

73. A vegetarian ecofeminist reading of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

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Abstract

From 1818 to the present day, over 200 years, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* has been the source of inspiration for a myriad of works ranging from scholarly articles and books to films and cartoons. Receiving a great amount of attention from many critics from various fields, the novel has been analyzed in detail by considering different perspectives and theories. However, the theme of vegetarianism and its relation to feminism has nearly remained untouched. The main reason for this drawback is that the link between vegetarianism and feminism, which bases its argument on the theories of ecofeminism that emerged in the early 1980s, is still little known and researched. For vegetarian ecofeminists, all forms of oppression are formed and spread through the dictations of phallogocentric systems arrogating the hierarchical binaries. Within this dualistic logic perpetuating and organizing all dichotomous couples, not just women but nature, and animals are also exposed to violence and humiliation. Looking through feminist-vegetarian perspectives, the starting point of this established hegemony is the mistreatment imposed on 'nonhu(man)' animals, whereby this speciesism leads to many other forms of oppression and violence for the passivized others. Therefore, considering these current issues and analyzing *Frankenstein* within the framework of vegetarian ecofeminism, the principal contention of this study is to prove that women's getting rid of oppression, injustice and humiliation is closely related to realizing and ending the inhumane treatment against animals and nature. Only then it will be viable to ensure welcoming ties between the experiences of vegetarians and ecofeminists and to establish an all-encompassing structure for all living creatures.

Keywords: Frankenstein, vegetarian ecofeminism, dualistic logic, all-encompassing, hybridity

Mary Shelley'nin *Frankenstein* eserine vejetaryen ekofeminist bir bakış

Öz

Mary Shelley'nin *Frankenstein*'i, 1818'den günümüze, 200 yılı aşkın bir süredir akademik yayın ve kitaplardan, sinema ve çizgi filmlere kadar sayısız esere ilham kaynağı olmuştur. Farklı alanlardan pek çok eleştirmen tarafından büyük ilgi gören roman, farklı bakış açıları ve kuramlar göz önünde bulundurularak detaylı bir şekilde analiz edilmiştir. Ancak vejetaryenlik temasına ve feminizmle ilişkisine neredeyse hiç değinilmemiştir. Bu eksikliğin temel nedeni, 1980'lerin başında ortaya çıkan ekofeminizm kuramlarına dayanan vejetaryenlik ve feminizm arasındaki bağın hala çok az bilinmesi ve araştırılmasıdır. Vejetaryen ekofeministlere' ve 'ekofeminizm göre tüm baskı biçimleri, hiyerarşik ve ikili karşıtlıkları kutsayan fallosentrik sistemlerin diktesiyle oluşur ve yayılır. Var olan tüm

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dikotomik çiftleri sürdüren ve örgütleyen bu düalist mantık içerisinde sadece kadınlar değil, doğa ve hayvanlar da şiddete ve aşağılanmaya maruz kalmaktadır. Feminist-vejetaryen açıdan bakıldığında, kurulan bu hegemonyanın çıkış noktası insan olmayanlara (nonhu(man)) uygulanan kötü muamele olup, bu türçülük pasifleştirilen ötekiler için başka birçok baskı ve şiddet biçimine yol açmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, bu güncel meseleleri göz önünde bulundurarak *Frankenstein*'i vejetaryen ekofeministlere' ve 'ekofeminizm çerçevesinde analiz eden bu çalışmanın temel iddiası, kadınların baskı, adaletsizlik ve aşağılanmadan kurtulmasının, hayvanlara ve doğaya yönelik insanlık dışı muamelenin farkına varılması ve sonlandırılmasıyla yakından ilişkili olduğunu kanıtlamaktır. Ancak o zaman vejetaryenler ile ekofeministlerin deneyimleri arasında yakın bağlar kurmak ve tüm canlılar için kapsayıcı bir yapı oluşturmak mümkün olacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Frankenstein, ekofeministlere' ve 'ekofeminizm, düalist mantık, kapsayıcılık, hibritlik

Introduction

Individuals adopt different styles of living during their lifespan according to their preferences and they sometimes stick to a habit from the very beginning to end. However, they may be confronted with some cases that profoundly subvert and change their view of life, especially when they realize that nature and humanity suffer because of their reckless attitudes that vary from overpopulation and pollution to deforestation and eating habits. With that awareness, each individual starts to question oneself and moves into a new way of consciousness for all living creatures. According to Tyler Doggett, who teaches courses on food ethics, ethics of killing various things and altruism, this recognition is essential to break the chains of vicious circle in which all people are surrounded, because the toxic effects that the whole world experiences are likely to continue and worsen if they do not change their choices and diet. Doggett explains that concern with the following lines:

Billions of humans eat meat. To provide it, we raise animals. ... To feed these animals, we raise crops. To raise crops, we deforest and use huge quantities of water. To quench these animals, we use still more water. In turn, these animals produce staggering amounts of waste, waste that poisons water sources and soil. ... To raise these animals and produce this meat, farmers and slaughterhouse workers labor in conditions from onerous to brutal. If controlling, hurting, or killing animals is wrong or if the production of these environmental effects or effects on people is wrong or if consuming the meat produced is wrong, then a breathtaking level of wrong-doing goes on daily (2018).

Considering the consequences mentioned above, how can all wrong-doings be stopped? Can adopting a vegetarian way of life and diet be a solution for all those sufferings? Vegetarianism and the ethical treatment of animals are among the long-debated issues since the philosopher Pythagoras, who regards meat consumption as morally corrupting and devouring for a human soul. Often considered “the father of vegetarianism” in the West, Pythagoras concludes that all living things are kindred; therefore, humans are forbidden from sacrificing and harming animals in any case, but to uphold conscientious and equal treatment toward them. For him, any kind of failure to obey this ethical principle results in suffering not just for animals but for humans as well. In other words, while it may seem that altering from a meat-based diet to a vegetable/fruit-based one is for the benefit of animals, it is actually for the welfare of people and holistically for the universe.

Pythagoras's belief in the kinship of all living creatures and his ethical condemnation of carnivorousness has had an enormous influence on his followers through the ages. However, with the rise of Christianity and the spreading ideas of Christian theologians claiming that animals are inferior and placed at the service

of humans, the “Pythagorean diet” lost its importance till the late 18th century, when Charles Darwin subverted the Church’s dogmas with his evolution theory. Then, vegetarianism gained popularity during the 18th century as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution that triggered consumption and corruption. With the emergence of new humanist values and the rise of the Romantic movement with its great relation to nature, more and more people have started to promote vegetarianism by castigating the consumption of meat as inhumane and brutal. The Romantic writers, such as Thomas Tryon, Alexander Pope, Joseph Ritson and Percy B. Shelley, strongly oppose violence against animals by advocating that “the use of animal food disposes man to cruel and ferocious actions”, as Ritson declares in his work titled *An Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food: As a Moral Duty* (2017, p. 86). Like Ritson, Percy B. Shelley highlights the importance of adopting a vegetarian diet and lifestyle to be able to stop social injustices ranging from poverty and crime to aggression and war, because for him, if mankind persists in their insistently carnivorous attitudes, they will be among the affected ones as well as being the main cause of those catastrophes. Thus, regarding the consumption of animal flesh as unnatural and barbaric, Shelley sets the rules of a simple and natural diet near the end of *A Vindication of Natural Diet* in capital letters: “NEVER TAKE ANY SUBSTANCE INTO THE STOMACH THAT ONCE HAD LIFE” (1888/1992, p. 222). This simple and unwritten rule of nature is based on the idea that it is not right to take the life of another living being to consume it as food. Then, he amplifies his assertion depending on the story of Prometheus, who causes a great change in human nature and history. For Shelley,

Prometheus, (who represents the human race) effected some great change in the condition of his nature, and applied *fire* to culinary purposes; thus inventing an expedient for screening from his disgust the horrors of the shambles. From this moment his vitals were devoured by the vulture of disease All vice arose from the ruin of healthful innocence It is only by softening and disguising dead flesh by culinary preparation, that it is rendered susceptible of mastication or digestion; and that the sight of its bloody juices and raw horror does not excite intolerable loathing and disgust (1965, pp. 11-17) (emphasis ours).

In this passage, Shelley suggests that the consumption of meat is not part of humanity's original natural diet and it is only through the use of fire and culinary preparation that humans can stomach the idea of consuming meat. He also argues that the consumption of meat leads to disease, and it is a source of vice that arises from the loss of innocence. Within this light, Shelley’s works opposing cruelty to animals and his idea of creating an all-encompassing society based on a vegetarian diet “without the help of fire” have influenced the following generations of vegetarians and reformers as an outstanding example of incontrovertible justification for their causes. Among those, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and her timeless work *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818) (henceforth, *Frankenstein*) stands as the embodiment of Percy Shelley’s vegetarian wor(l)d. Influenced by her husband and Romantic vegetarian contemporaries, Mary Shelley creates a vegetarian creature who feeds on “berries, nuts, and roots” (*Frankenstein*, p.141). In fact, the creature tastes some roasted offal left behind on a campfire; however, as the influential feminist-vegetarian scholar Carol J. Adams specifies in her *The Sexual Politic of Meat*, *xe*³ immediately “rejects [the] Promethean gift” (2010, p. 155) and keeps *xyr* vegetarianism while watching the fire’s corrupting influence. According to Adams, “for Romantic vegetarians, the story of Prometheus’s discovery of fire is the story of the inception of meat eating” (Adams, 2010, p. 154), which symbolizes humanity’s fall into disease and violence using the corrupting impact of carnism. Thus, allying herself with Romantic vegetarians, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley uses the subtitle “Modern Prometheus” to represent Victor Frankenstein, who identifies himself as a creator and a bearer of

³ ‘xe/xem/xyr’ are neopronouns increasingly used in place of ‘she/he/they’, ‘her/him/it’ or ‘her/his/its’. Despite being mostly used by transgender, non-binary, and/or gender nonconforming people, neopronouns can be used by anyone. The reason why it is preferred to use neopronouns for the creature is that the creature represents the hybrid nature, comprising the features of both humans and animals.

civilization with the qualifications involving rationality, logos, certainty, measurability, and technology, which are the core notions of Enlightenment. With that conscious choice, she aims to prove that this modern Prometheus is the source of death and destruction for all living creatures with his 'burning' power. It also indicates that he endeavors to have an upper hand on nature with his reasonable mind and impertinent courage.

For Kira Braham and Eric Lindstrom, the novel's subtitle still poses intriguing questions for readers at all levels, like the "Pandora's Box" itself. Basing their arguments on the theories of ecocritical studies, Braham and Lindstrom claim that "rather than promote a reinvestment in the mythic animacies of modern life, the discourse of Prometheism has participated in a collective disenchantment" (2022, p. 2) and established master/slave dichotomy by subjugating nature and nonhu(man)s. In other words, this structured tyrannical thought creates more "super-men and world-mastering demi-gods", convincing themselves of their inherent right to control and override, as W. E. Burghardt Du Bois describes in his *Of the Culture of White Folk* (1917, p. 434). For him, the modern Prometheus cannot be identified with the improvement of civilization, but instead with "the doctrine of the divine right of whites to steal" (1917, p. 444) (emphasis ours). Du Bois mourns for black human life within the Promethean discourse. However, within this study, it is aimed to de(con)struct white men's supremacy and hegemonic binaries rigidly upheld on all creatures defined as "others" and/or "nonhu(man)s": women, nature and animals. It is urged to break free from the Promethean ethos not to be eternally tethered to the same destructive cycle. Therefore, the entangled relations between the subjugation of women and the subjugation of animals/nature, or in other words, "the female human in a gender context and the nonhuman animal in a human context" (Kordecki, 2022, p. 282) must be subverted through developing an ecofeminist-vegetarian theory.

Being a feminist or vegetarian feminist: The roots of vegetarian ecofeminism

The key issue for feminists is to fight against all forms of oppression – physical, psychological and/or sexual – and their damages to "otherized" and/or "marginalized" by hegemonic masculinity. To be able to raise awareness about the extensive and prevalent existence of these oppressions, feminists have conducted numerous studies and struggled a lot. Today, despite the diversity of approaches among feminist scholars and activists, it is widely accepted that various forms of oppression are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Thus, in light of this awareness, feminists are against single-minded activism since that kind of activism not only "clouds the expansive nature of oppression, but also hinders the process of undermining such oppression and ultimately liberating all those oppressed" (Gruen, 2011, p. 60). However, for some scholars like Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill, only rational agents can be included in this liberation process; thus, they are opposed to including animals in the moral community. For instance, Kant claims that "so far as animals are concerned, we have no direct duties. Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as means to an end. That end is *man*" (1780/1963, p. 239) (emphasis ours). Having the same opinion as Kant, Mill also insists on the inferiority of animals in his essay "Utilitarianism" with the following lines:

Few human creatures would consent to be changed into any of the lower animals, for a promise of the fullest allowance of a beast's pleasures; no intelligent human being would consent to be a fool... It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, is of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question (1861/1979, p. 10).

However, this kind of analogy that puts animals (or nonhu(man)s as they are mostly called) into a lower position leads to "speciesism", as Peter Singer stated in *Animal Liberation*. He defines speciesism as a

far-reaching “prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species” (1975, p. 6). Thus, it is morally wrong just like the other forms of unjustified discrimination, such as racism, sexism, elitism and/or ableism. Being superior to others or marginalizing a group of species is against the nature of human and non-human liberation, as each deserves to live and breathe freely.

Another scholar and writer advocating the rights of nonhumans is Tom Regan. In his *The Case for Animal Rights*, he argues that what matters is being the “subject-of-a-life not merely as tools for [human’s] use but as good in themselves (1983, pp. 243-248). That is, for Regan, being a “subject” does not only mean having a range of senses but sensitivity as well to pain and suffering; therefore, humans and animals are alike in their rights including life, security and freedom from harm. Therefore, there is no sense in splitting them into categories as they are equal inherently. These classifications demonstrating the supremacy of one side over the other do not help to enjoy life but serve the goals of speciesism.

These assertions regarding speciesism, utilitarianism and rights have remained unchanged over the decades, and gained more importance during the 1980s with ecofeminism that all-encompasses various voices from different social perspectives to strengthen the connection between ecological and feminist theories and practices. Taken at face value, ecofeminism may be regarded as a movement primarily focusing on nature and women, but the convergence of ecological and feminist perspectives is much more than that. It creates multiple ways to understand the diversified dynamics of relationships between all living organisms in every possible way. More precisely, the point of ecofeminism is focusing on interconnections and interconnectedness, as Sam Mickey puts it:

The point of ecofeminism is thus not to focus on nature and women to the exclusion of everything else. The point is rather to focus on the interconnections and networks of coexistence, which include the entangled categories of race, class, age, ability, religion, nationality, ethnicity, and many others, along with species, gender, and sexuality. In other words, the point of ecofeminism is fundamentally intersectional, attending to the multitudinous ways in which the various aspects of coexistence interconnect. Not necessarily parallel or symmetrical, intersections abound, tracing paths from personal to political, self to other, environmental to social, class to race, and gender to species (2019, p. xvii).

Thus, ecofeminism is a broader field of study than expected entailing several subcategories and its main concern is to de(con)struct hegemonic relations based on power hierarchies and subverting dichotomies resulting in inequality and oppression. However, to some ears, ecofeminism still sounds like a reaction to the subjugation of women and nature, thereby remaining silent on the issue of nonhu(man) animals. The underlying reason for this silence and/or ignorance is the misbelief asserting that the identification of women with animals might put women into a more inferior position as “nature in the abstract is grand and important; animals, particularized, seem lesser beings than [women]” (Scholtmeijer, 1995, p. 307). Nevertheless, the fundamental aim of feminism is to fight against all forms of oppression imposed by phallogocentric culture; thus, feminists must also resist the biased domination and exploitation of animals and nature. As Lynda Birke states, “One of the strengths of feminist thought is that it is never ‘just’ about women: it is a critical discourse that tends to ask uncomfortable questions about everything” (1995, p. 33). Through this commitment, an apparent link has been constructed between feminism and vegetarianism, and “vegetarian ecofeminism” has become an issue of concern for many feminists and ecofeminists.

Marginally appeared in two ecofeminist anthologies – in *Reclaim the Earth* (1983) by Stephanie Leland and Léonie Caldecott and *Reweaving the World* (1990) by Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein, “vegetarian ecofeminism” has increased its popularity and created awareness both in the academic and public field through Carol J. Adam’s *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990), Josephine Donovan’s *Animal Rights and Feminist Theory* (1990) and Greta Gaard’s *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature* (1993). The common ground of all these scholars is to create an understanding of feminism trying to eradicate all systems of oppression and violence emanating from androcentric bias and liberate all oppressed groups by creating a pluralistic and inclusive structure. According to vegetarians, ecofeminists and vegetarian ecofeminists, this all-encompassing structure can be achieved in two ways, as Greta Gaard puts in her review⁴ essay regarding vegetarian ecofeminism:

First, [vegetarians and ecofeminists] have been able to make the sympathetic connections between human experiences and the experiences of other animals: Mothers can “empathize with the sow whose reproductive freedoms have been denied and whose nursing experience seems so wretched”; survivors of rape or domestic violence can imagine “feeling like a piece of meat,” though this violence is not to be equated with or confused with becoming meat. Moreover, people of color, women, gays, and lesbians all know the experience of being hunted – of being “prey” in Western culture – and some ecofeminists have even experienced being prey for other nonhuman animals (2002, p. 120).

That is, focusing on affective connections that include sympathy/empathy and compassion, vegetarian ecofeminists believe that dualistic thinking creates privileged groups and inferiority among others – as in the forms of hu(man)/nonhu(man), man/woman, culture/nature – can be challenged and the damaged connection with nature and nonhu(man)s can be reconciled through intersectionality in feminist, ecologist and vegetarian movements. Thus, a multidirectional way of thinking and evaluating the ‘beings’ will serve as a replacement for the dualized one. It also shows that prejudgments may be dissolved through inter/multidisciplinary studies.

Is Shelley’s creature a monstrous vegan?

Despite sometimes being called “utopian”, the feminist intersections with animals, nature and/or oppressed “others” attract renewed attention of critics, scholars and writers. In addition to documentaries, anthologies, monographs and articles published in extensively read journals, there have been also many early literary works defending the feminist-vegetarian connection, such as Margaret Fuller’s *Woman of the Nineteenth Century* (1845/2016), Begum Rokeya’s *Sultana’s Dream* (1905/1988) and Charlotte Perkin Gilman’s *Herland* (1915/2017). Within the framework of these issues, in this section, the focus will be on Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s *Frankenstein* to portray the struggles of the “creature” to be able to establish a welcoming space for all living organisms.

Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus, the story of an experimental arrogance and omnipotence drawing its strength from science, has been discussed for decades from the point of different fields that vary from posthumanism and Enlightenment to science fiction and narcissism recurrently, but the theme of monstrous veganism is underlined strongly by Emelia Quinn in her *Reading Veganism: The Monstrous Vegan, 1818 to Present*, in which she portrays how monstrous veganism has been depicted in literature throughout the time. Considering the eating habits of the creature created by Victor Frankenstein, Quinn asserts that monstrous vegans have four characteristics as in the following:

⁴ In this essay, Gaard reviews the works of Carol Adams, "Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals," *Hypatia* 6, no.1 (1991): 134, and *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum,1990) and Val Plumwood, "Human Vulnerability and the Being Prey," *Quadrant*, March 1995, 29-34.

First, monstrous vegans do not eat animals, an abstinence that generates a seemingly inexplicable anxiety in those who encounter them. Second, they are hybrid assemblages of human and nonhuman animal parts, destabilizing existing taxonomical classifications. Third, monstrous vegans are sired outside of heterosexual reproduction, the product of male acts of creation. And, finally, monstrous vegans are intimately connected to acts of writing and literary creation (2021, p. 40).

As stated in the lines by Quinn, the creature can firstly be considered a “monstrous vegan” in the sense that xe chooses not to consume animal flesh and instead feeds on plant foods. For instance, after xe has been rejected by xyr creator, Victor Frankenstein, and driven into a world to which he does not belong, the creature ends up in a wood near Ingolstadt, where he quenches his hunger and thirst by eating and drinking fruit from a nearby stream. Despite being physically exhausted by hunger and thirst, and spiritually vulnerable as well, xe meets xyr basic needs from nature:

This was the forest near Ingolstadt; and here I lay by the side of a brook resting from my fatigue, until I felt tormented by hunger and thirst. This roused me from my nearly dormant state, and I ate some berries which I found hanging on the trees, or lying on the ground. I slaked my thirst at the brook; and then lying down, was overcome by sleep (*Frankenstein*, pp. 102-103).

Even in this miserable state, the creature does not try to satisfy xyr needs by consuming animal flesh. However, this abstinence from eating meat creates fear in people who encounter the creature, as the vegan habits of such a huge creature - generally depicted as meat-eating to indicate prehistoric savagery - are totally against their long-established and internalized beliefs. In other words, it is not the expected behavior of a “monstrous creature” and it seems paradoxical to people. Nevertheless, for Quinn, the creature’s rejection of meat emanates from xyr instinctive desire for “a return to peaceful origins”, where there is no “male-imposed discourse that dictates human origins” (2021, p. 56) as man/woman, culture/nature and human/nonhu(man). In this peaceful origin, the creature does not have to be shaped through the phallogocentric lens, but enjoys the interconnectedness of xyr hybrid nature. Assembled from various body parts belonging to human and nonhu(man) species, the creature creates a new type of being that breaks and blurs the phallogocentrically-constructed boundaries. With this new and all-encompassing identity, the creature feels strong and experiences the *jouissance* in nature. However, xyr hybrid features combined with vegan eating habits evoke uneasiness and fear in others and even in xyr creator, as put in below:

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavored to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!-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 color as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion and straight black lips (*Frankenstein*, p. 57).

Victor’s depiction of his own creature with disgust and dissatisfaction explains the underlying reasons for villagers’ attitudes and their primordial reaction to fear. That is, when people confront something that defies their conception of reality, they typically tend to react with horror and loathing, seeking to protect themselves from possible damage. The shock of their encounter with the creature upsets the delicate balance of their lives and pushes them to their limits:

At that instant, the cottage door was opened, and Felix, Safie, and Agatha entered. Who can describe their horror and consternation on beholding me? Agatha fainted; and Safie, unable to attend her friend, rushed out of the cottage. Felix darted forward, and with supernatural force tore me from his father, to whose knees I clung; in a transviolently with a stick. I could have torn him limb from limb, as the lion rends the antelope. But my heart sunk within me as with bitter sickness, and I refrained. I saw him on the point of repeating his blow, when, overcome by pain and anguish, I quitted the cottage, and in the general tumult escaped unperceived to my hovel (*Frankenstein*, p. 135).

Upon facing these harsh reactions and attacks, the creature starts to question xyr creation process and appearance as well. The joy emanating from the all-encompassing wholeness and hybridity turns into self-accusation and discomfort. Feeling alienated and outcast, Victor's "monstrous vegan" begins to fight with xyr own identity and sense of being:

[...] What was I? Of my creation and creator I was absolutely ignorant; but I knew that I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property. I was, besides, endued with a figure hideously deformed and loathsome; I was not even of the same nature as a man. I was more agile than they, and could subsist upon coarser diet; I bore the extremes of heat and cold with less injury to my frame; my stature far exceeded theirs. Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled, and whom all men disowned? (*Frankenstein*, p. 120).

Overwhelmed by pain, suffering and desire for revenge, the moral boundaries of the creature blur and xe commits an act of violence and inflicts pain upon people because of their constant rejection and mistreatment. The more estranged from nature he is, the more insensitive he becomes and loses empathy for others. In other words, the all-encompassing feature of this hybrid creature diminishes and it is replaced by the destructive nature peculiar to hu(man)s. This sense of violence and hatred continues till the creature meets Felix, one of the kids in the countryside. Notwithstanding the impulse, the monster is ultimately unable to harm Felix, because he is overwhelmed by pain and suffering, and his heart sinks into it like a bitter disease. This moment points out the complicated nature and in-betweenness of the creature. That is, while the creature is both robust and brutal, xe is also fragile and gentle, which seems paradoxical, yet demonstrates xyr hybridity.

The creature's deep solitude, lack of friends and perpetual isolation from society contribute to xyr descent into darkness. Actually, this descent in the creature indicates that xe is not intrinsically vicious or monstrous, but more a product of hu(man)-made conditions and mistreatments xe has received from society. The in-betweenness of the creature is a critique of the devastating power of social prejudice, isolation and rejection that obstructs establishing a welcoming space for all creatures. Recognizing the destructiveness of not becoming a member of this "phallogical civilization" (Adams and Donovan, 1995, p. 305), the creature pursues after the world, which is non-violent, non-otherized, but inclusive and harmonious, as put in:

'If you consent, neither you nor any other human being shall ever see us again: I will go to the vast wilds of South America. My food is not that of man.; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment. My companion will be of the same nature as myself, and will be content with the same fare. We shall make our bed of dried leaves; the sun will shine on us as on man, will ripen our food [...] (*Frankenstein*, p. 146).

The lines uttered by the creature indicate that xe chooses to be unified with nature by rejecting the materiality and hypocrisy of hu(man)s. Rather than being in a constant search for acceptance in this "phallogical civilization", xe prefers to be alone in nature, which is welcoming for all living creatures. There, xe goes beyond the limits and dictations and welcomes new possibilities by transcending the constructed dichotomies between hu(man)s or non-hu(man)s.

Conclusion

In the preface of *Buffalo Gals and Other Animal Presences*, Ursula K. Le Guin illuminates the oppressive dynamics of a society based on phallogocentric dictates. She highlights the predicament of marginalized groups, comprising women, children, and animals, who are confined to domestic roles and substandard positions in this gender-dominated setting. They are intimidated into silence, oppressed and labeled as

deviant if they reject to adapt to the well-established patterns of patriarchy. More precisely, under the shaping and limiting male gaze that perpetually watches, monitors and disempowers, these marginalized groups can only have assigned domestic roles and take inferior places in the metaphorical game of 'Man vs. Nature', as stated below:

In literature as in "real life," women, children, and animals are the obscure matter upon which Civilization erects itself, phallogically. That they are Other is . . . the foundation of language, the Father Tongue. If Man vs. Nature is the name of the game, no wonder the team players kick out all these *non-men* who won't learn the rules and run around the cricket pitch squeaking and barking and chattering! (Le Guin, 1990, p. 10) (emphasis ours).

Thus, these "non-men" players of the civilization game erected by hu(man)s have to find new ways to survive rather than changing their arenas, because hu(man)s will keep on using the otherness of non-man and non-hu(man) as the rationale for their oppression and exploitation. Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan explain this vicious circle as in the following:

The injustices suffered by women—the suppression, silencing, and violence— are arguably an extension of the more easily identified abuse of animals. The otherness of women from an androcentric perspective finds a correlate in the more radical otherness of the animal from an anthropocentric perspective. On both scores—the magnitude of abuse and the extent of alienation—the analogue of animal otherness is an idea that can serve to free women from the equivocation that might lead them to collude with their abusers. If the object of feminism is to defeat androcentric culture, then animals offer an ideational model for ontological defiance (1995, p. 305).

For Adams and Donovan, there is entangled relation between women's violence and the mistreatment of animals. These groups are both subject to abuse and estrangement, and acknowledging this analogy can empower women to challenge the androcentric culture. The proposed solution in this dissertation is to transform androcentric and anthropocentric norms through inclusiveness. Ecofeminists and vegetarian ecofeminists are encouraged to reunite in the struggle against cruelty and abuse by realizing the entanglement of different dimensions within living organisms. Indeed, intersectionality and hybridity emerge as essential concepts to foreground coexistence and harmony and give priority to the coexistence of various aspects within the same living organism.

In line with these concerns, Mary Shelley delves into the theme of oppression as an integral dimension of her novel, *Frankenstein*. Focusing on the individual experiences of both Victor Frankenstein and his creature, she intertwines the concepts of oppression, monstrosity, and hybridity. Deep oppression is imposed on the creature from the moment of xyr creation. Left alone and unguided, a form of both emotional and psychological oppression, the creature looks for friendship and approval. However, xe is resented, feared, and rejected due to xyr grotesque and monstrous appearance. Thus, the search for friendship bindingly turns into a strive for wisdom and self-discovery. When xe attempts to self-educate xyrself by both reading books and keeping an eye on people, xe faces society's perpetual s antagonism and brutality. Subjugated by fears and preconceptions of the hu(man)s, the creature undergoes a deep loneliness and distress that eventually drives it to take vengeance on Victor and society.

Within this context, Shelley's work sheds light on the social oppression and prejudice faced by people who are apprehended as *others* or not conforming to the norm. The creature's physical appearance makes xem a target of discrimination and violence, reflecting broader issues of social prejudice and discrimination. Therefore, the metamorphosis of the creature from an innocent being into a vindictive and resentful figure demonstrates how suppression can mold a person's identity and behavior. Nevertheless, despite being abused, mistreated and rejected, the creature has not sided with xyr oppressor(s) and chosen to resist not to be defined and shaped by the dictations of *phallogocentric*

civilization because xe believes that “no creature is being used as a means to the ends of others, or of society as a whole” (Nussbaum, 2004, p. 314). That is, remembering xyr inclusive and hybrid nature, the creature chooses to be unvindictive, because “if to cause suffering is wrong, then it is wrong no matter who is made to suffer” (Regan, 1983, p129). Thus, xe becomes an aspirational light for all those striving for a more integrated and sustainable way of life.

Briefly, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* stands out as a stark symbol of intersectionality and resilience. The creature in the novel personifies a hybrid nature and vegetarianism that defies the dominant norms and aspirations of a society. Despite maltreatment and refusal, the creature declines to conform to xyr subordinators and instead defies the dictates of a phallogocentric civilization that excludes and stigmatizes the marginalized as nonhu(man)s. With xyr all-encompassing nature, xe emboldens marginalized *others* to affirm themselves and paves the way for vegetarian ecofeminists to achieve a more just and harmonious state of existence by emphasizing the significance of identifying and tackling oppression and exploitation in different spheres.

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