

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

A perfect personality is impossible to be depicted in a fictional character, whether it is human, half-human, animals, animals that can talk, elves, monsters, or other creatures. The fictional characters created by the authors certainly have their weaknesses behind their stack of strengths. For a fictional character who can be considered perfect, there is still a deficiency in them, a deficiency that contradicts their personalities. The deficiency can be in the form of the negative traits of the characters, such as their selfishness, not being responsible for what they have done, or willing to harm others to achieve their goals.

Most literary works have one or more characters who have two contradicting personalities in themselves, which usually becomes the main idea or the theme of a work. The two contradicting personalities are usually good and bad sides. From the points above, the representation of the fictional characters who have two contradicting personalities can be seen in *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley.

Frankenstein or *The Modern Prometheus* is a gothic novel originally written by an English writer Mary Shelley in 1818. The first edition of *Frankenstein* was published anonymously on January 1, 1818, in London. At that time, many reviewers suspected that Percy Shelley¹ is the author. It is because there is a citation of a poem entitled *Mutability* by him in chapter 10 of

¹ The husband of Mary Shelley.

Frankenstein. The novel was then republished in 1823 as the second edition under the name of Mary Shelley.

Frankenstein lists as the third best-selling classic books in the 1800s on the Goodreads². The work also has been adapted into numerous films due to its remarkable popularity, such as *Frankenstein* as the first film adaptation directed by J. Searle Dawley in 1910, *Life Without Soul* in 1915, and *Frankenstein: The True Story* as the first TV film adaptation in 1973. The popularity of *Frankenstein* did not only produce a variety of film adaptations based on the novel, but it also inspired a lot of other films where only the monster of *Frankenstein* took part in it. Those films are *The Monster Squad* (1987), *Dracula vs. Frankenstein* (1971), *Van Helsing* (2004), and *Hotel Transylvania* trilogy (2012-2018).

The story of *Frankenstein* tells about a young genius scientist who is very ambitious to uncover the facts behind life and death. He aims to cure all existing diseases in this world and keep the painful death away from people. To make his dream comes true, he needs to resurrect a lifeless creature through a scientific experiment. He has succeeded in resurrecting the creature. Unfortunately, it becomes the beginning of the catastrophe of his life.

In general, it is supposed that humanity should be present in the human being because they have a conscience, and the monstrosity should be present in the monster due to its ferocious instinct. On the contrary, the writer assumes there are several things that show the human's monstrosity and the monster's humanity in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

² Goodreads <https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/1800s>

The writer wants to reveal that the character of Victor is not always presented with his goodness, and the character of the monster is not always presented with his cruelty. The writer also wants to undermine the readers' perception and makes the readers see from a different perspective regarding the two contradicting personalities of the *Frankenstein's* characters. To do so, the writer aims to investigate how the formal elements of *Frankenstein* are interconnected at one another. Moreover, the writer will associate these elements with symbolism and imagery in the novel. The symbolism and imagery are useful to support the issues of monstrosity and humanity because of its relevance.

Considering all the points above, the writer feels interested in analyzing the monstrosity and humanity of the characters of different species in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. One is a pure human being, and the other one is just an abnormal creature as a result of a failed scientific experiment. Therefore, the writer decides to entitle this research as **"Monstrosity and Humanity in *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley: A Formalistic Reading"**.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Frankenstein tells the tragic story between Victor Frankenstein and his creation, who is often touted as *the monster*. Mostly, the readers judge that Victor is on the good side due to all horrible things the monster has done to him, and the monster is on the bad side because he never hesitates to kill Victor's family. Moreover, their status further strengthens this idea, in which Victor is a human being that has a conscience, and the monster is only the result of a failed experiment.

The writer wants to reveal the fact that even a perfect creature like Victor can also prioritize his ego to do some inhumane actions, and even an illogical creature like the monster can act more humanely rather than the humans themselves. Hence, the good side is not always present in humans just because they have a conscience, and the bad side is not always present in a figure with an illogical origin like the monster.

1.3 Scope of the Research

The writer only focuses on the formal elements, elements of fiction, and symbolism or imagery found in *Frankenstein* to analyze the issues of monstrosity and humanity in the chosen characters. These formal elements are based on the new criticism by Cleanth Brooks, which deals with the dependency between tension, irony, paradox, and ambiguity of *Frankenstein* to form its organic unity. Meanwhile, the elements of fiction are those elements that the writer obtained by doing a close reading. It works as the preliminary analysis that provides a better base to comprehend further analysis. The writer also associates these elements with symbolism or imagery found in the novel to support the issues of monstrosity and humanity.

1.4 Research Questions

This research aims to answer these following questions:

1. How does Mary Shelley utilize the formal elements (tension, irony, paradox, and ambiguity) in *Frankenstein*?

2. How do these formal elements form organic unity to present the issues of monstrosity and humanity in *Frankenstein*?

1.5 Objective of the Research

This research aims to investigate how the formal elements work together to convey the organic unity of *Frankenstein*. To be more specific, the writer refers to the formal elements from Cleanth Brooks, which focused on the tension, irony, paradox, and ambiguity of *Frankenstein*. This research also aims to prove that humans in *Frankenstein* do not only have humanity, but they also have monstrosity in themselves. Humans in this novel do not always behave well and humanely, but they can also behave wickedly that the writer describes as a monstrosity. As well as the monster, this research aims to prove that despite having his monstrous nature, the monster also has his humanity.

1.6 Reviews of Related Studies

In conducting this research, the writer has reviewed several journal articles, thesis, and other related studies from some experts and graduated students related to the research topic. These reviews of related studies will be the guide for this research and enrich the writer's analysis.

The first related study is an article written by Daniel Cottom entitled *Frankenstein and the Monster of Representation* (1980) in a journal of *SubStance* from the University of Wisconsin. In his article, Cottom judges the monstrosity of the monster is based on its gigantic stature. He claims that the size of the monster (whether it is from inside or outside) represents a mistake, and it has an impact on

the monster's relation with society. He also states that the gigantism signifies a fear to those who see the monster. In addition, Cottom explains that the monstrosity in *Frankenstein* is seen on the abortion of the female's role where the monster is created only with the hand of male (Victor) and Victor's refusal to create a female monster to accompany the male monster.

This article provides a clear explanation about the monstrosity of the monster and the monstrosity of the novel from a different perspective³. However, the writer argues that the monstrosity of the monster is not only based on its gigantic stature, but also its personality and attitude towards society. In the writer's opinion, it would be better if Cottom explains the monstrosity not only from the monster but also from the human's side, like Victor Frankenstein.

The second related study is a thesis written by Zaneta Skalossova entitled *Monster and Monstrosity in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (2015) from Masaryk University. Skalossova explains that the monstrosity is based on Victor Frankenstein, the monster, and the author Mary Shelley by using the historical-biographical approach. In line with Cottom's argument, Skalossova expresses that the main root of the monster's monstrosity is based on its gigantic stature. She explains that due to its gigantic and abnormal stature, the monster cannot be welcomed in a world where people are afraid of the unusual things. As for Victor, she states that the main root of Victor's monstrosity is his ambition to create a human with his scientific experiment, which later fails and results in a hideous creature instead of a normal human being.

³ The abortion of the female's role.

Furthermore, she claims that Shelley's monstrosity is reflected in how she creates a monster that mercilessly kills almost all of the Frankenstein family. This is the reflection of the tragic and depressing life of Shelley during her lifetime. Shelley is known to have a mournful life surrounded by the deaths of her closest people. Her mother died ten days after her birth, her father disowned her for several years because she eloped with her husband, she nearly died because of miscarriage, and she lost three of her children because of illness and premature birth. Not only that, her sister's suicide and the death of her husband also worsen the situation.

Both Cottom and Skalosova have the same view that the monstrosity of the monster is based on its gigantic stature. Unlike Cottom, Skalosova gives a more detailed explanation regarding the monstrosity of the monster and Victor. She also provides additional information regarding the monstrosity of the author, Mary Shelley. However, Skalosova does not elaborate on the humanity of Victor and the monster, which will be the main focus of this research.

The third related study is an article written by Ronald Britton entitled *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein: What Made the Monster Monstrous?* (2015). In his article, Britton claims that the monstrosity of the monster is a reflection of Shelley's tragic memories of losing too many beloved people during her lifetime. Britton points out that the monster keeps on killing Victor's beloved people one by one in the novel. As a result, he considers that the character of Victor refers to Shelley, while the monster refers to death and depression that surrounds Shelley's life. Britton also explains that the monster is born into this world without the

figure of a mother, not much different from Shelley who lost her mother after giving birth to her. Hence, this lack of love condition becomes the beginning of the monster's monstrosity.

The fourth related study is an article written by Erinc Ozdemir entitled *Frankenstein: Self, Body, Creation, and Monstrosity* (2003) in a Journal of Faculty of Language and History-Geography from Ankara University. Ozdemir analyzes the monstrosity of *Frankenstein* by focusing on gender with the postmodern point of view. He believes that although gender is not a major theme in the novel, it still plays an important role in the elucidation of monstrosity.

In line with Cottom's statement that the monstrosity in *Frankenstein* is seen through the abortion of a female's role where the monster is created only with the hand of man, Ozdemir states that the monstrosity of *Frankenstein* has a huge privilege on men. It can be seen from Victor's scientific experiment that presents as heroic. There is no one capable of resurrecting a lifeless creature, and Victor turns out to be the very first male scientist who can do that. It signifies as a victory to conquer nature in an absolute way if Victor is succeeded in resurrecting a human being. In the end, Victor has succeeded in giving a soul to his creature, but he has failed to create a creature like the human being in general.

The fifth related study is a thesis written by Aftiyari Nisak entitled *Love as Represented in John Donne's Love's Alchemy* (2016) from State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga. In her thesis, Nisak analyzes the object of her research by using the new criticism theory from Cleanth Brooks. This thesis works as a guide for the writer due to the same theory used. Nisak analyzes the object of her

research by elaborating the formal elements by Cleanth Brooks, such as tension, irony, paradox, and ambiguity to find the meaning of *love* in John Donne's *Love's Alchemy*.

Based on her thesis, it helps the writer to understand more about the new criticism based on Cleanth Brooks and how it applies to literary works. However, Nisak does not analyze the elements of fiction based on her research object. The writer thinks it would be better if she includes the analysis of these elements as the preliminary analysis of her thesis to provide a better understanding of the further analysis, and also to strengthen her ideas.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This research conducts by using an intrinsic approach. In Wellek and Warren's book entitled *Theory of Literature*, they state that an intrinsic approach focuses on the interpretation and the analysis of the work itself (1948:139). It means that the literary study with an intrinsic approach should only concentrate on the actual elements of the intended works (140). In line with Wellek and Warren's statements, in his book entitled *Doing English: A Guide for Literature Students*, Eaglestone expresses that an intrinsic approach concentrates on the language of the text as its central object (2002:43). By using an intrinsic approach, it means that the critics only consider the elements inside the text, such as the choice of metaphors, the use of symbols, structure, characters, theme, setting, and the development of the plot to find the meaning of the intended works (44).

Before explaining the specific theory used in this research, the writer will define the meaning of *monstrosity* and *humanity*. First, in his book entitled

Monstrosity in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and Philosophy, Unterthurner states that monstrosity is regarded as essential of normality (2012:8). He claims that monstrosity presents a thought with a modern problem. The modern problem is a state of order turns into disorder, and normality bleeds into abnormality (7). During the 19th century, the monsters of flesh and blood are replaced by a new form of monstrosity, which is the state of someone who becomes monstrous (8). Unterthurner also claims that the monstrosity is pulsing from inside the subject (9). Hence, it means that not only abnormal creatures that can be monstrous but also humans because the monstrosity comes from within the subject.

Second, in his book entitled *Literature, the Humanities, and Humanity*, Steinberg assumes that humanity is among the things that make us human. For the modern world, the idea of humanity is revived in the Renaissance, which keeps the Renaissance from being a brutal age. He claims that humanity presents us with numerous alternatives behavior, which means that humans can be either angelic or bestial. Hence, they have their own choices to behave on which side, whether it is good or bad (2014:2-4).

1.7.1 Formalist Criticism/New Criticism

In his book entitled *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, Guerin states that the formalist criticism emphases by English and American critics in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. It later comes to be called the new criticism in the last third of the century (2004:96). In addition, Tyson states that new criticism has dominated literary studies from the 1940s through the 1960s (2006:135). Hence, through new criticism, it teaches the readers to look at

the organic unity of literary work by doing a close reading and focusing on its intrinsic elements (2004:96).

This research uses a new criticism theory and a close reading method to examine the monstrosity and humanity in the chosen characters of *Frankenstein*. According to Lois Tyson in her book entitled *Critical Theory Today*, new criticism focuses on the specific elements from the text itself to validate its interpretations (2006:135). As for close reading, Eaglestone claims that the method of interpretation that is based on the intrinsic elements is considered as a close reading (2002:42). By doing a close reading, the writer pays close attention to the meaning, language, structure, or plot of *Frankenstein* to analyze the issues of monstrosity and humanity in the chosen characters. Furthermore, the writer applies a close reading method in analyzing the preliminary analysis of this research, which focuses on the characters, plot, setting, point of view, and theme of the novel.

1.7.2 Cleanth Brooks' Formal Elements in New Criticism

The pioneered figure of new criticism was John Crowe Ransom, followed by Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and Cleanth Brooks. To be more specific, this research focuses on the new criticism from Cleanth Brooks. In his book entitled *The Well Wrought Urn*, Brooks explains that several formal elements need to be concerned to form the literary work as a whole, such as tension, irony, paradox, and ambiguity (1947:195).

Based on his idea, he states that tension is created by the two contradicting things of the work that are based on irony, paradox, and ambiguity. It links the

opposition from irony, paradox, and ambiguity and thus emerged as the complexity of a literary text (Tyson, 2006:140). In addition, the meaning of a good literary work lies in its tension, and thus the elements of fiction are tied by the tension of the story (Abrams, 1993:210).

The irony is the qualification which the various elements in a context receive from the context. The statements in literary work always present ironically because irony is a sense of expression to deliver the meaning (211). Moreover, the irony usually describes the bitterness or the tragic situation of the characters. Furthermore, Brooks claims that paradox insists on irony, and the presence of irony seems to be built around paradoxes (1947:8,212).

Meanwhile, a paradox is the language of sophistry, hard, bright, witty, and hardly the soul of the work (1947:3). Tyson adds that paradox is a contradicting statement but represents the actual things are. A paradox is responsible for the complexity of the literary works that portray it (2006:139). Thus, it means that there is a message or a meaning behind the contradicting statements in a literary work.

As for ambiguity, Brooks suggests it is about the statements in the work that has more than one possible meaning. For him, ambiguity is not a confusion, but necessary paradoxes (133). Ambiguity is interrelated with paradox because paradox contains a contradicting statement, which leads to the ambiguity of the work.

In the process of investigating how these elements are interconnected, the writer associates them with the symbolism and imagery found in *Frankenstein*.

These additional elements are useful to support the issues of monstrosity and humanity because of its relevance. The function of imagery is useful for Shelley to convey her ideas by leading the readers to their imagination. Meanwhile, in his book entitled *An Introduction to Literary Studies*, Klarer states that the symbols in literary works refer to a meaning that is based on objects (1999:32). It means an object that is considered as a symbol represents something more than its literal meaning. Hence, there is some implied meaning that can be interpreted from the object rather than the name of the object itself.

1.7.3 The Organic Unity in New Criticism

The greatness of a literary work can be seen from its organic unity (Tyson, 2006:138). To find out the organic unity of *Frankenstein*, the writer investigates how the elements of fiction⁴ and formal elements by Cleanth Brooks⁵ are interconnected at one another. Thus, these formal elements will emerge as the structure of the work (form) and point out the meaning of the work.

As a result, the form and the meaning that develop together is considered as an organic unity. According to Tyson, if a text has organic unity, then all of its formal elements are interconnected to convey the theme or the meaning of the work as a whole (138). In conclusion, by investigating the formal elements and associate them with the symbolism or imagery in *Frankenstein*, it will point out the organic unity of *Frankenstein*, which is the monstrosity and humanity.

⁴ Characters, Plot, Setting, Point of View, and Theme.

⁵ Tension, Irony, Paradox, and Ambiguity.

1.8 Method of the Research

In conducting this research, the writer applies the qualitative method that is based on the library research for collecting the data. The writer also follows some steps on conducting this research, such as collecting data, analyzing data, and presenting the result of the analysis.

1.8.1 Collecting Data

The collected data comes from two sources: primary data and secondary data. The primary data is obtained from a *Frankenstein* novel by Mary Shelley. Meanwhile, the secondary data are obtained from articles, books, and theses from some experts and graduated students that are related to this research. The writer also collects the secondary data from the library and internet.

1.8.2 Analyzing Data

The writer applies a close reading that concerns about the elements of fiction⁶ of *Frankenstein* to create the preliminary analysis. As for the main analysis, the writer applies the new criticism theory from Cleanth Brooks that concerns about the formal elements⁷ of *Frankenstein*. The writer also associates these elements with the symbolism or imagery in *Frankenstein* that is useful to support the issues of monstrosity and humanity. As a result, these interconnected elements will form *Frankenstein* as a whole and convey its organic unity regarding the monstrosity and humanity based on the chosen characters⁸.

⁶ Characters, Plot, Setting, Point of View, and Theme.

⁷ Tension, Irony, Paradox, and Ambiguity.

⁸ Victor Frankenstein, The Monster, and the chosen minor characters.

1.8.3 Presenting the Result of Analysis

The result of the analysis is conducted descriptively due to the use of a qualitative method. In her book entitled *How to Research*, Blaxter mentions that qualitative research is one of the types of research that deals with collecting and analyzing the data in the form of non-numeric (2006:65). Hence, the result of this research is presented by combining the arguments, opinion, quotation, and citation from the related sources in the form of statements or paragraphs.

