate.

After reading some books, the creature relates, "I applied much personally to my own feelings and conditions. I found myself similar, yet at the same time strangely unlike the beings concerning whom I read" (103). Learning renders the creature eloquent with a persuasive decorum and power, but this cogent articulation does him little good, as he is incapable of being integrated to the society. This voice, gained by the voiceless through education, engenders further counterproductive responses from

the ones with whom he tries to converse. After being compelled to hear the story of the creature firsthand, Victor points out that "His words had a strange effect upon me. I compassionated 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" (149). Educated, the creature starts to ask such philosophical and existential questions as: "Who was I? What was I? Whence did I come? What was my destination?" (104). These are some typical questions children ask, and the kind of answers they receive structures their future identity and shapes them once and for all. By asking such questions, the creature is in the process of bridging the boundaries of Self and Other. Still, to his chagrin, these inquiries remain unanswered, as, since the onset of the novel, the creature suffers from lack of guidance, placelessness, and an emotional vacuum – anxieties experienced by most postcolonial subjects. The vulnerable youth who represent an easy target to harbingers of terrorism are also benighted and deluded. Just like the creature, they need guidance to transform them into lovers of life instead of death.

Bent on being treated with clemency, the creature beleaguers Victor and cogently coerces him to make him a mate who is as hideous because he knows that he will not get any sympathy from humans, who are only panicked and terrified when they behold him. The monster reveals, "my virtues will necessarily arise when I live in communion with an equal. I shall feel the affection of a sensitive being, and become linked to the chain of existence and events, from which I am now excluded" (143). Horrified, Victor accedes to the demands of the creature in order to allay the rage of the rampant monster and propitiate him, but, to the dismay of the creature, Victor, contrite, eventually makes a U-turn for fear that they will mate and reproduce. Frenetic at the destruction of the female monster, the monster, whose mind is in a seething turmoil, embarks on a vengeance mission or killing spree against Victor and his family members. Failing to establish intimacy with any of those he meets, the monster metamorphoses into a menacing criminal who is, much like his creator, isolated and alienated from everyone. Thus, Victor becomes a father figure for the creature, and from him the creature internalizes central aspects of his behaviour and character.

The monster sarcastically explains to Victor that they are two sides of the same coin: "Listen to me, Frankenstein. You accuse me of murder; and yet you would, with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature. Oh, praise the eternal justice of man!" (65). Obviously, the creature is merely mirroring and reproducing his maker much like the oppressed tend to admire, imitate, and internalize cruelty perpetrated by the central powers. This chaos engendered by the oppressed concerns "the oppressor, who is himself dehumanized because he dehumanizes others" (Freire 29). In this logic, those who support terrorist groups or who help create them are also "terrorists" just as the creator of monstrosity is complicit in this very evil act.

Victor's self-centeredness is manifested through his imagination which solicits him to transgress against the laws of nature and forces over which we have no control. Due to his obsession with his studies and experiments, concerning "natural decay and corruption of the human body" (46), he is rendered isolated from society

and family. And because of his "almost frantic impulse," Victor has "lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. It was indeed but a passing trance" (50). He states that his experiments "had taken an irrespirable hold of my imagination" (50). According to Mary Poovey, "Frankenstein's fatal impulse also has profound social consequences, for the vanity that convinces the scientist of the benevolence and power of his imagination is one expression of the essential egotistical drive to assert and extend the self – to deny not only one's own mortality but also, to use Kant'e phrase, the otherness of others" ("My Hideous Progeny" 334). Victor's unreserved egotism wreaks apocalypse on his family members, friends, and the creature destroys them all – William throttled, Justine sentenced to death through false evidence, and the monster tracks down Victor seeking revenge. Their conflicting aspirations led to the demise of both. However, it is not the oppressed who initiate this cycle of violence. As Paulo Freire forcefully indicates,

> It is not the unloved who initiate disaffection, but those who cannot love because they love only themselves. It is not the helpless, subject to terror, who initiate terror, but the violent, who with their power create the concrete situation, which begets the 'rejects of life.' It is not the tyrannized who initiate despotism, but the tyrants. It is not the despised who initiate hatred, but those who despise. It is not they whose humanity is denied them who negate humankind, but those who denied that humanity (thus negating their own as well). Force is used not by those who have become weak under the preponderance of the strong, but by the strong who have emasculated them. (55)

Hence, the terrorists can create and label "terrorists" from their privileged positions of power by way of projecting on them all negative attributes and thus feel secure in their brittle, complicit hegemonic space. In Shelley's novel, the scientist creates the monster, and this process fires back, and with terrorism it seems that those who complain about it and apparently fight against it are also potentially complicit in the existence of this phenomenon. Objecting to his maltreatment by imperial officers in J. M. Coetzee's 1980 novel *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the tortured magistrate – a former servant of this unnamed Empire – reacts: "We are at peace here…we have no enemies…unless we are the enemies" (76). Such a statement possibly captures the brittle rationale for the so-called "war on terror" Western hegemonic discourses often use when talking about their "enemies." It turns out that terrorism and this so-called war against it may well be a ploy devised by hegemonic powers to further their domination of the world and help them gain more advantages or privileges. In a sense, the age of terrorism is but an advanced stage of imperialism. While this does not preclude the actual terrorist threat of some individuals and organizations, more attention should be given to the role of the media and ideology in shaping our conception of "friends" and "monsters/enemies."

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