



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

English Language and Literature Programme

**MONSTERISING THE OTHER: MONSTROSITY IN MARY
SHELLEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN OR THE MODERN PROMETHEUS*
AND JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *FRAN-KISS-STEIN: A LOVE
STORY***

Hayal ŞAHİN

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2026

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OR THE MODERN PROMETHEUS AND JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *FRAN-KISS-STEIN: A*
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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

The jury finds that Hayal Şahin has on the date of 14.01.2026 successfully passed the defense examination and approves her Master's Thesis titled "Monsterising the Other: Monstrosity in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* and Jeanette Winterson's *Fran-kiss-stein: A Love Story*".

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ETİK BEYAN

Bu alıřmadaki bütn bilgi ve belgeleri akademik kurallar erevesinde elde ettiđimi, grsel, iřitsel ve yazılı tm bilgi ve sonuları bilimsel ahlak kurallarına uygun olarak sunduđumu, kullandıđım verilerde herhangi bir tahrifat yapmadıđımı, yararlandıđım kaynaklara bilimsel normlara uygun olarak atıfta bulunduđumu, tezimin kaynak gsterilen durumlar dıřında zgn olduđunu, **Prof. Dr. Aytl ZM** danıřmanlıđında tarafımdan retildiđini ve Hacettepe niversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstits Tez Yazım Ynergesine gre yazıldıđını beyan ederim.

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ABSTRACT

ŞAHİN, Hayal. *Monsterising the Other: Monstrosity in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus and Jeanette Winterson's Fran-kiss-stein: A Love Story*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2026.

In this study, two science fiction novels, Mary Shelley's Gothic classic *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* (1818) and Jeanette Winterson's *Fran-kiss-stein: A Love Story* (2019), which opens the door to a new era in technology, are analysed in the context of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's monster theory. Cohen's theory suggests that the fear of monsters and all monsterised beings represents some rooted cultural anxieties that pervade societies. Science fiction is associated with the effects of an actual, possible or completely imaginary scientific development on individuals and societies, and it presents futuristic concepts, unimaginable developments and nonhumans such as aliens, vampires, zombies and monsters. All these fantastic elements can also be interpreted as symbols that mirror inner dynamism in societies when viewed from a different perspective. Considering monstrosity as a symbol that stands for the Other in societies, Shelley's notorious modern monster with his hideous appearance and Winterson's posthuman monsters, projected through the concept of disembodiment, such as artificial intelligence and full brain emulation, can be scrutinised in the context of the fear of the Other existing society at that very moment, rather than approaching them as anxieties arising from mere technological developments. In addition to the highlighted monsters that emerge in the novels, the individuals who are marginalised, alienated and monsterised can also be deciphered, over the issues of gender, race, ethnicity, gender identity and disembodiment. It is emphasised in the study that one of the main factors that fuel all kinds of othering within society is the traditional rhetoric based on binary thinking that hinders diversity and polyphony. Accordingly, these two novels illustrate that while the Others of the nineteenth and the twenty-first centuries differ to some extent, the ostracisation of the victims and the suppression of female voice, diversity, nonconformity and hybridity remain unchanged. In this regard, this comparative study that focuses on Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Winterson's *Fran-kiss-stein* through the lens of Cohen's monster theory argues that monsters created by society are significant in reading people's fears, desires, prejudices and limits, regardless of the era, as Others in societies have always been labelled as the monster upon any transgression of cultural boundaries imposed on them.

Keywords

Frankenstein, *Fran-kiss-stein*, Jeanette Winterson, Mary Shelley, monster theory, otherness, posthuman

ÖZET

ŞAHİN, Hayal. *Ötekini Canavarlaştırmak: Mary Shelley'nin Frankenstein Ya Da Modern Prometheus'ında ve Jeanette Winterson'ın Fran-kiss-stein: Bir Aşk Hikayesi'nde Canavarlık*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2026.

Bu çalışmada, iki bilim kurgu romanı, Mary Shelley'nin Gotik klasiği *Frankenstein, Ya Da Modern Prometheus* (1818) ve Jeanette Winterson'ın teknolojiye yeni bir çağın kapısını aralayan *Fran-kiss-stein: Bir Aşk Hikayesi* (2019) romanı Jeffrey Jerome Cohen'in canavar teorisi üzerinden incelenmektedir. Bu teori, canavarlara ve canavarlaştırılan varlıklara duyulan korkunun, topluma sirayet etmiş bazı köklü kaygıları temsil ettiğini öne sürmektedir. Bilim kurgu gerçek, olası veya tamamen hayali bir bilimsel gelişmenin bireyler ve toplumlar üzerindeki etkilerini gözler önüne sermekte ve fütüristik kavramları, hayal etmesi zor gelişmeleri ve uzaylılar, vampirler, zombiler ve canavarlar gibi insan olmayan varlıkları konu etmektedir. Tüm bu fantastik unsurlar, farklı bir açıdan bakıldığında mevcut toplumun iç dinamiklerini yansıtan semboller olarak da yorumlanabilir. Canavarlık toplumlarda Ötekini temsil eden bir simge olarak ele alındığında, Shelley'nin korkunç görünümüyle nam salan modern canavarı ve Winterson'ın yapay zekâ ve tam beyin öykünmesi gibi bedensizlik kavramı üzerinden yansıtılan insan sonrası canavarları, salt teknolojik gelişmelerden kaynaklanan kaygılar olarak ele alınmak yerine, toplumda var olan Öteki korkusu bağlamında irdelenebilir. Romanlarda öne çıkan canavarların yanı sıra ötekileştirilen, yabancılaştırılan, canavarlaştırılan diğer bireyler de cinsiyet, ırk, etnik köken, cinsiyet kimliği ve bedensizlik meseleleri üzerinden çözümlenebilir. Çalışmada, toplumdaki her türlü ötekileştirmeyi besleyen en büyük etkenlerden birinin, çeşitliliği ve çok sesliliği engelleyen ikili düşünceye dayalı geleneksel söylemler olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Bu iki roman göstermektedir ki on dokuzuncu ve yirmi birinci yüzyılların Ötekileri bir dereceye kadar farklılık gösterse de mağdurların toplumdan dışlanması ve kadın sesinin, çeşitliliğin, uyumsuzluğun ve hibritliğin baskılanması meseleleri hâlâ benzeşmektedir. Bu doğrultuda Cohen'in canavar teorisi merceğinden Shelley'nin *Frankenstein*'i ile Winterson'un *Frank-kiss-stein*'ine odaklanan bu karşılaştırmalı çalışma, hangi çağda olursa olsun bir toplumun yarattığı canavarların toplumun korkularını, arzularını, önyargılarını ve sınırlarını okumada hâlâ önemli olduğunu çünkü Ötekilerin onlara çizilen kültürel sınırları ihlal etmeleri durumunda toplumda her daim canavar olarak etiketlendiklerini savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Frankenstein, Fran-kiss-stein, Jeanette Winterson, Mary Shelley, canavar teorisi, ötekilik, insan sonrası

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGI Artificial General Intelligence

AI Artificial Intelligence

INTRODUCTION

It is not our differences
that divide us,
it is our inability to recognize, accept,
and celebrate those differences.

-From Audre Lorde's "Learning from the 60s"

This thesis examines the novels *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* and *Frankenstein: A Love Story* within the context of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's monster theory and argues that the monster engendered and then ostracised by society is important in conceiving the fears, anxieties, foibles and prejudices of society as otherness connotes monstrosity within societal frameworks. The aim of this study is to reveal how the fear of monsters and all monster-like creatures in the selected novels represents some social, cultural and political anxieties that permeate society within the related time periods. Cohen's monster theory, as a channel where the voice of the Other and the beyond can be heard, contains the common trigger of many social problems, that is ostracisation of difference of any kind, and it provides a basis for individuals to hold a mirror to themselves and understand how they monsterise differences.

In this study, through a detailed analysis of the characters in the novels together with the social, cultural, political and ideological background of the time periods in which the related novels were written, some social facts and internalised thought patterns that foster hierarchy, binary thinking and othering will be underlined. Considering Cohen's monster theory, nineteenth and twenty-first century European society's resistance to difference will be deciphered, as will how individuals who do not comply with the standards of dominating thought patterns are tried to be monsterised and annihilated be emphasised. When monstrosity is considered as a symbol representing the Other, and the other implied monsters in the subtext are deciphered, Shelley's modern monster, notorious for his repulsive appearance, and Winterson's posthuman monster, which appears as

disembodiment, as exemplified by artificial intelligence, artificial general intelligence and full brain emulation, can be examined in the context of the fear of the Other, rather than being regarded as anxieties stemming solely from technological developments.

The study will also highlight that while in *Frankenstein*, othering is presented through gender, race and foreignness, in *Fran-kiss-stein*, in addition to gender, othering is applied through current issues such as gender diversity, AI, AGI and full brain emulation. Both novels are similar in their central ideas of life, creator, creation and responsibility, and themes of human identity-otherness and gender-body politics. However, they differ in features such as form, setting, tone, characters, narrative structure, narrative voice, perspective on science, and focus on gender and identity as they were penned in different centuries. In addition, while Shelley presents monstrosity as a direct result of rejection, neglect and lack of love, implying that the actual monster is the creator who abandons his creation, Winterson sees monstrosity as an unstable, fluid identity that challenges norms, by revolving around issues of gender, identity, technology, and disembodiment in the posthuman world. Therefore, it is also possible to observe the evolving perception of monstrosity over two centuries through these two novels. Winterson attempts to answer the question Shelley sought to respond: — ‘What happens when a created being is left unloved and uneducated?’— and transforms it into the fears of the twenty-first century. Winterson questions what life, love, and identity will be like when there is no longer a need for the conventional human form, and argues that humanity will determine its own destiny, for better or worse. She suggests that humanity will either dismantle the issue of otherness or create new Others depending on how technology is used and guided.

Despite being written in different periods both *Frankenstein* and *Fran-kiss-stein* question what it feels like to be human and to be the Other. They also reveal the fact that Others have always been internally perceived as the monster, and upon any violation of cultural boundaries imposed upon them they are easily declared as monsters. Winterson takes Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, which was kneaded with the throes of the era’s adjustment to the swift social, political and scientific transformations, and reimagines it in a period of posthumanism, artificial intelligence and gender fluidity. Both Shelley and Winterson create misfit monsters, who challenge social norms and strike fear into the society they

live in. It is observed that though some concerns have changed over the course of time, the link between monstrosity and otherness still persists.

In the academic literature, several studies have examined *Frankenstein* and *Fran-kiss-stein*. Some of these studies include Özlem Gülgün Güner's "Visual Adaptations of the English Novel: Film Adaptations of the Novel *Frankenstein* – *Frankenstein*, 1931, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, 1994" (2009), in which she highlights that *Frankenstein* is underpinned by a feminist perspective. In addition, reading *Frankenstein* as a criticism of patriarchy and gender norms, Deniz Göksu analyses the novel through the lens of Haraway's Cyborg Theory in "A Feminist Subversion of Gender Binarism on Cyborgian Grounds Through a Critical Analysis of Cyberpunk Fiction: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Marge Piercy's *Body of Glass*" in 2019. On the other hand, Devin Ens emphasises the inevitable lack of the ethics of care as women are excluded from reproduction and care process in "Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as a Defense of the Ethics of Care" in 2014. Analysing *Frankenstein* through a Lacanian perspective, Selen Baranoğlu Çevik deciphers the novel's underlying themes of desire, sexuality and alienation in "An Analysis of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Robert L. Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in Relation to Lacanian Criticism" in 2008. Sercan Uzun, however, examines *Frankenstein* and *Fran-kiss-stein* from a transhumanist and posthumanist standpoint, revealing the transformation of humanity together with technology in "Posthuman and Transhuman Monstrosities: The Ontological and Techno-evolutionary Journeys of 'Human' from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* to Jeanette Winterson's *Fran-kiss-stein: A Love Story*" in 2024.

In this regard, although *Frankenstein* and *Fran-kiss-stein* both have been the subject of many academic studies, some studies have analysed them by focusing on one aspect of monstrosity, and some studies have examined *Frankenstein* or *Fran-kiss-stein* together with other novels that are not included in this study. Therefore, there remains a gap in the literature that the present thesis aims to fill in with an extensive comparative analysis that binds these two novels through a theoretical eye that approaches monstrosity as an instrument of othering by illuminating multiple aspects of monstrosity within cultural context. For such a study, Cohen's monster theory provides a valuable framework for evaluating these two novels by suggesting that monsters are cultural bodies that reflect

society's fears, weaknesses, prejudices and limits, presenting monstrosity as a cultural output. Taking all the aforementioned information into consideration, this thesis aims to decipher how the Other is rendered monstrous in *Frankenstein* and *Fran-kiss-stein*, and how any difference, be it race, class or gender, has been equated with monstrosity throughout the ages.

The first chapter intends to present a theoretical framework and a historical context for the novels that will be discussed in the study. Cohen's "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)" will be scrutinised, and each of the seven theses he presents in his seminal work will be clarified individually. Considering the social, political, cultural and historical backgrounds of the periods when the related novels were written, the impact of the periods' socio-cultural and political climate on the issue of othering and the Others, in other words, the monsters each period has generated, will be analysed.

The second chapter aims to scrutinise Shelley's *Frankenstein* through the lens of Cohen's monster theory and seven theses, by focusing specifically on the ones that concern othering and monstrosity. It will be emphasised that a creature who is not even given a name by his creator, just because he does not conform to accepted standards of beauty, or rather cannot conform to them as he is too far from resembling Leonardo da Vinci's The Vitruvian Man, is left unloved, alienated and therefore monsterised, even though being different has not been his own choice in the first place. It will also be highlighted how the life adventure of this creature, pushed to do evil by society, is similar to the situation of the real-time Others of the period, namely women, foreigners and Black people.

In the third chapter, Winterson's *Fran-kiss-stein* will be examined in light of Cohen's monster theory and seven theses, giving greater emphasis on the ones related to othering and monstrosity. Thematically changing, yet still persistent othering will be highlighted by identifying the parallels and divergences of the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries' Others. The issue of otherness is presented in this novel through disembodiment, which has the potential to help eliminate discrimination related to body politics if AI is trained appropriately. Othering due to body discourse such as skin colour, gender and gender identity seems pointless and loses its credit in the face of a posthuman world order, in which disembodiment exists. It is with this foresight that Winterson takes over Shelley's

novel from where she left off, blending the concerns of both the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries and offering a solution to the centuries-old problem of otherness through *Fran-kiss-stein*.

At the end of this study, it will be concluded that when analysed from a Cohenian perspective, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Jeanette Winterson's *Fran-kiss-stein* mirror the anxieties and fears of societies that cling tightly to normative thought patterns, as the monsters they engender reveal. In other words, it can be said that individuals who have adapted themselves to the dominant mindsets marginalise anyone who differs from them, and they do not let them exist with their own uniqueness. Although the individuals who are compatible with societal norms envy these taboo-free, revolutionary monsters deep inside, they do not hesitate to mistreat, bully and destroy them. In short, the monster, which is the product of society, literally reflects the prejudices of the dominant ideologies, which is in line with Cohen's monster theory, as the selected novels showcase.

CHAPTER 1

MONSTROUS BODIES IN *FRANKENSTEIN* AND *FRAN-KISS-STEIN*: A THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Do monsters really exist?
Surely they must,
For if they did not, how could we?

-From J. J. Cohen's "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)"

In his "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)" (1996) Jeffrey Jerome Cohen treats the monster as a cultural output and scrutinises it in relation to the culture generating it. He offers a new approach to reading cultures through the monsters they beget, proposing that monsters reveal a much deeper cultural truth than basic history. For this reason, he criticises two fundamental doctrines of cultural studies: the emphasis on historical specificity and the belief that all knowledge is localised. Cohen rejects the idea of historical specificity, arguing that monsters can move beyond historical moments. He asserts that although a particular context leads to the formation of monsters, they reappear over time revealing enduring cultural anxieties with all their durability, mobility and trans-historicity. Cohen also challenges the focus on localised knowledge by referring to the inherent hybridity and mobility of monsters as metaphoric figures that have the capability to bat around globally.

In addition to his challenge to two fundamental tenets of cultural studies, Cohen argues that history, often viewed as an ultimate and definitive source of meaning, should be viewed as just one text among many others. Cohen declares his opinion related to the composition of culture and history in his theses by arguing that "[w]e live in an age that has rightly given up on Unified Theory, an age when we realize that history (like 'individuality,' 'subjectivity,' 'gender' and 'culture') is composed of a multitude of

fragments, rather than of smooth epistemological wholes” (“Monster Culture” 3). As this statement reveals, for Cohen Unified Theory, the idea that a single explanation can clarify a wide range of issues, has lost its relevance because it has been proven by experience that history and culture are made up of fragmented pieces, not “epistemological wholes” (3). Hence, he declares his aspiration to introduce these fragments altogether by building “an unassimilated hybrid, a monstrous body” (3). Instead of offering a fixed theory, Cohen presents seven ideas so as to comprehend cultures via the monsters they engender by also focalising specific cultural movements. Building his arguments on the idea that the monster is the epitome of any kind of dissimilarity, Cohen argues that the monster reveals the cultural values, tendencies, worries, biases and fears of society, and that “the monster exists only to be read” (4).

Since early human history, individuals have been subjected to some form of othering owing to differences of any kind they possess. As this study deals especially with the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries, it can be argued that from the nineteenth century to the present, individuals have been marginalised due to differences such as gender, status, social class, race or gender identity. All these disparities and how they are alienated and belittled have been the subject of many studies and discussed separately through a variety of theories. In psychoanalytic monster theories, as in Jung’s, Freud’s and Kristeva’s, to illustrate, individual psychology is highlighted. Feminist monster theories, on the other hand, build gender-centred arguments, as does Creed in *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (1993). Postcolonial monster theorists, such as Said and Bhabha, view the monster as the representation of the colonised. In contrast, posthumanist monster theorists, as exemplified by Haraway and Braidotti, focus on non-human beings as main figures, highlighting that the monster is the harbinger of the annihilation of anthropocentrism. Each of the theories mentioned above provides an insight into one dimension of monstrosity; on the other hand, Cohen brings all these aspects together in his monster theory. Since Cohen’s monster theory is quite broad in scope, as it regards any kind of difference as an excuse of othering, it could gather the content and argument of many theories under one roof within a wide-ranging cultural framework. Muyargas et al. argue that Monster Theory is a methodological instrument that deals with monstrosity and othering in heterogeneous contexts, and that those who are labelled as the monster

might be “the queers, trans, non-normative identities, non-binary, (dis)abled, ageing, people of colour [and] norm transgressors” (3). As can be deduced from the arguments of Mueyargaz et al., on the scope of Monster Theory, it has the ability to integrate the concerns of various theories such as Queer Theory, Feminist Theory, Critical Race Theory and Disability Theory. As a scholar who helped the study of monsters become recognised as a credible theoretical framework, Cohen deals with the relationship between otherness and monstrosity in his “Monster Culture (Seven Theses)”, and he enables the analysis of monstrosity through an interdisciplinary perspective in diverse contexts.

In line with Cohen’s monster theory, which is based on understanding cultures through the monsters they create, *Frankenstein* and *Fran-kiss-stein* can be situated among the exemplary novels of English Literature dealing with the theme of otherness and monstrosity though penned in two distant ages. While Shelley’s notorious nameless monster is bullied and despised due to his physical difference, in Winterson’s novel the monstrous body is altered into posthuman concepts. The inability to accept and embrace in-betweenness or difference particularly due to the dominance of traditional rhetoric based on binary thinking such as human-non-human, animate-inanimate, male-female or simply us-them which pervade society, makes the fear of monsters in these two novels similar. In other words, hybridity, non-binarism and unpredictability appear as elements of fear which causes the marginalisation of the feared, the unpredictable and the unclear. In support of these primary monsters, there are some secondary monsters implied in both novels, and a thorough reading and evaluation of these monsterised subjects carries the issue of othering to a deeper level.

Both in *Frankenstein* and *Fran-kiss-stein*, female characters, who are gendered Others of the patriarchal society, are monsterised when they act outside the traditional female archetype. In Winterson’s novel, Shelley’s passive female characters are replaced with sex robots, who are obedient like Shelley’s female characters with extra sexual appeal, in accordance with the era’s phallogocentric expectations. In *Frankenstein*, there is not even a single female character who does not comply with societal norms. This idealised, silenced and pacified woman image is declared as compliant in the subtext, but those who go against the patriarchal order, who question, who rebel, and who dare to step into the male

domain, in a way, become monsters of the phallogentric system. The absence of such unconventional female characters in *Frankenstein* is the conscious choice of Shelley, for she wants to depict the spirit of the nineteenth century, when self-confident, brave, and independent women, who dare to make themselves visible, are criminalised. Therefore, though Shelley refrains from placing female characters who act against patriarchal interests into her novel, the reader understands in which conditions the female characters would be monstrous from the subtext of the novel. Moreover, because of their bodily difference both Shelley's nameless monster and Winterson's non-binary trans doctor Ry are mistreated. In the patriarchal system built on binary opposites, clarity is expected from the body, and for this reason, Ry, who has both feminine and masculine characteristics, and the unnamed monster, who has characteristics that are both similar to and different from the conventional human form, are despised. That Ry defies patriarchal interests with their violation of gender binaries causes them to be assumed as the monster. In other words, in both novels, the one who is different or socially incompatible cannot be positioned in society and is labelled as the monster and excluded.

Having introduced the purpose and content of this study briefly, it would be appropriate to give some information about the periods in which the selected novels were written. Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* around a tumultuous time of political unrest. Starting in 1803, Napoleonic Wars lasted for twelve years, and Britain was defeated in the War of 1812 on American territory. In addition to the turbulent foreign affairs, there was a sense of unrest and tension stemming from social and political injustice within British society. One of the most tense and trumpeted issues of the period was the abolition of slave trade. Although slavery had been abolished in Britain in 1807, it still existed in some of its colonies, which made people question the meaning of morality and conscience. That a group of unarmed peaceful protestors, mostly working-class men and women, who tried to express their aspiration for social and political reform, was killed by British soldiers sparked off a political unrest, and this bloody incident was called Peterloo Massacre (1819) (Pidd n.pag.). Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote his poem *The Masque of Anarchy* following this nonviolent resistance and its heartbreaking consequences and encouraged the society he is the part of with the following lines:

Rise like Lions after slumber

In unvanquishable number,
 Shake your chains to earth like dew
 Which in sleep had fallen on you –
 Ye are many – they are few. (151-155)

No matter how much the last line “Ye are many- they are few” impresses people, Mary Shelley feared that the majority would not be able to overcome the overwhelming minority, namely the elite. As Winterson states on a YouTube channel named The Waterstones, “you could rise up as they did at Peterloo. Of course, you can’t now because everything has changed. It doesn’t matter how many we are because the elites have the power in a way that Mary Shelley was terrified of” (1:22-1:35). As Winterson’s statements convey, the same fear of being repressed by power holders still haunt people of the twenty-first century, and this is what she relates to her own time.

Alongside this political turmoil, the seeds of the long-lasting Industrial Revolution (1750-1900), which led to vast changes in technology, science and economy, were being sown, subtly transforming the society. Especially in a scientific sense, such huge developments were being observed that the study of galvanism, for instance, made people question the nature of life and death, and in a way transfixed the society. Advancements in alchemy and early theories of evolution combined with many other scientific novelties such as blood transfusion startled people and cast doubt on their dogmatic ideas.

Due to the oppressive atmosphere women were expected to be a willing part, late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries played a crucial role in reimagining the society’s viewpoint of gender roles. During these periods, many thinkers incited an intellectual change with their works that challenged traditional discourses. Amidst escalating debates about nature, science and the role of the individual in society and in the universe, together with the anxiety led by increasing scientific experimentations and limits of the humanity, novel questionings and mind-blowing arguments were introduced to society by many intellectuals. To illustrate, Mary Shelley’s mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, pioneered “English-language feminism” and challenged the orthodox thinking on the woman’s function in society through her works such as *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (1792) written amidst the Enlightenment era

(Ford 189). By defying the notion that men are superior in comparison to women, and women need to embrace the role assigned to them, Wollstonecraft shook the patriarchal agenda with her following statements:

[W]omen are told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness or temper, outward obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man; and should they be beautiful, everything else is needless, for, at least, twenty years of their lives. (45)

At a time when gender roles were so entrenched, she defended the idea that both genders should have equal status and opportunities, by emphasising her wish to see women “as a whole ... instead of a part of man” (80). She attributed the reason why women were weaker than men in matters such as intellectuality, decision-making, and management to differences in upbringing rather than biological ones. She wanted to convince particularly women themselves that women could be at least as competent as men in social and business life, if equal educational opportunities are provided. Wollstonecraft problematised the way women were seen as extensions of men or mere objects of their desire rather than as autonomous individuals. Just as Simone De Beauvoir’s observation in *The Second Sex* (1946) “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (273), Wollstonecraft brought forward the performativity of gender roles more than one and a half century before her and enriched the intellectual arena.

Besides the oppressive atmosphere created by rigid gender binaries, class and race issues in the nineteenth century also led to social division and hierarchy. Until scientific evidence showed the opposite, most European societies viewed Black people as an inferior race that needed to be controlled and naturally to be enslaved. Even celebrated Enlightenment thinkers such as Immanuel Kant and George Hegel reflected their discriminatory ideas in their works. As stated by Ndole, Magero and Namwambah in “Contradiction in Kant’s Hierarchical Racism and Egalitarian Humanism,” in Kant’s idea “other races, except the white race, are unable to acquire moral maturity due to a lack of talent (a gift of nature)” (33). In addition, writers such as Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchase portrayed Black people as exotic creatures, justifying and normalising their exploitation, which also helped shape the society’s perspectives of them (Malchow 93).

Hence, according to the biographer Miranda Seymour, the lonely and deserted monster in *Frankenstein* was created after Mary Shelley observed African slaves toiling and being exploited on the wharves of Bristol, one of the prime slave ports of the time (Martyris n.pag.). In other words, Shelley might have implicitly addressed slavery, one of the resonant issues of the period, through this abandoned creature and warned society about the violent and brutal outcomes of repressed pain, through the transformation of a naïve, innocent and well-intentioned being into a monster. Likewise, the French Revolution caused fearful scenarios to form in the minds of the upper classes because deep down they were aware of how class and race discrimination oppressed some segments of society and they knew that one day these people would rise to demand their rights. Considering that Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* a few decades after the French Revolution, she might have made implicit references to such political issues in *Frankenstein*, too (Malchow 94).

According to Malchow “[i]t is commonly accepted that Gothic literary genre of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries represents ... the central tensions of an age of social liberation and political revolution” (91). Although it is more common to approach Gothic Literature in relation to the era’s political and social transformation by touching upon the themes dealing with unfair persecution, the depiction of the proletariat, and early feminist initiations, it is also possible to interpret it from a racial perspective besides Marxist and Feminist ones (Malchow 90). Malchow argues that in her portrayal of the monster Shelley might have been inspired by the attitude of the age toward the non-white, especially the complicated feelings caused by the news of “the abolition of slavery in West Indies,” the anxiety of Luddite Proletariat among middle class people or Mary Shelley’s own trauma related to her pregnancy and delivery (91-92). In Malchow’s words “the peculiar horror of the monster owes much of its emotional power to this hidden, or ‘coded’ aspect” (92), and he attributes its continued popularity in later years to the affinity of this coded aspect with evolving and maturing contemporary representations of racial and ethnic Others. In other words, although the reason why Frankenstein’s monster is such a powerful element of disdain and fear is not explicitly attributed to his racial difference, when viewed from a different perspective, it can be sensed that such a reading is not improbable.

Although the Victorian Era is not within the scope of this study, it will be useful to mention it briefly since understanding the Victorian mindset will contribute to the study as the Victorian Era is the period when the binary oppositions in society, which continued into the twenty-first century, peaked. As an extension of the abovementioned dichotomy stirred up by the Industrial Revolution, the Victorian Era (1837-1901) features as a period marked by rigid binary oppositions based on hierarchical distinctions such as upper-lower, male-female, human-animal, civilised-uncivilised. In his article titled “Class and Gender in Victorian England,” Davidoff touches upon such divisions shaping Victorian England. When talking about the typical binary oppositions of the era, Davidoff states that the middle-class or aristocratic adult man represents the act of thinking, while the working-class man typifies non-thinking manual actions. He also adds that while the man is associated with public sphere, logic, intelligence, action and power, the woman is identified with private sphere, emotion, docility, innocence and chastity (90-92). Namely, the sociocultural norms of the nineteenth century exerted great dominance over women’s lives and precalculated each step they took. Hughes expresses the ideology of separate spheres that suppressed women’s social life and confined them to domestic sphere in the Victorian era, and the circumstances that led to this convention as follows:

[M]en and women’s roles became more sharply defined than at any time in history. In earlier centuries it had been usual for women to work alongside husbands and brothers in the family business. Living ‘over the shop’ made it easy for women to help out by serving customers or keeping accounts while also attending to their domestic duties. As the 19th century progressed men increasingly commuted to their place of work – the factory, shop or office. Wives, daughters and sisters were left at home all day to oversee the domestic duties that were increasingly carried out by servants. (n.pag.)

In other words, with the new changes in business life, the chance for middle-class women to get involved in social life has decreased to a minimum, and since well-off families already had employees to do the housework, there were not many activities left for the angels in the house to do.

In contrast, in the Victorian Era, the concerns and problems of the economically disadvantaged groups were quite different from those of the economically prosperous segments as women from the lower classes were involved in working life. Especially in

mines and factories as well as via domestic service they were earning their bread. Until the Coal Mines Act prohibited women and children under the age of 10 from working in the underground mines in 1842, women and children continued to work under severe conditions (Heesom 69). Due to the settled gender roles, they were being exposed to harsh, humiliating and abusive conditions. They were suffering from low wages -much lower than men's-, long working hours, lasting more than twelve hours, with no respect, legal protection or union rights. Women who could not make ends meet due to the inequality in wages found a solution in turning to prostitution, which labelled them as evil and fallen. Martineau mentions "there is the strongest temptation to prefer luxury with infamy to hardship with unrecognised honour" (178). That is to say, there is the temptation for lower class women, who were not acknowledged and appreciated no matter how "chaste" and "honourable" they were to at least cover their expenses by selling their body. Living conditions forced them to do this because chastity did not cure hunger.

Starting with the second half of the Georgian Era, the Industrial Revolution reached its golden age during the Victorian Era. Herderson and Sharpe depict this period full of contrasts as such:

The sixty-three years of Victoria's reign were marked by momentous and intimidating social changes, startling inventions, prodigious energies; the rapid succession of events produced wild prosperity and unthinkable poverty, humane reforms and flagrant exploitation, immense ambitions and devastating doubts. Between 1800 and 1850 the population doubled from nine to eighteen million, and Britain became the richest country on earth, the first urban industrial society in history. For some, it was a period of great achievement, deep faith, indisputable progress. For others, it was 'an age of destruction,' religious collapse, vicious profiteering. (567)

In other words, while for some people this period was promising with innovations such as the printing press, telegraph, railway systems, chemicals and steel manufacturing, for some others it was a period of obscurity, fright, despair, doubt and shaken beliefs, as all-firmly held values started to weaken or evolve. In a period of such rapid scientific, technological and economic transformation, social life was thereby reshaped. With the undeniable effect of the Industrial Revolution social order, business life and family institutions were rebuilt by strict roles attributed to gender, and this confined women to

the domestic sphere assigned to them. This situation turned men and women into two separate beings with completely different responsibilities, as two distinct creatures having to act in accordance with their predetermined roles.

In addition to the mindset that divides the society into two based on gender roles, it is observed that there is also “a dual vision of women” in Victorian England (Davidoff 91). According to Pomeroy, this system that divides women into two categories is an inheritance from classical culture, and this legacy is reinforced by the school curriculum that fuels the hierarchical and gynophobic acquisitions and interpretations of society (161-62). In other words, although the frame of mind that categorises women as this or that was well-cemented in the Victorian period, it is actually a deep-seated issue whose roots go back to the classical ages. As vividly presented in Coventry Patmore’s poem, “The Angel in the House,” ideal femininity required being pure, chaste, spiritual, nurturing, self-sacrificing and even sexless in the era. Those marrying these angels found it natural to satisfy their sexual hunger with “fallen women,” the reversed image of virtuous angelic wives. Hence the domestic mother role assigned to middle-class women alienated them from sexual activity, and for this reason, it was quite common to see older middle-class men in illegitimate relationships, either with young middle-class or mostly with working-class women (Davidoff 93). Thus, during this period, there was a perception of womanhood based on the duality of an innocent and self-sacrificing female figure -angel in the house- devoted to her husband, children and home, and a deviant female figure -fallen woman- either appealing to the sexual urges of men or refusing to comply with societal norms. *Great Expectations* (1860–1861) by Charles Dickens, *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (1891) by Thomas Hardy, *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Brontë, *Middlemarch* (1871–1872) by George Eliot and *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1862) by Mary Elizabeth Braddon are some notable Victorian novels that highlight the struggles women faced due to societal expectations fostered by the contrasting image of woman.

That one group is favoured while the other is marginalised is an issue that remains unsolved because the legacy of discrimination based on issues such as gender and race, which was passed on from the nineteenth century or even earlier to the twenty-first century, is still relevant. Notwithstanding all the enlightenment efforts and humanist advancements, the patriarchal system, whose origins trace back to thousands of years and

white supremacist attitudes, which reached maturity in the nineteenth century, have persisted till the twenty-first century though egalitarianist ideas spreading in the society have diminished the power and prevalence of rooted biases to some extent. To illustrate, during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, ideas that prioritised the significance of being human were not applied to women or non-whites. Apparently, the ideas and innovations that were alleged to serve humans were only for the white man. It cannot be denied that many regulations and improvements have been implemented in terms of women's rights and human rights so far. Despite all the initiatives promoting equality, internalised gender-based expectations, discriminatory attitudes and stereotypic premises could not be removed at once. Social Others had to fight for their natural rights and had to pay the price for their demand for equality.

During the periods following the First World War and the Second World War, people began to evolve as they started to question old norms and values with the effects of changing world order. The psychological damage left by the First World War (1914-1918) on individuals and societies was so profound that tremendous progress was made in the fields of psychological theory and treatment. The massive pain and grief experienced contributed to the recognition of the importance of psychological well-being and the significance of each and every individual. Due to the distress and grief that the Second World War (1939-1945) led to, warworn people started to lose their trust in the ideals of humanism, which gave priority to analytical thoughts that advocated European humanism and Western modernity (Crosthwaite 15). In addition, postmodernist and poststructuralist ideas encouraged people to reconsider humanist ideals that centred around the white man, not the "human" (Torgovnick xv). Moreover, owing to the intensely inflamed women's movements, flourishing schools of feminism and Black Studies, people began to question hierarchical thought patterns shaped by Western cultural norms. By gaining more inclusive and less discriminatory perspectives regarding identity and gender, binary thinking, which is the product of analytical Western thought patterns, seemed nonapplicable and started to be dissolved.

In time, strict roles attributed to men and women have started to become less rigid. Posthuman concepts have gradually moved from fiction to reality. Scientific and technological developments, fresh ideas in the fields of philosophy and psychology

together with emerging literary and cultural theories have caused people to question socially constructed norms. Fluidity of gender and body has begun to be promoted. Encompassing posthumanist approaches have started to be introduced and adopted.

It was precisely in such a dynamic period, full of change and renewal, that Winterson reinterpreted Shelley's *Frankenstein* and wrote *Fran-kiss-stein*. Two years after the publication of *Fran-kiss-stein*, in 2021, she published an essay collection named *12 Bytes*, which bears similar qualities and concerns to her fictional novel. *12 Bytes*, a non-fictional book made up of twelve essays, takes readers on a truth-based journey from the past to the present, and provides readers with information that has been tried to be pushed into the background of history. Therefore, *12 Bytes* will also be referred to in this study as it functions as a significant document which helps apprehend the background and context of the novels that are the subject of this study.

Feminist philosopher and theorist Rosi Braidotti (1954-) asserts that the tenets of Western feminism bear striking similarities to Enlightenment humanism, which does not consider inequality and hierarchy as a big issue, and therefore many activists and theorists have begun to question what human and humanism actually mean and whom these terms refer to (21). By defending the idea that "feminism is not a humanism" Braidotti elaborates on her argument as follows:

[W]hile the philosophical poststructuralist generation developed its own brand of antihumanism, a radical feminist wave, antiracist critical theory, environmental activists, disability rights advocates, and LGBT theorists have questioned the scope, the founding principles, and the achievements of European humanism and its role in the project of Western modernity. These social and theoretical movements questioned the idea of the human that is implicit in the humanist ideal of 'Man' as the alleged 'measure of all things.' (21-22)

As the quotation above conveys, many different circles started to advocate the idea that humanism is far from being inclusive and reformatory as it centres around male perspective. For this reason, Braidotti holds the view that feminism must be anti-humanist and against Eurocentric humanism, whose criterion is the man, particularly the white man (25). In her idea, the world should move towards a system in which minorities are equally valued as the majority, and minds should be cleansed of xenophobia and racism (25). She

regards technologically mediated posthuman world as a pathway to real equality as it has the potential to destroy all rooted discriminatory norms. As Braidotti notes, “the technologically mediated world is neither organic-inorganic, male-female, nor especially white” (35). Namely, she defends that posthuman era is promising as it might lead to the annihilation of many discriminatory norms; thus, it might help dismantle conventional definitions of gender, race, ethnicity and even human form. Similarly, Winterson alleges that with the help of technological developments, by cooperating with AI, AGI or any other possible forms, humans might evolve into better versions of themselves and leave biases that hinder diversity behind (*12 Bytes* 208).

Even though *12 Bytes* is about scientific issues and technological breakthroughs, Winterson’s activist voice that brings up social problems and calls for action is heard in the narrative. Winterson’s feminist stance is reflected in the essays in *12 Bytes* dealing with the treatment of women throughout history, such as the disregard of women’s labour and achievements. She also thinks that computing technology might help end the system and regulations that aim to control human bodies as it might render body politics, which inhibits polyphony, insignificant by offering “more life into a time without boundaries” and connectivity (11). As for her, though privileged people tend not to depart from hierarchical distinctions, as people find privilege appealing if they belong to a privileged group, computing technology might be an exit to leave all the system based on hierarchies behind for the achievement of absolute equality. In this case, it is possible that othering through gender, race, ethnicity, skin colour and so forth will lose its significance and impact.

Arguing that the nineteenth century was an important period in terms of the conceptualisation of gender and sexuality, Katz claims that the beliefs, perspectives, and preferences of middle-class whites of the period largely paved the way for rigid judgements based on binary thinking, and as a result of the internalisation of such type of mentality those who could not comply with the norms were accused of rebellion and perversion (82). For example, being heterosexual was seen as an indisputable truth of nature that those who were attracted to members of the same sex were declared perverts. According to them, while nature and creation required the undoubted law of heterosexuality, these so-called deviants were rejecting “the normal” and “choosing”

perverted ways. As Haner states “[o]ver the course of the early twentieth century, heterosexuality came to be equated with normal sexual development: being a ‘real’ man and being a ‘real’ woman” (6). According to Haner, this situation positioned heterosexuality in a privileged and virtuous place, “[identifying] other sexual practices as deviant or non-existent” (6).

Patriarchy is a widely accepted system which is capable of skilfully using all existing elements to ensure its own continuity. Heterosexuality, one of living creatures’ sexual orientations, also has its share of this. Based on how heterosexuality is used as a hegemonic power by patriarchy, Hoagland introduces the term “heterosexualism,” and defines it as follows:

[It is] an entire way of life promoted and enforced by every formal and informal institution of the fathers’s society, from religion to pornography to unpaid housework to medicine. Heterosexualism is a way of living that normalizes the dominance of one person and the subordination of another. (26)

Namely, heterosexuality, which goes beyond being a sexual orientation over time, or more accurately, as Hoagland puts it, “heterosexualism,” serves to ensure the continuity of the dominance-submission dichotomy by acting as a pawn of patriarchy, as an oppressive power (Haner 6-7). To be clearer, everything, from the definition of femininity to how women are to dress has been subtly dictated to women by patriarchy throughout the centuries. On the other hand, this imposition applies not only to women but also to men. Patriarchy also defines the tenets of a “real” masculine man. For example, if a man displays behaviours that are conventionally associated with women, that man is immediately accused of being feminine, which supports how fragile the issue of gender roles is. In short, both women and men are victimised by patriarchy in one way or another. Despite all the changes and transformations that humanity has gone through throughout its adventure, there remains a feeling of passing down this toxic legacy from generation to generation, and in the new world, this toxic legacy poses an obstacle to both humanity and new forms in taking steps towards becoming more enlightened, more egalitarian and more solidarist.

To explore *Frankenstein* and *Fran-kiss-stein* in relation to their broader contexts, Winterson's *12 Bytes* functions as an accurate document with its emphasis on the mindset of the eras. Winterson takes the reader on a historical journey, confronts them with present-day issues and prepares them for possible future scenarios in *12 Bytes*. She starts with the Machine Age and mentions women such as Ada Lovelace who had to survive in the man's world but could not take their rightful place in the history for so long as history has always been "his" story. Though Ada Lovelace was "an original mathematical investigator, perhaps of first-rate eminence" and "the world's first computer programmer-of a computer that hadn't been built" she was repeatedly told that she was under the risk of going mathematically mad as women were not expected to enter men's territory for both their and society's well-being (*12 Bytes* 16-17). The generations after her were unaware of her existence as a mathematical genius for a long time as phallogocentric system left her achievements unrecorded. Long years of metaphorical excavations produced favourable outcomes, and the efforts of some "nameless" women, including Ada Lovelace, were unearthed and honoured.

As well as mentioning Ada Lovelace several times throughout her book, Winterson also touches upon many a woman's oppression and suppression within the patriarchal system's borders, as she notes in *12 Bytes* that "[f]or all of recorded history – until the last 150 years – the world has been made by men and for men, mostly white men, and men have been the ones to write about it" (196). She expands on Victorian perspective of the woman and highlights Victorian society's view that "women didn't have the brains for serious study – and when they did have the brains, too much concentration made them crazy, ill, or lesbian" (17). To put it differently, in the Victorian Era, departing from the sphere in which women were expected to be taking care of their children, husband and house and attempting to get involved in the man's domain meant being a freak. Therefore, refusing to live a life based on phallogocentric standards meant being ill or a lesbian.

Winterson also emphasises first female computer programmers, whose abilities were undervalued. She draws attention to today's female students who get mansplained by their male instructors about their career goals. She highlights how female students are manipulated not to consider a career in computer programming as it is implied to them that they have less intellectual capability than male students in this field. Namely,

Winterson touches upon hardships women have had to overcome throughout centuries in *12 Bytes*. She displays how male perspective shaped the history and female programmers in ENIAC were called typists or refrigerator ladies. Marsland writes in *The Standard* that in *12 Bytes* Winterson reassesses the history of AI from a feminist lens and highlights “the extraordinary work of women such as the codebreaking contemporaries of Turing at Bletchley Park, or Katherine Johnson, who helped NASA put men (not women) into space” (n.pag.). Marsland comments on the woman question reflected in *12 Bytes* noting that “[a]chievements by women were sidelined by their male bosses, such as the six women who programmed one of the world’s first computers, the ENIAC, and weren’t invited to its launch in 1946” (n.pag.). As the quotation suggests Winterson’s book reveals how women’s achievements and talents have always been belittled and distorted by male perspective throughout centuries.

Winterson recounts multiple names and anecdotes concerning women’s arduous journey throughout centuries in her essays. By saying “[b]iology is destiny if you work for the patriarchy,” she draws attention to the fact that women have always had to be the best to be appreciated, as opposed to men, for whom being mediocre is sufficient (188). Winterson also underscores how women have always been exposed to mansplaining and have experienced difficulties related to men’s misinterpretation of their own subjective expectations as absolute reality, which recalls Simone de Beauvoir’s expression in *The Second Sex* that “[m]en describe [the world] from their own point of view, which they confuse with absolute truth” (194).

In addition to the ongoing bullying that women are subjected to throughout centuries, Winterson also addresses the systematic racism and inadequate representation Black people face especially in the fields of science and technology in *12 Bytes*. To illustrate, in the essay titled “Jurassic Car Park,” Winterson criticises the hegemony of white male perspective and lack of diversity, which prompts opinionated datasets and stereotypical thinking in the technology industry. In *12 Bytes*, Winterson touches on many events that relegate Black people to a secondary position, from Nobel Prize winner James Watson, who was part of the team that discovered the double helix, stating in 2007 that Black people are less intelligent than white people, to Amazon’s Ring and Sidewalk systems that harm Black people because of their flawed facial recognition systems. Arguing that

AI systems fed by such biased dataset reinforce existing inequality and hierarchy, Winterson stresses the prominence of integrating people of different colours and nationalities in this field so that AI can be trained with a more just and egalitarian mentality.

Though Winterson regards the future of humanity interwoven with non-human beings as something promising, she has worries, too. “What worries her is that we’ll drag our toxic old baggage into this brave new world, and put the technology to the wrong uses – give it the wrong meaning. *12 Bytes* is her attempt to warn us off that, by examining where we’ve come from, and asking where we’re going” (Spinney n.pag.). Despite the multitude of suffering, injustices, tyranny, deeply traumatic memories of the past and all types of othering described, Winterson believes that all the ingrained prejudices and rigid descriptions can be unlearned by stating that “[t]he great thing is that none of this is fixed. What has been done can be undone” (194). In her opinion, if people abstain from transferring their toxic mindset to non-human beings, a new chapter in history, which is far from prejudices, hierarchy and stereotypical mindset, might start. If humans, more precisely tech bros, show great diligence in providing positive instruction to AI, future life forms’ impartiality might make people put their toxic old baggage aside forever.

Winterson believes that human and posthuman collaboration is likely to yield favourable outcomes. Winterson starts one of the essays in *12 Bytes* titled “F*ck the Binary” with the sentence “[t]he two sexes. The most fundamental binary in the world” and she declares her aspiration to create a “value-free gender and race experience” with the assistance of AI (162-163). Though AI is a blank page with no human-specific traits, conservatism or prejudices the way it is instructed might determine the future of the world. “The tragedy is that,” says Winterson, “humans seem to be addicted to stereotypes of gender and race – the binaries (me boy/you girl/me Black/you white) that have caused, are causing, untold human pain and suffering” (164). To end the suffering, Winterson highlights the significance of human and non-human collaboration. Posthuman feminism advocates a similar idea related to the intermingling of the human and the non-human, and advocates that an inclusive concept of identity that is not limited by anthropocentrism, colourism or binary gender norms can hopefully be achieved via posthumanism. Braidotti claims that “[b]ecoming earth (geocentered) or becoming-imperceptible (zoe-centered) entails a

radical break from established patterns of thought (naturalization) and introduces a radically immanent relational dimension” (30). She accepts that it is hard to get rid of rooted anthropocentric acquisitions and habits, and this conceptual and habitual break might lead to the feeling of loss and misery. But still, she insists, this break is necessary for the formation of a new system of thought and moving toward a “transdisciplinary approach” (31).

As discussed previously, posthuman world possesses promising qualities to establish a new world order in which real social justice can be achieved. If selfishness, monopoly and competition are sacrificed for the sake of altruism, polyphony and solidarity, the new era might be marked as the most egalitarian time period history has ever witnessed. In *12 Bytes* Winterson offers such a solution for the redemption and continuation of humanity. She defends the idea that “[h]umanity is going to have to grow out of friction. It is cooperation, not competition, that will save the planet and redirect human energy to better ends than personal wealth. Sophia and her kind can help us here. Robots, after all, are not motivated by greed” (*12 Bytes* 152). Winterson believes that the inevitable strength will arise from the unity of all beings and humans and posthumans might turn the universe into a more solidarist and altruist place if they cooperate in light of both goodwill and technology.

In “A Cyborg Manifesto,” Haraway puts forward a similar idea by objecting to conventional definitions of gender and identity. She advocates that “[c]ommunication technologies and biotechnologies are the crucial tools recrafting our bodies. These tools embody and enforce new social relations for women worldwide” (33). The quotation reveals that technology can provide new social relations that women and other minorities have always yearned for. In Haraway’s idea, cyborg, as a combination of organisms and machines, helps broaden the meaning of identity and enables the dissolution of hierarchy (16). In the same vein, Braidotti defends the necessity to merge the fall of anthropocentrism to social justice issues. She also examines whether “insurgent postanthropocentrism” can succeed in saving humanity (33). She questions whether “the posthuman- in its posthumanistic and postanthropocentric inceptions- complicate[s] the issues of human agency and feminist political subjectivity” (33). She deduces that the posthuman has the potential to improve it “by offering an expanded relational vision of

the self, as a nomadic transversal assemblage engendered by cumulative effect of multiple relational bonds” (33). As for Braidotti, the blending of the human and posthuman has the potential to expand the definition of identity and end hierarchy of all kinds, by reforming the concept of body, identity, life and human. Similarly, an ecofeminist scholar and activist, Gaard, argues that the well-being of women, animals, nature and all marginalised beings is intertwined. In an interview on ecofeminism, she expresses her opinion on the necessity of holistic liberation through the collaboration of “[f]eminism, ecofeminism, indigenous feminisms, posthumanist and anti-speciesist feminisms” (n.pag.). Namely, scholars’ opinions agree on the necessity of hierarchical distinctions among beings to be eradicated for the well-being of all species.

What has been proposed in the study so far is that until the very recent past, many initiatives and revolutions that were claimed to promote the improvement and prosperity of “the human” did not actually include all people, because the white man was at the centre of everything and everything apart from the white man was assisting components dedicated to accompanying “his” journey. In the incessantly progressing world, however, the definition of identity has fluidised and become more intricate. Social Others who were systematically marginalised have begun to question the injustices they were subjected to and fight for their rights. People have started to consider discriminative attitudes as something disgraceful, not something to be proud of. Therefore, the posthuman world might provide the persistence of such anti-discriminatory mindset and lead to intellectual revolution. The destruction of anthropocentric thought patterns and a more inclusive, more encompassing thought structure, which welcomes non-human forms, is also promising for all marginalised living forms. Winterson holds hopeful expectations about the world in which humanity cooperates with non-human forms. She believes that the posthuman world is equipped to provide social equity irrespective of gender, colour, race or way of being created. Winterson emphasises the transformative power of love and regards it as the remedy of almost all diseases by stating that “every problem in the world facing us now, our wars, hatreds, divisions, nationalisms, persecutions, separations, scarcity, lack, and suicidal self-destruction of the planet, could be mended by love” (*12 Bytes* 230). As she suggests in almost all essays in *12 Bytes*, if love not prejudice is taught to new forms, humanity can move forward, shoulder to shoulder, in a more just and

overarching universe. If these new forms that do not have human greed and lust for power are not misled, the universe might be better than ever. With this idea in mind, Winterson updated Shelley's *Frankenstein* to the twenty-first century and left the novel open-ended. Just as the closing scene of the fourth episode of *Black Mirror* Season Seven hints, people themselves will shape the future, either for better or worse. If they succeed in transferring the bright side within themselves to AI, they will not have to create a new Other, that is a new monster, and be terrified of it.

Having contextualised the concerns of the novels in question in this study, it would be appropriate to further elaborate on Cohen's monster theory and its relation to the novels. According to Cohen, the monster is the epitome of racial, cultural, sexual, or ideological divergence, or rather it is the portrayal of any kind of dissimilarity ("Monster Culture" 7). For Cohen, the phenomenon of monstrosity includes not only fictional but also real creatures. Individuals, who are compatible with the social codes and expectations of society, marginalise those who oppose or cannot adapt themselves to these pre-determined and well-accepted codes; hence, they ascribe them monster-like qualities. The features of fictional monsters, as Cohen thinks, reveal the cultural values, tendencies and fears of the current period.

In his seminal work titled "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)" Jeffrey Jerome Cohen divides his monster theory into seven theses. In "Thesis I": The Monster's Body is a Cultural Body, "[t]he monstrous body is pure culture", says Cohen (4). Anderson interprets this statement by saying the monstrous body "so precisely parallels its environment that it offers the easiest method of analysis for the culture it exists within" ("The Monstrous Disability" 28). Cohen suggests that the monster might symbolise anything but itself. Being monstrous is being different in any format and this difference leads to anxiety and fear. In "Thesis II": The Monster Always Escapes, "[m]onsters must be examined within the intricate matrix of relations (social, cultural, and literary-historical) that generate them," Cohen states (5). These monsters first disappear, then reappear, and surround humans in another place or time. He gives examples of different monsters from different eras, saying that these monsters reappear regardless of how many times they are killed. For example, in vampire stories, the undead reappear in another clothing, as if they wanted to participate in the social movements of the time, as if they

were activists. In “Thesis III”: The Monster Is the Harbinger of Category Crisis, “the monster resists any classification built on hierarchy or a merely binary opposition,” says Cohen (7). The monster tries to open up a third or more space for itself. It demands a polyphonic system, “a radical rethinking of boundary and normality,” rejecting sameness and resisting to integration (6).

Because the monster does not want to submit itself to the demands of the society, it always flees in order to exist as it is by protecting its own identity. As Çakır states, “Shildrick defines the term monstrous as anything that differs from the norm, arguing that monsters ‘show us the other of the humanist subject. It is the other who must be excluded in order to secure the boundaries of the same, the other who is recognizable by the lack of resemblance’” (5). Thus, it is the nature of the monster to defy the accepted norm in order to represent the Other properly. Gilmore comments on the function of monsters as follows:

The power of monsters is their ability to fuse opposites, to merge contraries, to subvert rules, to overthrow cognitive barriers, moral distinction, and ontological categories. Monsters overcome the barrier of time itself. Uniting past and present, demonic and divine, guilt and conscience, predator and prey, parent and child, self and alien, our monsters are our innermost selves. (194)

As the quotation above suggests, the monster defies categorisations, norms, time and binary thinking because of their hybridity and fluidity. For this reason, it is the Other and the representative of all social Others. In “Thesis IV”: The Monster Dwells at the Gates of Difference, Cohen argues that the monster is the embodiment of difference, the outside, the other, the beyond. As stated by Beal, monsters “are paradoxical personifications of otherness within sameness. That is, they are threatening figures of anomaly within the well-established and accepted order of things” (4). In other words, the monster comes to a monotonous, orderly and safe environment and disrupts the order full of the soothing feeling of sameness with its difference and disharmony. No matter how much the monster threatens the status quo Cohen defends the idea that through these monsters, demarcations and binary oppositions blur.

In “Thesis V”: The Monster Polices the Borders of the Possible, the monster is presented as a warning against curiosity of exploring the unknown and operates as emblematic

practitioner of whatever is prohibited. Cohen likens the monster to a “border patrol” that dissuades one from the exploration of dangerous areas through monstrous examples such as sea serpents or promotes racial and cultural “purity” through anti-intermixture narratives (12-15). Individuals, who exceed limits or in other words socially determined barriers, become prey to monsters or even worse they turn into monsters themselves by being rebellious taboo-breakers. Thus, monsters act as metaphorical examples of what an individual should not be.

In “Thesis VI”: Fear of the Monster Is Really a Kind of Desire, Cohen emphasises the seductive and intriguing aspects of monsters as well as their fear-inducing characteristics. The concept of monstrosity is closely related to the issue of crossing borders. According to Foucault, monstrosity is not a deviation but a rebellion against the system that draws borders and establishes rules, and this transgression issue does not always carry a negative meaning. Monsters, which are outside all the norms, question the accuracy and necessity of these borders and open new horizons of thought. And despite being marginalised and alienated due to their rebellious nature, they become a source of curiosity in society as well (Çakır 13-14). As for Cohen, individuals secretly envy these free-spirited, taboo-free monsters, and they desire to be like them. “Through the body of the monster fantasies of aggression, domination, and inversion are allowed safe expression in a clearly delimited and permanently liminal space,” Cohen states (17). Thus, individuals satisfy their suppressed inner worlds in safe zones.

In “Thesis VII”: The Monster Stands at the Threshold ... of Becoming, “[m]onsters are our children,” says Cohen, “[t]hey can be pushed to the farthest margins of geography and discourse, hidden away at the edges of the world and in the forbidden recesses of our mind, but they always return” (20). In his final thesis Cohen draws attention to the fact that people themselves create the monsters they both fear and secretly envy. According to him monsters are born from people’s own fears, anxieties, biases and desires. As they come into existence from somewhere within people, they are reborn no matter how many times they are repressed. As uttered by one of the characters in the graphic novel named *The Unwritten* “[w]e make our own monsters, then fear them for what they show us about ourselves,” which means monsters are generated, feared and envied by society and they live somewhere inside the human (Carey and Gross 73).

Thus, Cohen's extensive study regarding monster and monstrosity offers an insight into how societies construct the Other and then look forward to annihilating it. Cohen's study also exposes how race, gender, sexuality and monstrosity concur in cultural representations. The novels analysed in this thesis, *Frankenstein* and *Fran-kiss-stein*, in this vein, can be regarded as exemplary texts that cohere with Cohen's theory that presents monstrosity as a cultural output. In line with the comprehensive construction of the theoretical framework, the following chapters focus on the selected novels, emphasising that the monster narrative, or more precisely the narrative of the Other, subsists through the ages as monsters are the products of society, springing from people's own fears, anxieties, biases and suppressed desires.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL EXCLUSION: MONSTROSITY IN MARY SHELLEY'S

FRANKENSTEIN

I, the miserable and the abandoned,
am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on.
Even now my blood boils at the recollection of this injustice.

-From Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* presents an intricate and multilayered narrative that traces a cat and mouse "game" between Victor Frankenstein, a passionate young natural philosophy student, and the nameless Monster he creates out of the body parts of the dead. Shelley blends her narrative with gothic and science fiction elements, while she also forces the reader to answer philosophical questions regarding creation, responsibility, morality and being human. The theme of othering is blatantly embodied in the Monster who is shunned by the society he lives in and his creator, due to his eccentric appearance, which engages with the tenets of Cohen's monster theory, arguing that societies tend to ostracise anyone dissimilar to the majority. This chapter analyses the Monster's painful adventure, his genesis and immediate rejection, his effort to educate himself and his eternal loneliness, his desire to do good and the society's hatred born of prejudice, as well as his transformation from an innocent creature into a monster. It argues that the Monster is the symbol of societal dread and rejection with his hybridity that challenges normality and boundaries, and it also explores the issue of othering represented not only by the Monster, but also other monstrous subjects embedded in the novel. Whether the novel, which is open to multiple readings, is approached from a racial, gender or other perspective, the theme of otherness unites each reading. Individuals who deviate from

codes of normality, societal norms or expectations are not welcome; therefore, they are humiliated, feared, marginalised and attempted to be exterminated. The theme of othering is the cornerstone of the narrative arc and ideological criticism in the novel, for otherness leads to monstrosity if the Other attempts to go beyond the rights granted for her/him. In this vein, by synthesising all pieces of information in light of Cohen's monster theory, this chapter argues that monstrosity in *Frankenstein* is related to the nineteenth century's social Others, who are women, non-whites and foreigners.

Novelist and editor, Mary Shelley (1797-1851) is the creator of one of the all-time favourite books of English Literature, *Frankenstein*. In addition to this gothic science fiction classic, she also wrote two historical novels *Valperga: or, The life and Adventures of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca* (1823) and *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck* (1830), an apocalyptic dystopian novel titled *The Last Man* (1826) and two domestic novels *Lodore* (1835) and *Falkner* (1837). In addition to them, she penned a semi-autobiographical novella titled *Mathilda* around 1819; however, her father William Godwin did not let her publish it because of its explicit subject matter, including incestuous desire, guilt and suicide, which Godwin called 'disgusting and detestable' (Nitchie 450). Therefore, *Mathilda* was published in 1959, one hundred and eight years after Shelley's death.

Shelley is presented by biographers as "intensely private, imaginatively exuberant, yet also emotionally withdrawn figure, whose political melancholy and strong religious faith are intriguingly at odds with the optimistic rationalism of her famous parents, and her poet husband's atheistic radicalism" (Ousby 860). Daughter of a prominent enlightenment philosopher William Godwin and a leading feminist mother Mary Wollstonecraft, Shelley was surrounded by highly intellectual figures (Kern n.pag.). Shelley, who came from a radical and reformist social circle, was directly involved with the serious social issues of the time, such as slavery. Both Mary Shelley and her husband Percy Shelley believed wholeheartedly that the institution of slavery was against human rights, and they fought for an end to it (Kelly n.pag.). In an age when racism was used as a tool by Europeans to legitimise imperialism, exploitation and inequality, Mary and Percy Shelley participated in sugar boycotts and thereby manifested their opposition to the exploitative system.

That Shelley's mother died when she was only ten days old, that her half-sister Fanny and Percy Shelley's first wife Harriet, who was pregnant and still married to him at the time, committed suicide one after the other, and that Mary Shelley saw only one child reach infancy out of her five pregnancies, all prove how much she was tested by the subject of death all her life (Bulkeley n.pag.). Hence, Victor Frankenstein's aspiration to create a living form out of dead body parts can be associated with Shelley's hidden desire to raise her beloved ones from the dead. Considering various losses she had to cope with throughout her tragic life this comparison sounds fitting. The purpose of this study is not to examine the novel *Frankenstein* as a work that reflects Shelley's traumatic experiences regarding the issue of death, but it is possible to find many sources in the literature that approach the novel from this perspective, and it might be useful to conduct further studies related to this topic.

In *Frankenstein*, Shelley depicts the Monster as the embodiment of social othering and employs the Monster as a spokesperson of the nineteenth century's social others, such as women, Black people and foreigners. The Monster in the novel is a paragon of how the sorrow of not being loved, accepted or embraced might turn into the desire for revenge over time. The Monster, who is not even given a name by his creator, is bullied and despised simply because his appearance is different from the rest of the society and therefore, he is labelled as the Other, the monster. In this chapter, it is claimed that this explicitly declared monster stands for those who are marginalised because of their gender, skin colour or foreignness. It highlights that if women wonder beyond boundaries drawn for them by the patriarchal order, they are declared monsters. With regard to non-whites, they have no other option than being the Other in the eyes of white-centric mind as they cannot change their skin colour. So, being foreigner is associated with monstrosity as foreigners carry their own culture wherever they go, which is undesirable and entails the risk of disrupting the culture as well as the bloodline.

To begin with, in *Frankenstein*, Shelley sheds light on the situation of women by portraying them as passive, subservient and submissive characters. Instead of placing provocative or marginal female characters in her narrative, she purposefully includes socially acceptable ones as the decent women of the eighteenth and nineteenth century England were submissive, reticent and without agency just like Safie, Elizabeth, Justine,

Margaret and Agatha, who are depicted as objects used in the actions of men in the novel. Haddad states that in *Frankenstein* “[e]vents and actions happen to [female characters], usually for the sake of teaching a male character a lesson or sparking an emotion within him” (n.pag.). Therefore, each female character in the novel is a reference to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’ idealised norms of femininity. Though Shelley does not explicitly state this, by portraying all her female characters as submissive to patriarchy she implies that if they attempt to deviate from socially prescribed ideals of femininity, they, too, might be declared monsters. The witch hunt period, which took place especially in Europe and North America between the end of the fifteenth century and the middle of the eighteenth century, for instance, is one of the most tragic examples of monsterising, oppressing and silencing women with the aim of strengthening the patriarchal system. As Shelley’s female characters do not attempt to enter the man’s domain, they maintain their respectable position in their society as opposed to the monsters in the society who question, rebel and fight for gender equality. In *Frankenstein*, Shelley deliberately constructed her female characters to be patriarchy-friendly so that they would reflect the subordinate status of women of the period accurately. Though Shelley’s female characters do not act as monsters because each of them functions as a part of the patriarchal system, they are still social Others because of their gender.

Gilbert and Gubar argue that although *Frankenstein* appears to be a masculine narrative, the truth is, it actually parodies male authorship. They state that “[t]hough it has been disguised, buried, or miniaturized, femaleness -the gender definition of mothers and daughters, orphans and beggars, monsters and false creators- is at the heart of this apparently masculine book” (232). The fact that a man creates a living being, a male creature, without the need for a woman’s womb, or that all the female characters in the novel are portrayed as rather passive might make the novel seem like a tool for serving patriarchy; however, many scholars and academics claim that Shelley did not intend to do that, and her worldview and the social environment she was in also prove this. In Özdemir’s words “[i]n fact [*Frankenstein*] hides female desire and anxiety within its folds of masculine desire and anxiety in addition to presenting its issues in terms that question the assumptions of the dominant culture and the institutions which form the basis of society such as the family and the law” (41). The false punishment of the character Justine

reflects a deep discomfort with the law that operates with patriarchal bias in a male-centred world. Likewise, Shelley's portrayal of the Monster in *Frankenstein* is an attempt to reflect the biased and unjust system that ignores female sex. It is a way to rebel against the patriarchal order through a seemingly masculine narration. Even though the Monster is a male character, what happens to him recalls the conditions that nineteenth-century women had to face. Gilbert and Gubar argue that *Frankenstein* uncovers a "woman's helpless alienation in a male society" (246). By illustrating the events that women are exposed to in society through the example of a man, Shelley subtly criticises the patriarchal order that leaves women uneducated, unsocialised, disrespected and marginalised. Through such an analogy the passivity and meekness of the female characters in the novel mean that they speak for the condition of women in the society.

In *Frankenstein*, Elizabeth Lavenza is portrayed as the epitome of virtue and beauty with continuous references to her kindness, devotion and elegance through Victor's perspective. Victor depicts her as "a being heaven-sent," "a creature who seemed to shed radiance from her looks," a child "fairer than a garden rose among dark-leaved brambles," and "the living spirit of love" (Shelley 25-26-29). The only role she possesses is to support Victor throughout his ambitious journey and to satisfy Victor's spiritual feelings through her domestic virtues, by acting as an object of affection. Elizabeth is a refuge that Victor is sure to find waiting patiently for him at home, when he returns from his turbulent and dangerous life outside home, and she has no agency of her own. What is expected from Elizabeth is to fill the spiritual void left by Victor's mother Caroline, as Elizabeth is regarded as the extension of a loyal, self-sacrificing, patient and devoted mother figure, Caroline. Hodges states that "Kate Ellis interprets *Frankenstein* as a critique of the bourgeois family and the separation of male and female spheres" (155). Namely, Shelley reveals and subtly criticises the rigid conventions of the era that assign women limited roles. Devoid of any personal goal or hope, Elizabeth's life and death gain meaning as long as they affect Victor. She is like a cause or rather an excuse for war through which Victor can display his masculine initiatives, ambitions and anger. Even Elizabeth's death is the result of Victor's actions as she becomes the victim of his ambitions though she is aware of nothing Victor is after.

Margaret, another female character in the novel is positioned as a passive listener to her brother Robert Walton's adventures and incredible stories. The letters she receives from Walton symbolises the situation she is in, as she is given the role of merely visualising what her brother has personally experienced and of preserving his active image. Behrendth states that "[t]he only woman truly present in the tale is paradoxically not 'there' at all: the unseen, silent auditor/reader Margaret Walton Saville, who exists only in Walton's letters, ... whose province is to hear, sympathize, and approve" (69). On the other hand, it is also observed that in spite of her silence and passivity, Walton needs her compassion and approval, as the following sentences Walton writes to Margaret demonstrate: "And now, dear Margaret, do I not deserve to accomplish some great purpose? My life might have been passed in ease and luxury; but I preferred glory to every enticement that wealth placed in my path. Oh, that some encouraging voice would answer in the affirmative!" (Shelley 7). The feelings Walton expresses show that Walton needs Margaret's sympathy, support and moral approval even if her voice is not heard. As Blewitt and Bell state, Walton and Victor write their own stories, while characters such as Margaret listen to their stories, which highlights the domestic, maternal, controlled and "safeguarded" position of women of the period (75).

Agatha, the epitome of humane emotions such as compassion, conscience, and kindness, is another virtuous female figure in the novel, who unknowingly teaches the Monster the good side of humanity. The monster observes the loving environment in which Agatha lives and is so affected by this situation that he begins to direct himself toward goodness and righteousness. He utters the heart-warming feelings the De Lacey family evokes in him despite his heart-breaking encounter with some mean villagers as follows:

What chiefly struck me was the gentle manners of these people; and I longed to join them, but dared not. I remembered too well the treatment I had suffered the night before from the barbarous villagers, and resolved, whatever course of conduct I might hereafter think it right to pursue, that for the present I would remain quietly in my hovel, watching, and endeavouring to discover the motives which influenced their actions. (Shelley 104)

The way the Monster verbalises his feelings regarding the De Lacey family demonstrates how much he wants to be a part of such an affectionate family, and his desire to be loved,

protected and embraced like Agatha. Perhaps that's why he takes Agatha as a role model, hoping that if he can be just as kind, good-hearted, helpful and compassionate as her, he can be loved as much as she is. The monster even finds ways to help the family without revealing himself, such as taking their tools at night and providing them with firewood. Nevertheless, even Agatha, who approaches anything with love and kindness, cannot manage to overlook the Monster's "ugliness," which shatters the hopes of the Monster, and wastes his efforts. Agatha's fear of him reflects her society's judgements shaped by bias, which prevent even the kindest person from seeing the beauty beneath the shell.

In addition to Agatha, Safie is another female character who contributes to the Monster's development unintentionally. While Felix teaches Safie language, history and culture, the Monster listens to them secretly and by continuously observing them he gets to know human language, society and literature. The Monster expresses his enthusiasm to familiarise himself with the world around with these words: "While I improved in speech, I also learned the science of letters, as it was taught to the stranger; and this opened before me a wide field for wonder and delight" (113). Besides language and literature, he also becomes acquainted with intellectual issues such as equality and justice, which confronts him with how unfairly he has been treated. Safie's reactions touch the Monster so much and improve his sense of empathy to such an extent that as he learns about the "discovery" of the American hemisphere he cries with Safie "over the hapless fate of its original inhabitants" (113). Siegel depicts this Christian Arab woman, Safie, as "a lone female voice silenced in the midst of a male-dominated narration" (9).

In *Fran-kiss-stein*, the only gendered Other who is close to monstrosity is Safie. Siegel argues that Shelley commemorates her mother Wollstonecraft through the character of Safie since there are several similarities Safie and Wollstonecraft share. Safie, just like Wollstonecraft, is born into an oppressive landscape, cannot get the education she longs for, goes on trips alone despite all the difficulties, and advocates women's education and autonomy through her writings (9). In Richardson's opinion, Safie's refusal to live in harem and her desire for a relationship based on mutual respect, love and exchange of ideas bear traces of Wollstonecraft's ideas (153). Similarly, Mellor regards Safie as "the incarnation of Mary Wollstonecraft" (277). Siegel also compares the situation of Safie, whose letters are stolen by the Monster, to the situation of Wollstonecraft, whose activism

is trivialised and silenced in the patriarchal society (9). Although Safie is presented as the only female character who can overcome familial, geographical, religious and cultural barriers, it is hardly possible to say that she is completely free. That her intellectual pursuits are mediated through a male character, Felix, and her voice is limited as her letters to Felix are only mentioned but not disclosed fully, demonstrate how her autonomy is restricted in a society that prioritises male voice. Namely, Shelley portrays Safie as a female character who has the potential to be a monster, by emphasising her egalitarian and philosophic mind. However, Shelley does not go any further as she wants to draw attention to forces that hinder her autonomy rather than her feminist approach to the world and relationships.

Lastly, there is a female character who is already silenced before she is created in the novel: the Monster's future wife. In her analysis of *Frankenstein*, "Possessing Nature: The Female in *Frankenstein*," Mellor evaluates Victor's destruction of the Monster's female companion as fear of female sexuality and power of reproduction. In Mellor's interpretation, Victor destroys his female creation outright because he is scared of her independent free will, that untrammelled female desires can be infinitely more evil than male ones, that she might be uglier than the male monster he has created, and that his female creation might have sexual intercourse with someone other than the male Monster and corrupt the bloodline of humanity (225). Victor is so afraid of creating a female being and of the power of the female that he does not fulfil the single wish of the Monster, whom he has left forever alone in the world.

Behrendt argues that the female characters in *Frankenstein* function as the objects of discourse. He supports his argument by focusing on each female character in the novel. To illustrate, Margaret's letters to her brother are not revealed to the reader, which hinders her autonomy. Justine and Elizabeth's responses to the discourse directed at them are interrupted by a system of male authority that feeds on violence. Victor's mother loses her life, and the Monster's future wife is destroyed by Victor himself even before the creation process comes to an end. Behrendt comments on the oppressed and suppressed situation of women by stating that "[i]n the public literary world of the time the story is much the same. As objects of discourse, women [are] continually reminded of their 'proper' and 'natural' place in private familial and public extrafamilial interaction" (71).

As objects of discourse female characters in *Frankenstein* are spoken about, commented on, judged, approved or disapproved by the male gaze; in short, they are never the active subjects of discourse, as is dictated by patriarchy. By doing so, Shelley holds a mirror up to the society she belongs to realistically.

Therefore, in the novel, Shelley uses the Monster as a metaphor not only to criticise the issue of unnatural creation brought about by the development of science and technology, but also to demonstrate how women are marginalised and oppressed in the era. She also implies that women's transition from the category of the Other to the monster is highly precarious, as they have the potential to challenge the phallogentric order if they begin to question and assert their rights. Since patriarchy does not want to risk losing its power, it silences the "monsters" in women. So, both the Monster and the female characters in the novel are silenced, objectified, denied much of what is available to men, and they need the presence of a man in order to construct their identities. By using this parallelism, Shelley subtly criticises the patriarchal norms that exclude, judge, dehumanize, and silence individuals who are positioned as the Other. Just like the Monster and the female characters in the novel, nineteenth-century women were always spoken about as objects of discourse, but they were rarely allowed to speak for themselves as active subjects. As Smith states, "[n]o women in the novel speak directly: everything we hear from and about them is filtered through the three masculine narrators" (270). The Monster often complains about his loneliness and lack of education and is saddened by the thought that no one will befriend him. Just like nineteenth-century women who were restricted in their actions in areas such as education, politics, and business and who wanted to make their voices heard, the Monster calls out for companionship and agency. Just like nineteenth-century women, who were supposed to stay in the private sphere, the Monster is also expected to distance himself from the rest of the society, as no one wants to see him in the public sphere. This situation of the women of the period is clearly exemplified in the novel. Just as Mellor notes in the biography of Shelley, female characters in *Frankenstein* "possess neither narrative authority nor independent action" similar to the Monster whose story is mostly narrated through Victor and Walton (220).

Therefore, the Monster's body can represent the fear of women's emancipation especially due to the unfolding feminist ideals. Using science to erase the role of women in

reproduction, to give up on creating a female partner for the male creature, and the powerlessness of the female characters in the narrative make it possible to read the body of the monster as an anxiety stemming from the sparks of feminist ideas and as fear of the disintegration of patriarchal norms. Victor's eagerness to be the single parent of the new living forms demonstrate his quest to destroy women's role in reproduction and men's dependence on women for the continuation of the human race as can be understood from the sentences he utters: "A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs" (46). Victor's choice of words signals that while other fathers in the world share the gratitude of their children with the children's mothers Victor aspires to be the sole subject of thankfulness. By excluding women from the process of reproduction he wants to feel more independent, powerful and complete in the act of creating life. Babineau states that Victor "on one hand, exerts a kind of monster-making by angelizing the women who surround him and, on the other hand, projects his intentions, fears, and appetites on the being he creates" (n.pag.). Babineau emphasises that Victor, by confining Elizabeth in his own mind, identifying her with inanimate objects, and defining her with clichéd adjectives attributed to women, virtually strips her of her own existence and individuality. According to Babineau, what Victor does is a kind of othering and dehumanising, and his angelic description of Elizabeth reflects the role of satisfying the male gaze assigned to women both at the time when *Frankenstein* was written and even in the twenty-first century. Babineau interprets Shelley's intention of creating a character like Victor as a "critique of patriarchal Enlightenment ideas" (n.pag.). In other words, the monster does not exist independently from and unrelated to the taboos, anxieties, tensions and cultural movements of the period. As Cohen's first thesis suggests, the body of the monster can be read and interpreted like a text.

In *Frankenstein*, the social and political aspects of nineteenth-century England are observed through the symbol of the Monster, who is excluded from society and shunned by everyone, including his creator. Although the Monster is a male character, his struggle reflects the difficulties experienced by women during the period. Shelley could have created the Monster as a female character, but she did not prefer to do so. Given that the

female characters in the novel reflect the era to such an extent, wouldn't it be more striking if Shelley created the Monster as a woman? It should also be taken into consideration that in the patriarchal world a female monster and her hardships when confronted with real life might not have resonated so much. This fictional role reversal implemented by Shelley might be regarded as a prudent attempt to evoke empathy. Hoeveler interprets Shelley's creation of a male monster rather than a female one as a critique of the patriarchal system that was intent on keeping women out of scientific and emotional spheres (123). In this way, Shelley reflects the power of women by showing how the absence of women in these areas ruins the system, be it familial, scientific or judicial.

In addition to depicting the position of women in nineteenth-century England, *Frankenstein* also addresses issues of racism and xenophobia in terms of othering. Through the novel, the politics of the period and how the British feared the inclusion of ethnic and racial others into their culture are revealed. Shelley's portrayal of the monster is very similar to the way non-British people were perceived at the time. The monster is approached with suspicion and regarded as a threat due to his physical appearance. It is assumed that he belongs to an inferior race and civilisation. No matter how much the Monster tries to liken himself to an average person, who is born from a mother, no matter how clean his inner world is, the fact that he is dehumanised and alienated because of his appearance is similar to the situation of the Others of the period. Even the Monster's creator abhors him simply because he does not conform to the specifically accepted norms of beauty. To illustrate, Victor is so horrified by the final image of his creation, whom he hoped to be well-proportioned and pleasing to the eye, that he describes him as follows:

Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion, and straight black lips. (Shelley 49)

In "*Frankenstein, Racial Science, and the Yellow Peril*," Mellor likens the Monster's depiction to the Mongols and reads it as an indicator of how Asians were portrayed as social others within British society. He attributes this to the fact that at the time the novel

was penned, almost a quarter of the world was imperialised by England, while the Mongols could not be subjugated (481). Therefore, the existence of these far away mysterious social others was an element of peril for the British, and people feared the integration of them into British society.

Malchow argues that Shelley was deeply influenced by the racial and abolitionist discourse of nineteenth-century Britain as reflected in *Frankenstein* (92-93). Malchow reads the Monster's appearance and sinister manners as a reference to the stereotypical projection of Black people. Regarding this overlapping description of the Monster and Black people Malchow makes the following comment: "Beyond size and repulsiveness, the most striking physical attributes of the monster are his ape-like ability to scamper up mountainsides and his endurance of temperatures which European man would find intolerable" (104). The fact that the Monster himself states he is "more agile" than everyone else, can "subsist upon coarser diet," and can tolerate extreme weather conditions parallels Malchow's argument (Shelley 114). Malchow finds such a depiction of the Monster consistent with the way the West Indies slave advocates portrayed the natives (104). He also likens Victor's "futile chase after his creature in the Alps or the frozen waste of the Arctic" to "the white planter's ... futile search for the runaway slave in the opposite extreme of the Equatorial Tropics" (104). In short, Shelley was influenced by the concerns and discourses of the political atmosphere in which she was born, and it is possible to observe the reflection of this in her novel *Frankenstein*.

Subsequently, Shelley's way of portraying the characters and plotting the events is open to multiple interpretations such as the Monster representing the Other gender of the period, namely women, as well as the ethnic and racial Others of the period, namely the non-British people. In Cohen's words "[a]ny kind of alterity can be inscribed across (constructed through) the monstrous body, but for the most part monstrous difference tends to be cultural, political, racial, economic, sexual" ("Monster Culture" 7). As can be deduced from the statement of Cohen, any type of difference and nonconformity fosters a perception of monstrosity within societies, in line with Cohen's thesis that "the monster's body is a cultural body" (4). In "This Thing of Darkness: Racial Discourse in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," Smith examines the racial overtones in Shelley's Gothicism, and argues that Shelley was deeply concerned with issues of race and slavery,

which were among fundamental concerns of the emerging English culture (209). He states that Shelley's youth and the period during which she wrote *Frankenstein* were spent observing the great waves of British anti-slavery activism. Although public activities such as mass meetings could not take place until 1814 due to the repressive attitudes of the government, the issue of slavery continued to appear repetitively. According to Smith, this human rights-related issue also affected the tendencies and thought structures of many intellectuals, including Shelley. Adding that Shelley was also aware of violent slave uprisings, such as the San Domingo rebellion in Haiti in the 1790s, Smith attributes Shelley's decision not to use sugar to her awareness that the product came from plantations in the West Indies (209). So, Shelley, who was aware of the sociopolitical events of the period, might have wanted to express her stance against racism and slavery, and inform the readers about the rage and violence this human rights violation could bring about through her novel *Frankenstein*.

Frankenstein carries the reverberations of nineteenth-century Britain's uneasiness stemming from unpredictable scientific developments and racial, class and gender issues. When the Monster's body is considered within the context of the anxieties engendered by scientific developments, it can be regarded as an unfortunate consequence of Victor's grandiosity, which refers to the era's Enlightenment hubris. Based on his own experiences, Victor warns people about how hubris destroys moral boundaries and how wrong it is to create a being by challenging natural processes: "Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge, and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow" (Shelley 45).

Besides being the symbol of Enlightenment hubris, the body of the Monster can also be seen as a symbol of British colonial anxieties. As mentioned previously, the Monster's "watery eyes," "yellow skin," "straight black lips" and huge body are quite different from those of a European (49). This depiction seems to align with the representational features of non-British societies. Being non-British meant being vulnerable to colonial objectives and exploitation in the nineteenth century. As a result of the long-lasting exploitative system, the affluent members of the society had a deep-seated fear that one day oppressed people would rebel and seek revenge, and this created anxiety over potential outcomes.

Alongside Enlightenment hubris and British colonial anxieties, the Monster's body may also embody the fear of the poor working-class. Just like the Monster, this alienated segment of Industrial Britain, deprived of power, knowledge, education, compassion, may one day revolt violently, which arouses anxiety among the privileged middle and upper classes. The monster's search for justice, his failure to find it, his eventual rebellion and resort to violence may be a sign that this anxiety is likely to come true. The monster gets so tired of the misery presented to him that he finally expresses his hopelessness and helplessness to Victor in a burst of anger: "I am malicious because I am miserable. Am I not shunned and hated by all mankind? ... I will revenge my injuries: if I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear; and chiefly towards you my arch-enemy, because my creator, do I swear inextinguishable hatred" (Shelley 140-41).

In *Frankenstein*, the story between Victor and the Monster is based on escape and pursuit, which supports Cohen's thesis that "the monster always escapes" (4). Devastated by the news of William's murder, Victor immediately understands that the Monster is the one behind it. After a confrontation where the Monster and Victor try to understand each other, the Monster tells Victor that he does not enjoy killing anyone. He expresses his need for a wife who can love him as he is. He asks for a companion "as deformed and horrible as" himself, a woman "of the same species" because he is aware that only a woman as hideous as himself will not loathe him (Shelley 139). If he gets this wish accomplished, he promises that he and his wife will live in the most remote corner of the world without disturbing anyone. Although this request seems reasonable to Victor at first, he gives up on the idea for reasons previously mentioned in the study and dismembers the Monster's bride-to-be in front of him. The Monster, whose heart is filled with the fire of revenge upon witnessing this scene, expresses his anger towards Victor by saying, "I shall be with you on your wedding night" (164). As a result of ignoring the Monster's warnings and threats, Victor witnesses the murder of Elizabeth on their wedding night. After this incident Victor vows to destroy the Monster in front of all his deceased family members at the cemetery. This is the moment when Victor decides to pursue his own creation. The monster who is aware of his own power and invincibility responds to Victor's desire to pursue him as such:

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. (201)

With these statements, the Monster challenges Victor to a duel, making a show of power and reminding Victor of his relatively fragile and weak body. Although the Monster hints that Victor's struggle with him is futile, Victor does not hesitate to try, and eventually, the conditions that are not too harsh for the Monster exhaust Victor, as he struggles with hypothermia and starvation. Since the Monster knows that Victor is not capable of finding food for himself, the Monster leaves food behind, which reveals who is in control. This chase ends with Victor falling sick. Namely, the Monster acts as a Cohenian monster with his defiant attitude that refuses to surrender.

Frankenstein's monster is hybrid and liminal, thus he can neither be categorised nor captured in terms of binaries. Cohen attributes monsters' constant escape to their desire to resist being categorised and defines them as follows: "[T]hey are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. So, the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions" (6). In *Partings Welded Together: Politics and Desire in the Nineteenth-Century English Novel*, Musselwhite analyses *Frankenstein* and touches upon the Monster's hybrid nature that defies binary oppositions as follows: "[f]or the Monster confounds all classifications and identifications: it is alive and dead, male and female, master and slave, pursued and pursuer, parent and child -- all at once" (69). In other words, the Monster not only acts as an element of fear but also disrupts the ordinary but safe atmosphere provided by the binary oppositions society is accustomed to with all his incompatibility. So, Shelley uses the Monster's resistance to categories to criticise the act of categorisation that society performs on humans.

As a Cohenian monster, Frankenstein's monster mirrors cultural unease about otherness. The perturbation felt towards the Other can stem from any type of difference. The exclusion of the Monster in *Frankenstein* may refer to the treatment of racial, class, and gendered Others of the period as explained in detail in the previous sections of the study.

In his fourth thesis, Cohen expresses how the monster poses a threat to individuals, society and cultural apparatus as follows:

By revealing that difference is arbitrary and potentially free-floating, mutable rather than essential, the monster threatens to destroy not just individual members of a society, but the very cultural apparatus through which individuality is constituted and allowed. Because it is a body across which difference has been repeatedly written, the monster (like Frankenstein's creature, that combination of odd somatic pieces stitched together from a community of cadavers) seeks out its author to demand its *raison d'être* [reason for being] —and to bear witness to the fact that it could have been constructed Otherwise. (12)

As the quotation above suggests, monsters are frightening not only because of the way they look but also because they confront individuals with the idea that identity is not unchanging, it is a construction. With their very being they confront people with that the limits of normality or abnormality are determined haphazardly. Internalising this awareness is not easy; it creates unrest because it disrupts the existing balance, violates boundaries, and blurs the difference between us and them. For this reason, sometimes, not hearing, not accepting, pretending not to understand, can feel more familiar and safer, just like Victor does. When the collected limbs are combined and the final body of the Monster comes to life, Victor describes his creation as follows: “[h]is jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs” (Shelley 50). From the very first moment Victor sees and observes his own creation, the barrier he puts between them is evident in the way he describes the Monster. The fact that Victor does not want to hear the Monster and perceives his hand probably reaching out for help as a threat, may reflect that Others of the period were approached with a similar prejudice, with no attention paid to their words, as in the example of the Monster. If his appearance had not been prioritised and he had been approached properly, this nameless being might have been integrated into the society and might not have caused any problems. In fact, the being that Victor initially created is not born a monster, he is made a monster by the prejudice and hatred of Victor and the rest of society. Victor, far from giving the Monster a name, describes him with derogatory adjectives such as fiend, demonical, horrid, disgusting and unhallowed even though he

has not yet committed any evil, which demonstrates that Victor judges him based on appearance as does the rest of society. This situation parallels the Others who are not listened to, not heard, and not recognised because of their colour, race, gender, or any other difference.

Cohen's monster theory argues that the monster acts as a border guard, reminding people of the danger of crossing the border by personally exemplifying what they should not be and should not do. The border watched by the monster may point to the dangers that can be encountered in case of the violation of scientific, social, geographical or intellectual boundaries. As Cohen states, "[t]he monster prevents mobility (intellectual, geographic, or sexual), delimiting the social spaces through which private bodies may move. To step outside this official geography is to risk attack by some monstrous border patrol or (worse) to become monstrous oneself" ("Monster Culture" 12). Similar to Cohen's explanation of the monster's mission, Shelley's monster, who challenges biological, social, and moral boundaries, reminds individuals that if they transgress these boundaries, they, too, will be labelled as monsters. The Monster also acts as a messenger, warning humanity of the dire situations they could face if they follow Victor's path and transcend natural boundaries. Either way, monster narratives might act as cautionary tales, suggesting people not to transgress certain cultural norms. In the article focusing on the reason why monster stories attract people, Asma explains how monsters function as cultural cautionary tales as follows:

The monster plays an important role in norm enforcement. If you don't follow the rules, the bogeyman will get you. If you don't walk the path of virtue, the devil will take you. If you succumb to gluttony, you'll become a "hungry ghost" in the next life (according to Buddhist traditions). Most monsters function as disgusting threats that heroes and gods vanquish, repudiate, and cleanse from the community. They offer surrogate rehearsals for how the real community ("us") will resist actual enemies ("them"). Monsters are sticky memes that draw groups together into moral communities. (n.pag.)

As the quote suggests, monsters are ethical guides that demonstrate possible scenarios and warn people. In *Frankenstein*, through Victor, who has transcended the boundaries of the possible by creating the Monster, humanity is informed about the impropriety, unpredictability and catastrophic effects of what lies beyond that boundary.

Victor's feelings for the Monster in *Frankenstein* bear the dilemma of hate and desire. According to Babineau "[t]he Creature in Shelley's *Frankenstein* is the physical embodiment of Victor's thirst for power and illusions of grandeur, that he both fears and desires" (n.pag.). For this reason, every time Victor looks at the being he has created, he both feels proud of himself for his creative power and hates himself for what he has done, thinking that it is nasty and immoral. So, the Monster is the epitome of Victor's complex emotions, inner conflicts, fears and desires. As Cohen states, "[w]e distrust and loathe the monster at the same we envy its freedom, and perhaps its sublime despair" ("Monster Culture" 17). That is to say, no matter how much liminality and transgression frighten people they evoke a sense of curiosity and desire as well. Therefore, it is not too improbable to state that monster narratives unveil hidden desires of society. Just like the feelings aroused by the sublime beauty of Mont Blanc, about which a poem of the same name was penned by Percy Shelley, the Monster both repulses and attracts with its awe-inspiring nature. The Monster is free, free from rules, boundaries, and social norms, which both scares and attracts simultaneously.

According to Cohen's monster theory, even if monsters, who are societies' own creations, are banished to the ends of the earth, they will return someday. It is expected that upon their return, they will be transformed into better equipped, more knowledgeable, and more aware versions of themselves (20). With the confidence of the knowledge, they have acquired from outside, the monsters question the mistakes people have made. In Cohen's words, "[monsters] ask us to reevaluate our cultural assumptions about race, gender, sexuality, our perception of difference, our tolerance toward its expression. They ask us why we have created them" (20). Similarly, the Monster in *Frankenstein*, throughout his journey of becoming, learns human language, literature and history. He reads *Plutarch's Lives*, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and *Paradise Lost*, which is his favourite. The reason why he likes *Paradise Lost* so much is that he finds similarities between Adam and himself as both of them are "united by no link to any other being in existence" (Shelley 124). However, in time he realises that he shares more similarities with Satan, whom he views "as the fitter emblem of [his own] condition" (124). He thinks Satan is even luckier than himself because he at least has fellow devils to accompany him. Though the Monster gains a lot of knowledge he feels something is missing in his life as "no father

had watched [his] infant days, no mother had blessed [him] with smiles and caresses” (115). As a result, the Monster, who turns into an eloquent speaker, confronts Victor as a more knowledgeable and critical individual. The monster questions why his creator created him and reproaches Victor in a sophisticated way: “Remember that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed ... I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend” (93). The Monster’s careful choice of words, his elevated use of language, and his references to Adam and Satan are evidence of how much he has improved himself. No matter how impeccably he speaks English, almost like a Romantic intellectual, he is only regarded as an ugly body, which resonates Homi Bhabha’s mimic man idea. The Monster becomes almost like a human being, but no matter what he does, he cannot be called human because, parallel to Homi Bhabha’s statement about colonialism, mimicry and otherness, the Monster’s difference makes him “almost the same, but not quite” (126).

Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, which has been rewritten by various authors, adapted into several movies and TV series, written about in articles and theses, cited in speeches, revisited repeatedly for centuries and credited as the first true science fiction novel, has a multi-layered depth that opens a different horizon with each reading. When the novel is examined in the context of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen’s monster theory, it is comprehended that monstrosity is a concept that arises from and is inherent to society. The phenomenon of monstrosity, which is the voice of the excluded, the Other and the marginal, can refer to women, to non-British people, or rather, to everything that is treated as the Other. Created, rejected, despised and forced to flee, the Monster educates himself and returns to take revenge. Before completing his mission, he delivers a lesson to humanity. He claims that the cruelty he has committed is not due to his innate evil, but lack of love. He reminds humanity that even the biggest differences can be tolerated, and the utmost mistakes can be mended by love and empathy. He declares his goodwill and need for companionship as such: “If any being felt emotions of benevolence towards me, I should return them a hundred and a hundredfold; for that one creature’s sake I would make peace with the whole kind!” (Shelley 141). The Monster questions why he was created, deprived of love and abandoned to loneliness, just like the period’s gender, racial and ethnic Others, who are just as well the children of society.

CHAPTER 3

TYRANNISING THE OTHER: MONSTROSITY IN JEANETTE

WINTERSON'S *FRAN-KISS-STEIN*

What is your substance, whereof are you made
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?

-From Shakespeare's Sonnet 53

In her speculative metafiction *Fran-kiss-stein*, Winterson adapts Shelley's *Frankenstein* for the twenty-first century, by merging historical fiction with science fiction and her own comments. In the historical narrative, Winterson reimagines Shelley's life and the process of writing *Frankenstein*, while in the metafictional narrative, she explores the experiences of a non-binary doctor named Ry Shelley and an AI expert Victor Stein, thus blending the past and the near future. As well as revealing the point technology and science have reached in the posthuman world, Winterson also shows the readers how differences are still marginalised by society. One of the monstrous bodies of the novel is that of disembodiment, as illustrated by AI, AGI and full brain emulation. Victor, an avid scientist, tries to push the limits of AI and aims to get rid of the weaknesses of the body by codifying the human mind. At this point, the possibility of being sidelined by new forms and the unknown future of the body within the posthuman context appear as elements of fear. This fear can be interpreted more as an uneasiness felt by humanity, accustomed to an embodied life form, towards a disembodied future. The cause of this uneasiness might be linked to the uncertainty, hybridity, and liminality that emerge with the downfall of binary oppositions. Another monstrous body of the novel is Ry Shelley, a trans non-binary doctor. Ry, who has a romantic relationship with Victor, is ridiculed, abused and excluded only because of their gender identity and sexual orientation. What makes these two monstrous bodies similar is that they have the potential to challenge the

heteronormative order that feeds on binary oppositions. Whether *Fran-kiss-stein* is analysed from gender, queer, posthuman or any other perspective, each theory converges at the point of otherness. It is stressed in the novel that those who go beyond the current system, expectations, and social codes are declared monsters, denied equal rights/status, subjected to systematic discrimination and despised. When the theme of otherness, which is the key component of the narrative trajectory and theoretical critiques in the novel, is interpreted in light of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's monster theory, the message of the novel will be clearer. This chapter argues that in *Fran-kiss-stein* being the Other means being a monster, and relates monstrosity once again to women, gender diverse individuals and the concept of the posthuman in accordance with Cohen's monster theory.

Professor of Creative Writing, Jeanette Winterson (1959-) is the owner of many sensational novels, rebelling against conventions, exploring the themes of gender polarity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Her novels include *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985), *The Passion* (1987), *Sexing the Cherry* (1989), *Written on the Body* (1992), *Gut Symmetries* (1997), *Lighthousekeeping* (2004), *The Stone Gods* (2007) as well as *Frankissstein: A Love Story* (2019), which is the concern of this study. As a twentieth century activist, feminist, and lesbian writer, she touches upon the issues of othering, oppression, and ostracisation in her works. As a girl raised to be a missionary by devout Evangelist parents, she felt monstrous enough, when she started to be attracted to girls. After her parents learnt that she was in a romantic relationship with someone of the same sex, she was either to end her relationship or leave the house. She was declared evil, sinister and the Other. As a result, she had no other option than leaving the house and moving to a tent, staying in a friend's flat for a few days or living in a car. In her semi-autobiographical novel *Oranges are not the Only Fruit* it is possible to observe how deeply Winterson was scarred and othered by her family and the society during her childhood and youth because of her sexual orientation. Winterson who has suffered greatly from the excessive importance given to the body, the dominance of binary oppositions and the suppression of the voice of the soul closely follows technological and scientific advancements. As Merritt says, "Jeanette Winterson is not usually considered a science-fiction writer, yet her novels have always been concerned with alternative realities, and for more than two decades she has drawn on the imaginative possibilities

offered by technological and digital advances” (“12 Bytes by Jeanette Winterson” n.pag.). It is sensed that Winterson, in a way, regards trans-human and posthuman world as a chance for humanity to get rid of their deep-seated stereotypical biases and as a manifestation of the soul rather than the body.

When Winterson’s opinion is asked on why Shelley’s *Frankenstein* has inspired numerous authors including herself to write a novel, she replies:

[I]t’s a book that becomes more and more prescient, it’s as though she sent out a flare to the future or it was a message in a bottle, and it was thrown overboard and now as it comes to us it seems to be absolutely about the times that we’re living in. We’re about to create a new kind of life form, not out of the assembled parts of decayed corpses but out of the zeros and ones of code. (“Jeanette Winterson: The Waterstones Interview” 0:25-0:51).

As can be understood from Winterson’s statements, the content of Shelley’s novel is still relevant today and it influences many contemporary writers. Shelley penned the novel at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, just after the French Revolution, when the ideas of egalitarianism, liberty, fraternity and equality, which did not include women, were on the rise. Just like the women of the era, the monster created by Victor has no rights, no educational opportunity or equal conditions. Apart from the people of the nineteenth century, Winterson also compares the monster’s situation to the situation of today’s people and says:

What Mary Shelley really understood was that intellect on its own, unconnected to or disconnected from a feeling tone is baleful and malign and causes far more trouble than perhaps just the sort of bumbling inefficiencies of ignorant people. So she really talks about that and I think our society now feels like that. We do feel atomised, remote, excluded, baffled by much of what is going on around us in the way that the monster feels baffled by what is going on around him. He looks and he can’t understand. We look and we can’t understand. We are in the hands of an elite whose interests are not ours. (2:36-3:16)

Winterson’s sentences indicate that people today experience similar conditions to what Shelley’s monster felt, meaning that the monster still exists, as a concept monstrosity always moves from one soul to another and lives on in different forms.

Fran-kiss-stein, as a rewriting of *Frankenstein*, sheds light upon contemporary othering practices, elaborating on differences such as being gender diverse and posthuman. Thus, this chapter examines contemporary idea of monstrosity delivered through the issues of gender fluidity and disembodiment, alongside the centuries-old issue of women and monstrosity. To begin with, the ideas of gender fluidity and disembodiment, which challenge binary oppositions, are presented as elements of fear in the novel. For example, Ry Shelley's inability to define themselves as either fully female or fully male challenges the traditional male-female dichotomy. Namely, simply through their body, they challenge heteronormative expectations. Ry's trans non-binary identity triggers anxieties within the patriarchal and normative structure. Furthermore, the possibility of codifying consciousness renders it independent of the body, defying the bond between the mind and the body. In the novel, the theme of disembodiment is handled through artificial intelligence. The transfer of consciousness and separation from the human body are reflected as threatening issues. The anxiety about the break in the bond between the body and the identity and the assumed loss of many pleasures obtained through the body as a direct result of disembodiment are presented as elements of fear in the novel. As a result, those who are seen as a threat to the existing order are marginalised and monsterised by the society.

In *Fran-kiss-stein*, being gender diverse leads to being monsterised. In the novel, the character who represents society's view that being gender diverse means being monster is Ry Shelley. Ry's struggle to live with a non-binary identity in an environment riddled with sharp dichotomies causes them to experience constant humiliation and misrecognition. Ron Lord, to illustrate, tyrannises them due to their fluid gender identity, and instead of respecting their preferred name he addresses them as Ryan or Mary. "I am what I am, but what I am is not one thing, not one gender. I live with doubleness... I am fully female. I am also partly male," says Ry while expressing themselves (*Fran-kiss-stein* 89-97). Though Ron Lord is kindly reminded of Ry's preferred name several times, he intentionally hurts them by saying "[l]isten, Ryan, or Mary, or whatever your name is." (85). He even asks them very personal questions such as "have you got a d*ck?" exceeding the limits of respect (85). Ron Lord, who initially assumes Ry as a cisgender man, asks them so-called manly questions to establish a male-to-male connection with

them. When he realises that he is wrong in his prediction, Ron Lord is somewhat confused about how to approach them because he has no way of communicating with people other than cisgender individuals. As Kit states, “Ron has two different social scripts based on whether he talks to men or women, and he tries to fit Ry into one of the two, questioning them and searching for signs that can tell him which binary gender category Ry belongs to” (n.pag.). Ron searches for signals that would place Ry in a clear binary gender category, either by examining their body parts and actions, or by asking inappropriate questions to learn about their habits, but he gets none. He defines them as “a bloke who’s a girl,” which reflects his narrow knowledge and worldview (*Fran-kiss-stein* 331). In this case, Ron Lord is a representation of people who view the world through the framework of binaries and use it to establish hegemony. As stated by Brown and Gershon, “[b]odies are sites in which social constructions of differences are mapped onto human beings... The body is placed in hierarchised (false) dichotomies” (1). As the quotation reveals, society projects the constructed ideas onto people, by using physical differences as a means of hegemony and othering.

In *Fran-kiss-stein* Winterson uncovers the hardships that trans individuals are compelled to cope with. One of the pivotal scenes that highlights trans individuals’ challenges is the scene set in a restroom. When Ry passes by a drunk elderly man standing in front of the urinal and goes into a cubicle, the man takes it too personally and gets furious. By kicking Ry’s door “YOU THINK I’M A F*GGOT?” he shouts at them only because they do not prefer to pee next to him at the urinal (*Fran-kiss-stein* 241). He continues to vent his anger with annoying questions and comments. He rudely asks them why they avoid showing their genitals or why they talk like a woman and commands them to “PISS LIKE A MAN” (241). In addition to his verbal abuse, he also physically abuses Ry by touching their crotch. Realising that Ry is a transgender individual after touching their crotch, the man mocks their efforts to bring their body into alignment with how they feel inside. Fetishising their body, the man attempts to rape Ry. He wants to inflict gender-based violence as a means of “correcting” a pervert as “THIS IS THE REAL DEAL” according to him (242). Even though he cannot achieve his goal, this event creates mental wounds in Ry. A study examining the motivation behind sexual assaults against gender-diverse individuals offers insights into real-life scenes similar to the novel’s restroom scene.

Burgwal, Van and Motmans argue that the violence directed at gender-diverse individuals stems from the fear of degradation of cultural gender norms as mentioned below:

Several studies show that transphobic violence stems from an irrational fear of those who do not conform to cultural gender norms, rather than from being provoked by the minority status of the victim themselves... Behaving or dressing in a way that, according to social norms, only fits the opposite gender, or does not fit into one of the binary gender roles, increases the chance of violent reactions. This assumes that those who do not exceed gender norms are less likely to experience violence.
(n.pag.)

As can be deduced from the quotation above, intolerance towards gender-diverse individuals stems largely from the inability to fit them into cultural binary gender norms rather than their sexual orientation. This brings the issue back to the ossified binaries that oversimplify complexities and justify oppression. This means that a man must “act manly” as cultural norms expect him to be, and a woman must “act womanly” as cultural norms expect her to be. The unpleasant incident between Ry and the drunk man is an example of this rigid dichotomy. An individual who has neither breasts nor penis evokes uncertainty, fear and hatred within the man. SAGE Encyclopedia, which compiles definitions in peer-reviewed academic studies, defines transphobia as “a negative emotional reaction of disgust, fear of, and/or aversion toward transgender (trans) people based on their gender identity and/or expression” and it uses the term trans as a hypernym for “diverse gender-expansive identities and expressions” (n.pag.). Ry defines herself/himself as “liminal, cusp[ing], in between, emerging, undecided, transitional, experimental, a start-up (or is it an upstart?) in [their] own life,” and what the society cannot comprehend, cannot make sense of, and consequently fears and labels is this liminal position they take in life (*Fran-kiss-stein* 29). Though Ry says “[i]t is my body. I had it made for me” sincerely, without offending or hurting anyone, people around them feel entitled to comment on their body, attitude, way of speaking and identity (122).

Even Victor Stein, who aims to transcend boundaries, is sometimes unable to fully grasp Ry’s identity and needs. When he tells Ry, “[y]ou are both exotic and real. The here and now, and a harbinger of the future,” it becomes clear that he sees them as an object of his own posthumanist vision (*Fran-kiss-stein* 154). In addition, Ry is, in Victor Stein’s own

words, “delicious new data,” and this awakens sexual desire in him. In other words, he approaches Ry as an object that will satisfy his intellectual and sexual pleasure. Moreover, although Ry’s unpredictability and “peculiarity” attract them to Victor Stein, it can be said that he actually overlooks many points that Ry values in their identity construction, as can be understood from his statement that he would not be with them if they had a penis. In Ayyıldız’s words, “Victor, who asserts the uselessness of the body and wants to cross the human limit of both biology and gender, race, ethnicity, faith and sexuality issues, contradicts his transhumanist perspective by problematising the doubleness of Ry’s body” (42). Ayyıldız attributes Victor Stein’s contradictory attitudes and expressions to the fact that he has been raised within the patriarchal discourses, even though he is a man of intellectual pursuits with a transhumanist vision (43). For this reason, although he aims to destroy the binaries, which reinforce hierarchy, his patriarchal background still shapes his expectations of romantic relationships that cause a phobic undertone in his expressions. In Kit’s words, “[a]lthough Victor defends Ry when they are subjected to Ron Lord’s transphobic prying, he sees their transgender identity only as a stepping-stone on the way to his transhuman utopia, exoticising Ry as his futuristic muse” (n.pag.). In short, Victor Stein sees Ry’s physical modifications as an early example of his future plan, while ignoring the ordeal they endure in adapting their body to their soul.

Ry and Frankenstein’s monster are treated similarly. Ry is marginalised and ostracised because of their physical features and identity. Winterson’s updating of the story and characters in *Frankenstein* while keeping the theme of othering intact might indicate what attracted her to Shelley’s novel. Even if the reasons vary, one somehow dehumanises, alienates, excludes, and ostracises the other in both novels. Winterson’s obsession with the state of being ostracised is understandable, considering how she was bullied and ostracised by her family because of her sexual orientation throughout adolescence and young adulthood. In her memoir titled *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* Winterson recounts how her adoptive parents excluded and abused her physically and emotionally to “correct” her. Hence, Winterson may have found something of herself in *Frankenstein*’s Monster and may have seen herself in his suffering and search for identity, just like Susan Stryker, a transgender scholar, who thirteen years before Winterson

published *Fran-kiss-stein* stated that she likened her own life struggles to the Monster's in Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Stryker said "I find a deep affinity between myself as a transsexual woman and the monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Like the monster, I am too often perceived as less than fully human due to the means of my embodiment; like the monster's as well, my exclusion from human community fuels a deep and abiding rage in me" (245). As can be understood from the expressions of Stryker, the Monster's deprivation of love, sympathy and social inclusion due to his bodily difference resonates with the souls of many people who are excluded for the same reason. Through *Fran-kiss-stein* Winterson gives voice to gender-diverse individuals, exposing how they have been treated like monsters.

Another figure, or more accurately, another notion in the novel that is thought to be confusing, unpredictable and threatening and thus approached with suspicion is the concept of the posthuman and posthuman beings. Namely, in addition to dealing with the theme of the relationship between othering and monstrosity through gender diversity, *Fran-kiss-stein* also regards posthuman as a target of othering. Allardice states that "[t]he novel looks back 200 years to Mary Shelley and the industrial revolution and takes us into the present-day revolution of artificial intelligence, sexbots and cryogenics" (n.pag.). Victor Stein, who considers the body as "a life support system for the brain," aims to separate the mind from the body, which has a limited lifespan, and he plans to upload it in a more durable system, with the aim of immortalising it" (184). Ayyıldız notes that Victor Stein "deconstructs the idealised human model and plans to create a cyborg with a robotic body and a human brain," which dismantles anthropocentric presuppositions (39). What Victor Stein envisions is a future where humanity has surpassed its biological limitations through technological development. As he promised to his mathematician friend Jack Good before his death, Victor Stein toils to revive his mind by activating his cryopreserved brain. He declares his plan to digitalise consciousness, leaving behind bodies that are prone to disease, aging, and deterioration in his lecture entitled "The Future of Humans in a Posthuman World." To this end, Victor Stein risks destroying traditional binary oppositions such as human-nonhuman, male-female. As Ayyıldız notes, "in [Victor Stein's] posthumanist context, as a transhuman production of AI, a cyborg can transgress all established binaries constructed by Western logocentric humanism (35).

Ambo claims that in *Fran-kiss-stein* it is reiterated that soul is incomparably worthier than the body as the body is a temporary possession. For this reason, immortalising a person's soul is more vital than keeping male-female dichotomy (25). As stated in *Fran-kiss-stein*, “[t]ranshuman means different things to different people; smart implants, genetic modification, prosthetic enhancement, even the chance to live forever as a brain emulation” (104). It is emphasised in the novel that it is necessary to leave conventional thought structures behind for a better future as a life intertwined with machines or non-human forms might be even more promising. A posthuman life might be a ray of hope to annihilate inequality stemming from conventional binaries that result in hierarchy and hegemony. In his analysis of *Fran-kiss-stein*, Ciompi states that the novel delineates a posthuman life that will continue forever through “brain emulation,” as a result of which, what is known as “pure” human must transcend existing biology through more advanced biology (169).

The future of a hybrid race as Winterson portrays in her novel through Victor Stein's utopia, could possibly put an end to many inequalities that cause human suffering. It can help annihilate the injustice and hierarchical structures stemming from a plethora of issues such as race, colour, gender and identity, as the technologically mediated world, by nature, defies binary thinking and institutionalised norms. Winterson celebrates the new hybrid world order in which identities and systems are constantly evolving and blurring. As noted in *Fran-kiss-stein*, though “binaries belong to our carbon-based past [and] [t]he future is not biology – it's AI,” integration of machine intelligence with human beings is considered disturbing by many (72). In other words, while *Fran-kiss-stein* supports the destruction of anthropocentric binaries, it also suggests how arduous it is to overcome binary thinking because this process requires radical change and causes ambiguity, as Ayyıldız remarks (29). The disintegration of binary thinking obscures issues of identity and existence. The new posthuman world order, which fluidises deep-rooted binaries, is presented with the mysterious ending of the novel. Ciompi comments on this ambiguous conclusion as “this prophet of transhumanism remains suspended between two dimensions. He disappears. His body is nowhere to be found. Perhaps he is dead, or his mind has truly entered the cybernetic eternity” (169). Although Winterson only hints at

it, it is likely that Jack Good's brain takes on a hybrid form, while Victor Stein merges with the infinity of cybernetic technology, which is a leap into posthuman realm.

The historical narrative, based on Mary Shelley's experiences, begins with Mary reflecting on what a wretched creature she is as a human being. Immediately afterwards, she emphasises the importance of emotions, the inner self, love and the mind. While the first narrative emphasises that our minds are precisely what makes us human, the narrative about artificial intelligence steps in. By connecting artificial intelligence to gender and sexual fluidity, Winterson prioritises one's internal sense of self over external appearance. It is at this point that these two seemingly disparate narratives converge. Mary's emphasis on the mind in the historical narrative and Victor Stein's dream of a pure mind, free from corporeality, in the metafictional narrative recalls Winterson's claim in her essay collection *12 Bytes* that Mary Shelley sent a "message in a bottle" through *Frankenstein* (15). Arguing that *Frankenstein* is more than a Gothic novel, a science fiction novel, or a novel dealing with themes such as equality in education and maternal orphans, Winterson believes that *Frankenstein* is a message sent to the future by Shelley; for, it is a harbinger of new life-forms. As Winterson points out, "[l]ike Victor Frankenstein's, our digital creations depend on electricity – but not on the rotting discards of the graveyard. Our new intelligence – embodied or non-embodied – is built out of the zeros and ones of code" (*12 Bytes* 15).

Throughout *Fran-kiss-stein*, Winterson repeatedly quotes the lines from Shakespeare's Sonnet 53: "What is your substance, whereof are you made/ That millions of strange shadows on you tend" (*Fran-kiss-stein* 5, 14, 30, 61, 245, 341). In her article that defends how being non-binary means being the Other in *Fran-kiss-stein*, Kit draws attention to this recurring refrain, and states that "[i]n *Frankissstein*'s source text, Frankenstein's creature, an outsider himself, raises the question of what makes someone human, what is considered monstrous, and who has the prerogative of deciding on the answers" (n.pag.). The Monster questions why he is the outcast, while those deemed "normal" are welcomed. *Fran-kiss-stein* asks similar questions, sarcastically criticising the system that creates distinctions such as us-them, manly-womanly, right-wrong, proper-improper. While questioning concepts such as normality, beauty and conformity based on binary thinking, it emphasises the pure essence, free from external factors. In Sonnet 53, in which

the lines quoted above appear, Shakespeare describes the Fair Youth, who embodies the characteristics of Adonis and Helen, the classical male and female archetypes. A scholar, writer and literary critic Vendler interprets Shakespeare's Sonnet 53 as a celebration of androgynous beauty. As she states, "[t]he beloved has an androgynous beauty that is as suitable to a portrait of Helen as to a portrait of Adonis" (259). Similarly, one of the main characters in *Fran-kiss-stein*, Ry, has an androgynous beauty, a harmonious mixture of feminine and masculine traits. The beauty eluding gender categorisation might indicate to the necessity to think beyond the binary in all matters as Winterson emphasises in *Fran-kiss-stein*, as a consequence of which Winterson keeps repeating those lines. On the very first pages of the novel, "[i]s this life a disordered dream? Is the external world the shadow, while the substance is what we cannot see, or touch, or hear, yet apprehend?" Winterson questions (5). As the statements convey and Winterson emphasises throughout the novel, true self is somewhere beyond sensory perception. This is precisely why soul and mind must be prioritised. If priority is given to the metaphysical, hierarchy and division, which are fuelled by prejudices, can be overcome. In *Fran-kiss-stein* Victor's artificial intelligence studies, Mary and Ry serve to elevate non-material entities such as mind and emotion.

In addition to dealing with monstrosity and otherness through gender diversity and posthuman, *Fran-kiss-stein* also touches upon the issue of being a woman in the patriarchal world order, by revealing how women are supposed to act in order not to be labelled as the monster. *Fran-kiss-stein* aims to demonstrate that though more than two centuries passed after Shelley published *Frankenstein*, being a woman still means being the Other, and defying phallogocentric expectations is equated with monstrosity. An example of Shelley's submissive women are xx-bots, who only talk as much as their owners wish and never reject them. These robotic beings are examples of extremely objectified femininity. They are created by Ron Lord, a misogynistic entrepreneur, and they are rented or sold for male pleasure and enjoyment. Devoid of any emotion or will, they are reduced to an illusion, possessing pre-programmed movements, moans, and speech patterns that provide men with sexual fantasies, which Ron Lord calls public service. With their "top-grade silicone nipples," "20-inch waist," "40-inch boobs," "extra-wide splayed leg position," vibrating body parts and skin-colour, hair, clothing and

fragrance option, Ron Lord's xx-bots also have a thematic significance in the novel (*Fran-kiss-stein* 41-43). For, with their limited vocabulary and budget-friendly options, these nameless robots with "no nagging" and "no sulking" reveal much about patriarchal desires (40). In an interview in *The Guardian*, Winterson clearly expresses her view on the xx-bots, which highlights why she included them in her novel: "It's disappointing. It's so crude, and it's the place where the investment is going... sexbots, which are based on 1950s stereotypes about how a woman should behave: acquiescent, willing, always ready and patient in the home," says Winterson (n.pag.). As her statements indicate, she uses xx-bots not to promote or condone their production but to display her critical stance. While introducing the xx-bots Ron Lord says "[y]ou can be old, you can be ugly, you can be fat, smelly, you can have an STD, you can be broke. Whether you can't get it up, or you can't get it down, there's an XX-BOT for you" (*Fran-kiss-stein* 48). What Ron Lord is advertising here is an unreciprocated service, a one-sided sacrifice, as expected from human women. He glorifies the idea of simply getting things from women, consuming them without any effort and struggle. In a review in *The Washington Post*, Charles comments on Ron Lord's marketing language as "[t]he dialogue is slick and funny, often delightfully obscene, but beneath all the kookiness, Winterson is satirizing sexual politics and exploring complicated issues of human desire" (n. pag.). These robotic women can be seen as an exaggerated representation of the role expected of women in the patriarchal order. They are used to satirise selfish expectations of men who have been nurtured by a patriarchal mind-set. Similar to Shelley's reticent female characters, these commodified beings speak as much as their male owners desire and exist only to please them. By satirising gender norms through these life-like but lifeless beings, Winterson interrogates the objectification within such inventions. While doing so, she also reveals the extent to which women, especially strong and autonomous women, are seen as a threat, as opposed to the subservient robots. So, if the original forms of the xx- bots are preserved as designed by Ron Lord, they are not monstrous, for they do not pose a threat to patriarchy. However, if they start to gain consciousness and independence, they are likely to move to the category of monsters.

Among the various hyper-feminine robot types that appeal to different tastes, there is only one robot with a name: The Germaine. Although it remains outside academic studies, the

Germaine, the only named robot, may be one of the most important thematic elements Winterson includes in *Fran-kiss-stein*. Though Winterson has not stated anywhere that there is a naming link between the xx-bot Germaine and Germaine Greer, the robot might have been named after this 70s feminist icon. Garder, who writes for *The New York Times*, too, alleges that 1970s-themed xx-bot the Germaine might most probably be called after Germaine Greer though he does not present supporting arguments for his ideas (n.pag.). Still, it is possible to detect enough evidence supporting that the Germaine is called after Germaine Greer, when the Germaine and Germaine Greer are compared. The words Ron Lord uses to describe the Germaine seem to refer to Germaine Greer's most outspoken years and to the issues she fought for. Ron Lord describes the Germaine as follows:

There's even a 70s feminist version with no bra, messy hair and a dildo for anal play. Yeah! Clever! She gets to fuck you! No, I haven't tried it. I do try them all but I didn't fancy that one. In the office we called her the Germaine. She's the only one with a name. Have you read that book? My mum told me about it. I started it but it wasn't what I thought. Who rents her? Some masochists. And a few university professors. (*Fran-kiss-stein* 47)

The fact that Germaine Greer was one of the prominent second wave feminists of the 60s and 70s, and the Germaine is a feminist model of the 70s, is the first evidence of the connection between these two. Additionally, Germaine Greer's perception of wearing a bra as a form of patriarchal control and oppression may explain why the Germaine is braless. In *The Guardian*, Jardine summarises Germaine Greer's ideas about wearing bras and claims that according to Germaine Greer, "there could be no liberation for women... as long as we were required to cram our breasts into bras constructed like mini-Vesuviuses – two stitched, white, cantilevered cones which bore no resemblance to the female anatomy" (n.pag.). Germaine Greer's loosely tousled hair style also matches what Ron Lord calls messy hair. Moreover, the book Ron Lord refers to Ry as "that book" can be Germaine Greer's influential feminist work, *The Female Eunuch*, published in 1970. In *The Female Eunuch*, Germaine Greer states that women are metaphorically castrated by oppressive traditional codes and institutions, which explains why the Germaine wears a dildo. In an interview, as Weinraub states, Germaine Greer says that the title of the book gives a lot of clues about its content and summarises the situation of women as follows:

Like beasts... who are castrated in farming in order to serve their master's ulterior motives -- to be fattened or be made docile -- women have been cut off from their capacity for action. It's a process that sacrifices vigor for delicacy and succulence, and one that's got to be changed. (n.pag.)

Germaine Greer's courageous stance on women's liberation and her pursuit of gender justice is certainly not appealing to those like Ron Lord. For this reason, he assumes that robot Germaine is preferred only by some masochists and university professors. Namely, even though there is no concrete academic evidence supporting the idea that Winterson is referring to Germaine Greer with the robot Germaine, the similarity between them is obvious.

A striking aspect is that though the Germaine is not a popular xx-bot among men, she is the only one identified by a name. This might be because Germaine Greer is the author of books, or she is brave enough to defy patriarchy. That the Germaine has a dildo might be regarded as a symbol of resisting the patriarchal order because by reversing gender roles she threatens the heterosexual institution. Although she has a name, this does not change the assumption that the Germaine is the monster, the Other in the eyes of patriarchy, unlike other ultra feminine robots as she does not conform to cultural gender norms. This situation indicates that strong individuals (except cisgender men), who do not submit to the patriarchy, are stripped of their 'femininity' (or masculinity) and monsterised by the society. One of Winterson's aims is to hold a mirror up to this reality through her novel.

Fran-kiss-stein also reflects Britain's concerns about rapidly developing AI technology, the salient issues of gender and sexual identity, and changing gender roles. That Victor Stein aims to upload consciousness to "a substrate not made of meat" as he regards the brain just as a piece of meat reduces the idea of sustaining life with the body, which has existed since the formation of humanity, to uploading and downloading like a device (*Fran-kiss-stein* 110). Hybridity is precisely what frightens society. When the difference between machine and human blurs, the question of what makes us human loses its relevance. While current artificial intelligence technology appears to serve humanity, its future evolution remains unknown. If it is assumed that human mind has been transferred to a non-meat material, would all physical pleasures such as eating, painting or touching

vanish? Or would reproduction itself disappear? Would virtual parents be reading fairy tales to virtual babies? These are the issues that leave the society with uncertainties though the idea of immortality and comfort seems appealing. As Tlili claims, on one hand, artificial intelligence is a symbol of humanity's cultural desire for development and innovation, while on the other hand, it is a mirror of cultural fears such as loss of control and violation of privacy. As for Tlili, "when [artificial intelligence is] viewed through Cohen's first thesis, [it] emerges as a multifaceted cultural monster, embodying both the fears and aspirations of the societies that create it" (3). In this respect, artificial intelligence can be considered an object of fear and desire, just like the Monster in *Frankenstein*. Although artificial intelligence is initially presented as a project serving humanity in *Fran-kiss-stein*, the issue gets out of control in the novel, as it creates anxiety from the moment the idea of transferring consciousness to a non-organic object is implemented.

Just as its lack of embodiment is what makes AI a monstrous body, their body is what makes Ry a monstrous body. As Cohen states, "[t]he monstrous body is pure culture. A construct and a projection, the monster exists only to be read: the monstrum is etymologically 'that which reveals,' 'that which warns,' a glyph that seeks a hierophant," ("Monster Culture" 4). By their very being Ry reveals a lot about their identity and represents those who struggle with the society on the path of identity construction. While Ry is in the process of constructing their own identity, they also struggle with the society's initiations to reconstruct their identity. Their mere existence intimidates and disturbs society though Ry does not aim to instil fright or discomfort in people, just like the Monster in Shelley's novel. In *The Monster Theory Reader*, how monstrosity is used as a mechanism of othering individuals because of their difference, be it race, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation is discussed. Implying that one is not born a monster or becomes a monster but is branded a monster by the society, Weinstock states that "[i]t takes a village to make a monster...nothing and no one is intrinsically or 'naturally' monstrous" (358). Similarly, the way Ry is treated reflects current sociocultural concerns about gender and sexual identity. Society takes Ry's mere existence as a threat to heteronormative order. Instead of celebrating their difference, those who have secured their place in the system deny their existence, undervalue and monsterise them. In

Benshoff's "The Monster and the Homosexual," it is stated that in most fictional horror texts, homosexuality is associated with monstrosity and that those other than heterosexual cisgender individuals are portrayed as perverse and frightening, which fuels othering and discrimination (229-31). The writer attributes non-hetero individuals' monstrous or weird representation in fictional horror texts to the society's prejudices. As he alleges, these prejudices are utilised to heighten the sense of fear, which further reinforces existing prejudices. Regarding that monsters are born out of collective societal fears about difference and otherness, monstrous representation of non-heterosexual individuals in horror movies mirrors society's perception of those individuals and how their very being is constructed as unnatural and deviant by society (232). For this reason, Ry's body is a cultural body. As Ry tries to construct themselves, cultural norms reconstruct and rewrite them repeatedly. Though Victor Stein admires Ry as they succeeded to align their physical reality with their internal perception of themselves, and he hopes everyone will have this opportunity in the future (as he sees Ry as an embodiment of his future ideals), cultural codes that oppose, downgrade and marginalise gender and identity fluidity cause Ry to be exposed to critical judgement and degrading treatment.

Just as the concept of posthuman is perceived as a monstrous body due to its potential to distort the existing world order and Ry is perceived similarly due to their non-heteronormative orientation, the xx-bot Germaine is also perceived as a monstrous body due to its reversal of gender roles and expectations. While posthuman ideals defy human-machine binary and Ry's non-binary trans identity threatens man-woman binary, the Germaine contradicts domination-submission binary between sexes. All three are perceived as threatening because they disrupt binarism that serves patriarchy and capitalism. Therefore, the Germaine is not just one of the xx-bots, it is a reference to all the women like Germaine Greer, who resist conforming to patriarchy, rebel against oppression, question conventions, and are aware of their power. But why is a character representing such serious social issues presented as an xx-bot in the novel? The answer might be that Winterson offers a hidden commentary to highlight the reality that patriarchy manages to subdue and robotise even the most self-conscious and well-equipped women. Winterson may be trying to convey the message that even if a woman has a name, writes a book, refuses to wear bra, or has a dildo, she is ultimately a woman

trying to exist within the patriarchal system, just like a robot. As Bağırlar notes in “Winterson’s Cyborg Dream in *Fran-kiss-stein*,” Ron Lord’s xx-bot technology is an indicator that women are silenced, manipulated and abused among the barriers of phallogentric world order and that even science and technology are used to prioritise the needs and interests of patriarchy (703). Therefore, individuals, who are aware of this oppressive patriarchal cycle and desire to end it, are declared monster by the society. The Germaine, a feminist model xx-bot, desired by very few men, can be interpreted as a symbol of this attempt to break the cycle. Through a Cohenian reading of the Germaine’s monstrous body, the patriarchy’s anxieties related to feminist ideals are revealed.

Accordingly, Winterson’s rewriting of Shelley’s *Frankenstein* can be interpreted as a proof that Cohenian monsters might wake up from sleep any time. Cohen emphasises the uncontainable and indestructible nature of monsters, and he suggests that monsters reappear in ever-changing forms in accordance with the transforming social, cultural, political or ideological times, no matter how many times they are assumed to be exterminated. As Cohen claims “[n]o monster tastes of death but once. The monster always escapes because it refuses easy categorization and resists containment. It reappears, transformed in new contexts, to disturb and provoke once more” (“Monster Culture” 5). Shelley’s nameless monster, the female voice silenced by the patriarchy in *Frankenstein* and even Shelley herself reappear in Winterson’s fiction metamorphosing into different versions of themselves in accordance with the changing era and concerns. By placing the Germaine among the new robotised woman slaves, Winterson brings the 70s feminist monster back to life. With the whole brain emulation technology, created through the collaboration of human and artificial intelligence, Shelley’s monster, ostracised because of his body, is brought back to life metaphorically, as this technology erases bodily prejudices. Mary Shelley, who struggled with the challenges of being a woman in the nineteenth century, reappears as Ry, who shoulders the burdens of being a trans non-binary in the twenty-first century. A nineteenth century female monster, who dared to step into male domain by being the author of books, reappears as a non-binary monster, who defies gender binaries in the twenty-first century. In her review of Gilmore’s book about monsters, beasts and fears, Miller states that “[a]s a culturally-based thinker, [Gilmore] sees the monster as a key into a society’s ethos, revealing the

community's tensions and concerns about its own identity and the threat posed by outsiders" (166). Likewise, Shelley's monsters reemerge centuries later in their up-to-date form to combat current social issues, by stirring social anxieties.

According to Cohen, monsters reject to be a part of "classificatory order of things," as they are threatening hybrids, whose existential purpose is to dismantle categories ("Monster Culture" 6). Likewise, Halberstam asserts that "the monster always represents the disruption of categories, the destruction of boundaries, and the presence of impurities" (27). Scholars such as Barbara Creed, David Greven, Sarah-May O'Sullivan regard the monster as an example of what Julia Kristeva defines as "abject." According to Kristeva, "[t]he abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them" (*Powers of Horror* 15). Therefore, the abject is deviant because it crosses boundaries, breaks rules, and disrupts the systematic order, similar to the characteristics of Cohen's monsters. In like manner, the monsters in *Fran-kiss-stein*, such as trans bodies, as exemplified by Ry, and xx-bots, who have the potential to gain consciousness, pioneer category crisis. Each of them acts as the announcer of the need for a new world order in which categorisations vanish.

In *Fran-kiss-stein*, Cohenian monsters symbolise what is considered abnormal, ugly, deviant and divergent by the society. According to Beal, a monster might be anything that "invades one's sense of personal, social or cosmic order and security" (5). That is to say, a monster disturbs order and intimidates those who benefit from it or discomforts those who do not want to take the risk of change. While analysing monsters' place in culture, Çakır puts forward her ideas related to security-sameness and insecurity-difference as follows:

For humanity, the tendency to create a space where one feels secure is dependent on sameness, and this security remains as long as disturbing, unsettling, or unfitting things stay outside the borders. However, if an Other invades in this space, the sense of safety and familiarity is threatened, creating tension and anxiety. (3)

As the quotation suggests, people tend to equate security with uniformity, and this leads them to threaten the Others. In other words, the Other's intrusion into their safe space is

an alarming and threatening action. Ry's gender and sexual identity that are outside of heteronormative patterns, the Germaine's femininity that does not conform to gender identity roles, and the ubiquity and physical nonexistence of posthuman concepts unsettle the collective mind. Society, which tends to exclude everything that cannot be grasped or positioned within the context of binary thinking, does the same to these three subjects in the novel. These three monsters are there exactly to break this thought pattern. They fight for the rights of all Others who are pushed to the margins of the society.

Winterson does not openly declare herself a posthumanist, nor does she unquestioningly embrace all the tenets of posthumanism. While she explores posthuman themes in her works, she simultaneously ponders the promises and threats of a posthumanist world order. Winterson, who is very interested in science and technology, offers ideas on how scientific and technological developments can be used for the benefit of humanity, as she foresees it. In *12 Bytes*, she notes that “[n]ot the next 250 years but the next 25 years will take us into a world where intelligent machines and non-embodied AI are as much a part of everyday life as humans are” (36). Rather than focusing on catastrophic scenarios, Winterson focuses on the promises of a new world order constructed by human and posthuman collaboration.

The use of bionic organs and body implants to improve people's quality of life is an indication that humanity has already taken steps into the transhumanist world. A prosthetic device called LUKE arm, to illustrate, provides people with the natural feeling of bodily movement and gives tactile feedback. As FDA reveals, it is “the first prosthetic arm that can perform multiple, simultaneous powered movements controlled by electrical signals from electromyogram (EMG) electrodes” (Hammond n.pag.). This prosthetic device is not like an artificial eye, arm or leg without sensory feedback, integrated with the body for a better aesthetic appearance. It is a functional technology that integrates human and machine through sensory feedback, which creates a cyborg. On January 28, 2024, five years after Winterson published *Fran-kiss-stein*, Neuralink announced the success of a brain implant that let the unidentified experimental subject operate devices such as smartphones by just intending to do so, without needing buttons, wires or movement (Chappell n.pag.). This direct link between mind and machine is again a transhumanist aspiration. There is more scientific evidence that supports that we are

already being cyborgs and have taken our first steps into transhumanism, and a posthuman world order is not so far away.

To return to *Fran-kiss-stein*, posthumanist world order promises to establish equal standing for Others such as Ry, who tries to harmonise their body with their mind and the Germaine, whose intellectual breadth is overlooked because of her gender. They reappear in a transition era as contemporary monsters to rise against injustices. As AI lays the groundwork for a new world order which promises the annihilation of hierarchical distinctions, it is also regarded as a monster in the eyes of the people, who have guaranteed their privileged position in hierarchical structure. The monsters in *Fran-kiss-stein* are the signs of categorical ambiguity because only by not giving in to binary thinking, they may end the suffering of Others. Ry, the Germaine and posthuman initiatives defy anthropocentric and androcentric binaries thanks to their nonconformist nature.

While in *Frankenstein*, the oppression of women within the patriarchal system is reflected through the female characters' docility, silence and lack of agency, in *Fran-kiss-stein*, Winterson underlines this ongoing patriarchal expectation from women through Ron Lord and his xx-bots. Bağırlar alleges that "Winterson's novel is like the application of Haraway's utopian cyborg dream" (710). She states that both Haraway and Winterson argue that discrimination and hierarchy will not be eliminated as long as technological advancements are based on body politics (707). In other words, both Winterson and Haraway defend that if technological progresses intertwine with body politics, these advancements will continue to serve patriarchy. Ron Lord's xx-bot technology proves how technological advancements reinforce patriarchal norms. This is precisely why Winterson suggests in *Fran-kiss-stein* that a posthuman world is a way out of discrimination. Victor Stein's declaration that "[t]he world I imagine, the world that AI will make possible, will not be a world of labels – and that includes binaries like male and female, black and white, rich and poor. There will not be a division between head and heart, between what I feel and what I think" resonates Winterson's utopia (79-80). Victor Stein's project, unlike Ron Lord's, does not aim to perpetuate traditional prejudices. Winterson emphasises that the posthuman world envisioned by this inclusive project can

make the dreams of women, non-hetero individuals, and in short, all Others in the existing world order, come true.

Ry, the Germaine and posthuman concepts such as AI, AGI and full brain emulation elicit fear and desire in society simultaneously. Cohen argues that “[w]e distrust and loathe the monster at the same time we envy its freedom, and perhaps its sublime despair” (“Monster Culture” 17). He attributes the lasting appeal of monster narratives to the coexisting feeling of disgust and charm they evoke in people. Julia Kristeva, likewise, touches upon paradoxical feelings the abject evokes in people in *Powers of Horror*. She asserts how things “beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable” ... “beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire” (1). She continues her argument by stating that “that impetus, that spasm, that leap is drawn toward an elsewhere as tempting as it is condemned. Unflaggingly, like an inescapable boomerang, a vortex of summons and repulsion places the one haunted by it literally beside himself” (1). That Ry has a mastectomy is found disgusting by the people who are tied to the codes of heteronormative world order, however; it cannot be denied that it is common for people to consider changing their body to improve their appearance.

While changing body for cosmetic or health reasons is not thought to be alarming, changes as a part of gender confirmation process are received with discomfort. A non-binary trans individual without breasts and penis disrupts society’s sense of normality, but still, they arouse curiosity. Though Victor Stein states that he is not gay, which echoes his desire to keep his privileged position in the heteronormative world order as a heterosexual man, he also admires Ry and their reconstruction of their body. While one Victor, who is a part of the heteronormative mindset, finds Ry loathsome, the posthumanist Victor adores them. This contradictory approach shows that finding something repulsive or attractive does not come from the thing itself, but from the culture within whose thought patterns and prejudices the viewer is shaped. The contradictory emotional state of the man who first spews hatred at Ry in the restroom and then attempts to rape them is another evidence of desire-hate paradox reflected in the novel. As is evident from the related examples in the novel, desires that one is afraid to admit might be revealed under the mask of hatred.

As for Cohen, monsters maintain a stance against inflexible binaries as monsters promote progress, change and novelty with their fluid and ever-evolving nature. Monsters confront people with their misperception and misinterpretation of the world. In Cohen's words "[monsters] ask us to reevaluate our cultural assumptions about race, gender, sexuality, our perception of difference, our tolerance toward its expression. They ask us why we have created them" ("Monster Culture" 20). This quotation reveals that monsters aspire after confronting people with the constructed narratives they have produced. Namely monsters invite people to question their so-called truths, which privilege one segment of the society while marginalising the other. By occupying a liminal space themselves, by being one of the Others, monsters suggest people to soften their rigid boundaries. Similarly, McAvan stresses that monsters are always in the process of transition, and he notes that "[t]he composition of the monster collapses such foundational binaries as male/female, gay/straight, dead/alive, human/machine, human/animal, black/white, and inside/outside" (n.pag.). As is evident from the scholars' views on the *raison d'être* of monsters, monsters reappear no matter how many times they are attempted to be exterminated as they are responsible for giving voice to the Others until true equality is ensured. They defy the existing system with their unruly, liminal, and non-conformist attitudes as do the monsters in *Fran-kiss-stein*.

Ry, in this regard, is a Cohenian monster with their gender and body outside cultural norms. With their hybridity they offer people a third option, which makes it possible to approach the notion of gender from a broader perspective. As a Cohenian monster they introduce people with revolutionary ideas that force them to reconsider their cultural conventions. That Ry does not monsterise or approach topics such as artificial intelligence, mind upload, full brain emulation or transhumanism with caution is because they can empathise with anyone who wants to transcend the burden of body. Ry states that "I am part of a small group of transgender medical professionals. Some of us are transhuman enthusiasts too. That isn't surprising; we feel or have felt that we're in the wrong body. We can understand the feeling that any-body is the wrong body" (*Fran-kiss-stein* 104). As can be deduced from Ry's statement and the novel *Fran-kiss-stein* itself, disembodiment is also a Cohenian monster.

The posthumanist vision Victor possesses resonates the insignificance of body, which is a revolt against a centuries-old issue of body politics. Bağlılar comments on Winterson's view on the relationship between body politics and artificial intelligence as follows:

Winterson noticeably points out that body politics will disappear with the creation of disembodied forms. Victor's artificial intelligence differs from robots or sexbots. Xx-bots cannot think and are the new female slaves of the phallogocentric system based entirely on gender issues... Hence, Winterson speaks of a world where the concept of gender, inequality and gender discrimination are absent, because humans in that world are not special. (707)

While Shelley reflects the situation of women in patriarchal system, Winterson goes beyond it and offers suggestions on how this situation can change. She implies that patriarchal expectations have evolved in the twenty-first century, when women are relatively freer and more powerful, but women are still objectified and expected to behave in a certain way. She demonstrates how patriarchal ideology and embodied gender bias can be overthrown with the help of advances such as artificial intelligence and whole brain emulation. Though Ron Lord produces xx-bots in line with patriarchal expectations, it is hinted that they might gain consciousness and be more than subservient objects as they are still in the process of becoming. To illustrate, While Ron Lord's personal xx-bot is inside his bag, it starts to act independently and appals everyone. This event is an indication that even xx-bots, which are designed mainly to obey and please men, might evolve and rebel. Though it is not explicitly mentioned in the novel, the Germaine might be one of the xx-bots that have started to gain consciousness and agency. By placing such xx-bots beginning to act independently in the novel, Winterson might be suggesting that even the most obedient women, compliant with patriarchy, have the potential of turning into Cohenian monsters who act, rebel and take the lead.

Though *Fran-kiss-stein*'s award nominations in Booker Prize 2019, Comedy Women in Print Prize 2020 and Polari Prize 2020 did not result in success, the book has had a great impact on public, and it has been the subject of highly positive reviews in prestigious publications. To illustrate, in *Washington Post*, Ron Charles praises it as “a brainy, batty story — an unholy amalgamation of scholarship and comedy” (n.pag.) while in *The Guardian*, Johanna Thomas-Corr describes it as a “playful reanimation of Mary Shelley's

1818 classic, gamely links arms with the zeitgeist” (n.pag.). In addition, in *Los Angeles Times*, Carolyn Kellogg highlights the novel’s stance against binary thinking and describes it as “intellectually bracing and sexually explicit; a historical literary romp and a futuristic thriller” (n.pag.). When the novel is scrutinised in light of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen’s monster theory it becomes evident that monstrosity arises from the anxiety and fear that reveal themselves when the ingrained norms of the society are confronted with something new and “deviant.” Namely, being outside the norm is equated with monstrosity. Binary thinking, which erases diversity and multiplicity of voices, also keeps the chaos under control, and for this very reason, it suits the interests of patriarchy, which clings tightly to rigid oppositions such as male-female, human-machine, rational-emotional and mind-body. For this reason, the monster is the voice of the Other, the hybrid, the liminal, the divergent. In *Fran-kiss-stein*, the monster is the one who is not female enough, not male enough, or not human enough as in the case of Ry, the robot Germaine and the concept of disembodiment.

CONCLUSION

Let's not call it artificial intelligence.
 Perhaps alternative intelligence is more accurate.
 And we need alternatives.

-From Winterson's *12 Bytes*

In examining Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Jeanette Winterson's *Fran-kiss-stein* through the lens of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's monster theory, this thesis has explored the mechanisms of othering under the pretexts of various forms of difference, whether race, gender, gender identity, or ontological status. The recurrence of othering in multiple forms across historical epochs has been linked to ongoing traditional discourses based on binary thinking. It has also been stressed that binary thinking has contributed to anthropocentrism and androcentrism, which, once internalised, have continued to reproduce and reinforce such rooted discourses. In both novels, the othered parties suffer due to the lack of encompassing, nonhierarchical and non-centric approach. While *Frankenstein* highlights how being non-normative is equated with monstrosity in a subtly critical way, *Fran-kiss-stein* challenges normativity with strong criticism and advocates the necessity to approach identity from a more inclusive, fluid and non-centric perspective, which paves the way to integration with new forms of existence in the posthuman era.

Shelley's *Frankenstein* conveys the issue of ostracism through the Monster who is marginalised because of his non-normative human appearance. As the Monster is a non-human made from human limbs, it might appear that his marginalisation is the result of human-nonhuman dichotomy; however, the actual reason for this is his difference, his incompatibility with normality, as people he comes across have no idea about how he came into the world and they judge him based merely on his appearance. The Monster's superior physical strength, extremely tall height, gigantic hands and bodily imperfections transcend normative human characteristics, which causes him to be met with dread and

to be shunned by society. No matter how much he educates himself by acquiring human language, gaining an understanding of literature, history and philosophy and learning and practicing human norms, nothing changes the fact that he is the Other. Therefore, the Monster's exclusion from the society refers to the prejudices stemming not only from the human-nonhuman dichotomy but also from all hierarchical binaries such as male-female, white-black, beautiful-ugly, rich-poor, upper-lower, us-you. In other words, the Monster's isolated and relegated state represents the situation of all individuals who are pushed to the margins of society because of their "inferior" position in the hierarchical order. Arguably, Shelley speaks for all those who have been marginalised by the society through the specific example of the Monster, who is excluded due to his non-normative physical appearance, as she sheds light on the connection between divergence from norms and othering.

Winterson's *Fran-kiss-stein*, on the other hand, explores monstrosity and othering through artificial intelligence and artificial general intelligence technology, which have the potential to help annihilate normative human identity. While the novel presents human-machine binary through humans, robots, artificial intelligence and artificial general intelligence, it also focuses on society's sceptical approach to rapidly evolving technology. Rather than criticising or praising technology, the novel prioritises social implications of it. Winterson reflects on the developing technology based on body politics through xx-bots, revealing how this feeds phallogocentric ideology. She also speculates on what this might mean for individuals who are marginalised because of their bodies if technology advances based on disembodiment rather than body politics. Moreover, Winterson proposes that if the human-nonhuman binary is destroyed, all other binaries could be dissolved one by one. Namely, *Fran-kiss-stein* does not only reflect the society's othering attitudes and behaviours, but it also proposes a solution to put an end to them, by offering insights into the posthuman world in which all human norms and definition of identity are destined to evolve.

Both *Frankenstein* and *Fran-kiss-stein* delve into the theme of othering from different historical, social and technological angles. While in *Frankenstein* the reason for othering is presented through non-normative physical appearance, that is, conventional physical monstrosity, in *Fran-kiss-stein* physical modification and disembodiment are conveyed

as elements that lead to othering. The fear of encountering an unusual body in *Frankenstein* gives way to the fear of disembodiment in *Fran-kiss-stein*. The physically monstrous body in the Industrial Age is transformed into disembodied monstrous bodies such as machine consciousness and full brain emulation in the Technological Age. Once the monster is considered as an opportunity for self-evaluation and a chance for bias-free reasoning, things change, threat and fear turn into promise and optimism as *Frankenstein* implies, and *Fran-kiss-stein* strongly defends. Monsters liberate definitions hindered by binary thinking, enlarge the scale of individuals' identity definition, provide a chance for diversity and polyphony. Similarly, this study views the monster as a power to cure social wounds caused by discriminative thought patterns, as a reminder of social self-criticism.

Through the presence of a trans non-binary character named Ry in *Fran-kiss-stein*, the possibility that the body might be out of harmony with the mind is highlighted. That Victor Stein regards Ry as a harbinger of the future implies the dream of a future in which any individual will feel satisfied whether they are grounded in a body or free from it. When *Frankenstein* and *Fran-kiss-stein* are examined together, it is observed that othering does not decrease in parallel with scientific and technological advances, it only changes form. Arguably, that is why Winterson merges the past and the future with her novel's two seemingly distinct narratives, offering accounts of Mary Shelley's life in the historical one and revealing the social implications of a technological revolution that extends to Victor Stein's full brain emulation technology in the metafictional one. In both narratives the interrelated cycle of othering and body politics is observed. In this hegemonic cycle, those in a powerless position are subjected to systematic marginalisation by the powerful. This creates the categorisation of approved and unapproved in the eyes of the society. In other words, a random perception of what is right or wrong, a division which in fact does not exist inherently, is created by powerholders. Over time, this perception penetrates society and becomes a social code. This is what Winterson emphasises in her novel. She wants the reader to comprehend that thinking in binaries is a cognitive bias that misleads people and forces them to approach the universe and anything residing or happening in it in two distinct categories. She wants the reader to question conventional discourses rooted in binary thinking that approve of one, while stigmatising the other. She challenges the reader to go beyond bias, body

politics and binary thinking. She emphasises the fact that people assign random social meanings to the body though it is just a biological entity and such a construction of meaning brings about the hierarchical dichotomies, which is one of the primal causes of social othering.

This study, which applies Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's monster theory to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Jeanette Winterson's *Fran-kiss-stein*, regards monstrosity not simply as a terrifying concept full of villains and vices but as a manifestation of oppression, an uprising against injustice, a force for development. Cohen's monster theory, which decodes monstrosity in relation to culture, offers a comprehensive framework for exploring the theme of social othering and analysing the instruments of it. According to Cohen's theory, monsters are reverberations of suppressed or denied identities societies bear inside, as monster narratives are fictionalised forms of societal anxieties, fears and desires. As well as the monster's unsettling effect, Cohen also emphasises its transformative power by empowering it to question norms. So, the Cohenian monster, as the monsters in *Frankenstein* and *Fran-kiss-stein*, is both the one who disturbs and unsettles, and the one who questions and guides. In the eyes of the society, the monster is a rule-breaker, who travels through routes and enters areas a normal person should not and reminds people of their natural boundaries. In *Fran-kiss-stein*, Winterson lets her monsters be more than border guards. Her monsters confront the society with the fears, anxieties and prejudices they possess. Rather than warning against the danger of transgressing limits, Winterson introduces new possibilities such as a posthuman world order, which might foster positive progress. In this respect, the findings indicate that Cohen's monster theory offers a comprehensive and effective theoretical lens that can be utilised both in literary and cultural studies to examine the issue of social othering, which has persisted to this day, by underlining that monsters are cultural bodies that reflect society's fears, weaknesses, prejudices and limits.

As long as there is a single human community left in the universe, or a community to which humans have instilled their hierarchical and discriminatory mentality, monstrosity and the monster narrative are likely to persist. Even if only one human is left in the universe, as long as the binary mindset, the echoing voices, shadows, fears and judgments persist, monstrosity will possibly not disappear. As long as the possibility of defining

something without its opposite is not considered, the monster will always reappear as a disturbing figure until the message it struggles to convey across centuries is grasped. Whether as an odd youth with physical deformity, a bald elderly man with a hump on his back, a witch on her broom whispering, a cyborg some parts of whom are not made of human flesh, a robot who takes control of the family, a device recording all one's most private moments, monsters always return to call upon societies to confront their own wrongdoings. As long as normality cannot be discussed without abnormality, good without evil, us without you, and a definition free of duality and hierarchy cannot be produced, neither will monstrosity and othering end.

The monster is anything positioned against normality in the binary mind, and therefore the monster is reproduced in all eras and at all times, supporting Cohen's argument that monsters have the ability to reincarnate. As both *Frankenstein's* and *Fran-kiss-stein's* open endings indicate, it is necessary to embrace the ambiguity of future. To illustrate, though the Monster in *Frankenstein* tells Walton that he will put himself on fire, no one can be sure whether he will realise this plan. Similarly, at the end of *Fran-kiss-stein*, while Victor Stein's e-mails are answered and his bills are paid, he exists nowhere physically. This obscurity is thematically significant in both novels, for it highlights the monster narratives' change-oriented nature, which is open to embrace the uncertainty and vagueness of future. The obscure endings of the novels mean that monsters will revisit people until people succeed to face, question and correct their wrongdoings.

Overall, in this study the issue of monstrosity and otherness has been explored in relation to race, gender and foreignness while analysing *Frankenstein*. The issue of monstrosity and otherness has been scrutinised in relation to gender, gender diversity and posthuman concepts such as AI, AGI and full brain emulation in *Fran-kiss-stein*. It has been mentioned how scientific and technological advancements centred on the body nourish the heteronormative patriarchal order. It has also been stated that Winterson suggests cooperation and even merging of human and machine for the sake of changing the phallogocentric mindset. The findings in this study provide an inspiration for further studies, for they enable the reconsideration of the link between monstrosity and otherness in different texts and in other societies. The novels that have been analysed in this study might also be scrutinised through the theoretical lens of Disability Studies, Neurodiversity

Studies, Trans Theory or Queer Futurism as they, too, offer persuasive and effective means for highlighting the problem of othering.

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APPENDIX 1 ORIGINALITY REPORT

	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ	Doküman Kodu Form No.	FRM-YL-15
		Yayın Tarihi Date of Pub.	04.12.2023
	FRM-YL-15 Yüksek Lisans Tezi Orijinallik Raporu Master's Thesis Dissertation Originality Report	Revizyon No Rev. No.	02
		Revizyon Tarihi Rev. Date	25.01.2024



**HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞINA**

Tarih: 21/01/2026

Tez Başlığı (Türkçe): Ötekini Canavarlaştırmak: Mary Shelley'nin *Frankenstein Ya Da Modern Prometheus*'ında ve Jeanette Winterson'ın *Fran-kiss-stein: Bir Aşk Hikayesi*'nde Canavarlık

Yukarıda başlığı verilen tezinin a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 85 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 21/01/2026 tarihinde tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda işaretleme yapılmış filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezinin benzerlik oranı % 4'tür.

Uygulanan filtrelemeler*:

- Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç
- Kaynakça hariç
- Alıntılar hariç
- Alıntılar dâhil
- 5 kelimedenden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç
-

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tezinin herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumlarda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

Hayal Şahin

Öğrenci Bilgileri	Ad-Soyad	Hayal Şahin
	Öğrenci No	N22120954
	Enstitü Anabilim Dalı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
	Programı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Tezli Yüksek Lisans

DANIŞMAN ONAYI

UYGUNDUR.

**Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları İkinci bölüm madde (4)/3'te de belirtildiği üzere: Kaynakça hariç, Alıntılar hariç/dâhil, 5 kelimedenden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç (Limit match size to 5 words) filtreleme yapılmalıdır.

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		Yayın Tarihi Date of Pub.	04.12.2023
	FRM-YL-15 Yüksek Lisans Tezi Orijinallik Raporu Master's Thesis Dissertation Originality Report	Revizyon No Rev. No.	02
		Revizyon Tarihi Rev. Date	25.01.2024

**TO HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

Date: 21/01/2026

Thesis Title (In English): Monsterising the Other: Monstrosity in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or *The Modern Prometheus* and Jeanette Winterson's *Fran-kiss-stein: A Love Story*

According to the originality report obtained by myself/my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options checked below on 21/01/2026 for the total of 86 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled above, the similarity index of my thesis is 4 %.

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Kindly submitted for the necessary actions.

Hayal Şahin

Student Information	Name-Surname	Hayal Şahin
	Student Number	N22129954
	Department	English Language and Literature
	Programme	English Language and Literature MA

SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

APPROVED.

**As mentioned in the second part [article (4)/3] of the Thesis Dissertation Originality Report's Codes of Practice of Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences, filtering should be done as following: excluding reference, quotation excluded/included, Match size up to 5 words excluded.

APPENDIX 2 . ETHICS COMMISSION FORM

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		Yayın Tarihi Date of Pub.	22.11.2023
	FRM-YL-09 Yüksek Lisans Tezi Etik Kurul Muafiyeti Formu Ethics Board Form for Master's Thesis	Revizyon No Rev. No.	02
		Revizyon Tarihi Rev.Date	25.01.2024

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞINA

Tarih: 21/01/2028

Tez Başlığı (Türkçe): Ötekini Canavarlaştırmak: Mary Shelley'nin *Frankenstein Ya Da Modern Prometheus*'ında ve Jeanette Winterson'ın *Fran-kiss-stein: Bir Aşk Hikayesi*'nde Canavarlık

Yukarıda başlığı verilen tez çalışmam:

1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır.
2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanımını gerektirmemektedir.
3. Beden bütünlüğüne veya ruh sağlığına müdahale içermemektedir.
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5. Diğer kişi ve kurumlardan temin edilen veri kullanımını (kitap, belge vs.) gerektirmektedir. Ancak bu kullanım, diğer kişi ve kurumların izin verdiği ölçüde Kişisel Bilgilerin Korunması Kanuna riayet edilerek gerçekleştirilecektir.

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Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

Hayal Şahin

Öğrenci Bilgileri	Ad-Soyad	Hayal Şahin
	Öğrenci No	N22129954
	Enstitü Anabilim Dalı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
	Programı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Tezli Yüksek Lisans

DANIŞMAN ONAYI

UYGUNDUR.

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	FRM-YL-09	Revizyon No Rev. No.	02
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**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

Date: 21/01/2028

Thesis Title (In English): *Monsterising the Other: Monstrosity in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus and Jeanette Winterson's Fran-kiss-stein: A Love Story*

My thesis work with the title given above:

- Does not perform experimentation on people or animals.
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- Requires the use of data (books, documents, etc.) obtained from other people and institutions. However, this use will be carried out in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Law to the extent permitted by other persons and institutions.

I hereby declare that I reviewed the Directives of Ethics Boards of Hacettepe University and in regard to these directives it is not necessary to obtain permission from any Ethics Board in order to carry out my thesis study; I accept all legal responsibilities that may arise in any infringement of the directives and that the information I have given above is correct.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

Hayal Şahin

Student Information	Name-Surname	Hayal Şahin
	Student Number	N22129954
	Department	English Language and Literature
	Programme	English Language and Literature MA

SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

APPROVED.