



Frankenstein's Obsession in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* A Psychoanalysis Study

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Abstract

Obsession is the id's feeling that can change the world, accordingly, this study is about Frankenstein's obsession that gives changes in the academic world in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Frankenstein is a common person who is remarkably obsessed by his idea of changing the invention of the academic world through his creation of the animated death. Using psychoanalysis theory as well as dramatic and descriptive approach supported by close reading method, the study finds that Frankenstein succeeds in completing his obsession, animating the death. Unfortunately, he has to be with the dismay by his competence, his being sick, his creation shadows him, and his wife is murdered.

Key words: obsession, psychoanalysis, desires.

INTRODUCTION

Obsession refers to an idea or thought about a distressing nature preoccupying somebody in a considerable length which he cannot avoid of (Sutherland, 1989). Accordingly, the researcher refers to a psychoanalysis that

deals with thoughts as well as deeds (Zhang, 2020), with procedures of consciousness as well as unconsciousness, desires, and suppressions, as well as the rule of mental functioning (Berger 1993). Psychoanalysis also refers to the psychology of understanding inasmuch as an understanding of the psychic life of consciousness and a higher link with the psychic life unconsciousness are available (Kartono, 1996:131). The researcher then comes to the understanding that the psychoanalysis discussion deals with somebody's personality.

Additionally, personality is divided into three parts, which is, the conscious (consciousness), the preconscious (pre-consciousness) and the unconscious (unconsciousness). The preconscious mind, somebody's experience allowing him to experience, is constructed by the conscious mind and the unconscious mind (Suryabrata, 2002).

Sigmund Freud, the initiator of the aforementioned psychoanalysis theory categorizes human psychological structures as the id, ego, and superego (Endraswara, 2003). The Id refers to a biological feature which is the most elementary psychological layer, presented as a human basic need such as eating, drinking, sleeping and having sex. Containing lots of inborn natures such as achieving the wishes as well as getting the pleasures right away are the characters of the id. Anxiety addresses him only if the person can fulfill these two things. This is because the id is located in the subconscious without interaction with reality, whilst, to fulfill the id's desires, to be in contact with reality is a must (Minderop, 2010).

Ego is human's psychological part that fulfills the id's desires, located between the sub-consciousness and consciousness, related to the reality. Only if the ego is weak, the ego can trigger inner conflict. Whilst, the external conflict can happen when the ego is strong. Then, the ego functions to solve the id's problems (Minderop, 2010). Superego refers to the moral values in society that determine whether or not the ego completes the id's desires (Minderop, 2010). In other words, superego is to control the id's desires such as sexual desire, explicit hostility, deviant behavior etc. (Akbar, 2021).

One of the novels worthy of psychoanalysis application is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* with the main character, Frankenstein, with his very smart brain for science. Meeting professors in the University in Ingolstadt, Frankenstein is obsessed to create human which then becomes a monster. Unfortunately, when his work does not give him anything, he becomes ill and insane. Then, how Frankenstein's obsession is pictured as well as the effects of Frankenstein's obsession are the focus of the researcher study.

To get the novelty of the study, the researcher refers to, firstly, Rogers (2018), in his article the Monstrous Idea in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, conducting a study on Shelley's descriptions of Victor as well as Walton, together with Romantic-era religious and medical texts. Using the suggestions of David Hartley's theory of associationism, the character, Frankenstein comes up with the idea of obsession in the enthusiasm of religion as well as scholars.

Secondly, the researcher refers to Ruston (2019), in his article Chemistry and the science of transformation in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, conducting a study on transformation matter from one form to another that is applied by Victor Frankenstein to create the creature. The study then shows that through Frankenstein's creation, chemistry is the most important scientific discipline in the novel.

Lastly, the researcher refers to London (2020), in her article Mary Shelley, Frankenstein, and the Spectacle of Masculinity, conducting a study on masculinity in the male body of Frankenstein. Through historical approach, the study shows that a feminist analysis takes advantage of a reading of *Frankenstein's* persistent masculinity demonstration.

From the elaboration of the previous studies above, the researchers' study clearly gets the novelty, none of which uses Freud's psychoanalysis referring to the obsession of Frankenstein; the first study triggers the scholars and the religion to study of Frankenstein's obsession (which is discussed by the researchers), the second study deals with chemistry as a science, and the last one deals with masculinity.

METHOD

Research Approach

Because the study belongs to the study of literature, therefore, the researchers themselves become the instrument of the study. Furthermore, the researchers use a qualitative descriptive method as Hossein Nassaji (2015) in *Qualitative and descriptive research: Data type versus data analysis. Language Teaching Research* states that a qualitative descriptive method controls the weakness and sees how the study occurs and factors that influence it. Besides, observing deeply is necessary to do. Likewise, this method is a flawless way to do the social aspect of study (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). Then the goal of the method is to elaborate Frankenstein's Obsession and the effects of the obsession in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Descriptive and dramatic method is also used by the researchers because the researchers want to describe, to discuss and to report the speech and action of the characters (Little, 1966), through which the researchers present and analyze the obsession of Frankenstein. Close reading is used too to analyze the data more clearly insomuch as it is a literary technique analysis focusing on the precise details of a text to come to the identification of the deeper meaning coming from the reader's whole understanding of the text (Pickering, 2019). Therefore, the researchers think it necessary to use close reading as the researchers merely focus on obsession and its effects in the novel.

Kind of Research

As the researchers do a study on literary research, the research then goes to description, speech, and action of the main character's obsession in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Data Collection Technique

Interviewing, observing, documenting, as well as surveying are kinds of data collection (Huberman & Miles, 1984). As the study is the study of literature so that interviewing is excluded here. By observing, the researchers mean to read the whole novel, to get the issue and the related theory. By documenting, the

researchers mean to classify the data having to do with obsession. By surveying, the researchers meant to analyze the classified data

Data Analysis

The data analysis goes to the research question and the explanation of the research question (Huberman & Miles 1984) which is how obsession is elaborated in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Further, by close reading approach, the researchers do the description, discussion and report of the character's speech as well as actions dealt with obsession.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Obsession

Frankenstein's Desire to be the Pioneer in the New Way

Curiousness is one of the id's desires everybody has, through which knowledge develops. The main character, Frankenstein, is a curious person about universe especially about human's soul, heaven as well earth, through his invention something unexpectedly happens.

"I confess that neither the structure of languages, nor the code of governments, nor the politics of various states possessed attractions for me. It was the secrets of heaven and earth that I desired to learn; and whether it was the outward substance of things or the inner spirit of nature and the mysterious soul of man that occupied me, still my inquiries were directed to the metaphysical, or in it highest sense, the physical secrets of the world" (Shelley, 2005:28).

The quotation above shows that he is quite thirsty of knowledge especially knowledge of man, universe and heaven that triggers him to be the first person in the invention. "I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation" (Shelley, 2005:38). To dream to be a pioneer in every way in this case on search of human body is the id's amazing desire. Because human is regarded as the God's peak of miracle in creation, Frankenstein's id leads to behave as God. Compared to the previous study, the obsession of Frankenstein to animalize the dead one becomes the gap of the study.

Frankenstein' Desire to Achieve the Greater Development

To make his dream come true, Frankenstein's curiousness is applied to learn chemistry through which the greatest invention can be made. To make it, Frankenstein becomes the student of Mr. Waldman. To the subject Frankenstein takes, Mr. Waldman gives him a complimentary words. "I am happy," said M. Waldman, "to have gained a disciple; and if your application equals your ability, I have no doubt of your success. Chemistry is that branch of natural philosophy in which the greatest improvements have been and may be made (Shelley, 2005:39). To come to the achievement, Frankenstein relieves all of his ability. He manages to complete the chemical equipment in two years. All the university people admire him as Frankenstein has "improved so rapidly that at the end of two years I made some discoveries in the improvement of some chemical instruments, which procured me great esteem and admiration at the university" (Shelley, 2005:42). This is another form of the id's performance (to be helped by the ego) to learn more about chemistry. The researchers regard Frankenstein's efforts to a deep learning of chemistry as the application of Freud's psychoanalysis of the id because desire of doing things belong to human's heart where the id lives though ego plays a very important role in the application, however, the researchers ignore in the discussion of it as the concentration is the obsession. Again, this invention becomes the novelty of the study since the above previous studies exclude this one.

Frankenstein' Desire to be the Happiest Man in the World

To run a happy family turns out to be with everybody not excluding Frankenstein. When a man is respected by the other member of the family, he is a happy man in the world. The greatest invention Frankenstein ever makes is to animate the death in the hope that the animation respects him as his creator. Therefore, Frankenstein becomes the happiest person. "I thought that if I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might in process of time (although I now found it impossible) renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption" (Shelley, 2005:45). It shows that Frankenstein is really obsessed to

create something that should be in the God's area that is to animate the death though finally his creation does not live normally. It is indeed a monster that becomes the enemy of humankind. It is again the role of the id with its strong desire supported by ego though the ego has to obey superego with its moral rules.

Frankenstein's id comes to its peak. He wants to play God since God is the only one creating souls. Again, this is the most miracle invention of human triggered by the id to animate the dead though the id lies deep in human body, yet, its role becomes the base of the development of human civilization. Sigmund Freud very precisely structures human's psycho commencing with the id in the bottom, then followed by the ego upper, then the superego in the top of human's psychology structure. It means that those psychological structures of human are attached to one another; the superego is not functioned when no ego runs the id's desire. In the same way, the ego is useless if the id has no desire. Thus, Frankenstein's greatest invention starts from the id that bears obsession. This invention is again confirming the novelty of the study since no previous studies of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* analyze about obsession.

In a nut shell, from the analysis above about obsession bringing the greatest invention, the researchers dare say that Frankenstein plays God by animating the dead is caused by the id. The id has been transformed into the desire of the first one in anyway, of the greatest development, and of the happiest life.

The Effects of Frankenstein's Obsession

There are effects the researchers would like to explore here, firstly, Frankenstein feels unhealthy. Due to his continuous enthusiasm, he is unhealthy; he looks pale, frightened, and isolated (Shelley, 2005). Secondly, Frankenstein is so hallucinated-feeling the created monster approaches him-that he assaults the monster (Shelley, 2005). Thirdly, Frankenstein also has a danger from his created monster. Fourthly, it turns out that the monster has a sexual drive like a normal living thing. He needs a female monster. No sooner does Frankenstein refuse to create the female one, his created monster revenges against him. Consequently,

his created monster murders Frankenstein lovely friend. "Have my murderous machinations deprived you also, my dearest Henry, of life? Two I have already destroyed; other victims await their destiny; but you, Clerval, my friend, my benefactor—" (Shelley, 2005:179).

Lastly, Frankenstein's married life is in dismay. As explained above that his created monster is disappointed with Frankenstein, accordingly, he tries to threaten Frankenstein by coming on his wedding day. The monster then succeeds to kill Frankenstein beloved wife, Elizabeth. "She was there, lifeless and inanimate, thrown across the bed, her head hanging down and her pale and distorted features half covered by her hair" (Shelly, 2005:198).

CONCLUSION

From the finding and discussion above, the researchers conclude that Frankenstein's obsession brings him to his catastrophe. His own life as well as his social life are in danger. That he cannot take care of his health is the fact of his tremendous obsession. Besides, his married life is also put in danger. His created monster threatens him unless he creates the female monster for him. His newly married life is tragic by the death of his wife because of his created monster, eventually. Despite, the researchers are in a considerable hope that there will be researchers conducting the study on the same novel with the different theory or with different novel with the same theory in order that the literary study develops in a great speed.

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