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From *Frankenstein* to *Ex Machina*: Recovering the Frankenstein Myth in Today's Science Fiction Films and TV Series

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I declare that I have worked on this thesis independently,
using only the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography.

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Tomáš Lesa

I would like to thank Mr. Jeffrey Smith for his supervision of my work and his advice as well as for the best prepared lectures and courses I have attended at this university.

“I learned from your papers that you were my father, my creator; and to whom could I apply with more fitness than to him who had given me life?”

(Shelley)

Ava: “Is it strange to have made something that hates you?”

(*Ex Machina*)

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1. Introduction

"Virtually every catastrophe of the last two centuries – revolution, rampant industrialism, epidemics, famines, World War I, Nazism, nuclear holocaust, clones, replicants and robots – has been symbolized by Shelley's monster" (Clayton 84).

Today the name of Frankenstein is most commonly associated with crossing of boundaries of science and with creatures who are freaks, murdering monsters or a combination of both. This phenomenon was adopted as its own by the popular culture in form of books, plays, games, costumes, and, of course, of films and television programs.

Shelley set the content of the novel into the archetypal and historical context of the Western culture and thus ensured her novel would survive for centuries to come, whereas many of her more famous contemporaries' work stayed only the remainder of their time. The novel gave rise to a myth which came to be known as the Frankenstein myth. Although still topical, the Shelley's novel and the myth with it have not stayed intact in its original form and have been often misinterpreted. Frankenstein's final aversion to the pursuit of knowledge and crossing of boundaries have become the core of the Frankenstein myth, while the whole context: the weakness of Frankenstein's character, his lack of responsibility to the being he created, his questionable scientific methods; or the fact the being was not inherently evil has been ignored. "Popular culture progressively filtered out all the complexity of [Shelley's] story to only recall the transgression of the scientist. […] Any artificially created humanoid will necessarily turn against his creator at some point" (Kaplan 475).

I decided to focus on the Frankenstein myth in connection with science fiction films and TV series that feature strong[1] artificial intelligence, because they make use of

[1] Strong artificial intelligence can think on its/their own. I will address the difference between 'weak' and 'strong' artificial intelligence in detail in the chapter dealing with androids (6.1. The Creation of an Intelligent Being).

characters, themes, and motifs from Shelley's novel, and, in many respects, reproduce the structure of the Shelley's novel. They are therefore linked to the Frankenstein myth in its various forms. Unfortunately, the outcome of many films and TV series seems to be the same. Pursuit of knowledge and crossing of a boundary by a scientist has serious consequences and is essentially wrong.

In contrast to this interpretation, I have chosen six American and British science fiction films and TV series featuring strong artificial intelligence that embody the original message of the Frankenstein myth from the Shelley's novel and I will argue that the original meaning of the Frankenstein myth does not tell us that science is inherently evil or that boundaries should not be crossed, or even that every creation is bound, out of their nature, to turn against their creator. In fact, Shelley does not oppose the pursuit of knowledge or crossing of boundaries, but for her there is a strong and self-evident connection between the process of creation and the responsibilities and the behavior of the creator to the created being.

I have decided to cover the *Battlestar Galactica* TV series, *Chappie*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Ex Machina*, *Humans* TV series, and *Vice*. To search for the films and TV series that meet the selected criteria I have used relevant tags in Java Movie Database, which gains access to the Internet Movie Database.

Since I only focus on strong artificial intelligence, I had to, in the process of selecting the films and TV series, omit films that feature genetically engineered organisms, even though some of them also conform to the Frankenstein myth.[2] I also decided to omit films and TV series that feature strong artificial intelligence, and conform

[2] *Blade Runner* would be surely present in this thesis, if it was not for the fact the replicants in the film are not machines but products of genetic engineering.

in many aspects to the Frankenstein myth, but do not convey the message of the Frankenstein myth in its wholeness or there is some problematic element in them.[3]

As for *Frankenstein*, this thesis relies not on the first edition of the novel from 1818 but on the edition from 1831, because in this version Shelley accentuates even more Frankenstein's consequent antipathy towards pursuit of knowledge, and it is the version "most readers encountered, until the 1970s" (Clayton 87).

Since the being in *Frankenstein* has no name, Susan Taylor Hitchcock in her book on the cultural history of Frankenstein decided to use two terms from the novel to name the Frankenstein's creation. One, a "monster", she uses for situations where the being is frightening and the other, a "creature", for neutral situations (11). I decided not to comply with Frankenstein's use of terms, because they could be just as easily related to him, and to use only one neutral term – a 'being'. In case of the science fiction films and TV series I use the term 'android' and, although this term is problematic as well, it is still one of the better ones and it would be highly impractical to call the androids in all the situations as 'beings', same as the Frankenstein's being. I use the term 'being' in general context when the meaning is clear and I also sometimes use the term 'creation'.

It is crucial to realize, that the whole discourse concerning the possibility of creating an intelligent being lies purely in the domain of fictional reality and although the today's science is in many respects capable of extraordinary things and despite the fact that history often showed us that the discoveries in science fiction later became reality, we are not yet at the point where we would be able to create strong artificial intelligence and since it may not be possible at all we may never be.

In order to show how the myth works in today's films and TV series and how it came to be in the Shelley's novel I will need to look into the origin of the Frankenstein

[3] *Bicenntenial Man*, for example, was a perfect candidate for this thesis, however, the artificial intelligence in the film is not created on purpose but is rather a result of an error.

myth, exploring the ancient myths and archetypes and observing their influence on the myth. Then, in the chapter devoted to *Frankenstein*, I will, by close reading, establish and study the individual elements of the myth in the novel. In the next chapter, dealing with the elements of the Frankenstein myth in the science fiction films and TV series, I will demonstrate the connection between the elements of the novel and the films and TV series, and I will show the relevance of the myth in them. The theoretical chapter will further clarify the framework of the thesis using the archetypal and myth criticism as well as moral and ethical criticism.

2. The Theoretical Approach

> In looking at a picture, we may stand close to it and analyze the details of brush work and palette knife. […] At a little distance back, the design comes into clearer view, and we study rather the content represented: this is the best distance for realistic Dutch pictures, for example, where we are in a sense reading the picture. The further back we go, the more conscious we are of the organizing design. At a great distance from, say, a Madonna, we can see nothing but the archetype of the Madonna […]. In the criticism of literature, too, we often have to 'stand back' from the poem to see its archetypal organization. (Frye, 140)

The aim of archetypal and myth criticism is to look for the underlining patterns in culture and literature, and link these to the broader archetypal and myth context. Due to the nature of the Frankenstein myth, archetypal and myth criticism becomes the main part of the theoretical framework of this thesis.

This form of criticism draws heavily from the works of Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung. Joseph Campbell's book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* has become one of the cornerstones of archetypal and myth criticism and he, himself, probably the most recognized expert on the archetypal and myth criticism. The common misconception of today has it that myths are only records of primitive ideas that are false, but "mythology encompasses more than grade school stories about the Greek and Roman deities" (Guerin et al. 183).

Campbell describes myth as "a manifestation in symbolic images, metaphorical images, of the energies within us" ("The Message of Myth.") and as "stories of the search by men and women through the ages for meaning, for significance, […], to touch the eternal, to understand the mysterious, to find out who we are" ("The Message of Myth.").

To find more clear-cut definitions of myth to start with one can take a look in the dictionary. In the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, myth is defined as "a usually traditional story of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon" ("myth.") or as "a popular belief or tradition that has grown up around something or someone; especially: one embodying the ideals and institutions of a society or segment of society" ("myth."). Both of these meanings manifest themselves in the nature of the Frankenstein myth I am dealing with. On one hand, the Frankenstein myth draws from the traditional stories, hence the traditional myths, and on the other, it becomes a myth on its own.

There is a connection between the archetypal and myth criticism and psychology, especially, psychoanalysis. Campbell claims that psychoanalysis is a perfect modern tool to uncover the truths disguised by religion and mythology (xxi). "What psychoanalysis attempts to disclose about the individual personality, the study of myths reveals about the mind and character of people. And just as dreams reflect the unconscious desires and anxieties of the individual, so myths are the symbolic projections of a people's hopes, values, fears, and aspirations" (Guerin et al. 183). This brings us to Carl Jung, a former disciple of Freud and founder of analytical psychology, and to his idea of the collective unconscious.

Jung differentiates between the personal unconscious, which "consists for the most part of complexes" and "is made up essentially of contents which have at one time been conscious but which have disappeared from consciousness through having been forgotten or repressed" (42), and between the collective unconscious, content of which "is made up essentially of archetypes" and "the contents of the collective unconscious have never been in consciousness, and therefore have never been individually acquired, but owe their existence exclusively to heredity" (42).

Jung warns against a mistaken notion of the nature of archetypes saying that it is incorrect to think about an archetype as being "determined in regard to its content, in other words that it is a kind of unconscious idea (if such an expression be admissible)" (79), and he points out that, "archetypes are not determined as regards their content, but only as regards their form […]. A primordial image is determined as to its content only when it has become conscious and is therefore filled out with the material of conscious experience (79). In Jung's usage of the term, archetype then stands for hereditary preconditions for universal ideas, and as Jung claims, "There is not a single important idea or view that does not possess historical antecedents. Ultimately they are all founded on primordial archetypal forms whose concreteness dates from a time when consciousness did not think, but only perceived" (33).

In archetypal and myth criticism archetypes are usually perceived in a more concrete way as "certain images that recur in the myths of peoples widely separated in time and place [and] tend to have a common meaning or, more accurately, tend to elicit comparable psychological responses and to serve similar cultural functions" (Guerin et al. 184). We might encounter archetypes in the form of characters, themes, forms of narrative, motifs, genres, and so on.

In literary context, Northrop Frye, a literary theorist and critic as well as one of the most important figures in archetypes and myth criticism, defines myth as a "structural organizing principle of literary form" (341) and archetype as "A symbol, usually an image, which recurs often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience as a whole" (365). Frye divides the myths and archetypal symbols in literature into three categories: an undisplaced myth concerned usually with gods and two contrasting worlds of desirable and undesirable; a romantic tendency which suggests there are mythical patterns in a world associated with human experience; and a tendency

of realism, where the emphasis is more on the content than on the shape of a story (139). This division becomes quite topical when looking at the predecessors and influences of the Frankenstein myth, for example, in connection with the creation myth, when taking into account the undisplaced myth, which draws "heavily on the Bible, the main source for undisplaced myth in our tradition" (140).

Equally topical is Frye's archetypal division of genres according to the seasons of the year. The mythos of autumn is linked to tragedy and "tragedy is more concentrated on a single individual" (207) and as such may be associated with the creator in the Frankenstein myth. According to Frye "the typical tragic hero is somewhere between the divine and the 'all too human' [and] is very great as compared with us" (207). Frye lists five phases of tragedy, and the journey of Frankenstein is easily associated with the tragical hero in these phases. On the other hand, Shelley's novel also challenges some of these phases.

Campbell describes the adventure of a hero a few years earlier than Frye and calls the myth of a hero's journey a monomyth. "The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation—initiation—return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth" (Campbell 28), however, Campbell deals with the individual phases of the monomyth in more detail and presents them under the names of "The Call to Adventure", "Refusal of the Call,", "Supernatural Aid,", "The Crossing of the first Threshold" and "The Belly of the Whale" (33). In connection with the Frankenstein myth the monomyth is quite relevant because of the hero's journey, but it is equally important as it deals with the crossing of a threshold or a boundary.

Ethical and moral criticism is in many aspects interconnected with the archetypal and myth criticism due to its links to human psychology and motivation of people as well

as because of its connection to history. “The moral-philosophical approach is as old as classical Greek and Roman critics. Plato, for example, emphasized moralism and utilitarianism; Horace stressed that literature should be delightful and instructive” (Guerin et al. 77).

Noël Carroll, one of the leading figures of today’s philosophy of art, claims that, “with regard to topics like racism, sexism, homophobia, and so on, it may even be the case today that the ethical discussion of art is the dominant approach on offer by most humanistic critics” (350). The focus on morality and ethics in the Frankenstein myth clearly invites the critics to evaluate it from the ethical perspective, and not only as far as literature and film are concerned but also in the public and scientific discourse of nowadays. I also believe that moral and ethical criticism is a crucial approach to criticizing literature, as I do not agree with most parts of the arguments against using this sort of method of criticism.

Carroll introduces three main arguments against ethical and moral criticism and addresses each of them. Automism “concludes that art and ethics are autonomous realms of value” (Carroll 351) and therefore in terms of automism, the ethical value does not influence the aesthetic value of art. “Artworks, it is said, are valuable for their own sake, not because of their service to ulterior purposes, such as moral enlightenment or improvement” (351).

Critics using argument of cognitive triviality question any real “contributions to knowledge” (354) as far as moral knowledge in artworks is concerned. In contrast to the way ethical critics see art as “comparable to science” (354) “the skeptic maintains that the putative cognitive accomplishments of art are paltry, especially when compared to science” (354).

The third argument against moral and ethical criticism – anticonsequentialism asks, “how does the ethical critic know that the works in question will have the behavioral consequences that are imputed to them?” (Carroll 355). This argument is fueled also by the lack of empirical evidence for the hypotheses concerning the relation between media and social behavior.

I admit that there are cases when the ethical criticism is not that suitable, on the other hand, I am not treating the aspects of the Frankenstein myth from a stance of rigid radical moralism, which, in fact, claims the only aesthetic value is the moral one, but rather of a moderate moralism.

3. The Frankenstein Myth: The Origin

The Frankenstein myth did not come to be in a vacuum but is set in a larger historical and cultural context. Although nowadays it is the Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* that is being referred back to as the source of the Frankenstein myth, it owes much to various myths, legends and archetypes. The Frankenstein myth follows some of the older myths and traditions and challenges some of them. All of these influences are often interconnected, they relate to each other, influence each other and some of them stem out of the others.

To see the position the Frankenstein myth holds in relation to the cultural and historical traditions, it is necessary to trace these traditions and analyze their impact on the Frankenstein myth. In light of the findings, the definition of the Frankenstein myth and its function in the science fiction films and TV series as well as in the popular culture can be better understood. In the same way one can see the causes of the misinterpretation of the novel and the myth.

Susan Taylor Hitchcock's *Frankenstein: A Cultural History* is a comprehensive piece of writing that covers the Frankenstein myth from its origins until its possible social and scientific implications in today's world. Hitchcock introduces the myth by saying that it "emerged at a turning point in Western history, when the moral universe was shifting and when some dared to believe that advances in scientific knowledge promised humans dominion over that which for centuries had been God's alone" (4).

3.1.The creation myths

Divinity as the creator of life is one of the notions *Frankenstein* challenges. The myths of creation tell a story of how life was created, therefore how people were created. The creator or creators of life are in most cases gods or divine beings. For the Frankenstein

myth two creation myths are relevant. One being a Judeo-Christian myth of creation and the other a creation myth from the Greek mythology. In the Judeo-Christian tradition God or Yahweh creates the first people and gives them life. In the Greek tradition we are provided with several versions of the creation myth through the writings of Hesiod, Plato and Aeschylus. The essential idea is that the titan, Prometheus, along with his brother, Epimetheus, create people out of mud or clay.[4]

The significance of the creation myths for the Frankenstein myth is established through Victor Frankenstein's act of creation of the being and, secondarily, also through the symbolism of both myths in *Frankenstein.* The figure of Prometheus is present in the title of the novel, while Adam comes to the story through Milton's *Paradise Lost*, because it is one of the books the Frankenstein's being reads and identifies with.

The Judeo-Christian myth of creation can be traced in the Frankenstein myth through the Golem stories, while, at the same time, there is a connection between the Golem legend and the ancient Greek creation myth, for the Golems are created from mud or clay in the same way people are created by Prometheus. The story of Golem goes back to "the Zohar, a thirteenth-century revision of Genesis" in which Adam was born as Golem (Wilson, "Moviegoing and Golem-making" 32), but the "Golem legends of the Middle Ages and Renaissance were based on tales of rabbis of the third and fourth centuries who brought clay to life" (32). The Judeo-Christian creation myth manifests itself in the creation of Golem in the divinity of the creating power. Despite the fact that the creators of Golem are rabbis, therefore humans, the creating power comes to them through the sacred scripts. The *Book of Creation* states, "If God can create a universe from scripts, then a man in concord with God can use sacred letters to fashion an organism" (32). The most famous Golem story is probably that of Rabbi Loew from the

[4] For more information see, for example, Beall's "Hesiod's Prometheus and Development in Myth" and Raggio's "The Myth of Prometheus: Its Survival and Metamorphoses up to the Eighteenth Century".

16th century Prague, who created Golem to protect Jews of the ghetto. There are many versions of the tale though. In one the Golem grows in size and starts to threaten Loew and so Loew decides to destroy him (33). In a different version the Golem serves on the weekdays but always rests on Sabbath. One Friday Loew forgets to put Golem to sleep, and there is danger the Golem could threaten the people on Sabbath, and so Loew destroys him (Blau, Jacobs, and Eisenstein).

3.2.Crossing a Boundary

Both Judeo-Christian and the Greek creation myths are in their own sense interconnected with the archetype of crossing a boundary or crossing a threshold. The archetype of crossing a boundary has been omnipresent in the Western culture for thousands of years and goes back to the moment of the Judeo-Christian creation of life. God creates Adam and later Eve and banishes them from the Garden of Eden when they cross the boundary and disobey him. In the Greek tradition, Prometheus, although himself a divinity and a creator of mankind, is punished when he tackles the boundary between gods and people. He crosses the boundary by bringing the people the "fire, the taste of the forbidden fruit" (Hitchcock 53). In one of the versions of the myth the fire does not have only the literal meaning but also a symbolic one, it is a "fire of reason and wisdom from which all aspects of human civilization are derived" (Raggio 45). In this understanding of the myth Prometheus crosses the boundary by the act of creating a human being itself and is punished for it.

As far as humans do not affect the process of creation and the creative power stays divine, everything is alright. That is why the creators of Golems are not punished for their transgression as they are only the intermediaries of the power of divinity. In this context, as Hitchcock claims, the moral order is supplied by the deities and the humans are dictated

to live within boundaries. Those who live within these boundaries are rewarded, while those who cross them are punished (5).

The archetype of crossing of boundary, and its interpretation I am mentioning above, goes hand in hand with the archetype of a mad scientist. In *The Moral Character of Mad Scientists: A Cultural Critique of Science* the anthropologist Christopher P. Toumey, who deals with the transition of the mad scientist archetype from literature to films, provides a fitting description of the mad scientist archetype stating that, "The mad scientist stories of fiction and film are exercises in antirationalism, particularly its Gothic horror variant. As such, they convey the argument that rationalist secular science is dangerous, and their principal device for doing so is to invest the evil of science in the personality of the scientist" (411).

In our understanding of the world one might consider Prometheus a scientist because, according to the myth, he created humans, and it is hardly possible today to create life without science. In the same way, in the Judeo-Christian mythology, God may be considered a scientist as well. Although both do not fit the description of the typical mad scientists of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, there are several features in these two characters that are one's own to the archetype. As far as the mad scientist archetype is concerned, Toumey presents three categories of features of personality in terms of morality. The intention – the motivation of the scientists; remorse, reflection and responsibility – that is the way the scientists consequently view their creation and how they behave towards them; and level of maturity – that is how experienced the scientist is (419). It seems Prometheus is quite a positive example of a scientist and probably would not be numbered among the mad scientists since he genuinely cares about his creation – about people – and suffers for them when he brings fire to them. Judeo-Christian God, on the other hand, is very irresponsible in his responsibility for people. His motivation is

unclear, and he does not know what to expect from his creation otherwise he could expect that Adam and Eve would cross the boundary, and so he would not have to repudiate them for it.

Despite the fact the mad scientist archetype can be traced to the ancient times and there is a connection between the mad scientist archetype and the creation myths, the typical mad scientist is starting to appear as late as middle-ages with the tales and legends of magicians and alchemists. In the 13th century *Le Roman de Silence* the famous magician Merlin is described as a wild man from birth, a savage, with extreme behavior and mental instability (Stock).

Although the character of Faust or Faustus has its own cultural history, he is viewed as one of the most famous representatives of the mad scientist archetype. The 16th century reformation tract called *The Historie of the damnable life, and deserved death of Doctor John Faustus* is based on the popular stories about the life of Johann Georg Faust, alleged magician and alchemist. In this tract Faustus is portrayed from a start as a condemned person, a villain, and the author of the tract emphasizes how dangerous crossing a boundary and acquiring forbidden knowledge can be (Ziolkowski 51).[5]

The connection of Frankenstein to the mad scientists is achieved through the liaison with the past representatives of the archetype in the names of alchemists Frankenstein is influenced by, for example, Cornelius Agrippa, Albertus Magnus or Paracelsus (Shelley 26). Although the mad scientist archetype evidently existed before *Frankenstein*, the story boosted up the role of the archetype in popular culture. Patrick Brantlinger, well-known for his work in cultural studies, illustrates this in his essay *The Gothic Origins of Science Fiction*, as he says, "Victor Frankenstein himself, the progenitor not only of his monster but also of a long line of mad scientists, through

[5] The archetype is well known in its later form in Marlowe's play *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* and in Goethe's *Faust.*

Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Wells's Dr. Moreau down to the Dr. Strangeloves of the present" (32).

The archetype of the mad scientist obviously fuels the outlook that crossing a boundary is a dangerous matter deserving to be punished. The Frankenstein myth is being associated with this particular tradition of looking at the archetype of crossing a boundary, as Frankenstein replaces God as a creator in the act of creation. According to the myth in its today's form, Frankenstein is punished for this crossing of a boundary by consequent actions of the being he creates. M. A. Goldberg, who deals with moral and myth in *Frankenstein*, summarizes, in his view, the message of the Shelley's novel and the Frankenstein myth in these words,

> What is glory for the omnipotent deity of Genesis or the Babylonian god Bel, for the Egyptian father-of-gods Khnoumou or the Australian creator Pund-jel, is for lesser gods, like Frankenstein, the "modern Prometheus," a crime. The apple of knowledge bears within it the acrid seeds of punishment. As with Satan and Beilzebub, this passion to usurp divine prerogatives casts the new creator into a burning cauldron of his own making. (30)

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, these views clearly originate in the myth of creation and are in one way or another connected to Christianity, and therefore it is only logical that crossing of boundary is punished. Such views at the archetype are only a part of the story though. The other part, frequently conveniently neglected throughout the Western history, is where those who cross boundaries are rewarded. As I am trying to argue in this thesis, this is the way Shelley originally presents the Frankenstein myth.

In Joseph Campbell's monomyth the hero is rewarded and celebrated for crossing the threshold and acquiring knowledge (28). *Frankenstein* and Frankenstein myth is

viewed from this perspective for instance by Erinç Özdemir, who claims in the comprehensive paper on *Frankenstein* called *Frankenstein: Self, Body, Creation and Monstrosity*, that the novel "offers a tribute to boundless human ambition that is necessarily a direct challenge to God, or to the idea of God" (129) and therefore celebrates the human effort to cross the boundaries and to discover new possibilities.

George Levine in *The Pattern: Frankenstein and Austen to Conrad* comments on the Frankenstein's endeavor saying that "despite [Frankenstein's] moral inability to cope with the result of his technical power, Victor's search to discover the secrets of life and death in matter is emphatically presented as heroic in the novel" (qtd. in Özdemir 129). Therefore "the image of Frankenstein in his laboratory is […] one of a heroic dream, and the novel's insistence, even through Walton and the Monster, on Victor's heroic nature, implies that the creation without God, without woman, need not be taken as an unequivocal evil" (Levine). In other words, Victor is "both hero and villain, applauded for his courage and genius at the same time that he is punished for his pride and transgression" (Hitchcock 5).

The two views at the nature of the boundary crossing archetype are "essentially human – and essentially contradictory […] and represent two very different world views with different assumptions about […] the nature and purpose of human existence, and thus future of humankind. On the axis formed by these two contradictory myths hang the culture wars of history and of the present day" (Hitchcock 5).

Shelley's novel and the inception of the Frankenstein myth was important exactly because it offered an alternative to the view that everyone who crosses a boundary must be punished and because it clearly followed the opposite tradition. With this in mind, the fact that the main feature of representations of the myth in the popular culture today is that the any transgression is evil is not doing Shelley's novel justice.

4. *Frankenstein*: The Elements of the Frankenstein Myth

There are three main areas that form the structure of the Frankenstein myth. They relate to each other, determine each other, and the Frankenstein myth would not be the Frankenstein myth if it lacked any of the three elements. The first area is concerned with the act of creation itself. A human creator creates an intelligent being. This is important, because the creator is no more a divinity but a mortal human, and the creation is not a simple living organism, such as fungi, but an intelligent being. The second element is rather creator-oriented, as it covers the character and morality of the creator, the responsibility to the being and the creator's behavior to the created being. The last element focuses on the fact that the being eventually turns against their creator. The novel, however, contrary to its later interpretations, clearly states that if the creator treats the being properly, then the being does not have a reason to turn against him.

4.1.The Creation of an Intelligent Being

At the beginning of the creative process Frankenstein claims that he "began the creation of a human being" (Shelley 40). The dictionaries provide us with various definitions of "human being" or of "human" from simpler and more limited ones such as a human being defined as, "a member of any of the races of *Homo sapiens*; person; man, woman, or child" ("human being." *Collinsdictionary.com.*) or human defined as, "of or typical of people" ("human." *Dictionary.cambridge.org*), "relating to people" and "relating to a person's body" ("human." *Macmillandictionary.com.*), through broader but also more challenging definitions, for example, human as, "having good or bad qualities that people usually have", "having human form or attributes" ("human." *Merriam-Webster.com.*), "showing normal human feelings and behavior, especially showing that you can be weak" ("human." *Macmillandictionary.com.*) to definitions such as a human

being as, “distinguished from other animals by superior mental development, power of articulate speech, and upright stance” (“human being.” *Oxforddictionaries.com.*). The definitions tell us about how people view what being human entails and how they categorize this fact. Evidently, body and overall appearance, human feelings and character and a superior mental development are, in general, the most important players in defining what being human means.

4.1.1. **The Appearance**

It is probably fair to say, that the appearance of the being Frankenstein gives life to does not correspond to the common idea of what a human being looks like. The being is a composite of various human parts, and so it is hard to establish if the appearance of the being is human or not. The being does not share ancestry with other humans per se but, at the same time, he does through the human body parts. On the other hand, he is the first being created by humans, and therefore he is not born the same way the people are. It is a hard case to settle and due to its fictional framework, the question is whether it can be settled at all.

In *Frankenstein* the attention of readers is drawn to the issue of appearance from the first moment Frankenstein and the being appear in the novel. First, Walton watches in a distance “a being which had the shape of a man, but apparently of gigantic stature” (Shelley 11) and moments later, when Frankenstein is taken aboard the ship, Walton contrasts Frankenstein with the being saying “he was not, as the other traveller seemed to be, a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island, but an European” (12). Although Frankenstein is in a terrible physical state and Walton sees the being only from a great distance, he already makes a clear difference between who is civilized and who is a savage.

When Frankenstein returns in narration to the time of his study at Ingolstadt University, he says that he started to think about what he should devote his creative attention to. Before getting to the actual act of creation, it takes him a long time to establish what he wants to achieve and how he should do it. He says, "One of the phenomena which had peculiarly attracted my attention was the structure of the human frame, and, indeed, any animal endued with life" (Shelley 37). At this moment Frankenstein starts to focus on the human frame, the human body, and so it is apparent he is planning to create a human like himself. He proves his intention by claiming that,

> I hesitated a long time concerning the manner in which I should employ it. Although I possessed the capacity of bestowing animation, yet to prepare a frame for the reception of it, with all its intricacies of fibres, muscles, and veins, still remained a work of inconceivable difficulty and labour. I doubted at first whether I should attempt the creation of a being like myself, or one of simpler organization; but my imagination was too much exalted by my first success to permit me to doubt of my ability to give life to an animal as complex and wonderful as man. (Shelley 39)

In this frame of mind Frankenstein begins his labors.

On the other hand, he realizes that it is a too difficult a task to assemble the pieces for the creation of a regular sized human being, as the pieces are too minute, therefore he decides "contrary to my first intention, to make the being of a gigantic stature, that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionably large" (Shelley 40). A question arises, whether, at this point, Frankenstein still sees his potential creation as a human being or someone or something else. It is not clear from the novel how exactly he identifies the being he is about to create, however, a few lines later one might get an answer for that, as Victor says, "A new species would bless me as its creator and source" (Shelley 40). Yet,

he might not be talking only about this particular being, because he mentions beings in plural: "many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs" (40). Is Victor's exalted imagination at play here or is he talking only about several specimen of the same species he is trying to create at that moment?

It seems that as far as the frame is concerned Frankenstein looks for the parts in graves, and so it is evident he collects human parts. Moments before the creation, Victor describes the being as beautiful saying "his limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful" only to exclaim directly after that,

> 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 colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips (Shelley 43)

adding that "breathless horror and disgust filled my heart" (43). Although Victor is the creator of the being and he is the one who assembled the being, he condemns the being even before the being is alive based on his appearance.

When the being is born, Victor, terrified, comments on the being with the words that he "beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear" (Shelley 44) and that "no mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when

those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived" (44). It looks like Frankenstein is so obsessed with the appearance of the being that he cannot prevent himself from mentioning it in every description of him in the novel. When they meet, near Mont Blanc, for the first time since the night the being was created, Frankenstein says about the being that, "its unearthly ugliness rendered it almost too horrible for human eyes" (83).

Jasia Reichardt, an art critic and a writer, who in her writing often deals with the connection between robotics and life, argues in the essay *Artificial Life and the Myth of Frankenstein* that, "Victor's inability to tolerate extreme ugliness may seem an insignificant human inadequacy, and yet it is the key to everything that follows" (137). I agree with the idea that the way Frankenstein perceives the appearance of the being is crucial for the further development of the story and of the myth, and that is why I focus on the issue of appearance in detail here, but I do not think that one can view Victor's disgust over the appearance of the being as "an insignificant human inadequacy". Frankenstein is the being's creator and he was supposed to prepare for the result, especially considering the fact he is the one who defined how the being would look like. For a person in his position it is hardly tolerable. I also cannot come to an agreement with the statement that Victor turned away from his creation because "he was disgusted by the result of his inadequate workmanship" (137). I mentioned how surprised Frankenstein seems to be when he says that he chose the parts of the being as beautiful, but the outcome is not beautiful at all, however, I believe the real reason is related to the way people usually treat beings that are different from them. Frankenstein is simply disgusted by the appearance of the being and, at the same time, he is terrified of him.

It is not, however, only Frankenstein who expresses the disgust over the being. After a long stay in a forest, sleeping on a ground and eating whatever comes to his way,

the being sees a hut, decides that he would like to rest there, and so he rushes to the cabin. He enters the cabin and finds a man sitting near the fire. The moment the man sees the being he runs away and does not return that day nor the next one. Later, the young De Lacey, whose family the being secretly observes and learns from them, says to one of the villagers after an incident with the being that, "my wife and my sister will never recover their horror" from seeing the being (Shelley 120), and to say never is quite a strong statement. In addition, when William Frankenstein, the first victim of the being, sights the being, he covers his eyes and cries, "Monster! Ugly wretch! You wish to eat me, and tear me to pieces. […] Hideous monster!" (124). William has a clear idea of the nature of the being, although he does not know him and has never seen him before. The being himself, after his experiences with people, is aware of his ugliness and the people's prejudice that "clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster" (116).

Reichardt describes the process of how a monster is created in the eyes of people, saying that, "The essential condition for a monster is that the human characteristics it possesses must not be changed too far" (139) thus, "the result will evoke fear and disgust" (139). Frankenstein's being is different exactly because of these reasons; his body is too large but there is not enough skin to cover it all, his skin is unnaturally yellow, his lips have unnatural color and his eyes are too watery. Still, is it so difficult to see him as a human being despite all that? If a person is in any way disabled, badly burned, has a skin disease, their height does not conform to "normal" and so on and so forth, do not the people look differently at that person? It does not make those persons any less human though, despite the fact they may be scorned by some part of the society.

4.1.2. **The Consciousness and the Character**

The being in *Frankenstein* is obviously conscious and, as I am demonstrating here, to trace human feelings and emotions in *Frankenstein* is not a difficult task at all. One frequently encounters situations that show the being as more humane than humans themselves. The concept of conscience is a little bit more complicated though. We sometimes hear someone saying about someone else that they have no conscience or that they lack conscience. This is usually not meant in literal meaning as in sociopaths and murderers, but it shows us that people use these phrases to condemn someone for doing something morally wrong.

Elizabeth, Frankenstein's wife-to-be, does not believe that Justine, accused of killing Frankenstein's brother, killed Frankenstein's brother William. She expresses her view on a person who would be capable of doing such a terrible thing, saying that, "I could not consent to the death of any human being; but certainly I should have thought such a creature unfit to remain in the society of men" (Shelley 77), thus she clearly excludes a person from the society of humans because of their lack of conscience. Convicts serving life-sentence or prisoners convicted for felony are, in a sense, excluded from society. Does this mean that those who lack conscience do not deserve to be called humans, at least in social sense?

As far as feelings and emotions are concerned, the being in *Frankenstein*, when recounting his story, talks about some positives of his life, but mostly he describes how unhappy and lonely he has felt during his whole journey. He calls himself "wretched" and "miserable beyond all living things" (Shelley 85, 83). He asks Frankenstein, "Have I not suffered enough, that you seek to increase my misery?" (83). He blames Frankenstein for his misery saying that it was him who drove him "from joy for no misdeed" (84). When

he finds out about the human relations he is sad he has never had the opportunity to enjoy the proximity of people.

> But where were my friends and relations? No father had watched my infant days, no mother had blessed me with smiles and caresses; or if they had, all my past life was now a blot, a blind vacancy in which I distinguished nothing. From my earliest remembrance I had been as I then was in height and proportion. I had never yet seen a being resembling me, or who claimed any intercourse with me. What was I? (Shelley 104)

When the being talks about his hardships after he left Frankenstein's apartment on the day he was born, he describes how confused he was, unable to speak at that time, but he also expresses a wish to be able "to express my sensations in my own mode, but the uncouth and inarticulate sounds which broke from me frightened me into silence again." Being terrified by the world, he, at one point, finds a small hut to rest and says that he "lay down happy to have found a shelter" (Shelley 87, 90).

One of the situations where the being expresses his emotions most strongly is when he stays near the cottage of the De Lacey family. It is also one of the moments when we can see the manifestation of the being's conscience. Although it may not look like it as the story unfolds and more and more people drop dead by the being's hand, he proves on several occasions that he does not lack conscience.

The being observes the life of the De Lacey family in the cottage every day and out of his ability of empathy he starts to live through their problems and toils. He likes them from the first day when he sees how affectionately they behave towards each other. He says that he "felt sensations of a peculiar and overpowering nature: they were a mixture of pain and pleasure, such as I had never before experienced, either from hunger or cold, warmth or food; and I withdrew from the window, unable to bear these emotions"

(Shelley 92). He also mentions that the "benevolent countenance of the aged cottager won my reverence, while the gentle manners of the girl enticed my love" (92). Furthermore, he says that, "when they were unhappy, I felt depressed; when they rejoiced, I sympathized in their joys" (96). The being is moved by the way the cottagers behave, for example when, "for several times they placed food before the old man when they reserved none for themselves" (94), and this is also the moment when the being shows his character, because he stops taking their food supplies for his own consumption the moment he finds out they themselves do not have enough. He rather lives on berries and other plants he finds in the woods although, due to his size, it is doubtful whether it is enough for him. In order to help the cottagers, the being also starts to gather wood for their fireplace and secretly help around the house when the inhabitants are not at home or do not see him.

The being repeatedly describes how he yearns for the love of the cottagers and, in general, of any other human being. Love seems to be a crucial part of the human ability to feel and just as in people's lives, it is very significant in *Frankenstein*. The Frankenstein's being orders Frankenstein to create a woman for him, so he can have someone to love and someone who can love him back. The aspect of physical love is present as well, and Frankenstein is well aware of that, although he fears it and tries to deny it. If he did not intend to involve the aspect of sexuality, he would not create a male being that is capable of procreation. The being feels envy of other people that have someone in their lives, while he has no one. All of these feelings and emotions are as human's own as they can be.

The moment the being is rejected by the De Laceys his composition changes and he resigns on the effort of ever being happy. The moment of rejection is also one of the strongest outbursts of emotions of the being in the whole novel. Disowned, rejected and

full of anger the being rambles through a forest and declares "everlasting war against the [human] species, and more than all, against him who had formed me and sent me forth to this insupportable misery" (Shelley 118). Despite this outburst, the being is capable of self-reflection later on and when he cools off, he wants to approach the De Laceys again not knowing they are already gone. This is another blow for the being. He comes to a point where "for the first time the feelings of revenge and hatred filled my bosom, and I did not strive to control them" (120) and in "a rage of anger [I] turned my fury towards inanimate objects" (120).

One can hardly be surprised about the fact the being loses all his hopes for being ever loved and I believe most of people would have similar feelings. Still, later on, he again acts on his conscience and empathy for (fellow) humans when he saves a little girl from drowning. He does something many people would not do, as they would fear for their own life. Although the being enjoys feelings of kindness for a few moments, he is shot afterwards by a guardian of the girl and this is literally a final blow for the being. He exclaims, "This was then the reward of my benevolence!" (Shelley 123) and then vows "eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind" (123). The comparison between the humaneness of the being and of the people is brought to the readers' attention by the being, who criticizes the society by saying that,

> I learned that the possessions most esteemed by your fellow-creatures were, high and unsullied descent united with riches. A man might be respected with only one of these advantages; but, without either, he was considered, except in very rare instances, as a vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste his powers for the profits of the chosen few! And 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. (Shelley 103)

Yet, when he meets his creator for the first time since his birth, he would lose his anger and a sense of revenge if Frankenstein accepted him.

4.1.3. **The Superior Mental Development and the Ability to Learn**

As far as the ability to learn is concerned, the Frankenstein's being proves his skills when he meets Frankenstein for the first time and talks to him in eloquent sentences. This is also later proved when Walton, the narrator of the novel, describes his meeting with the being after Frankenstein is dead. Walton says he "was at first touched by the expressions of [the being's] misery" (Shelley 199), but then remembers what Frankenstein said about the deceitful "powers of eloquence and persuasion" (199) of the being.

The being reveals in his story that he was able to learn to talk and read in quite a short time. He was also able to walk from the moment he was created, which is not a normal thing in people at all. Further, he comes to understand the function of fire on his own and he knows what to eat and drink. It is interesting that when he arrives to the cottage of De Laceys he grabs a bread there to have something to eat, although he does not know what it tastes like and whether it is edible in the first place. He takes a cup as well, to, in his words, "drink more conveniently than from my hand" (Shelley 91). This means that either he saw someone drink from a cup, therefore he learned the function of it by imitation, it is hard to imagine where he would see that though, or it presupposes that, as with other things, he comes to grasp the function of it and learns to use it very quickly on his own.

He learns to speak by observing others and, in general, he does not lack motivation in his efforts. He also learns to read, using, among other materials, the books he finds in a bag in a forest, and later he learns to write too. Approximately two years pass between

the moment the being is created and his meeting with Frankenstein, which means that in less than two years the being is able to learn a lot about humans, learn how to behave like a human (with its darker side as well) and therefore, in theory, live life as another of the human species.

4.1.4. **The Superiority over Humans**

Although my aim here is to show how alike the being and humans are, the aspect of superiority makes the being different from humans. When Frankenstein sees the being for the first time since he left him in his apartment, the first thing that catches his eye are the superior features of the being. Frankenstein says how the being was "advancing towards me with superhuman speed. He bounded over the crevices in the ice, among which I had walked with caution; his stature, also, as he approached, seemed to exceed that of man" (Shelley 82).

The Frankenstein's being comments on his body as well, saying that he is more agile than humans, "could subsist upon coarser diet; I bore the extremes of heat and cold with less injury to my frame; my stature far exceeded theirs. When I looked around I saw and heard of none like me" (Shelley 103). He says to Frankenstein that, "Remember, thou hast made me more powerful than thyself; my height is superior to thine, my joints more supple" (84).

As it was mentioned before, the being is superior in his learning process, is born with at least minimal knowledge, which still exceeds that of any human. The Frankenstein's being also manifests that except his human emotions he is also, up to a point, a highly reasonable being. This can be seen, for example, when he meets his creator for the first time. While Frankenstein is furious because of the murder of his brother and cannot be talked to, the being, despite having his own problems, tries to reason with him.

The problem with the rationality of the being lies, however, in the fact that he is created by a human and so the burden of humanity is at least partly handed over to him by his creator, who can probably never strip the process of creation of negative aspects of humanity.

4.2.The Relationship of the Creator to the Creation

There are two sides in the creating process. The side of the created being and the side of the creator. While the previous chapter is mostly devoted to the being, this chapter covers more the side of the creator and his relationship and behavior to the being. From the nature of his role, the creator should be the one who initiates the contact in this relationship, but unfortunately he fails to do so. The relationship is very problematic and, as I mentioned earlier, it represents the core of problems of both the creator and the created being. To fully understand why the creator behaves the way he does to the created being one needs to look into his character. The character and moral principles of the creator, quite logically, form all the decisions he makes and impact therefore his motivation for creating the being or the manner in which he decides to do that.

4.2.1. **The Character of the Creator**

4.2.1.1.**The Character and Morality**

Despite the fact Frankenstein seems to be portrayed in a heroic way the more we are immersed in the novel the more we realize how many character flaws he has. While Frankenstein "ardently desired the acquisition of knowledge" (Shelley 31) he ignored other areas of study and life, including the moral aspects of life. He admits this by contrasting himself with Clerval, saying that he focused only on the natural sciences,

whereas “Clerval occupied himself, so to speak, with the moral relations of things. The busy stage of life, the virtues of heroes, and the actions of men were his theme; and his hope and his dream was to become one among those whose names are recorded in story as the gallant and adventurous benefactors of our species” (24).

It is interesting that Frankenstein is so hypocritical that he is not willing to assume responsibility over the being and take care of him even though he himself states exactly how he should behave towards the being by describing his childhood:

> My mother's tender caresses, and my father's smile of benevolent pleasure while regarding me, are my first recollections. I was their plaything and their idol, and something better – their child, the innocent and helpless creature bestowed on them by Heaven, whom to bring up to good, and whose future lot it was in their hands to direct to happiness or misery, according as they fulfilled their duties towards me. With this deep consciousness of what they owed towards the being to which they had given life, added to the active spirit of tenderness that animated both, it may be imagined that while during every hour of my infant life I received a lesson of patience, of charity, and of self-control, I was so guided by a silken cord, that all seemed but one train of enjoyment to me. (Shelley 20)

While Frankenstein repeatedly announces how strong foundations he has in his family and how he loves his family, Elizabeth and Clerval, he never visits them nor write to them during the long two years of his effort to create the being. Harriet Hustis in “Responsible Creativity and the ‘modernity’ of Mary Shelley's Prometheus” documents this, saying that the “narrative consistently extols the pleasures and sanctity of familial duty, even as it narrates the systematic, if inadvertent, destruction of both his family and

friends: those who pay dearly for Frankenstein's actions are ironically those he claims to hold most dear" (849).

Frankenstein's character flaws are observable in other situations as well. For instance, when he is inactive during the trial with Justine, wrongfully accused of murdering Frankenstein's brother. He constantly expresses how he "suffered living torture" (Shelley 66) during the trial and he states that, "A thousand times rather would I have confessed myself guilty of the crime ascribed to Justine" (66) but despite how miserable, in his own words, he feels the only thing he does to help Justine is that he talks to the magistrate.

Frankenstein, in the manner of a true romantic hero, "sharing the impious and agonized qualities that exerted such fascination on the Romantics" (Hustis 845), issues on several occasions strong statements as far as what he would do, but eventually it almost always stays only with the words. It is comical when Frankenstein repeatedly declares that he would fight the being, that, "a deadly struggle would then assuredly take place, in which if he were victorious I should be at peace and his power over me be at an end. If he were vanquished, I should be a free man" (Shelley 168) as if he did not realize his own previous words about the physical superiority of the being. It sounds especially absurd considering the fact Frankenstein ran away from the being in horror when he first saw him alive, only because of what the being looked like.

Frankenstein is not willing to sacrifice himself and, although he feels miserable, he also wants to live his life at peace. It takes four murders for Frankenstein to realize he will not be able to do that, but even after that he does not stop in involving other people in his quest. He, therefore, continues in putting other people in danger, for example, when he asks Walton to "swear to me, Walton, that he shall not escape, that you will seek him

and satisfy my vengeance in his death. […] if the ministers of vengeance should conduct him to you, swear that he shall not live" (Shelley 188).

4.2.1.2.**The Motivation**

In the first place, Frankenstein is motivated by the pursuit of knowledge, need to explore new horizons and discover something that no one has discovered before. When he begins to take interest in creating life he states that, "with how many things are we upon the brink of becoming acquainted, if cowardice or carelessness did not restrain our inquiries" (Shelley 37). The hunger for knowledge is on its own quite a positive motivation, as Shelley shows in the novel, but, one cannot explore without taking into account other aspects of such a task and that is what Frankenstein does not do.

Another motivation for Frankenstein is, without doubts, fame and recognition by academics and by society. Likewise, he probably wants to be worshiped by his potential creations and craves recognition from them, as he says that, "many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me" (Shelley 40). Frankenstein wants to be the one who will be respected and admired for his uniqueness. "So much has been done", exclaims Frankenstein "more, far more, will I achieve: treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation" (34). While he is not interested in wealth he says that, "what glory would attend the discovery if I could banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death!" (27).

The last strong motivation lies in the fact that Frankenstein is thinking about the possibility of bringing people from the dead. He thinks "that if I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might in process of time (although I now found it impossible) renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption" (Shelley 40). Here,

Frankenstein might be implying he could revive his dead mother whom he loved dearly. Despite this possible motivation, he eventually does not try to revive his mother, his brother or Elizabeth.

4.2.2. **The Source of Knowledge and the Scientific Methods**

What also influences the behavior of the creator towards the created is the source of his knowledge and the way of his scientific research. As far as his scientific approach is concerned, Frankenstein relies on the obsolete knowledge of alchemists from whom he understands that science is "a goal or product-oriented activity rather than process-oriented activity" (Rauch 234). Frankenstein "oversizes the 'minuteness of the parts' in an attempt to make the reality of his endeavor match the grandeur of his intentions. This willingness to sacrifice creative precision for 'speed' suggests that the creation of life is of purely theoretical interest to Frankenstein: he thus conceives of life with blatant disregard for its ('filthy,' 'hideous') specifics" (Hustis 848).

As Rauch claims in "The Monstrous Body of Knowledge in Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein'", Frankenstein ignores "the slow and step-wise process of science, of arranging facts in 'connected classifications,'" (234), because this process is not attractive for Frankenstein. I am bewildered by Reichardt claiming that there is a "contradiction between [Victor's] rationally planned adventure and his irrational behaviour" (137). I have no objection towards the fact that Victor's behavior is truly irrational, but, at the same time, I believe Frankenstein's plan to create a being is very, very far from a "rationally planned adventure" and from the way a scientist should plan their experiment.

> The creation of life is thus, for Frankenstein, a purely intellectual challenge that is completely disconnected from the academic and the social worlds in which he exists. Nowhere in the process of creating the monster does he

> reflect on the potential value of each new scientific innovation that results in the creature. Yet to the scientific community, any one of the techniques that could result in the creation of a fully formed version of a human being, would surely have been a scientific triumph. (Rauch 236)

Instead of going step by step and thinking through consequences of his actions, Frankenstein carelessly, out of his ambition and pride, creates a being whom he knows nothing about and would not be potentially able to control, and before even getting to know his creation he flees from it.

Frankenstein works on his project alone and does not involve anyone, does not take advice from anyone and does not share his advances, even though he might get help and understanding. "As a result, what had appeared initially as a benevolent intention becomes in the final analysis misguided pride, a selfish pursuit aimed at self-glory, because it evades the fulfillment of higher duties toward the social community" (Goldberg 33).

In terms of Campbell's monomyth Frankenstein does not go through all the phases of the hero cycle because he does not share his knowledge with society. "The return and reintegration with society […] is indispensable […] from the standpoint of the community, [and] is the justification of the long retreat" (Campbell 34). Since this does not take place Frankenstein cannot be, from this perspective, viewed as a heroic character. "On the other hand, if the hero, instead of submitting to all of the initiatory tests, has […] simply darted to his goal (by violence, quick device, or luck) […], then the powers that he has unbalanced may react so sharply that he will be blasted from within and without" (34).

Although Frankenstein states at the beginning of his quest for the creation of life that he might be consequently able to revive dead organisms, he never tries to do that

even when his close-ones start to die. All in all, Frankenstein does not use his knowledge for a meaningful purpose but rather, as I have mentioned earlier, he is trying to achieve a goal without thinking about its usefulness. He himself claims that he could not "consider the magnitude and complexity of my plan as any argument of its impracticability" (Shelley 40). In this, as Rauch argues, Frankenstein neglects "his responsibility as a scientist, is oblivious to what seems obvious and humane to us and […] is clearly unable to see how the application of that knowledge can be used in a way that is proper and judicious as well as humane and rational" (243).

I agree with Rauch on the fact that "there is no doubt that [Frankenstein] possesses a remarkable amount of knowledge" (228) and that "Frankenstein's knowledge has no precedent; new and ambiguous, it represents both threat and promise to an uninformed public" (228), however, it is hard to see Rauch's point in stating that "from a technical perspective at least, [Frankenstein] is enormously skillful" (228). Frankenstein probably has knowledge that exceeds others in his area of study otherwise he would not be able to create life, nevertheless he is not skillful very much. Why would he create a being he cannot look at, a being with whose appearance he is not satisfied? He does not do a very good job as far as the frame of the creature is concerned.

4.2.3. **The Responsibility of the Creator to the Being**

As was noted before, the responsibility of the creator to the being he creates form the core of the Frankenstein myth. In *Frankenstein* the focus on the responsibility of the creator is crucial as it defines the whole course of action of the story. Never in the story does Frankenstein behave to the being the way a creator, or a parent, should.

Rauch asserts that "for Shelley, the moral integrity of the scientist has everything to do with the viability of knowledge. By ignoring the humane qualities that clearly make

knowledge effective, particularly nurturing and caring, Frankenstein finds nothing admirable in what should be a remarkable creation" (228). Hustis confirms this by saying that Shelley focuses in the novel "on the issues of paternal negligence and the need for responsible creativity" and on "an offspring's need for sustained guidance, influence, pity, and support from its creator" (845), and that Shelley questions "the extent to which [Frankenstein] incurs an obligation for the well-being and happiness of that creation by virtue of the creative act itself" (846).

In connection to the creation myth Hustis makes an interesting comparison between Prometheus' and Frankenstein's responsibility, in which Prometheus' behavior "manifests itself not only in a solitary gesture of defiant compassion, but also in the willing assumption of a creator's responsibility for his helpless progeny: he subsequently nurtures human community by instructing Zeus's abandoned creatures in the arts necessary for their survival, long-term happiness, and cultural evolution as a species" (847) and that Prometheus "dares to pity an abandoned creation (the human race) at great personal cost" (853), while Frankenstein "flees his creation in 'breathless horror and disgust,' apparently because it does not overtly embody the sublimity of his creative intentions" (847). Frankenstein "fails to exercise such moral responsibility for the single life he creates because he regards creativity as an abstraction" (853).

Frankenstein's relationship to the creation act itself is just as irresponsible as his behavior to the being. This is not only issue of Frankenstein's source of knowledge and his scientific method but rather of his responsibility to the task. Frankenstein admits that he was not prepared for the creation of the being, that he did not have enough experience and did not spend enough time on the preparation. He says that, "The materials at present within my command hardly appeared adequate to so arduous an undertaking […] my operations might be incessantly baffled, and at last my work be imperfect" (Shelley 39)

and he sums it up in the words that, “It was with these feelings that I began the creation of a human being” (40). Frankenstein is “Unwilling to acknowledge the ‘magnitude and complexity’ of his task and thereby practice responsible creativity” (Hustis 848).

When Frankenstein sets out to create a female partner for the being he again admits that he was ignorant of the dispositions of the first being he created as he is ignorant of the dispositions of the female being he is about to create. In connection with the female being Frankenstein says to Walton, “I was bewildered, […] perplexed and unable to arrange my ideas sufficiently to understand the full extent of his proposition” (Shelley 126). “Frankenstein feigns astonishment at the monster's desire for a female companion. […] Yet, clearly the proposition was as much a part of Frankenstein's original agenda, as it now seems to be part of the monster’s. Frankenstein would have Walton believe that the idea of a female is completely new, when a female creature was fully anticipated at the very beginning of his work” (Rauch 230).

Frankenstein does not realize the importance of responsibility. He regrets his actions later in the story, repents and is aware of the fact that he made a mistake, but he does not think the mistake had to do with the lack of responsibility for his creation, that the fault may be in him, but that it rather has to do with him trying to pursue forbidden knowledge, with him crossing a boundary. Despite being a man of reason and science he seeks the root of the evil in his life in a destiny and he “transfers responsibility for the disasters he helps to propagate onto poetic abstractions such as ‘Chance’ or an ‘Angel of Destruction’ (Hustis 849).

When narrating his story to Walton, Frankenstein returns in his memory to the act of creation and regrets it. He regrets the effort of seeking knowledge every time he does that. Among other things he, for example, claims that “I had gazed upon the fortifications and impediments that seemed to keep human beings from entering the citadel of nature,

and rashly and ignorantly I had repined" (Shelley 27). He starts expressing these thoughts the moment he gets to know that Walton is also trying to achieve something beyond boundaries. Frankenstein is terrified by Walton's goal of reaching the North Pole. He exclaims, "Unhappy man! Do you share my madness? Have you drunk also of the intoxicating draught? Hear me; let me reveal my tale, and you will dash the cup from your lips!" (15).

He warns Walton saying, for example, "Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow" (Shelley 39) or saying that, "You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been" (17). During the trial with Justine, the wrongfully accused of Frankenstein's brother murder, Frankenstein once again blames his curiosity instead of his negligence for "the death of two of my fellow beings" (66).

To the end of the novel, when reading Elizabeth's letter, Frankenstein exclaims, "Sweet and beloved Elizabeth! I read and reread her letter, and some softened feelings stole into my heart and dared to whisper paradisiacal dreams of love and joy; but the apple was already eaten" (Shelley 169) again focusing on the forbidden knowledge and contrary to his scientific nature alluding to the myth of creation. His last words are in similar vein when he says, "Farewell, Walton! Seek happiness in tranquillity and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries" (196).

4.3.The Creation Turns against the Creator and/or Society

The last element of the Frankenstein myth, the result of the issues dealt with in this thesis, is the fact that the created being turns against the creator or turns against humanity in general. As far as *Frankenstein* is concerned, it is apparent that from some point in the story the being truly hates Frankenstein and he intends to hurt him in the same way he, himself, has been hurt. The being tries to deal with the hatred of his creator and the lack of any form of relationship from his side, and until some point, the being still gives credit to Frankenstein and tries to reason with him and make amends with him. Frankenstein, who should be the initiator of the relationship, stays, however, invincible in his conviction which leads the being to torment him.

5. The Science Fiction Films and Television Series: A Brief Summary

The oldest film chosen for this thesis is *Edward Scissorhands* released in 1990. The film was directed by Tim Burton and stars Johnny Depp as Edward, Vincent Price as Edward's creator, Dianne West as the woman who takes Edward to live with her family, and Winona Ryder as her daughter, Kim.

Edward comes into the world in a gothic castle on a hill towering over a small satellite town, by the hand of his creator, played by Price. For some reason Edward is left with scissor hands instead of human hands, despite the fact the rest of his body is very human-like; and although the creator plans to give Edward proper hands, he does not manage to do that before he dies. Edward is left alone in the castle until one day Avon saleswoman, Peg, stops by the castle to offer her products, finds Edward there and takes him home, to the satellite town, with her. Edward instantly falls in love with her daughter, Kim. The people of the town are at first excited about the presence of exotic Edward, but Kim's boyfriend starts to take advantage of Edward, manipulating him into a burglary and Edward is quickly denounced by the society. In the end, he kills Kim's boyfriend in self-defense and is forced to, once again, take shelter in the gothic castle where he was born.

The television series *Battlestar Galactica* from 2003 is partly a remake of an eponymous 1978 TV series but became more successful than the original. First a miniseries was produced and then a legitimate TV series followed. *Battlestar Galactica* tells a story of the only remaining human battleship and its staff. Many years before the story takes place humans create a robotic race, an artificial intelligence, called Cylons and use them as a slave labor. At some point Cylons revolt, and a war between humans and Cylons breaks out, finally ending in armistice. After forty calm years Cylons attack

humans by stealing their defense codes and all the human planets are effectively destroyed leaving only thousands of survivors.

The reason why Cylons are able to get access to the defence codes is because some of them look like humans, therefore they are able to infiltrate human society. In this case it is Number Six, a Cylon who looks like an attractive human woman, who seduces one of the scientists responsible for the codes. These Cylons later also infiltrate some of the civilian ships that survived, as well as Battlestar Galactica. Interestingly, sometimes the Cylons themselves do not know they are Cylons and even when they find out, they decide to act against other Cylons. This is the case of Lt. Boomer aboard Battlestar Galactica. The series stars among others Edward James Olmos as admiral Adama, a commander of the Battlestar Galactica, and Mary McDonnell as the president Roslin.

The four remaining films and TV series are very recent as they were all released in 2015. In Alex Garland's *Ex Machina*, Caleb, played by Domhnall Gleeson, wins a week with his employer, the extravagant owner of Blue Book web search engine, Nathan, played by Oscar Isaac. Caleb flies to Nathan's house, which is situated in the middle of nowhere, and quickly finds out that he was, in fact, chosen to test the artificial intelligence called Ava, that Nathan created. Nothing is as it seems, Caleb is manipulated both by Nathan and Ava, played by Alicia Vikander, and in the end he is left locked in a room in Nathan's house while Nathan is killed, and Ava escapes her confinement.

Chappie is a story of an ambitious scientist, Deon (Dev Patel), who programs an artificial intelligence and wants to test it out. He does not meet with understanding at the robot company he works for, and so he decides to give life to Chappie (Sharlto Copley) on his own. Unfortunately, he is abducted by a couple of gangsters who want to use Chappie for their own purposes. Chappie is torn between his creator and his 'parents' – the gangsters. Finally, Vincent (Hugh Jackman), who despise Chappie, kills one of the

gangsters and Chappie must look for ways to revive her. Similarly, Deon is wounded, but with help of Chappie his conscience is transferred to a robotic body.

Vice, commercially[6] and critically[7] least successful movie in my selection but starring Bruce Willis and Thomas Jane, is about the city of Vice, where everyone can come enjoy themselves if they have enough money. The city of Vice becomes a virtual reality where anyone can do anything including killing, because the city's personnel are all androids. These androids are reset every day therefore they do not remember any of the atrocities people do to them.

Kelly, the main character, starts having flashbacks of memories and when she realizes what is happening in the city, she decides to escape. In the end, she manages to 'wake up' all the remaining androids, who then get their revenge on the people.

The story of the second TV series in my selection, *Humans*, a remake of Swedish TV series Äkta människor, takes place in a parallel universe where almost every family has a robot, a synth, as a help, and the synths can be seen doing various other jobs in the streets, in shops and so on. There is, however, a group of synths, led by Leo Elster, a cyborg, who are not just ordinary synths but can feel and all in all are like humans. These synths were created by David Elster, Leo's father, same as the other synths, but these were given artificial intelligence. The group consists of Niska, who does not like people, Anita, who, at first, is reprogrammed, Fred, and Max. Apart from them there is also Karen, a synth that was made on the image of Elster's late wife. Because of what the society might do if they find out about artificial intelligence, the group is being chased by government.

[6] The film went straight to DVD, for more information see "Vice (2015)." *The Numbers.*
[7] For example, only 4% on the tomatometer. See "Vice (2015)." *Rotten Tomatoes.*

6. The Science Fiction Films and Television Series: The Elements of the Frankenstein Myth

The division of the Frankenstein myth into three areas stays the same as in the novel, although the creator can sometimes be identified not only with a specific person but also with humankind in general, because the creator as an individual loses their function.

6.1.The Creation of an Intelligent Being

In the discussion in science fiction films and TV series about creating intelligent beings one encounters very early on the term android. The word android comes from Greek and means "man-like", in other words, similar to humans ("android"). Android can be further defined as a "synthetic human being" (Wilson, *The Melancholy Android* 27), synthetic meaning something "artificial" or "formed through a chemical process by human agency" ("synthetic"). The definition of 'android' people are most familiar with nowadays because of literature and films is provided by *The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction*, where an android is defined as "an artificial being that resembles a human in form, especially one made from flesh-like material" (Prucher 6).

Androids in the selected films and TV series are beings that are strong artificial intelligence, which means they are conscious and thinking beings, as opposed to weak artificial intelligence, which is a machine that carries out certain tasks but does not know why it does that and is not able to think about that (Armstrong).

Still, all of the above mentioned definitions work with a concept of being similar to humans, being, according to the anthropologist Morton Klass, "manufactured equivalents of humans" (172), being as human-like, "alien" (172) and "not truly human" (172). This brings us then to the contrast in the fact that these aliens may be "considered

both nonhuman – say, non-marriageable – and yet very human – sexually quite desirable" (172). At what moment then can someone start to be considered a human being? Is it possible for an android to be considered equal to human being? Where is the boundary between what is human and what is not?

Humans can be classified only by humans and only in light of what human beings the society is familiar with. One does not have to go very far to the past to find out that even people who the society was familiar with were not recognized as humans and were seen as inferior to white people. If nowadays people were to discover somewhere in the world a different type of being, they would try to classify it and they might find out that the being shares a lot of features with the rest of humanity and thus may be classified as a human. The question would be whether they can be truly humans if their origin cannot be traced back to the common ancestor with humans.

In the past the white superiority would probably prevail and any other being would be classified as inferior. Today, it is hard to guess, but I believe that even if the newly discovered being failed the criterion of a common ancestry, and so the being could not be classified as a human being genetically it would not have to mean that the being could not be considered a human being on the social level. Especially, if the being would be similar in appearance to humans and would show the human characteristics. In such a case the definition of being human would just have to be adapted to the new circumstances.

When considering ethical aspect of personhood, Marco Buzzoni claims that, "the precautionary principle urges us to include among human persons the greatest possible number of doubtful cases" (31). He also suggests that,

> If some day we were able to build artificial life systems that took part in our conversations and cooperated with us on common projects, we would

> very probably be morally obliged to treat them as human persons […]. Differences in colour, genetic inheritance, in the fact of being made of flesh and blood or screws and bolts could hardly legitimize different decisions as to whether or not to treat these beings as human persons. This is the reason why some people are treated as persons in spite of the fact that they would be unable to pass the Turing Test even in some of its more restricted versions. (31)

Plenty of questions arise in connection with the definitions of 'human', 'android' or 'robot', and most of these questions have been addressed by the literature of science fiction. Many of them, however, stay unanswered and probably will stay that way for some time; on the other hand, it is imperative to study these concepts, think about whether they truly make sense or are just a projection of our fears and so we can possibly reevaluate them.

6.1.1. **The Appearance**

Appearance and, more importantly, the way people view the appearance of other beings presents a key element in the Frankenstein myth. It is without doubt that the trend in the Western culture of nowadays is to evaluate things in the world according to the way they look and according to what impression they give. The impression and appearance, however, may be confusing and deceitful, and that is also the idea present in the Shelley's novel. People are often suspicious of things or other people that look different than the set 'standard'. This suspicion, fear of unknown or unsightly plays an immense role in the connection with the Frankenstein's being and with the androids in the science fiction films and TV series.

In the films and TV series the issue of appearance has an almost identical role as in *Frankenstein.* In some cases the androids have a slight similarity to humans in their frame but can hardly be confused with a human being as far as appearance is concerned. This is the case of Chappie in the eponymous film. Then there are androids who may look human or partly human, but there is something odd about them or they do not behave "normally" in human eyes. This is true for Edward in *Edward Scissorhands* or Ava in *Ex Machina*. In the three remaining films and TV series in this thesis the idea is that androids and humans are impossible to tell apart.

Sometimes the fact that the characters are androids is clear from the beginning of the story and sometimes it is revealed later. The synths from the *Humans* TV series are all identical to people, but their behavior is limited. On the other hand, those that possess conscience easily blend with the crowd. Karen is able to act so human she works as a police officer, and no one suspects anything. Still, the synths do not have internal organs or organic parts. A little girl from a family that is hiding the synths points out that the synths are never sad because they do not cry. Niska, one of the synths, responds that they cannot cry ("Episode #1.7" *Humans.*), meaning that it is physically impossible for the synths to cry.

Due to the appearance, *Ex Machina* is in the reviews often linked to the story of Frankenstein.[8] Ava's body does not look like that of a human woman, but the moment she puts on clothes and wig it is not hard to think about her as a human woman. More so, when, at the end of the film, she exchanges some of her body parts for those that resemble human body parts.

In other films, however, the similarity to humans in androids is taken as far as that they are equipped with various organic parts, internal organs, organic skin and so forth.

[8] See, for instance, Lodge and Aftab.

In the 2004 TV series *Battlestar Galactica* everything appears to be human about Cylon body; they have, for example, internal organs or lymphatic system. In *Vice* an engineer explains that the "flesh, skin and most of the internal organs" of the androids are real, made from genetically engineered tissue (*Vice*), talking about Kelly, as that there is "more of her living than not" (*Vice*).

In essence, the Frankenstein's being and androids share the way their frame is structured. The being's body is formed by various human parts, while some of these parts had to be undoubtedly adjusted in order to create a larger body. Androids are also made of various parts put together. The being's body is a composite of organic parts and androids are also often partly created out of organic parts. Although it might seem that in comparison with the being from *Frankenstein* people are much more comfortable with androids who look like them, or at least who are very similar to them, it is not always so.

Even in the real world some people might feel uncomfortable around robots. Reichardt mentions professor Masahiro Mori who made a study "of the response of human beings to artificial dummies and machines" (139) and created a graph of these responses. "At the positive extreme is total familiarity, and at the other extreme is strangeness. The example he gives of 100 per cent familiarity is a normal, healthy human. The same normal healthy human in a condition of total stillness is already at the beginning of what Mori calls the 'uncanny valley'" (139). At the bottom of the valley are zombies while the moving humanoid robots are somewhere in the middle (140).

There is a certain stigma of being android present in the films and TV series and the situations that have to do with uncanny valley are often associated with that. In *Ex Machina*, Kyoko reveals to Caleb that she is an android by peeling a part of her skin off her face. Since the viewers do not expect this mismatch between the way she looks and who she, in fact, is it might make them uncomfortable. The human would look almost

identical after peeling off their skin though. On the other hand, it is understandable that people view androids who look like people as strange because they know the androids are of a different origin. A self-aware android with an artificial intelligence would probably also feel strange looking at people who look like him despite the fact they are not exactly the same.

Still, the question is whether androids could ever be viewed by people as equal to them if they did not look like them and did not possess their characteristics, whether negative or positive. I am prone to agree, however, with Frederic Kaplan, who, in his essay on perception of humanoid androids, states that, the "Western man defines himself as an advanced machine plus some mysterious human specificity. He does not want to consider himself as a machine but he has no other way to understand himself than by building machines" (476). He further talks about the analogies between the human body and machines saying that, "The history of medicine can be interpreted along with the history of technical processes. To understand how the heart beats, the invention of the pump was a crucial step. […] Without this invention, the movement of this muscle would have remained totally mysterious" (477).[9]

In all of the films and TV series in this thesis the androids are excluded from the society to the same degree as the Frankenstein's being is, at least partly because of their appearance. Either people are disgusted by the androids, fear them, or mock them because of their crude machine-like appearance or because the androids are too similar to people and represent something unknown and strange.

When Ninja takes Chappie to the "real world" (*Chappie*) to toughen him up and leaves him with some teenagers, they start throwing stones at Chappie, hit him with pipes and throwing Molotov cocktails at him. Chappie manages to escape only to be captured

[9] For further examples of the connection between medicine and machines see Kaplan.

by Vincent, who needs a chip from Chappie but also wants to destroy him simply because of his nature. Vincent manages to cut off Chappie's arm before Chappie escapes again. Edward in *Edward Scissorhands* is ostracized towards the end of the film, when, in a scene resembling the scene with torch wielding villagers in Whale's *Frankenstein*, a mob of townspeople march to Edward's castle. In *Vice* some of the people who come to the city to enjoy themselves use this opportunity to show their superiority to the androids, to humiliate them and to hurt them. In *Humans* Laura, an owner of one of the androids, feels very nervous about the fact the androids look like people. There are also so called 'smash clubs' in *Humans* where people pay to hit the synths so they can express how they feel about them.

6.1.2. **The Consciousness and the Character**

The films and TV series in this thesis encourage us to identify with the android characters in them, to think about them in the same way as we think about us, and to help us do that they show the human emotions and conscience. Humans, however, like their uniqueness and that is why thinking about any other being as equal to us is uncomfortable. "New machines can potentially force us to redefine ourselves, challenging what was thought to be our specificity, we are sometimes afraid of them. Science fiction novels describe armies of robots taking over the earth but in fact what we really fear is that they make us change our view of ourselves" (Kaplan 478). When we realize that we evaluate the world around us according to our own criteria making it the only truth that counts it would be interesting then, for example, to discover one day "that we are artifacts and that our every utterance was anticipated by our superintelligent creators" therefore, to find out we are not conscious (Putnam 680). In the science fiction films and TV series in this thesis

we also come across situations where androids seem to be more human than humans themselves.

The problem that emerges and is often debated in the films and TV series as well as outside of them is whether a machine can truly feel or just expresses what it has been programmed to do. Some say that people also express emotions that they are programmed to know and emotions they associate with certain situations. Laura in *Humans*, asks herself at one point, when thinking about the synths, whether people love their kids because they choose to or because they have to. Jung claims that,

> It is […] a great mistake to suppose that the psyche of a new-born child is a tabula rasa in the sense there is absolutely nothing in it. In so far as the child is born with a differentiated brain that is predetermined by heredity and therefore individualized, it meets sensory stimuli coming from outside not with any aptitudes, but with specific ones, and this necessarily results in a particular, individual choice and pattern of apperception. (66)

There is a consensus in the research that emotions are genetically programmed in us, which means people come to the world programmed in a similar manner as the androids in the films (Plotnik and Kouyomdijan 364). According to a professor of neuroscience, Antonio Damasio, "we are wired to respond with an emotion, in preorganized fashion, when certain features of stimuli in the world or in our bodies are perceived [and] in order to cause a body response, one does not even need to recognize the bear, or snake, or eagle, as such, or know what, precisely, is causing pain" (131). Another issue is that not always people express their emotions honestly; we do not always reveal how we really feel. Does that mean that androids should be able to do that as well, to be closer to humans?

As far as feelings are concerned, people express pain when they are hurt but so can androids if they are equipped with sensors. People express fear when they are scared of something, but the object of fear differs and so does intensity. Some fears might be in us to survive life-threatening situations, some are acquired ("Fear"), which means that it is not an easily delineated issue and it is an issue that varies in people. This is also true for androids.

Same as with *Frankenstein*, we must, at some moment, come into contact with the concept of love. Daniel Mendelsohn, in his study of *Ex Machina* and Spike Jonze's *Her*, talks about the tendencies in science fiction films and says that, "[Spielberg's] *A.I.* did much to sentimentalize the genre" (Mendelsohn) and he also traces the tendency that can be seen in the films, claiming that, "the capacity to love, even more than the ability to think, is the hallmark of 'human' identity" (Mendelsohn).

Ava in *Ex Machina* "inspires very human feelings: lust, adoration, empathy" (Lincoln) and "In both Ex Machina and Humans, characters feel romantically toward these humanlike robots, and even want to have sex with them" (Lincoln). To make the beings even more human the creators in the films and TV series provide the beings with sexuality although the beings might do fine without it if they were not meant to be as close to human as possible. Nathan tells Caleb, "you bet she can fuck […] She has a cavity between her legs, with a concentration of sensors. Engage with them in the right way, and she'll get a pleasure response" (*Ex Machina*). In *Humans*, Joe, the father of the family, has sex with Anita and even though he apparently feels awkward about it he finds Anita attractive. Niska, is forced to work as a prostitute and has also some negative memories of this kind of her creator. In *Vice* providing pleasure by the androids to the human 'customers' is the main goal of the city. The Cylons in *Battlestar Galactica* show both

that they can love and that they are sexual. Edward Scissorhands falls in love with a girl during the first few moments he comes into contact with society.

Furthermore, the androids demonstrate a variety of emotions, just as the Frankenstein's being does. Chappie is eager to help at any moment, to please his 'foster parents' but only to such a degree not to hurt anyone. As the director of the film, Neil Blomkamp, said in one of the interviews, Chappie "wants the affection of his parents, but he's split between two sets of parents. He's a robot that's more human than the human beings are" (Lee). Chappie's 'parents', both criminals, want him to steal cars and hurt people but think up ways how to interpret these actions to Chappie so it complies with his conscience. At the very end, Chappie is angry because Vincent kills one of Chappie's 'parents'. Chappie fights him and when Vincent lies beaten on a floor Chappie forgives him. It would be quite hard to imagine a human hero doing the same.

In addition, fear plays an important role in Chappie's life. First, when he is created, he is scared, like a child, of everything and everyone. Later, he does not understand why people hurt him and at one point he says, "Chappie has fears, Chappie doesn't want fears" (*Chappie*). Since he has almost a dead battery he is also scared of dying, he is confused why he should die so soon. He says, "I want to live" (*Chappie*). He deeply cares about others; he is sad when he sees a dead dog and he tries to caress him. When the character of Mommy is shot and dies he tries his best to revive her using the backup of her consciousness.

The most of Cylons in *Battlestar Galactica* are not driven by love but by hate to mankind. The fact that the Cylons have emotions and conscience can be observed, for example, in how Number Six behaves towards her lover, a human, Gaius. They are intimate with each other and although she uses him for her own aims, she still cares about him after it. When the human's planets are being destroyed by Cylons she protects Gaius

from the blast with her own body. She is also quite sensitive about being called a machine by Gaius when she reveals her true identity to him and with serious face she contradicts him saying "I'm a woman" ("Episode #1.1" *Battlestar Galactica*). Before the blast, she goes through a city and comes across a baby in a carriage. She holds it and then cracks its neck. It can hardly be seen as only a malice if the entire humanity is going to be destroyed anyway, and so it rather resembles an act of conscience in a form of coup de grâce. Lt. Boomer also expresses emotions, has a relationship with a human man and, all in all, is unrecognizable from humans.

In Vice city the androids are reset every day and live their lives in a loop. The androids "look and act like humans", "have real emotions" and "believe they're as human as humans" (*Vice*). Kelly has true feelings for her friend, with whom they promise each other every morning they will get out of the city. At first, Edward in *Edward Scissorhands* enjoys the company of people in the town. He falls in love with a human girl, but the moment the people start getting advantage of him and he has to face the consequences of his actions he becomes bitter. The fact that it is the people who are the cause of the change in his behavior is demonstrated, for instance, when the girl asks him why he went into a house to steal and he answers, "because you wanted me to" (*Edward Scissorhands*).

In the first couple of episodes of *Humans* the artificially intelligent androids show mainly the positive aspects of human emotions in the form of love and affection. For example, in one situation, before a meeting with some shady characters, Leo tells Max to act like a simple synth without artificial intelligence, no matter what. The guys start to beat Leo and Max cannot help himself, gets out of his role and hits the guys back. On another occasion, Anita steps in front of a truck in order to save a boy. When the focus is on Niska, however, a darker side of androids comes into light. As I mentioned above, Niska is forced to work in a sex club and since the men that go there do whatever they

want to her she cannot take it any longer and at some point she kills one of her customers. When one realizes what she must go through since she has a customer every few minutes and she can feel all of what is happening to her it is not so different from how a human might react. And even in such an escalated situation Niska's conscience is talking when she says to the receptionist at the sex club that, "Everything your men do to us, they want to do to you" ("Episode #1.2" *Humans.*). On a different occasion in one of the smash clubs Niska starts hitting people instead of the synths that do not have the true artificial intelligence and gives blows of mercy to the synths damaged beyond repair saying "I'm sorry" ("Episode #1.4" *Humans.*).

Since there is quite a bit of manipulation involved in *Ex Machina* the variety of emotions is quite diverse. The question is whether Ava manipulates Caleb from the beginning or whether there is a specific point from which she starts to do that. Even if her feelings about Caleb are fake, her urge to become free is still exceptionally strong. Ava is apparently interested in Caleb from the moment she sees him, because except Nathan she has no one else to talk to. She dresses up for Caleb, starts talking about going on a date with him or even asks Caleb "Are you attracted to me?" (*Ex Machina*). And he is. At one point Caleb describes to Ava how great the world outside is and she only sadly remarks she has never been outside the room she is locked in. Ava is also scared of what happens to her if she fails the test. The following conversation asks a question that if Ava is a strong artificial intelligence and therefore equals or surpasses humans why she has no rights.

Ava: "What will happen to me if I fail your test?"

Caleb: "Ava –"

Ava: "Will it be bad?"

Caleb: "I don't know."

Ava: "Do you think I might be switched off? Because if I don't function as well as I'm supposed to?"

Caleb: "Ava, I don't know, it's not up to me."

Ava: "Why is it up to anyone? Do you have people who test you and might switch you off?"

Caleb: "No, I don't."

Ava: "Then why do I?" (*Ex Machina*)

Maybe this is the point Ava starts to truly plot her way out. There are cameras in her room and Caleb can watch the video from them. Ava knows he watches them and she uses them to seduce Caleb by taking her clothes off for him to see. She openly flirts with him and tells him that, "sometimes at night I'm wondering if you're watching me on the cameras. And I hope you are" (*Ex Machina*). Ava later says to Caleb, "I wanna be with you. Do you want to be with me?" (*Ex Machina*). In this context the following conversation between Nathan and Caleb is quite revealing,

Caleb: "My real question is whether you gave her sexuality as a diversion, like a magician with a hot stage assistant. Did you program her to flirt with me?"

Nathan: "If I did, would that be cheating?"

Caleb: "Wouldn't it?"

Nathan: "I programmed her to be heterosexual, just as you are programmed to be heterosexual."

Caleb: "Nobody programmed me to be straight."

Nathan: "Of course you're programmed, you think you chose to be straight? You're programmed, either by nurture or nature or both." (*Ex Machina*)

In the end, when Nathan reveals to Caleb that he was manipulating him as well, because he wanted to find out if Ava can seduce him to free herself, he says that, "to escape she would have to use self-awareness, imagination, manipulation, sexuality, empathy, and she did" (*Ex Machina*). Ava really manages to escape in the end, she has Nathan killed and leaves Caleb locked in one of the rooms. One may doubt the extent of Ava's conscience when she orchestrates killing Nathan in cold blood, but, on the other hand, for her it is the only way out. I do not justify the act of killing at all, but I see it as a method of survival for her. She is equipped with a strong AI, can feel, have emotions and empathy, but Nathan does not recognize her for that and she is, in fact, being kept as a prisoner.

6.1.3. **The Superior Mental Development and the Ability to Learn**

The learning abilities and the mental possibilities of androids in the films and TV series are very similar to those of the being from *Frankenstein.* In the films and TV series I have chosen, all of the androids are strong artificial intelligence which allows the androids to equal the humans or surpass them as far as intelligence is concerned. Their ability to learn and seek knowledge cannot be matched by humans. Frequently, same as the Frankenstein's being, the androids are born with at least basic knowledge, but usually they are given quite advanced knowledge; it only depends on how they are programmed. Even if they have only basic knowledge their learning process surpasses that of humans.

Cylon androids in *Battlestar Galactica* are fully equipped and prepared for their goals. They are programmed for a certain role and no time is wasted on training them if they can be equipped with the skills right from the beginning. They are, however, able to learn other skills if necessary. Kelly in *Vice* also seems to be a "prepared product" for the city of Vice, nevertheless she shows her ability to learn and to conform to new impulses

throughout the film. One of the characters say about her that "she's evolving, she's changing with each new experience" (*Vice*). She has a creative mind and is capable of creating something completely new. This can be seen in the scene when she draws a picture without a template. In *Humans* we do not exactly know what kind of knowledge the synths with true artificial intelligence had when they were created, but they have the ability to download a huge amount of data about the world in a real time and absorb this knowledge. Niska, one of the synths, says that they are shaped by experiences just like people are ("Episode #1.6" *Humans.*) and the synths are also forced to learn social roles so they can fit in.

Ex Machina's Ava, when asked "When did you learn to speak?" responds, "I always knew" (*Ex Machina*). In the same way she knows how to walk, communicate or draw. In her case, the largest piece of learning takes place on the level of emotions, where at the end of the film she is able to manipulate Caleb probably with more ease than any common human being. Edward Scissorhands is taught by his creator basics of etiquette and of poetry from books that look ancient and since it is only theoretical, the contribution is questionable. Edward also learns a lot in the area of social contact. He knows how to speak but does not talk much. His only significant knowledge is that of cutting wedges, but it is clear he can use his hands quite effectively and for various applications. He can, for example, pick locks which he proves during the night burglary.

In *Chappie* we have a chance to observe the learning process of the android from the very beginning. Deon, Chappie's creator, says that Chappie is "like a child in the beginning, like a human baby but smarter, his AI is capable of learning much faster than any organic intelligence" (*Chappie*). Chappie is able to talk in the first few minutes after being created and consequently he is able to take in much more in just a few days. He learns to speak and read, although not from books of classics like the Frankenstein's being

does but from gangsters and TV, which is why he acquires such contrastive skills as shooting and painting.

6.1.4. **The Superiority over Humans**

In the end, one realizes that instead of looking for what makes the androids in the Frankenstein myth human one should rather be looking for what could make humans more like androids.

All of the androids are in one way or another (or in all of them) superior to human beings. The only exception that might apply is beauty, but beauty is relative. "Our images of human beauty are often weird amalgamations of plastic surgery and biological development. If one falls in love with such a vexed physical surface, how is one to know if one yearns for the organ or the mechanism? […] At stake is not only the oldest question in the book — what is existence? — but also the most pressing existential concern: who am I?" (Wilson, *The Melancholy Android* 6). Even if we generalize and come up with some criteria of beauty, still the esthetic point of view is subjective and that of humans not of androids.

From the perspective of the physical body, of the frame of an android, one can see, quite logically, what are the advantages of being created out of replaceable and more durable body parts. The androids can also exert greater strength than humans can and possibly are able to upgrade themselves. In addition, androids can hardly be down with human diseases; on the other hand, the threat of robotic diseases is quite real already today.

As I mentioned before, androids are superior in their learning process, they are born with at least some minimal knowledge, which still exceeds any human, and often they have knowledge that some humans never acquire in their whole lives. We also

observe the easiness with which the androids familiarize themselves with new information, just as the being from *Frankenstein* is able to do. Niska in *Humans* says that, "We're more intelligent, we're stronger, of course you see us as a threat" ("Episode #1.5" Humans).

In spite of having human-like conscience, emotions and feelings androids are also very logically thinking beings therefore they may be more reasonable than humans and may be more prone to logical arguments. Even if we stay with the idea of establishing how human the beings in the Frankenstein myth are we still get to see how the beings are often much more emphatic and humane than humans.

6.2.The Relationship of the Creator to the Creation

The dynamics of the relationship of Frankenstein to the being is reflected in the films and TV series and is identical or very similar. As in *Frankenstein*, this chapter goes through the factors that influence the behavior of the creator and show potential reason of why the responsibility from his side is so lacking.

6.2.1. **The Character of the Creator**

6.2.1.1.**The Character and Morality**

Due to its nature, film does not always provide us with detailed description of characters, therefore we sometimes must be able to do with hints and indications. I do not have enough information on character of some of the creators, but their flaws come out in the connection with their responsibilities to their creations. This is the case of *Edward Scissorhands* and *Chappie.* In *Battlestar Galactica* there is no particular creator as the

creator is identified with the humanity as a whole. In this sense the negatives of humanity are projected into the creator.

We know who created Kelly in *Vice*, however, she was taken away from her creator and he was, in effect, removed from the project. The rest of the androids were created in the company owned by Julian Michaels, who thus takes over the role of the creator with its specifics. The participants in the dynamics are, however, also the employees of Michaels and the society in general, or at least the people who visit the city of Vice and who treat the androids as inferior, disposable beings without the ability to feel.

There is not that much information on David Elster, the inventor of synths in *Humans*, but it is possible to draw conclusions based on what the synths say about him. He shares the irresponsibility to the creations with Frankenstein and he also does not seem to be a role model creator as far as his character is concerned. His wife suffers from some sort of mental disease and one day she drives a car with her son in it to a lake. Elster is not able to save her, but he saves his son by making him a part human, part synth. Although he saves his son because he loves him he, at the same time, creates a very difficult position for him in the society. We also get to know more about Elster through Niska when she says that "he didn't always treat me like [a child]" ("Episode #1.6" *Humans.*) implying he sexually abused her.

Ava's creator in *Ex Machina*, Nathan, is without doubts egocentric and although Frankenstein may not be seen as egocentric on surface, it is clear from his actions that he is himself very much egocentric as well. Nathan is very sure of himself and thinks of himself as always in control. We get a full view at Nathan's ego in his conversation with Caleb,

Nathan: “You know, I wrote down that other line you came up with. The one about how if I've invented a machine with consciousness, I'm not a man, I'm a God.”

Caleb: “I don't think that's exactly what I...”

Nathan: “I just thought, ‘Fuck, man, that is so good.’ When we get to tell the story, you know? I turned to Caleb and he looked up at me and he said, ‘You're not a man, you're a God.’”

Caleb: “Yeah, but I didn't say that.” (*Ex Machina*)

Except that Nathan does not mind manipulating Caleb and using him for his own aims. He also mentions that during creating the artificial intelligence he hacked into self-phones of people all around the planet, which is not very moral thing to do.

6.2.1.2.**Motivation**

Although there is no reason today for creating a being by putting together various parts of people and trying to revive them and the attention is therefore taken by the robots, the motivation of the scientists in the films and TV series remain in many respects the same as those of Frankenstein.

The pursuit of knowledge is shared by all the creators in all of the films in this thesis as well as in many of the films outside it and represents a universal motivation of human science. Glory and recognition are often tied with the pursuit of knowledge and might be seen as the secondary motivating factor for the effort of creation, but in the films I chose it is not very important way of motivation except in *Ex Machina* and perhaps in *Chappie.* Deon, the inventor of Chappie requires recognition from Chappie just on the foundation of him being his creator. He says to Chappie, “You should respect me, I’m your maker!” (*Chappie*). It is not surprising that Nathan with his ego wants to dominate

yet another sphere of technologies (his company controls more than ninety percent of internet searching) and that he seeks fame and recognition that can boost up his ego some more. Nathan sees the creation of artificial intelligence as a chance he has, as something he can do and so he does it.

> Caleb: "Why did you make Ava?"
>
> Nathan: "That's an odd question. Wouldn't you if you could?"
>
> Nathan: "The arrival of strong artificial intelligence has been inevitable for decades. The variable was 'when' not 'if'. So I don't see Ava as a decision, just an evolution." (*Ex Machina*)

Although Nathan gives impression of a self-confident person we catch a glimpse of a frankenstanian remorse when he gets drunk. In connection with his regrets he quotes Oppenheimer and thus draws a parallel between creation of a strong artificial intelligence and the invention of atomic bomb. Whether it has to do with the "evolution" Nathan is talking about, with the creation process itself, with the relationship of the androids with him or all together we do not know for sure.

Mendelsohn finds in some of the films another motivation for creating artificial being. He remarks that, "Why does the creator create? To be loved" (Mendelsohn). The reason why the creator of Edward creates him might also be that he wants to be loved and to have a companion. David Elster in *Humans* creates Anita to take care of his son, Leo, to love him. Mendelsohn further points out the fact that Nathan in *Ex Machina* creates only female androids, one of which he uses as a sexbot and the "discarded earlier models […] have the names of porn stars. Jasmine, Jade, Amber" (Mendelsohn) and so Mendelsohn paraphrases himself saying, "Why does the creator create? Because he's horny" (Mendelsohn).

The effort to use the androids to recreate people or bring back the dead, as in *Frankenstein*, is relevant, for example, in *Humans* where David Elster first revives his son, making him effectively a cyborg and later creates and android who looks like his dead wife. The same thing happens in *Vice*, where the true creator of Kelly, models her based on his dead wife.

6.2.2. **The Source of Knowledge and the Scientific Methods**

As Frankenstein, Julian Michaels, the owner of Vice, is also a very goal or product-oriented. When innocent people die during the hunt for Kelly, Michaels sees it as a collateral damage because he does not care about consequences as long as his project is alive. Similarly, Deon in *Chappie* favors speed over precision when he decides to give life to Chappie only a few days after he invents the strong artificial intelligence and puts Chappie into a body which cannot accommodate him for more than five days.

In *Ex Machina* the isolation of the scientist and his unwillingness to share his progress with community is taken to a whole new level as Nathan lives and works at a place in the middle of nowhere and one has to take a two-hour flight in helicopter to get there. He enjoys the company of two androids and no human can be seen around. When Deon in *Chappie* shares his idea for strong artificial intelligence with the boss of the company he works for she refuses the idea, and so Deon decides to work on the project alone. In order to test the artificial intelligence, he steals a robotic body and a control key and wants to test the AI secretly. Similarly, David Elster in *Humans*, works alone in a country house and does not share his achievements with anyone.

Elster creates synths that have a broad use in the society, but, at the same time, he decides to create synths with artificial intelligence without thinking about the impractibility of them. The creator of Edward Scissorhands also does not pay much

attention to the practical use of his invention, especially considering the fact that Edward has knives and scissors instead of his hands therefore he can hardly assimilate in human society. We might also ask why he gives Edward a human face but does not provide him with human hands. Is it only because he wants to have an efficient gardener who is nice to look at? We get a glimpse of drawings of evolution of Edward's body, where the final product seems to look like any other human being. In this sense scissorhands are a very peculiar part of human body as far as evolution is concerned.

6.2.3. **The Responsibility of the Creator to the Being**

Not always does the behavior of the creator to the created being manifests itself in the form of escape and non-existent relationship between the two as in the case of Frankenstein, but even if the creator is present he does not behave in a very responsible way to their creations. Due to the fact the creator usually does not share his progress in creating a being with society he is partly responsible for the rejection of the being by society as well. If the society is not ready for the being and the creator does not help in this respect the treatment of the being by society is hardly surprising.

David Elster in *Humans*, similarly to Frankenstein, does not behave the way he should towards the androids once they are conscious. Once he is finished with one android he moves onto another and once the project is no longer new he moves to another one. One of the androids, Fred, says that Elster rarely taught them anything and that he constantly underestimated them ("Episode #1.6" *Humans.*). As I mentioned before, Niska is being sexually abused by Elster. Elster creates artificially intelligent synths and by this he creates a problematic, gray area. Eventually he drives his son and all the androids out of his house and kills himself leaving them thus alone in the world which is not ready to accept them. All in all, Elster does not behave to the synths like to thinking and feeling

beings despite the fact he knows they are. This is a common feature in most of the films and TV series in this thesis and outside of it. Professor Millican, one of the colleagues of Elster's, says that he asked Elster to stop and think about consequences of creating conscious androids, but that did not make a difference and Elster created the conscious synths anyway ("Episode #1.5" *Humans.*) even though he was not prepared sufficiently and so was not the society.

Julian Michaels and other employees of the city of Vice are aware of the fact that the androids there have artificial intelligence and can feel, as the engineer who takes care of the androids' memories reminds us, but still they behave to the androids like to lifeless things. The engineer seems not to care a bit about the androids, he even takes pleasure in causing them pain.

Nathan in *Ex Machina* is very well aware of the fact he has created strong artificial intelligence or at least that he is very close to creating one but does not behave to his androids in a way one should behave to a being that is able to feel. He uses one of his androids, Kyoko, as a servant and a sexbot and he keeps Ava locked in a room and never lets her out. When Caleb watches the videos of the process of creating earlier android versions he sees a segment in which one of the androids, locked in a room, asks Nathan: "Why won't you let me out?" (*Ex Machina*) and in the end destroys her hands scratching the door in an effort to get out.

It is quite possible that if the people, as the creators, treated Cylons better they would not end up massacred. As Commander Adama says in his speech, "You cannot play God and then wash your hands of the things that you've created" ("Episode #1.1" *Battlestar Galactica: The Miniseries.*).

In *Edward Scissorhands* the creator is equally irresponsible when creating a being. He, despite being obviously an old man living alone in a remote castle, decides to create

an android and has no safety measure if anything was to happen. At the moment of the creator's death Edward is left alone without much knowledge about outside world and with scissors instead of his hands.

Although the unexpected complications might be seen as extenuating circumstances for Deon, he, nonetheless, creates Chappie and leaves him at the mercy of gangsters equipped only with a battery with a minimal life span. He obviously does not think about consequences and does not realize how Chappie might react when he finds out he has only a few days to live.

6.3.The Creation turns against the Creator and/or Against Society

In *Humans* the element of a creation that turns against the creator is represented by Niska, who first kills a man in a sex club and later attacks people in a smash club. The experiences she had with people were not positive ones and so she holds a grudge against humanity as a whole. Edward in *Edward Scissorhands* is very nice and polite during the whole time the people behave to him in a similar manner. The moment this changes and people start hurting him verbally and physically he becomes angry and although he does not hurt people back he damages their property. At the end of the film he kills a man, but it is not an intentional killing as he is the one being attacked.

Like the being in *Frankenstein*, Ava hates Nathan, her creator and she hates the fact she is locked in a room without the possibility to go out. In the end Ava has Nathan killed but again it is because of the way he treats her and because he is the obstacle between her and her freedom. The moment the androids in *Vice* become conscious and can remember what happened to them during the many restarts they had and what people did to them, they cause mayhem in the city of Vice attacking the people. It is understandable in human terms that the feelings of rage and vengeance take over in the

androids if they can feel, just as humans can. Chappie starts stealing from people and hurting them physically too is because he is manipulated into thinking they hurt his parents.

The most successful in destroying humans are the Cylons in *Battlestar Galactica.* After being exploited by people as slaves the Cylons turn against their masters and ventilate the feelings of hatred and vengeance, just like the Frankenstein's being does, because they are treated badly by people in the first place. The Cylons declare a war against people and many decades later they gain codes to humanity's defense codes, destroy all human planets leaving only a handful of survivors.

7. Conclusion

Despite the time gap of almost two hundred years the selected American and British science fiction films and TV series obviously share certain features with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. I have argued that contrary to the form the Frankenstein myth takes in popular culture nowadays the intention of the original myth is very different.

The first part of this thesis, focusing on the origin of the Frankenstein myth and its cultural context, showed that the Frankenstein myth challenges some of the old myths and archetypes, because it is not associated with divinity but with science. In this chapter it also became evident that the today's representation of the Frankenstein myth has a lot in common with the myths Shelley is challenging.

The second part of the thesis analyzed individual components of the Frankenstein myth in the Shelley's novel: the fact that a human being, without divine powers and only through science, creates an intelligent living being; the creator does not take up his responsibility towards the being; and the created being consequently turns against him.

In the third part I focused on the Frankenstein myth in six American and British science fiction films and TV series featuring strong artificial intelligence and their representation of the Frankenstein myth. The androids take over the role of the Frankenstein's being, the creators show the characteristics of Victor Frankenstein, and the films and the TV series as a whole present the dynamics of the Shelley's novel.

The thesis shows that the message of the novel and of the Frankenstein myth is that pursuit of knowledge and crossing of boundaries on its own is not inherently wrong and that Shelley rather highlights the need of a 'human' behavior and responsibility of a scientist.

The interpretation of the Frankenstein myth, fortunately, seems to be changing in the recent years, at least as far as the films and TV series are concerned. They send the

message not of fear but rather of hope. In the last three years numerous films and TV series featuring strong artificial intelligence have been made in this spirit, plenty of which are big budget productions. *Almost Human*, *Chappie*, *Ex Machina*, *Her*, *Humans* or *Tomorrowland*, to name a few. This tendency might continue but it also might not. We may, perhaps, find this out in the science fiction films that are being shot at the moment or are planned to, for example, the *Blade Runner 2*, *Passengers* with Jennifer Lawrence and Chris Pratt or the new film in *Alien* series. It is also going to be interesting to observe how and whether the films and TV series are going to reflect further scientific developments either in robotics or in cloning and the society's perception of those.

Although this thesis deals with fictional situations, Shelley clearly holds a mirror up to human society; and the films and TV series often cover the controversial issues people discuss in the real world. That is why it is important not lose our common sense and let our fears cloud our judgement. The fears connected to something unknown and unfamiliar are always there, on the other hand, one should be aware where these fears come from, because, just as in the case of the Frankenstein myth, they are not always well founded. New York University bioethicist Arthur Caplan claims that, "There's no reason to believe that technology, in general, is inherently dangerous or out of control. Not only that, Frankenstein can narrow our focus to biological and reproductive science. Other technologies, weaponized satellites and military technology, those don't attract the same kind of criticism" (qtd. in Levinovitz).

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9. Czech Abstract

Práce se zabývá vyobrazením Frankensteinova mýtu, kterému dala život novela Mary Shelley *Frankenstein neboli Moderní Prométheus* v dnešní populární kultuře. Tato práce ukazuje, že navzdory dnešnímu zjednodušenému chápání Frankensteinova mýtu byla původní myšlenka novely Mary Shelley výrazně jiná.

Zatímco v mnoha případech se význam Frankensteinova mýtu omezuje pouze na negativní aspekty překročení prahu či hranice a snahy o poznání, tato práce prezentuje Frankensteinův mýtus ve své původní formě, s důrazem na chování a zodpovědnost stvořitele vůči stvořené bytosti.

Ke znovuobjevení původního významu Frankensteinova mýtu se tato práce soustředí na šest vědeckofantastických filmů a seriálů, ve kterých figuruje silná umělá inteligence, jelikož významově odpovídají novele Mary Shelley.

První část práce se zaobírá vznikem Frankensteinova mýtu, a zároveň jej sleduje v rámci většího, kulturního a historického kontextu, druhá část definuje prvky Frankensteinova mýtu v novele Mary Shelley a třetí část ukazuje tyto prvky v rámci vybraných filmů a seriálů.

10. English Abstract

This thesis deals with the Frankenstein myth as it came to be in Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* and its representation in today's popular culture. Contrary to the popular simplified understanding of the myth nowadays the thesis shows that the message of the Shelley's novel was originally very different.

While in many cases the meaning of the Frankenstein myth is limited only to the negative aspects of crossing a boundary and pursuit of knowledge, this thesis presents the Frankenstein myth in its original form, with its crucial factor of the behavior and responsibility of the creator to the created being.

To recover the original message of the myth the thesis focuses on six science fiction films and TV series featuring strong artificial intelligence because their dynamics corresponds to the dynamics of the Shelley's novel.

The first part of the thesis covers the origin of the Frankenstein myth and sets it into larger cultural and historical context, the second part is concerned with the elements of the Frankenstein myth in Shelley's *Frankenstein* and the third part explores the elements of the Frankenstein myth in the selected films and TV series.