A QUEST FOR RECOGNITION: HEGELIAN AND LACANIAN MASTER-SLAVE DIALECTIC IN SHELLY'S *FRANKENSTEIN*

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Abstract

The two concepts of freedom and identity are among the keywords in humanities and social sciences which have attracted the attention of almost every philosopher and theorist throughout history. Each of them revisited the concepts according to her/his *Weltanschauung*. Among all, G. W. F. Hegel –the German idealist philosopher- is one of the most influential theorists, famous for his heavily complicated definitions of these two concepts. His master-slave dialectic is one of the most renowned examples regarding freedom and identity, which through the irreducibly locked reciprocal relationship, the identity of each of the two sides is formed. Following Hegel, Jacque Lacan -the contemporary French philosopher and psychoanalyst- returned to Hegel, striving to reconsider the terms and definitions in order to develop his own psychoanalytical theories. He borrowed the master-slave dialectic and shaped it in a totally different form. The 19th century British novelist, Mary Shelly, in her worldly acclaimed novel entitled *Frankenstein*, illustrates the mutual relationship between Victor and his handmade creature, which could be analyzed through the lens of Hegelian and Lacanian master-slave dialectic. This paper aims to highlight the presence of both Lacanian and Hegelian master-slave dialectic in *Frankenstein* and further, to conclude how the historical assumption of such relationships is distorted: the master is no longer a master, but a slavish being dependent (on) the slave. The discussion, eventually, would guide not only to a better understanding of the novel, but also to a better comprehension of the functioning process of the modern man's psychological structure.

Keywords: Frankenstein, Hegel, Lacan, Mary Shelly, Master-Slave Dialectic, Mirror stage

Introduction

The nineteenth and the twentieth centuries are usually called the golden ages of philosophy centered in Europe, especially Germany and France. These countries are regarded as the two different phases of advancement of the classical philosophy: Nineteenth century Germany is known for its idealist philosophers from Kant to post-Kantians, and finally leading to Hegel, and twentieth-century French continental philosophy is essentially regarded as a re-consideration of German thought from the modern man's social, political, psychological and theological vantage point. Figures like Foucault, Lacan, and Derrida, are among those whose names were heard by almost everyone and were considered as the focal theorists of a French world of philosophy. Each of these figures revisited the idealism through their own *Weltanschauung*.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the German idealist philosopher, is one of the most celebrated philosophers through western tradition along with Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and Heidegger. He is famous for his heavily speculative and complicated philosophical system. Through his system, he re-evaluated and redefined the concepts which were fundamental through the history of philosophy including *Geist*, history, freedom, and most importantly subjectivity and identity. Hegel's master-slave dialectic is one of the most renowned philosophical allegories in history, which takes on a special significance regarding his

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ingenious interpretation toward the concepts of freedom, subjectivity and identity. The mentioned allegory describes a situation in which through the irreducibly locked reciprocal relationship, the identity of both master and slave are formed.

Jacques Marie Émile Lacan, contemporary French philosopher and psychoanalyst, as a thinker who belongs to the tradition of the continental philosophy, aimed to revisit Freudian psychoanalytical theories in the light of the German Idealist philosophy, specifically that of Hegel. He structured his mirror stage theory in accordance with Hegel's master-slave dialectical theory. In other words, for Lacan, the relation of the child with her/his specular image follows the dialectical approach, which is very close to how Hegel depicted his theory of master-slave dialectic in which the role of the master and the slave is reversed. He describes this stage as one of the most pivotal stages in the formation of human ego through identification.

Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus is a gothic novel written by Mary Shelly, the late-18th-century romantic figure. It is the story of a young scientist named Victor Frankenstein who aimed to fashion a creature out of the bodies of the dead people with an unorthodox pre-scientific (outdated) sciences; however, unexpectedly he finds it a frightening, ugly monster. The monster's grotesque appearance, huge body and first move after imparting to life frightens Victor; his image haunts him, and causes a dreadful trauma for the creator. All through the novel, there is a kind of aggressive relation between the two sides until the end of the novel when finally, the mentioned animosity is ended by the death of one side: Victor.

The embryonic idea of this prominent story is formed through a mystical and prophetic experience. The experience, as Mary Shelley points out in the introduction added to the publication of 1831 edition, was at first a dream-like vision in one of the summer nights of 1816. It was manifested as a nightmare which was a consequence of a constraint and disquietude under the circumstances in Geneva and the treaty undertaken –a testament between Byron, Mary and Percy Shelly and one other guy, each to write a ghost story. She portrayed the intense atmosphere of those days as:

I felt that blank incapability of invention which is the great misery of authorship, when dull Nothing replies to our anxious invocations. Have you thought of a story? I was asking each morning, I was forced to reply with the mortifying negative. (Shelly ix)

On the morrow of that day, she put her comprehensions in the shape of a short story. Thereafter, through her husband acclamation and assistance, Percy Bysshe Shelly, she embellished the story and finally published it in 1818.

The forgoing story reminded words from Spinoza, the eminent Dutch philosopher, who lived a bit more than a century before Mary Shelley. Spinoza expressed his view in the early sections of his book *Theological-Political Treatise*:

Those who are most powerful in imagination are less good at merely understanding things; those who have trained and powerful intellects have a more modest power of imagination and have it under better control, reining it in, so to speak, and not confusing it with understanding. (De Spinoza 27)

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The monumental work of this English novelist is indicative of her incomparable imaginative power, which embedded her in a galaxy of prominent Romantic writers like Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats and etc. Maybe if Spinoza had come after her and those much the same as her, and had a chance to know them, he would have dedicated felicitous positions to them in his description about the significance of imagination, since imagination for him was a dominant and glorified faculty for prophets, the faculty which pinpointed individuals as worthy of receiving such comprehensions (prophetic experience). This novel is indicative of ingenuity, if not peerless, but certainly unrivaled as its creator, otherwise through which reasons can the contemporary celebrated figures' regard to this literary work be justified?

Theoretical framework

A. Hegel's master-slave dialectic

In order to better understand Hegelian master-slave dialectic, firstly, Hegel's term "dialectic," should be defined in details. For Hegel, dialectic is an evolutionary process towards the *Geist* or the unified self-consciousness. This process is comprised of three parts: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. "For every posited thesis, there will be an antithesis," according to Shishido, "an opposing proposition or negation" (113). The mentioned conflict between thesis and antithesis, in Zizek's words, finds its resolution through "negation of the negation" (*Slavoj Zizek* 79), named synthesis by Hegel. In his great book of philosophy, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he refers to his dialectical method as "the progressive unfolding of truth" (Hegel 2), i.e., the synthesis is not simply a combination of the thesis and the antithesis but actually it is something more than just a mere combination; it exceeds both thesis and antithesis.

In the second part of *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which is on self-consciousness, he points out that the relationship between the two self-conscious creatures, the master and the slave (or what Hegel calls lordship and bondage), follows a dialectical method, i.e., "Self-conscious creatures are essentially 'for one another,' yet without thereby losing their self-sufficiency or independence," as Siep points out, it is in "their 'identity' that they exhibit a reciprocal and multidimensional dependence" (90). The struggle, in the primary state or thesis, between the master and the slave is defined by the master's power to threat the slave to death and undermine his/her subjectivity. From this perspective, we can claim that the master is totally free and autonomous, while the slave's identity is dependent upon his/her master. In other words, if there is no master, the slave would be totally free, but he is not, only due to the presence of the master.

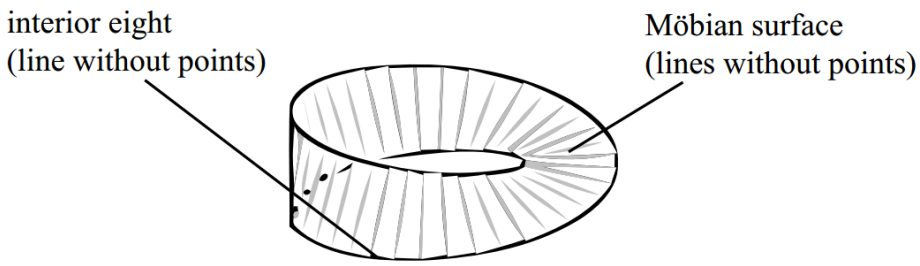
In the second state or antithesis, the thesis is negated through the master's dependence on the slave. "Whereas the master's role is to consume things, therefore, the slave's role is to work on things," Houlgate denotes, "in order to prepare them for the master's enjoyment." (96). In other words, the master needs the slave both to stabilize her/his identity and to find the object of her/his desires, but the slave does not follow the same rule. Slave depends on her/his labor, not the master, to recognize himself, and if

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"labor" is considered as a process of producing goods for the master, it would not be farfetched to take it as an equivalent for the word "creativity," and then it would be logical to say that the slave relies not upon the master to recognize her/himself, but his creativity (Krasnoff 101).

Therefore, the paradox of the dialectic, in other words, is that a positive always turns into a negative. Since the Master is dependent upon the Slave for the recognition of his identity, he can never be truly 'free'. On the other hand, the Slave is not dependent on the Master in the same way because he has another source of self-affirmation: his work. If the Slave's identity is affirmed through his work as a Slave, it is not the Master who is free but the Slave. (Homer 23)

The problem here is that this dialectical master-slave relation will never transcend to the synthesis just because the animosity between them never found any kind of resolution. Hegel points out that the only resolution in these type of relationships is the death of one side that will cause at least the metaphorical death of the other side. It means that, for instance, by the death of the slave, the master will commit suicide just because the object he needed to stabilize his identity is already lost. This mutual relation between the self and other is what Lacan reveals in his topological device called Moebius strip, in which, one is the continuation of the other and paradoxically, the other is the continuation of the self as well (*Lacanian Psychoanalysis* 70).



Moebius strip (Greenshields 48)

B. Lacan's mirror stage

In the imaginary order, according to Lacan, the child encounters his specular image for the first time, and this is the reason for calling this phase the mirror stage. It is usually between the age of six to eighteen months, i.e., the time that the child cannot yet control the movements of his body, recognizes his image as a whole and, as a matter of fact, enters the first stage of what Lacan named the "ego formation" (Movallali 149, Klages 79). The Child recognizes the image, not as the specular image of himself, but as the other. Up until the mirror stage, everything is straightforward because there is no conflict, or to put it in Lacanian term, there is no "struggle" between the child and his mirror image. The mentioned conflict follows the dialectical relation which is one of the most crucially necessary moments for the child to formulate his ego. Klages describes the conflict as the following:

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> The child sees an image in the mirror. It thinks, 'That's ME!' But it's not the child – it's only an image the child sees. The other person is there to reinforce the misrecognition with that shifting pronoun 'you' – 'Yes! It's YOU!' The other person gives the linguistic name, the signifier, that will go with the image the baby sees, and guarantees the 'reality' of the connection between the child and its image, between the signifier 'I' (or 'you') and the image, and between the picture of the whole body in the mirror and the child's sense of itself as a whole integrated being. (80)

Thus, for Lacan, ego is formed through identification with the specular image, the image which is not the child, but an alienating "illusory image of wholeness and mastery," and from there until the end of her/his life, the ego will provide the coherent understanding of the word "I" (Homer 25). The child finds/recognizes the image as complete, a unified whole, which is totally in contrast with the image the child had of her/himself, the image of the fragmented body which is not fully under the control. This recognition, in Lacanian psychoanalysis, is a "méconnaissance" (usually translated as mis-recognition) and its function is to "characterize the ego in all its structures" (Neill 131). Therefore, the image in order to constitute the structure of the ego, must engage in a dialectical relationship with the child.

For Lacan, the relation between the child and his/her specular image is dialectical. He constructed his mirror stage theory based on Hegelian master-slave dialectic. By the word dialectical Lacan means that there is an aggressive relationship in which each side strives to enslave the other. Eventually, the mirror image that should logically be the other of the child, is taking the position of the master and makes the formation of the ego of the child possible. Therefore, the child is actually becoming the slave of his slave, and all these master-slave relations that lead to the formation of the ego, as formerly mentioned, are just mis-recognitions. That mis-recognition will continue for the rest of the child's life and always enslaves him/her.

Discussion

A. Hegelian reading

Frankenstein, Shelly's masterpiece, was first published anonymously in London in January 1818. The date of the publication is important because historically, it is very close to the publication of one of the greatest philosophical books: Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which was published in 1807. Of course it will seem inaccurate, if we claim that Shelly read Hegel's *Phenomenology* and worked under the influence of it, but it would be logical to say that they were living in the same epoch and geographically almost near to each other, both in Europe, and this temporal and spatial proximity provided them both with the similar *Weltanschauung*.

Shelly's *Frankenstein* is the story of the struggle between the two self-conscious subjects, Victor and the monster, each of them struggling in order to stabilize and maintain their subjectivity. In this regard, all the novel is, in one way or another, a narration of this struggle –as is obvious, the novel is written in an epistolary form; someone is narrating a story through letters and in this case, narration is circling around the characters' egocentric

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struggle, each of them striving for stabilizing and maintaining their subjectivity. For Hegel, this state of struggle, or it would be much better if we call it aggressive act toward the other, is perfectly appealing to the senses; therefore, it would be enlightening if we reiterate the novel in the light of Hegel's master-slave dialectic.

Initially, in the first part of the novel, Victor is portrayed as someone who takes the position of the master in the master-slave dialectic. He was born in a family which was "most distinguished of that republic," and his father "was respected by all who knew him for his integrity and indefatigable attention to public business" (Shelly 40). These are the most basic evidence related to the social class of the family he was born in. Therefore, he "is a member of the master class" (Shishido 113). Moreover, through the novel, so many times the text foregrounded Victor's social class, power, and his knowledge. For instance, in the beginning of the novel, i.e. in the captain's letters to Mrs. Saville which is playing a very significant role as a persuasive power –he simply takes the position of a realist and an honest narrator who desires to talk and to inform his sister– Frankenstein described as:

> Will you smile at the enthusiasm I express concerning this divine wanderer? You would not if you saw him. You have been tutored and refined by books and retirement from the world, and you are therefore somewhat fastidious; but this only renders you the more fit to appreciate the extraordinary merits of this wonderful man. Sometimes I have endeavoured to discover what quality it is which he possesses that elevates him so immeasurably above any other person I ever knew. I believe it to be an intuitive discernment, a quick but never-failing power of judgment, a penetration into the causes of things, unequalled for clearness and precision; add to this a facility of expression and a voice whose varied intonations are soul-subduing music. (21-22)

If we take all this together, the logical evaluation will display that the surface of the novel is striving to impose on the audience the sense of "mastery" that Victor Frankenstein seems to have initially. According to this claim, the thesis of the dialectic is established.

But this is just a social aspect, there is also another aspect which is much more important and that is the individual power. Victor is a powerful guy; he attained the power through his unorthodox knowledge and solely due to this knowledge he could make himself a God-like figure. As a matter of fact, through his act of creation, Victor takes a God-like position and the creature as a created being is like a slave to him. However, throughout the novel, if looked closely, we will find that the mentioned state is negated with the antithesis. Near to the end of the novel, in the 24th chapter, the monster says:

> 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! (Shelly 235)

As we can see, the roles are reversed, i.e., the master is no longer a master, but a slavish being dependent on the slave. After the resurrection of the monster, we find Victor acting like a mad man: he was haunted by the monster since his horizon of expectation is

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broken. In other words, the creature is the least imaginable thing for Victor –a huge, ugly, dangerous being. He describes that moment as: "When I thought of him I gnashed my teeth, my eyes became inflamed, and I ardently wished to extinguish that life which I had so thoughtlessly bestowed" (Shelly 125). Throughout this sentence, we can clearly touch the unbearably painful moments that Victor was tolerating. The image of the dreadful monster was so traumatic that he could not swallow it. This trauma haunts Victor up to the end of the novel and for Hegel that is the exact meaning of the slave. In other words, Victor is a slave of his slave -the monster-, since all his acts are determined by the monster, i.e., he, by no means, can get rid of the trauma created by the monster.

The crucial point, which is necessary to be mentioned, is the interdependence of the subjects; there is an unresolvable animosity or struggle between Victor and the monster. The struggle will remain until the death of either sides. Here, at the end of the novel, the situation becomes much harsher and more unbearable that leads the subject toward *passage à l'acte* or the act of suicide. Following the death of Victor, the monster committed suicide as a response. This suicidal act is totally determinate, there is no way to get out of it, since through the death of the master, the slave's subjectivity will immediately break and there would be no source of reference to stabilize the salve's subjectivity any longer. The kind of death caused by the death of one of the sides of the irreducible mutual relation, in Lacanian terminology, is delineated as "a flight from the Other into the dimension of the real" (Dylan 140).

B. Lacanian reading

As mentioned in the previous part, Hegel points out that aggression and the need for recognition are among the common grounds which makes the reciprocal relations irreducible. Lacan took this point and revisited it in the light of Freudian psychoanalytical theory and the process of formation of the ego. The synthetical dialogue between these two giants –Hegel and Freud– made it possible for Lacan to internalize Hegelian master-slave dialectic, to bring it down at the level of human's personal psyche. Therefore, for him, master-slave dialectic is no more to provide a perspective at the social and political levels, but totally personal and psychological. In other words, Lacan is not going to talk about the dialectical relations between the master and the slave, but he is going to reconsider the process of formation of the ego in the children just by following the same methodology Hegel propounded in dialectic of master-slave.

From Lacanian perspective, the notion of the master-slave dialectic, or dialectical relations between the child and his/her specular image is not only based on aggression but also, paradoxically, based on both love and hate (or what Lacan calls the *ambivalence*) (Eyers 55). It means that the child hates the image just because it reveals the other of him/her, and at the same time, he loves it, or in Lacan words, "primary narcissism," because the specular image is not actually the other but the self, and the child needs it for the sake of self-recognition (Lacan 79). Here, we are to believe that Victor loves the monster as his hand-made creature. Taking the explanations of the novel into consideration, in fact, that love is

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the real cause of his severe failure and feeling of hatred, otherwise, why should somebody get disappointed and sick without finding that the lovely creature which was imagined, is the unimaginable ugly monster? Alternatively, how is it possible for someone to hate somebody after a sudden break of expectation without loving him/her? Therefore, he loves the creature only because he needs him to recognize himself, and it is a defendable claim behind his act of creation. In other words, he knows that "the absence of image leads to a failure," the coordinated self will be lost (Rose 11). In this sense, his act of creation, as it seems, is a quest for self-recognition, a quest that doomed to failure.

For Victor, as it is mentioned, act of creating the monster is just a quest, a desire to restore his un-identified identity. That is why he cannot find an image of himself as a whole integrated being and is in desperate need of it. The reason for Victor's feeling inferior to others is that he was an outcast in the world of science. His professor said, you "really spent your time in studying such nonsense?" (Shelly 61). It means that his old fashion alchemy could not provide him with a sense of wholeness and mastery and therefore, he needed to prove himself through something else, through some unorthodox experiences such as alchemy, or to prove that the scientific system he believed in was still working and contributing.

Therefore, Victor is striving to construct his identity, to form his ego through creating a human being as an image of himself in order to attain self-recognition through the other. He desired to see his handmade creature more powerful, more beautiful, and more autonomous, but he finds it fragmented and ugly. What haunts him is the fragmented image which he cannot identify and consequently, he cannot benefit from in order to attain self-recognition. Throughout the novel, the narrator reveals that Victor is an outcast from both society and family, a lover of the outdated scientific theories, not fully accepted through the university discourses, all this put together, unconsciously push him to seek a way to construct his ego, not through the familial and societal relationships but through a specific manner which is defined in his own special vocabulary and enacted in his own unique way.

Now is the proper time to challenge the orthodox interpretation of the novel and to deconstruct the historical-conventional view toward it. For Derrida, this process means "taking seriously the elements that a standard reading disregards, overlooks, or edits out" (Johnson 346). Some questions would be helpful in order to foreshadow the changing of the lens: what if Victor, a man who is narrating the story to Captain Walton, was a mad man in the real world and could not take the title of the 'reliable narrator'? Or what if Captain Walton, who is telling the story through writing letters to his sister, Mrs. Saville, is only retelling the story based on what was only happening in his imagination?

In order to find an answer to these questions, firstly, I need to claim that there is enough evidence to prove that the story is thoroughly fictitious. Therefore, here I am to show that there is no real monster outside but it is just a delusion of the real monster that haunts Victor. From this peculiar perspective, Victor may be suffering from the "paranoid Schizophrenia": paranoid because his delusion is not fragmented, but is following a life-

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structure as an alternative to the real life and schizophrenia since his connection with the real life is totally broken. If we take this point for granted, then all the used-to-believed meaning of the novel is subverted.

One of the strongest evidence proving that the whole story of creating a monster is a fiction is the time that William, Victor's six years old brother is killed in the woods. In the time of the murdering, Victor was in Germany, at the University of Ingolstadt, when his father sent a letter and wanted him back to Geneva for William's funeral. In the way of his journey, he goes to the mountains where the murdering had previously taken place. It demonstrates that he knows where his brother is killed, but the question is how? This kind of information must usually belong to the murderer, not someone like Victor who was living in Germany, never to have returned home for at least several years.

The other reason which is not less important than the former is that at the moment of the death of his wife, Elizabeth, Victor was in an inn, and this point is confusing since he knew that the monster was going to kill Elizabeth the night after the wedding (the monster had formerly threatened). The monster threatened Victor's wife that he would kill her in the wedding night and Victor was obviously well aware of it. This threat was not merely wording, for the monster had previously engaged in murderous activities by killing Victor's brother, and it was not something to be neglected. As a matter of fact, Victor never ignored it; as he says "He had vowed to be with me on my wedding-night" (Shelly 266). However, the act of taking his bride to another city and then leaving her alone and going to an inn is not justifiable by no means. Victor, having done so, is to be condemned for he has never, during the novel, proved to be an absentminded figure; moreover, he is educated, very precise and sharply committed in his daily works. Considering these facts, how should his actions be justified? Through this logic, it would not be farfetched if one assumes him as the first and foremost suspect of the crimes.

The points already mentioned are not the only inconsistencies of the narration, but these two pieces of evidence are seemingly enough to demonstrate the unreliability of one of the two narrators. In each of these cases, the result would be different. If we take Victor as an unreliable narrator who is narrating his so-called factual life to Captain, we definitely can say, as it was previously mentioned, that he is a paranoid schizophrenic. But the point is that, we can only accept Victor as an unreliable narrator, only if we consider the captain as an unreliable narrator too. It means that we cannot simply claim that Victor is an unreliable figure due to minor evidence as the support. Captain Walton in the fourth letter to her sister points out that he has seen the monster who was sitting "in the sledge and guid[ing] the dogs" (Shelly 30); however, the audience is not too innocent and inexperienced to believe him completely since his descriptions are not lucid enough to persuade the reader. And also there is enough evidence to prove that captain was a well-read man, very imaginative and for some period of time, was dreaming about writing a fiction. In the beginning of his first letter to his sister, he points out that his faculty of imagination is powerful enough to create: "Inspirited by this wind of promise, my daydreams become more fervent and vivid" (18). And then he points out:

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> These visions faded when I perused, for the first time, those poets whose effusions entranced my soul and lifted it to heaven. I also became a poet and for one year lived in a paradise of my own creation; I imagined that I also might obtain a niche in the temple where the names of Homer and Shakespeare are consecrated. You are well acquainted with my failure and how heavily I bore the disappointment. But just at that time I inherited the fortune of my cousin, and my thoughts were turned into the channel of their earlier bent. (19-20)

Consequently, it seems possible that he was somewhat influenced by the narrated story of Victor and the monster, and then fantasizes that the sledge is guided by the monster.

If Captain Walton is taken as an unreliable narrator, there is no need of Victor even as a minor character. In this case, the narrated story would be totally a fiction, and Walton is a captain sitting in his ship, striving to rely on his imagination to amuse both his sister and himself. From this perspective, we can compare Captain Walton to Mary Shelly, the author of this novel, in a way that both want to present the product of their imagination realistically, and make it believable for their audience. The other point that is much more significant here is the reason why Captain is in need of writing a novel? Writing fiction only for the sake of sheer amusement does not make sense; logic says that there is more in writing fictions than is assumed. One possible assumption can be considered as relevant to the captain's sister: probably she was in a bad mood due to hypothesized problems and that Captain was trying to alleviate her pain by distracting her from the misery into the fiction. However, there is no evidence to claim so and by evaluating the probable circumstances, these assumptions seem verifiable along with other possible ones.

If the previous assumption is not evidentially supportable, therefore, it would be theoretically more acceptable if we consider that the captain is not actually writing the novel for the sake of his sister, but himself. Maybe he is suffering from the same psychological problem as Victor. If we accept this point, his task of writing a fiction is a quest for finding himself. The novel for him is a quest, to realize himself, a quest for self-recognition. It is, as a matter of fact, very similar to what Freud says about the poets or any other types of literary figures: the task of writing is a journey, similar to the act of psychoanalyzing, playing a therapeutic role. Captain Walton, in the second letter to his sister, emphasizes the significant role of writing in a therapeutical strategy. He says:

I have no friend, Margaret: when I am glowing with the enthusiasm of success, there will be none to participate my joy; if I am assailed by disappointment, no one will endeavour to sustain me in dejection. I shall commit my thoughts to paper, it is true. (22-23)

Therefore, the loneliness is the object that causes him a desire to write; he wants someone to listen for whom to express himself. Mrs. Saville, for Captain Walton, is taking the position of the psychoanalyst, who listens to the expressions of the analysand, and through revealing things to her, he recovers himself and stabilizes his identity.

Conclusion

Having read the novel in an unorthodox manner, we find that both of the narrators of the novel are in a struggle with their mirror image till the end of their lives. In fact, from

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one perspective, the captain is struggling to recognize himself, to formulate and stabilize his ego based on a fiction which is to be produced. In this sense, not only Walton is not the origin of the work of art, but also his ego is the product of the narrated fiction. In other words, although it seems that he is a novelist, a god-like figure that the novel comes out of the complex structure of his mind, the novel is playing the role of a mirror, the object he needs to find himself as a whole and integrated being.

From another perspective, if Victor Frankenstein is the narrator, as any other human being who steps in, to put in Marx terminology, the modern alienating world, he needs to find a way to construct his ego and adapt it to the current circumstance. Whether the story told by Victor is real or not, the result is the same. If it is only a fiction, he is following the same strategy as Walton, otherwise the aim is the same but the strategy is different. In the latter case, he creates the monster, but the point is that through the first dreadful eye contact with it, Victor's ego was constructed but not in line with the expected egocentric result. From this perspective, this novel is a story of a quest for self-recognition, a man's quest to find himself, to form his ego and to explore himself through an ideal image. But Shelly thoughtfully challenges this idea by implicitly asking what if somebody sees his or her real image, not the ideal one?

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