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Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in Nineteenth-Century Istanbul: Appropriation and Performance as Trauma Narrative/Cure in Çağan Irmak's *Creature* (2023)

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Abstract

Çağan Irmak's 2023 Netflix series *Yaratılan* (*Creature*) is an adaptation inspired by Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein*. Çağan Irmak reappropriates the novel into the nineteenth-century Ottoman context. The series presumably has the cholera outbreak (1840s or 1890s) as the triggering point of one of the main characters', Ziya's (Dr Frankenstein's equivalent), search for immortality, and falls in line with the questions raised by the novel, as well as the traumatic history of not only the nineteenth century dynamics but also the human helplessness in the face of pandemics/epidemics, including COVID-19. Ihsan (the creature) as an unusual doctor, who quite extraordinarily becomes the "monster" of this adaptation, helps raise questions concerning (bio-)ethics as well as trauma and recovery. He is re-educated and regains his memory through his encounter with a theatre troupe and heals through his interactions with others who are social outcasts like him. Thus, performance (acting and narrating) functions as a way of facing and dealing with traumatic memories. In the context of cultural adaptation and appropriation of a classical novel, this paper aims to discuss how the act of adaptation itself and the choice of theatrical rehearsal, performance, and storytelling serve as a LaCapraesque acting out and working through to help deal with fictional and non-fictional traumas.

Keywords

Çağan Irmak's *Creature* · Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* · cultural appropriation · transcultural adaptation · trauma narratives

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Introduction

Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein* has been the subject and object of numerous film and theatre adaptations across various cultural backgrounds. The most recent Turkish adaptation and cultural appropriation of the novel to the screen is a Netflix series called *Yaratılan* (*Creature*) written and directed by Çağan Irmak (2023). Although the storyline loosely follows the original, as the running titles also suggest, the series is not loyally adapted from but inspired by Shelley's novel. The need for cultural (re)appropriation and the critical choices and changes made by the director/screenwriter mark the series as a text that opens itself to new theoretical discussions rather than the technical details of adapting the page to the screen. The series, which has the cholera outbreak (presumably the 1847 or 1893 outbreak) as the triggering point of Ziya's (Frankenstein's equivalent) search for immortality, not only falls in line with the questions raised by the novel, but also with the traumatic history of human helplessness in the face of pandemics/epidemics, old and new, including COVID-19, and the limits of humanity. Ihsan (Frankenstein's creature) as an unusual doctor, who quite extraordinarily becomes the "monster" of this adaptation, raises questions concerning (bio-)ethics as well as trauma and recovery. Contrary to the original creature who was depicted as a tabula rasa and as a noble savage that is educated through eavesdropping on the works such as Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Ihsan, whose name is phonetically and symbolically very similar to "insan" (human) and literally means "gift," is re-educated and regains his memory through his encounter with a theatre troupe. Thus, performance, on all levels, functions as a way of facing and dealing with traumatic memories. This paper focuses on *Creature* (*Yaratılan*) as a "palimpsestuos" (Hutcheon, 2006/2013) new text that is created through a process of cultural adaptation and appropriation of *Frankenstein,* specifically focusing on the creature of this adaptation, and how the act of adaptation itself as well as the choice of retelling/narrating, theatrical rehearsal, and performance in the heart of the series serve as a LaCapraesque acting out and working through to help deal with fictional and non-fictional traumas.

Trauma Theory and LaCapraesque "Acting Out & Working Through"

Trauma, the ancient Greek word for wound that is used for bodily injury, has been recognised as a theory, dominantly as a literary one, in the 1980s, with a return to Holocaust narratives. Yet, it was first defined as a wound of the mind, as early (or late) as the late 19th – early 20th century, by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* where he coins the term as "traumatic neuroses" (1940/2003, p. 50). Traumas are not limited to personal experiences; they are more of a personal or group response to both personal and/or collective traumas, which can be caused by any form of physical, verbal, or psychological violence. Freud describes it as a belated response to traumatic experiences that revisits the victim in the form of hallucinations, nightmares, and repetitive actions as the deeply buried traumatic memory struggles to come to the surface.[1] In her *Unclaimed Experience*, Cathy Caruth discusses that "the wound of the mind," as Freud argues in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* is "a breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world" and is not "like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event." Caruth states that it is "experienced too soon, too

[1] Freud also sees a close relationship between the existence of a physical wound and the delay in the acknowledgement of trauma (-tic neurosis) as well as the impossibility of acknowledging it in the moment of experiencing a traumatising event: "In the case of ordinary traumatic neurosis, two features stand out very clearly, and have proved a useful starting point for further thought: first, the fact that the key causative element appeared to lie in the surprise factor, the fright experienced by the victim; and second, the fact that if any physical wound or injury was suffered at the same time, this generally inhibited the development of the neurosis" (1940/2003a, p. 50). He also underlines how the "patient" is haunted by the traumatic experience that is unclaimed without being conscious of it: "Now it is a distinctive feature of the dreamlife of patients with traumatic neurosis that it repeatedly takes them back to the situation of their original misadventure, from which they awake with a renewed sense of fright. People have shown far too little surprise at this phenomenon. The fact that the traumatic experience repeatedly forces itself on the patient even during sleep is assumed to be proof indeed of just how deep an impression it made. The patient is assumed to be, so to speak, psychically fixated on the trauma." (1940/2003, p. 51).

unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor" (1996, pp. 3-4).

A victim or survivor of a traumatic event does not actually realise being wounded in the mind, which remains hidden and therefore open and unhealed. However, through an encounter of the same kind that would remind the victim or make the victim realise the original traumatising experience, the wound of the mind is triggered and wants to be claimed and acknowledged by coming to the surface. Thus, the suppressed memory/experience begins to show or remind itself through and in repetitive yet uncommunicable ways to speak out and be healed. These repetitive acts might also include repetitive behaviours that somewhat takes the victim back to the traumatic event/past. In Freud's terms, these are a part of repetition compulsion: "the patient does not remember … what he has forgotten and repressed but rather acts it out. He produces it not as a memory, but as an action; he repeats it" (1940/2003b, p. 36). Thus, through repeating and re-acting, the victim actually, unconsciously, first resists remembering but eventually tries to face and deal with the traumatising experience. In *Soundings in Critical Theory*, Dominick LaCapra argues that

> For Freud a traumatic influx of excitation-an overwhelming rupture that the subject cannot effectively bind-is brought about not through an original event in isolation but through repetition: an event becomes traumatic retrospectively when it is recalled by a later event. In the trauma one thus has a conjunction of repetition and change. (LaCapra, 1989, 34-35)

Moving from Freud's repetition compulsion, in *Writing History Writing Trauma*, LaCapra proposes acting out and working through as two essential parts of overcoming/healing traumas. In his own words,

> In acting out, tenses implode, and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene. Any duality (or double inscription) of time (past and present or future) is experientially collapsed or productive only of aporias and double binds. In this sense, the aporia and the double bind might be seen as marking a trauma that has not been worked through. Working through is an articulatory practice: to the extent one works through trauma (…), one is able to distinguish between past and present and to recall in memory that something happened to one (or one's people) back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future. (Dominick LaCapra, 2001, pp. 21-22)

According to LaCapra's interpretation and use of these two concepts, acting out is a process seen as the victim looking at the experience as an insider and from a subjective stance. Thus, it is also a process during which the traumatic experience is revisited through re-acting, yet it is not claimed. However, acting out is the first and crucial part of the process, yet it is possible to claim the traumatic experience only when it is followed by "working through". Since working through is a process during which the victim is able to look at the experience from an objective stance and as an outsider, which enables stepping out of a repetitive cycle. In the context of this article, not only this adaptation's monster but also the very act and need of going back to old texts and adapting them are studied under the light of trauma theory as the act of adapting is interpreted as repeating and reacting to remember and work through traumatic experiences, including historical ones.

Adaptation & Appropriation

Then, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by adaptation and appropriation in the context of this study. Adaptation studies, although a well-known and often studied or employed theoretical approach, is a field that had dominantly revolved around fidelity criticism (Hutcheon, 2006/2013, p. 6) and adaptation from page to screen, classical novels to films to be specific. However, a more contemporary outlook in adaptation

studies finds this approach as a very limited one that, on the one hand valorises and centralises the original/source text and disregards the new/end product, on the other hand, disregards a more complex process of an intermedia rewriting, reusing, adapting, and appropriating, which finally emerges as an independent text with its own agenda.

As Hutcheon discusses in *A Theory of Adaptation*, to talk about the process of or the end product as "adaptation" means that "we openly announce its overt relationship to another work or works" (Hutcheon, 2006/2013, p. 6). However, it is more of a concern to see how adaptation is no longer considered a copy (of a copy) that lacks originality, although it has close ties with one or several other texts. Hutcheon continues by defining her idea of adaptation as "repetition without replication" (2006/2013, p. 7), it is "a derivation that is not derivative—a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing" (2006/2013, p. 9). Therefore, this act may or should include a process of transferring and transforming (well-known) (non-) fictional stories through a new or different perspective, a dialogue between the source text and other texts.

It can be argued that, while Julie Sanders tackles adaptation and appropriation in their respective chapters in her seminal work *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2006/2016), for Hutcheon, cultural appropriation is not seen as a concept separate from adaptation; shifts in time and place, specifically attempts at transferring and transforming from one culture to another, are discussed under adaptation as "transcultural adaptation" (2006/2013, p. 145) which includes a form of translation, also changes in time and setting, but most importantly introduces cultural changes that embody the specific positioning of history, politics, and other concerns of the target culture. The end product of this process of adaptation is a "transculturated" (Hutcheon, 2006/2013, p. 145) text that comes with its own set of meanings that are created through the use of a mixture of stories, signs, and symbols from the source text and the target culture, thus "context conditions meaning" (Hutcheon, 2006/2013, p. 145). As a part of this process, "something new and hybrid results" (Hutcheon, 2006/2013, p. 150), and Hutcheon reuses Susan Stanford Friedman's (2004) "anthropologic term 'indigenization' to refer to this kind of intercultural encounter and accommodation" (Hutcheon, 2006/2013, p. 150). In the field of literary adaptations, film adaptations, and rewritings, this encounter results in not only recognisable connections with the source but also the adapter's claiming the material as their own or their culture through deconstructing and reconstructing the source text (sometimes in a new medium) in a new context and possibly from a critical stance.

Although the definitions or the meanings loaded to the concept are similar, Julie Sanders technically defines adaptation as "a highly specific process involving the transition from one genre to another" (2006/2016, p. 24), it "most often signals a relationship with an informing source text either through its title or through more embedded references" (2016, p. 36). However, according to Sanders' definition,

> appropriation frequently effects a more decisive journey away from the informing text into a wholly new cultural product and domain, often through the actions of interpolation and critique as much as through the movement from one genre to others. (...) appropriations tend to have a more complicated, intricate and sometimes embedded relationship to their intertexts than a straightforward film version of a canonical or well-known text would suggest. (2006/2016, pp. 35-36)

Thus, adaptation is viewed mostly as an act that includes a "generic shift" (Sanders, 2016, p. 35), the transference from one genre or medium to another as a result of which the adapted text continues its ties with the source text in different ways. The main transformation is about the change in genre or medium, yet close and obvious ties to the source are at the forefront of the new text whereas appropriation does not necessarily require a generic shift but has a more complex relationship with the source text. Yet, Deborah

Cartmell, who is also referred to in Sanders' work, sees adaptation as having limitless possibilities that surpass any attempt at defining it in a very specific and clear-cut way. Referring to Wagner's and Andrew's categorizations[2], she further investigates the topic as follows:

> But these categories restrict the field of 'adaptation' where the figure of the author (...) is prominent in the film's publicity and reception. We often lose sight of the fact that other films ... are also adaptations, and that there are adaptations which cannot be categorized in the ways that Wagner and Andrew suggest. In fact the more we study adaptations, the more it becomes apparent that the categories are limitless. (Cartmell, 1999, p. 24)

As Cartmell argues, these categorizations can be further multiplied, yet they also limit the definition of adaptation in the context of film adaptations to being an inferior or loosely related copy that receives acclamation or attention through their connection to the source text and its author. Although these categorizations do not diminish the creative and/or critical agenda of the adaptations, seeing adaptation as a process and an end product that may include or employ one or many different tactics that are categorised here in its aim to create a new whole can be a more inclusive and objective way of looking at adaptations.

Another important point in adaptation studies, apart from the impact of the source text and the aims of the adapter, is the audience response, as the audience, a "knowing audience" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 120) that knows the work is an adaptation from another recognised work or an "unknowing one" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 120) who does not recognise the source text and derives their own meanings and connections between the source text and many other possible references to other texts and the film. Imelda Whelehan also highlights this idea as follows:

> Clearly the adapter 'poaches' from the original in most crucial ways, but perhaps the seasoned consumer of adaptations begins to find the process itself equally participatory, welcoming the opportunity to recapture the experience of a first encounter with the original text in a different formulation. (Whelehan, 1999, p. 16)

Hence, it would be more correct to say that adaptation comes as an umbrella term and acts of adapting and appropriating can be considered as acts of gathering, salvaging, replicating, and rewriting. It is not limited to copying and loyally recreating the source, keeping its time, place, and contexts intact. Furthermore, the meaning-making process is an open-ended or never-ending process that includes not only the source text, adapter and the adapter's position and the end product but also the audience. Therefore, it arises as a "writerly text," as coined by Roland Barthes in *S/Z* (1970/1974, p. 5).

Rewriting *Frankenstein* & Rewriting History

Çağan Irmak's *Yaratılan* (*Creature*) is an appropriation, a transcultural adaptation that adapts Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* through indigenisation, resulting in the reproduction of a new set of meanings in a new context. Irmak's series, with each episode, reminds the viewer that what they see is inspired by[3] Shelley's novel. Irmak's adaptation keeps "knowing audiences" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 120) guessing while it

[2] "Wagner (1975: 222–6) has suggested three categories of adaptations: 'transposition', in which the literary text is transferred as accurately as possible to film (...); 'commentary', in which the original is altered (...), and 'analogy', in which the original text is used as a point of departure (...). Dudley Andrew (1984) suggests adaptations be classified as 'borrowing', 'intersecting' and 'transforming': 'borrowing' makes no claims to fidelity (...), 'intersection' attempts to recreate the distinctness of the original text (...) and 'transformation' reproduces the 'essential' text (...)" (Whelehan, 1999, p. 16).

[3] Although in Turkish it says "Mary Shelley'nin *Frankenstein* romanından esinlenilmiştir" (Inspired by Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*), yet the English translation says "based on the novel *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley." The original and translation are actually two different processes of adapting from a text.

also emerges as a new text through cultural appropriation, although the similarities between the plots, characters, setting, and the concerns at heart are more than an inspiration.[4] The concepts of inspiration, rewriting, adapting, and appropriating are not limited to Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Irmak (re-)tackles and, in a sense, "indigenizes" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 28) the *Frankenstein* story to deal with not only universal human dreams, anxieties, and limits discussed by Shelley in her novel but also with local history and traumas of the past, particularly Ottoman history, which also come as a desire to, perhaps, remind and deal with layers of past and present traumatic experiences. Thus, the act of indigenisation and cultural appropriation comes loaded with its own intertexts and meanings, while it also carries, transfers, and recreates the "palimpsestuous" structure of the source text (Hutcheon, 2006/2013, p. 6).[5]

It is possible to say that the adapter's task, or any author's or artist's task, is a Frankensteinian effort, similar to Shelley's Frankenstein, who gathers bits and pieces of body parts from graveyards to create a new being and stitches the pieces together and in a sense releases his creation to the greater world, Irmak, in our context, and Shelley herself, had woven their texts as a work of "intertextuality" (Kristeva, 2024, p. 37). Shelley is very much affected by her own reading history while creating her story and makes many allusions to other literary works that preceded her period (Hindle, 2013, pp. xxxii-xxxv). Starting from the subtitle of her novel "the Modern Prometheus" and with allusions to Milton or Rousseau, she not only makes references to her sources of inspiration but also recreates a new text by piecing together bits and pieces from other texts. Dennis R. Cutchins and Dennis Perry, in *Adapting Frankenstein* (2018), also list many sources that affected Shelley's writing as follows:

> Shelley herself, in fact, began this dialogic process by incorporating into her novel Giovanni Aldini's radical experiments in galvanism, the Prometheus myth, Rousseauian philosophy, *Paradise Lost* (1667), the Faust legend, *Caleb Williams* (1794), and arguably François-Félix Nogaret's *Le Miroir des événemens actuels, ou La Belle au plus offrant* (1790) and Senjūshō's 'Making a Humanoid at Mt Kōya' (ca. 13th century), among others. (Cutchins & Perry, 2018, p. 13)

They also argue that "Literary texts like Shelley's *Frankenstein* … retain a plenitude of both intentional and unintentional meanings … Adaptations may or may not adopt these meanings, but the very act of adaptation inevitably creates even more meanings, more possible paths …" (Cutchins & Perry, 2018, p. 5). In his own right, Çağan Irmak not only delves into this palimpsestuous text but also loads it with other references, such as cultural and historical texts and visual and audial texts, as the new medium requires and enables him. This inevitably leads to the birth of new meanings pursued by the director or derived by the audience. Thus, the series also emerges as a new being, a creation that is pieced together, "a tissue, a woven fabric"[6]

[4] Both the novel and the adaptation/appropriation will dominantly be referred to as a text rather than a work, as used and defined by Roland Barthes in his "From Work to Text" in *Music, Text, Image* (1977). Barthes argues that "The Text can be approached, experienced, in reaction to the sign. The work closes on a signified. … The Text, on the contrary, practises the infinite deferment of the signified, is dilatory; its field is that of the signifier and the signifier must not be conceived of as 'the first stage of meaning', its material vestibule, but, in complete opposition to this, as its deferred action" (1977, p. 158). Therefore, a text is not only not closed in terms of its relations with other texts but also not closed in terms of meaning production as it is not fixed on a signifier.

[5] Palimpsestuous is a word derived from the word palimpsest, which was originally used by those who studied ancient manuscripts and parchments. Gérard Genette first used it in *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, where he indicated that it is "an adjective … coined by Philippe Lejeune" (1982/1997, p. 399). As discussed by Sarah Dillon in her *The Palimpsest: Literature, Criticism, Theory* (2007), palimpsests "embody and provoke interdisciplinary encounter, both literally … and figuratively" (p. 2) and palimpsestuous is, as she refers back to and quotes from Genette's reading of Proust, "a palimpsest in which several figures and several meanings are merged and entangled together, all present together at all times, and which can only be deciphered together, in their inextricable totality' (1982b, p. 226)" (p. 5). In our context, Shelley's and therefore Irmak's texts are seen as palimpsestuous texts that are "merged and entangled together" not only with each other but also with many other texts of their respective periods and/or concerns.

[6] Barthes refers to the etymological meaning of the word text when he says it is "a tissue, a fabric" and discusses that "the text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (1977, p. 146) and draws attention to the palimpsestuous and intertextual existence of (any) text. However, I also like to add to this etymological meaning of the word tissue, its connotations that are closely related to the ideas discussed here, 1) paper, (and in the biological meaning of tissue as) 2) a collection of cells, all of which resonate not only with the idea of

(Barthes, 1977, p. 159); then, it is possible to argue that every work is a rewrite, an intertext, an appropriation that comes loaded with a new set of meanings.

However, the very conscious act of rewriting and adapting a text, especially going back to specific texts of the past and adapting and readapting them, comes with its own agenda. In a shallow manner, it might be for consumer culture and commercial purposes, yet in the last decades, it is more dominantly a postmodern desire to give voice to race, class, and gender issues. Encompassing the latter as well, I tend to see revisiting and rewriting or adapting old stories and histories, especially classical and controversial works such as Shelley's *Frankenstein*, in which human ambitions and anxieties are shaped into monsters (creature and/or Frankenstein) both as a need that emerges from humanity's unchanging yet ever-growing concerns and as an act of digging graves (in a Frankensteinian manner again), searching darkness and seeking pieces to create a meaningful whole that arises from the need to face and deal with the repressed traumas. Thus, rewriting, adapting, and appropriating all these acts, both for the writer, adapter, and the viewer, become either an act of acting out, seeking comfort in the known territory of literature and arts and/or a way of working through by resurrecting the (un)dead, unburying the deeply buried and unacknowledged traumas, and in our case, in a serial form that coincides with or follows a very recent global trauma, COVID-19, as well as the ever-growing concerns about the limits of science and technology in the hands of human beings.

While the main plot, the driving force for the protagonist(s) in both works, the search for prolonged life or immortality, and the discussions that arise from the similar teachings/restrictions of an Abrahamic religion in the field of science and medicine, questions concerning ethics and responsibility help the viewer link the adaptation with the original text, the intermedial approach, the changes necessitated by the cultural appropriation and the specific choices (intrusions, inclusions) introduced by the screenwriter/director make *Creature* a work of intertextuality and a rewriting. Thus, Irmak's work is in line with the processes of adaptation offered by Hutcheon, who argues that,

> (It is) An acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works
>
> A creative and an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging
>
> An extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work. (2006, pp. 7-8)

Moving from Hutcheon's definition, it is clear to see that *Creature*, as an adaptation that alters the source work to adjust and appropriate it, is composed of these three processes. The process of recreation and/or rewriting in *Creature* is both a process of adaptation and appropriation.

The novel which was first published in three volumes, and in epistolary form in which the monster's, Dr Frankenstein's, and Captain Walton's stories/narrations are "intertextured," Shelley's *Frankenstein*, as mentioned above, was first published in 1818 in three volumes and republished in 1823 in two volumes, bearing Shelley's name as the author. The third edition, published in 1831, was a single-volume edition that included Shelley's corrections and additions (Hindle, 2013). The novel in its original form (1818) begins with Captain Walton's letters to his sister and gradually begins to encompass Frankenstein's recounting of the events of his past, starting with Volume I Chapter I, and at the core of the novel and Volume II, we are given the story of Frankenstein's Creature, which is then followed by Frankenstein and completed with Walton's letters. Thus, the novel presents the reader with an epistolary form that is structured in a narrative-within-a-narrative form. Although we hear Walton's voice in a limited way, the whole text actually belongs to him as he listens to these layers of stories and retells them in his letters, though (at least seemingly) in the form of a transcriptionist. As Peter Brooks argues,

smaller units, elements, quotations, references coming together and building a whole, a new text, but also with the dream of creating a living/organic being thorough the use of a variety of materials or techniques.

> We might approach the network of issues dramatized in the novel first through Victor Frankenstein's crucial interview with his monstrous creation, the interview which leads to the Monster's telling his tale to Frankenstein, the story-within-a story (itself a story-within-a-story-within-a-story, when we consider the role of Robert Walton as initial and ultimate narrator). (1979, p. 205)

Therefore, the dominant voice, based on the number of chapters given to him, belongs to Frankenstein, yet at the core of the story we have the monster/creature's narration, which comes as a part of Frankenstein's story, yet clearly recounted as a moment that comes after the Monster's pleading to be heard by his creator "Listen to my tale … Listen to me, Frankenstein… listen to me … Hear my tale" (Shelley, 1818/2013, pp. 103-104). Reminding the reader of Hamlet's father's ghost who begs to be remembered, the Monster insists on telling his story, thus asking for the acknowledgement of his traumatic experiences. Brook states that "Frankenstein is touched by the Monster's eloquence" (1979, p. 207); hence, according to him,

> In the narrative situation of the Monster facing and speaking to his creator, we have an instance of what we might call, in the terms of Jacques Lacan, the imaginary versus the symbolic order. … In any speculary relationship the Monster will always be the "filthy mass;" only in the symbolic order may he realize his desire for recognition. The Monster hence produces a tale, based, like any tale, on the "narrative contract" between narrator and narratee. (1979, pp. 207-208)

Thus, the Monster and his story are acknowledged only when they are conveyed through the symbolic patriarchal order, but not until he is recognised as a meropic and eloquent being. However, although his story is at the core of the novel, it is still encompassed, imprisoned in Frankenstein's narrative voice, and his creator and others see him as an abject (Kristeva, 1980/1982, p. 5) being.

The narrative form of the novel itself underlines the idea of remembering, rewriting, and intertextuality as the stories of three different characters are entangled. While the novel comes in volumes that include three layers of narrative voices, actually embraced in one authoritative voice of Captain Walton, Irmak's cultural adaptation comes as a Netflix series with eight 40-minute-episodes and disrupts the epistolary structure while keeping the "intertextured" story-telling pattern intact. The episodic form can be said to recreate the volumes and chapters of the novel in a new way. The names of the episodes also tell a story and, in a sense, summarise the main plot: "Heal Him," "Voices in my Head," "Blood Shall Flow Warm," "A Soul will rise from the Dead," "Resurrection," "Who Am I," "My Name was Ihsan," and "I'm Done with Man(kind)" (Irmak, 2023). Although we see each character's story through their own experiences, the feeling that their narrative voices are intertwined and encompassed in each other is given through the fact that Ziya (Frankenstein's equivalent) narrates the whole story (which includes İhsan's [the monster's equivalent] story as he heard it from him) to Captain Ömer (Captain Walton's equivalent), who later writes it down by enclosing all these stories inside his narrative voice, including moral messages on science and technology. Due to the different medium in which the novel is recreated, the audience becomes a voyeur and a visual witness of the characters' traumatic experiences.

Places, names, and other cultural references are localised in the series due to the intercultural approach. Other major changes are made in *Creature* that underline the work's status as a rewriting and an appropriation that keeps its ties with the original but also begins its existence as a "new cultural product" with its own cultural codes. Linda Hutcheon argues that

> the ways of engaging with stories do not, of course, ever take place in a vacuum. We engage in time and space, within particular society and a general culture. The contexts of creation and reception are material, public, and economic as much as they are cultural, personal, and aesthetic. This explains why, even in today's globalized world, major shifts in a story's context – that is, for example, in a national setting or time period – can change radically how the transposed story is interpreted, ideologically and literally. (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 28)

The appropriation of *Frankenstein* into a 19th-century Ottoman background in 2023 leads to "major shifts" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 28) that open the new text to diverse interpretations. The first major change is seen in the title of the work. Instead of naming the series after the original and the protagonist, Irmak chooses to name it *Yaratılan* which is translated into English as creature rather than its literal meaning creation. Thus, Irmak shifts its focus from the creator Ziya to the creature İhsan. In the original language, the new name also points out a shift in the narrative perspective as well as the change that will be seen in the monster's identity. Changing the name from *Frankenstein* to *Yaratılan* (*Creature*) is not only a choice made to shift the focus from the original and foreign text but also an attempt at underlining the fact that it is a new text, not just a copy. However, it also puts the monster, the creature of the story, under the spotlight by removing Frankenstein from his titular position and naming the series as *Yaratılan*. While the English translation of the series, *Creature*, is still replicating the way other characters refer to Frankenstein's monster in the original, the nameless creature, the Turkish name, *Yaratılan*, does not actually come with connotations such as "monster" but literally means a being that/what is created. While the negative connotations are erased, "yaratılan," as a word that means "what is created," inevitably underlines a passive form of existence that requires a creator, possibly drawing attention to the second coming of İhsan as a resurrected being that needs care and guidance.

The adaptation presumably chooses the 1847 or 1893 cholera outbreak[7] in the Ottoman Empire as its setting and references to leprosy and plague. Özgür Yılmaz contends that,

> The Ottoman territories suffered greatly from plague outbreaks, which emerged in the Far East and journeyed to the west from there. Fortunately, in the Ottoman Empire, the plague lost its former power in the first period of the 19th century because of the quarantine system, which was implemented in the 1830s. However, eventually a more dangerous epidemic disease, cholera, became a global threat in this period. (2017, p. 24)

Thus, although cholera is not the only disease mentioned in the series, it is more dangerous and more significant than the other diseases, considering its impact in the 19th century Ottoman history. Yaron Ayalon, in *Natural Disasters in the Ottoman Empire: Plague, Famine, and Other Misfortunes*, argues that "the empire's refusal to embrace new methods of disaster prevention and control that had once proven effective in Europe, and the belated adoption of bacteriology and modern ideas of city planning" during "the 1890s cholera epidemic in Istanbul and its environs … largely contributed to the collapse of the empire" (2015, p. 20). Thus, the reference to the epidemic and other diseases recalls the traumatic process and outcomes of both the epidemic and the way the government reacts to and is affected by it. In the backdrop of these diseases, we

[7] The series does not specify the date, and the aim here is not to locate the series in a specific year, yet the setting of the series and the diseases mentioned point to the late nineteenth century, as cholera was a recurrent epidemic that was threatening the Empire, whereas the reference to the stray dogs being exiled to an island (Sivriada/Hayırsızada) points to either 1839 or 1910. The aim of talking about the possible dates is to contextualise the collective traumas of the nation revisited in the series through adaptation and appropriation. However, these traumatic events from different decades seem to overlap in this fictional rewriting of history.

are presented with not one but two medical doctors[8] with similar passionate obsessions and unorthodox ideas who suffer from God Complex. As if to echo the novel's title "Modern Prometheus," Ziya and Ihsan are both motivated by the same dream of deciphering the Book of Resurrection. However, one main trait separates the characters in their ambitions. Ziya acts out of traumatic anger and hubris in his desire to defeat mortality, while Ihsan acts more as a passionate yet responsible doctor who acts for the sake of finding a cure to diseases and not the secret of immortality.

Ziya, whose name means light[9], is a medical student who is inspired by and rebels against the teachings of his father, who is also a doctor in this adaptation. He is recently traumatised by the loss of his mother, who died of cholera, and the helplessness of science and human beings in the face of these kinds of diseases. Due to his passionate behaviour and reactions, he is severely criticised by his conservative professor and expelled from the school. On the other hand, İhsan, whose name means perfection or excellence and is nearly homophonic with *insan* (Turkish for human), is a doctor educated in Europe and is depicted as a mad scientist who is already seen as a misfit and banished from the medical school due to his eccentric character and radical ideas. While Ziya is mostly driven by his anger and mourning, İhsan is driven by his hunger for knowledge and passion for science, and they turn into Faustian characters experimenting with death and the dead to discover the secret of resurrection as a cure for illnesses and mortality in general.

One of the most important shifts or changes made in the adaptation is the result of this experiment. The adaptation's monster, the creature, becomes İhsan, rather than body parts gathered together. While experimenting on a dead body snatched from the graveyard, a Muslim Pauper's Cemetery, (instead of a boar as İhsan used to do) on the machine invented by İhsan which is designed to achieve the process of resurrection, İhsan gets struck by lightning, which also causes a fire and kills him instantly. When Ziya returns with bottles of transfused blood they were planning to use in their experiment, and sees İhsan's dead body, out of denial, sorrow and also his ambition, he decides to continue the experiment aiming to resurrect İhsan. Ziya recites the lines from the Book of Resurrection: "A light from the sky will hit the machine and a soul will rise from the that… A soul stronger than ever … A light that barred the way of the others that would follow it" (Irmak, 2023, Episode 3). Ziya, as his name means light and as he also remembers the way his grandmother talks about the story of his birth: "He tore his mother apart when he came out… That's why poor Gülfem couldn't have any more children …" (Irmak, 2023, Episode 3). He misinterprets the lines from the Book of Resurrection and thinks that he is the one who finds the cure to mortality:

> I tore my mother's uterus.
>
> I barred the way of the
>
> Ones who would follow me.
>
> I'm the one and only!
>
> The light is me! It's me! (Irmak, 2023, Episode 3)

This experiment, which ends "successfully," creates the monster of this *Frankenstein* adaptation. İhsan is similar to the original creature with his frightening, "scarred" appearance and baby-like innocence. This appropriation also creates a unique version of the monster/creature who can be seen as a victim of trauma with physical and mental wounds and repressed memories.

[8] Actually, İhsan is an unorthodox doctor who is rejected, while Ziya is a passionate medical student who is expelled from school for his unorthodox ideas.

[9] The meaning of Ziya's name, light, definitely is a reference to knowledge, a dominant connotation of light, and in this context, the connection to (life-giving or destructive) electrical power (lightning) should also be considered, while İhsan as a word means "gift" and someone gifted who acts perfectly, consciously, and responsibly.

Ziya, who becomes and fails as a father figure and a procreator for the creature, is also an involuntary witness to a horrific event and a perpetrator. He leaves the creature as he is unable to carry the burden of his own actions. İhsan, on the other hand, as the creature, turns into a *tabula rasa* when he is resurrected and is not aware of his traumatic neurosis, as he does not remember anything. As a trauma victim, he physically and mentally bears his scars and suffers from complete memory loss or unconsciously suppresses the traumatic memory: "As Caruth's influential book's title also suggests, the traumatic experience is an unclaimed one due to its imperceptible and obscure nature … the traumatic event is not acknowledged properly and as a result of the mind's self-preservation, knowing the traumatic event and the proper reaction to it are suspended by the victim/witness" (Karadağ, 2022, pp. 21-22). Thus, İhsan is not yet able to realise the traumatic experience as he needs to reintegrate into life and society to experience flashbacks through his encounters with others that help him remember bits and pieces about his identity, which inevitably are also triggering effects that (re-)traumatizes him. Due to his appearance, the people of the city are afraid of him and out of fear, especially the fear of being contaminated, they beat him and call him names such as "leper," "undead," and "demon" (Irmak, 2023, Episode 4). The fear of contamination or calling him "undead" are related to the epidemic diseases of the period on which the series chooses to focus. Yet, it also represents the fear of the other, who does not look, or act in ways that are conceivable by the "normal," "ordinary" men. İhsan's marginalisation as a man who has Herculean power yet a scary and scarry appearance, and the fear of contamination in other people also underline how trauma victims feel alone and feared by the others due to the threat of contamination through listening/witnessing the traumatic memory.

The first being that does not refrain from connecting with İhsan is his dog, Darwin. As Argos is the only one to recognise Odysseus in disguise (Homer, 2008, p. 209), Darwin recognises İhsan and does not judge his human companion based on his external appearance or is not afraid to be a part of İhsan's post-traumatic state. This encounter with Darwin is also the first moment in İhsan's resurrected life that he has a flashback that helps him remember an instance from his past life where he remembers his home and being with Darwin. However, Irmak touches upon yet another historical trauma of the period by drawing attention to the unconditional love between Darwin and İhsan. In Episode 5, Darwin runs towards a group of officials who seemingly feed stray dogs only to be able to catch them. One of them is heard saying "the French want them sent to the island … who are you to question the state?" (Irmak, 2023). This reference to Istanbul's strays, who are still seen as a disturbance for civilised city life, has its own layers of traumatic history, beginning in the 17th century.

The strays of Istanbul were seen as a threat to public health or a more modern and civilised city life in different periods. While the first attempts at exiling or massacring dogs date back to the 17th century, we see that the 19th century, most probably due to the Westernisation and modernisation process of the Empire, and specifically the capital city, witnesses many different plans to "cleanse" the city off of its dogs. The series, with its reference to the French who wanted them sent to the island, goes back to the early 20th century, 1910 to be exact, and talks about the Hayırsızada incident. As Cihangir Gündoğdu describes,

> In the summer of 1910, upon orders of the municipality, those celebrated members of Istanbul's urban landscape, its stray dogs, were pursued and hunted down with iron claws, put into cages, and embarked on a boat destined for Oxia (Sivriada, which is also known as Hayırsızada (Wicked Island)), a small, barren island off the shore near Istanbul. (2018, p. 1)

Gündoğdu also refers to the incident as a "tragic scene, which cost the lives of thousands of Istanbul's stray dogs," indicating that it "was the product of a long series of reforms in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire that were intended to revitalize the authority of the center" (2018, p. 1). Thus, it supports the idea that the plans to get rid of the strays of Istanbul resurfaced multiple times following the 17th century. However,

the acts of capturing and exiling or killing dogs have always been traumatic for the people of the city. Even Edmondo De Amicis, in his 1877 travelogue *Constantinople*, refers to the dog population of the city:

> And by then no doubt one of the city's most engaging peculiarities will also have disappeared: its dogs... Everyone knows how much the Turks love them and protect them. ... when Sultan Abdülmecit had them all removed to an island in the Sea of Marmara, the people became restive, and when they were brought back, there was a great celebration. In order to avoid provoking such discontent again, the government has left them in peace ever since. (2005, pp. 80-81)

Though Amicis and other historical sources draw attention to the public love for the strays and their reaction to the governmental decisions to exile or massacre them, these sources also underline the fact that the insistent attempts at disposing of the dogs turned into a traumatising process as people tended to see earthquakes, fires, and defeats in war as a consequence of the deportation or killing of the dogs. Irmak, while touching on universal traumas such as illness and death, also tackles local traumas of the target culture by creating a side story in which İhsan finds solace and pieces of his identity through his relationship with Darwin. Thus, seeing him being captured, exiled, and left to his doom not only serves as a moment to make the audience face this traumatic history and realise that nonhuman animals, specifically the ones that one cannot benefit from, are always treated as marginalised others, but also the scene serves as another traumatising experience for our main character.

İhsan, eventually turns into an outcast, left alone, rejected by the majority of people, and is only accepted by a theatre troupe called Vasili's Company, which consists of other social outcasts, misfits of society due to their disabilities, physical appearances, professions, or national backgrounds. Vasili's company or his family is a travelling troupe that literally exists in the margins of the city, building their tents on the outskirts of the cities they visit, living under the colourful roof of their tent. They are nomadic subjects who cannot or are not allowed to take root in one place, as each member and the whole group are marginalised not only because of their physical appearance or bodily defects but also because of their Greek origins, Muslim origins or gender, and also their professions as performance artists. When Vasili sees İhsan for the first time and realises that he has no chance to survive in an "ordinary" society, he takes İhsan under his protection and acts as a father figure for him, Vasili's wife refers to İhsan as "He's familia" (Irmak, 2023) when Vasili introduces him to the company. The creature's experience with the members of the theatre troupe who accept him as a member of their family, regardless of his appearance, turns into a transformative and therapeutic experience for him.

Çağan Irmak replaces blind De Lacey's conversations, his music, Felix's education of Safie, passages read from the Bible, *Paradise Lost*, *Sorrows of Werther*, *Ruins of Empires*, *Plutarch's Lives*, all of which serve as the education of the monster, with the theatre troupe. Although cultural appropriation requires a change, choosing the performing arts to replace the teachings of these texts does function on two levels. First, witnessing rehearsals and performances of the troupe that carry specifically chosen references to other literary and artistic works, such as *Hamlet* and *Othello*, or allusions to mythology, re-educate İhsan through the use of theatre, one of the oldest educative arts. Second, storytelling, listening to stories and the trauma narratives of others and repeating/rehearsing the lines help deal with traumas as the experience of witnessing as a spectator and performing[10] function as a form of acting out and working through. Dominick LaCapra refers to acting out as being "caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes-scenes in which the past returns and the future is blocked" (LaCapra, 2001, p. 21), which will be followed by working-through, hence, hearing and seeing the other members act, sing, and recite stories on stage functions as

[10]They make İhsan a mask that he can wear on stage while performing, which is similar to the one the audience recognises from *the Phantom of the Opera*. It can be argued that Irmak's added allusions and references to other texts are loaded with physically and mentally wounded, traumatised characters.

a form of acting out for İhsan. While watching them act, İhsan returns to the moment of his traumatic experience, and remembers the past. After a night at the theatre he wakes up from a nightmare and is able to speak again, with his first words being "I – wake up" (Irmak, 2023, Episode 5). İhsan's acting out, going back to the scenes from his past, is followed by working through as he regains his speech thus (re)enters the realm of "articulatory practice" (LaCapra, 2001, p. 21). His first words also come as a conscious act, aiming to underline that he reclaims his identity and is awakened to his traumatised state. It is important to remember that "the uncommunicable trauma seeks its own voice to speak out, thus, as Caruth also suggests, it revisits or haunts the survivor in the forms of 'repetitive actions,' 'nightmares,' 'hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena'" (Karadağ, 2022, p. 22). Thus, as İhsan watches the performances of the other members, this witnessing triggers his traumatic memories. Slowly remembering his past, he starts having nightmares. Later, through rehearsing and performing on stage, he repetitively remembers and repeats his traumatic past. He struggles to work through his trauma to escape this loop, which requires the trauma victim to look at the experience from a more objective stance. It can also be claimed that İhsan, in his attempt to regain his memory, is in search of his identity. This can be read as his desire to find and learn the truth of his state, which can only be achieved through revisiting or being revisited by the cause of the wound, the root of his trauma. In her chapter "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching," Shoshana Felman in *Testimony* suggests that

> To *seek* reality is both to set out to explore the injury inflicted by it—to turn back on, and try to penetrate, the state of being *stricken*, wounded by reality … and to attempt, at the same time, to reemerge from the paralysis of this state, to engage reality … as a vital, critical necessity of *moving on*. (1992, p. 28)[11]

Similarly, İhsan's silence, his inability to speak caused by being struck by lightning, resurrected with the use of an electric discharge, parallels the idea of being paralysed by the event. Thus, to claim his identity and to heal, he has to search and face his past, and he has to be able to articulate his story.

The possibility of working through trauma appears twice in the series, first when İhsan is accompanied by other outcasts in the theatre troupe who have their own traumatic pasts, and second when he meets another traumatised character Esma, after he is forced to leave the company. In both of these instances, İhsan is able to form a bond with fellow sufferers and feels a sense of belonging, yet, due to other people's intervention and violence the possibility of healing and belonging. İhsan is in the position of a listener during the first stage of his recovery when he is with the company. Thus, he seeks his own story through hearing the stories of others. Marika, who is depicted as a woman who became addicted to the drugs she used to numb her pain, shares her story with İhsan. She tells him how she was forced into prostitution at the age of 12 and escaped at 16 years of age. Although caused by drug withdrawal, the tremor she regularly suffers from, is a strong sign of her traumatised mind and body. She finds solace in the company and performing and singing, which can be seen as alternative forms of trauma narrative, her way of acting out and working through her traumatic memories. She also shares with İhsan how she sees the company as a refuge and talks about the healing effect of theatre and singing: "Theater, songs, cantos, and melodies saved my life" (Irmak, 2023, Episode 6). Similarly, Fadime, also known as Princess Fadime, suffers from dwarfism, which makes her an outcast. However, she also takes refuge in Vasili's Company and finds alternative ways of fitting in as a theatrical performance gives her the chance to be any character she likes. Significantly, she chooses to act like Ophelia by gathering flowers and reciting lines such as "forget me nots." In her case, her being a Muslim woman is another problem that Irmak uses to refer to a cultural and historical trauma. Performing and

[11] Italics in the original.

singing on stage were forbidden for Muslim women, and any woman or company who refused to obey the law were to be imprisoned and/or pay fines. As Nalan Turna argues, "entrepreneurs in the entertainment sector mainly were Ottoman and foreign males in the 'long nineteenth century,' female entrepreneurs seemed to be non-Muslim Ottomans and foreigners" (2022, p. 204) however when it comes to working in entertainment business or specifically in theatres "cultural/religious reasons prevented Muslim women from working in the sector for a long time" (2022, p. 208). Thus, Fadime's doubly marginalised state, and the necessity of hiding her in boxes when officers blame the company for employing a Muslim woman further delve into a history of discrimination that functions on and marginalises women in different ways. While Marika is seen by men as a woman of easy virtue because of her singing, Fadime has to hide as she does not have the freedom to sing or perform. İhsan, the eccentric doctor who turned into a marginalised outcast, in his new life/story, experiences life from an alternative position, seeing it through the eyes and stories of outcasts who are traumatised and pushed to the margins. While İhsan finds solace and seeks refuge in the by bonding with these people, he also gradually sees "the hatred humans feel towards the outcasts that are not one of them" (Irmak, 2023, Episode 8). The officers who come for an unfair retribution cause a series of unfortunate events which forces İhsan to leave the company, losing the chance of achieving healing.

After leaving the company that helped him "be human again" (Irmak, 2023, Episode 8), İhsan finds himself in a bucolic setting. He starts living in the coal cellar of an old woman and her granddaughter and starts eavesdropping on their conversations through a hole in the wall. Esma and her grandmother, Seher, are the reimagined versions of Safie and blind De Lacey. Seher and Esma trust İhsan and accept him as he is; they do not judge İhsan by his appearance. Esma, traumatised as an incestuous rape victim, is forced to hide in her grandmother's house as the public opinion sides not with the victimized women but with the perpetrator. She is another character who turns into an outcast and outsider due to her out-of-wedlock pregnancy. She is also introduced as a significant character that represents a gendered cultural trauma. Esma not only shares her own traumatic past with İhsan but also becomes an empathic listener for him. When they converse, they ask each other the same question, "Who are you hiding from?" and give the same answer, "From all of them/ Everyone" (Irmak, 2023, Episode 7). While their stories are different, they find a common ground in being traumatised, victimised, marginalised others, and they form a strong and romantic bond based on mutual understanding. Yet, this blissful opportunity for working through and healing for both characters is again destroyed by the village's people who are prejudiced against Esma, resulting in her death. Thus, for İhsan, each relationship that carries the potential of bonding and healing through empathy and acknowledgement, ends with being traumatised over again. As Dori Laub suggests, trauma victims, witnesses to trauma, want to tell their story and need an emphatic listener. In the case of İhsan he serves as an emphatic listener to his emphatic listeners, which gives him a "feeling of belonging to a 'secret order'" (Laub, 1992b, p. 82), both of which he loses due to other traumatic experiences. The killing of an officer forces him to leave the troupe, while the death of Esma pushes him to search for Ziya to force him into resurrecting Esma, to no avail.

When he finds Ziya and forces him to go on a journey, they walk through a snowy mountain to reach Esma's body, where Ziya is supposed to rebuild the machine to resurrect her. İhsan says, "It's not about revenge for me … you will finish what you started" (Irmak, 2023, Episode 8). In the novel, the creature wants a companion, and Frankenstein refrains from realising this request, fearing the possibility of them reproducing. However, İhsan does not want a bride, he wants Ziya to resurrect his emphatic listener, someone who loved him. Contrary to the novel's Frankenstein or most of the other adaptations that reimagine him, Ziya understands this need only after retelling the story of İhsan to the Captain. Like the Creature of the novel, İhsan first forces Ziya to listen to his story, which in a sense is a visual and audial appropriation of how the novel gives us a story-within-a-story structure. Furthermore, this process of narrating and transmitting his story puts Ziya, who in a sense is the perpetrator, into the position of an involuntary witness. Ziya insists on

not hearing him but İhsan makes him listen to his own narrative of trauma, after which he falls ill and is left to the care of Captain Ömer and his crew. It can be argued that bearing witness through listening to a trauma narrative, one that is heavy and includes the listener as a perpetrator, is a burden for Ziya and makes him fall severely ill. However, as he slowly gains consciousness and heals, he also starts telling his and İhsan's stories. Retelling the trauma narrative can be seen as healing as he not only finds emphatic listeners in the captain and his crew who believe his story but also, in a sense, acts out and revisits the traumatic experiences (of losing his mother, losing İhsan, resurrecting İhsan) over again, which helps him face and claim his belated trauma as well as İhsan's. Ziya recovers and looks healthier, and he says, "I woke up only to find myself telling you the truth. I didn't understand when living it, but only as I told about it, you see, I healed myself with my own story" (Irmak, 2023, Episode 8). Thus, a connection is drawn between the belated response to trauma and claiming and healing trauma through revisiting the experience/story. Although he heals by telling the story and maybe realises the necessity of emphatic listening, which makes him heartily accept helping İhsan, he is accidentally shot and killed by one of the crew. So, İhsan loses not only the creator of his second self but also an old companion who shared his traumatic past and the person who eventually acknowledged his story.

When İhsan loses his empathic listeners and his fellow sufferers who belong to this "secret order," he loses his chance to experience or complete working through his trauma. LaCapra argues that "working-through itself should be understood as an open, self-questioning process that never attains closure and counteracts acting-out (or the repetition compulsion) without entirely transcending it, especially with respect to trauma and its aftermath" (LaCapra, 2001, p. xxiii). He also draws attention to the necessity of empathic relation and in İhsan's case, leaving the company, witnessing the deaths of Esma and (even) Ziya make it impossible for him to continue. As Laub suggests "[t]he absence of an empathic listener, or more radically, the absence of an addressable other, an other who can hear the anguish of one's memories and thus affirm and recognise their realness, annihilates the story" (1992a, p. 68). Thus, İhsan's story, the creature's story in this rewriting, is also annihilated without the possibility of healing his wounds as he rejects working-through when he loses his empathic listeners.

Conclusion

In terms of the act of rewriting itself, adaptations and appropriations are all acts of returning to an old source material, a well-known fictional text, and in this context an attempt at resurrecting/recreating a text that deals with mortality, science, and "bio"ethics. Appropriation, in this sense, serves as a form of "acting out" and "working through." Considering the traumatic cultural and historical references woven into the series, the new adaptation not only falls in line with the novel's questions but also with the traumatic history of human helplessness in the face of history, pandemics/epidemics, including COVID-19.

Thus, this repetitive revisiting of or returns to *Frankenstein* in different mediums and periods, and in our example, in a bingeable or effortlessly consumable form, acts as trauma re-enactment, going back to the traumatic event and repeating it which is a form of "acting out and working through" through an intermedial and intercultural rewriting of *Frankenstein* Çağan Irmak is also taking a cognitive approach, as discussed by Pascal Nicklas and Oliver Lindner in their Introduction to *Adaptation and Cultural Appropriation*:

> The revision of myth in each age and its function in explaining the world or in being the reservoir of unresolved puzzles (Lévi-Strauss) show the basic anthropological set-up and the desire for recurring adaptations which keep appropriating the myth over and over again. (...) Cognitive poetics have to look at the connection of the pleasure principle with forms of repetition and the return of the repressed in the domain of psychological aesthetics. (2012, p. 3)

Consequently, as a new form of adaptation and cultural appropriation, the series can be seen as a revision and repetition of the repressed traumas that recur in real life and fiction, such as illness, death, and loss, so it is an alternative way for the director and the audience to face and deal with these traumatic experiences as well as carrying the potential of triggering past traumas. *Creature*, a text of transcultural adaptation and cultural appropriation that emerges as a new cultural product by revisiting the repetitive traumatic/traumatising narrative patterns that include illness, death, and other traumas, turns the audience into involuntary witnesses as well. Patrick Duggan and Mick Wallis argue that "witnessing in the context of performance is typically second-order: we bear witness to on-stage witnessing" (2011, p. 7). It can be argued that "this second-order witnessing to trauma functions on many different levels, first of all, witnessing trauma narratives/performances prepares the audience for similar catastrophic experiences" (Karadağ, 2022, p. 23). Most importantly, it can help the audience act out and work through collective traumas through the opportunity of reliving and repeating traumatic events as outsiders and witnesses. Thus, adaptations and appropriations deal with and may target and function as a way for facing, understanding, and healing collective (historical) traumas.

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