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FREUDIAN CONCEPT OF "NARCISSISM" IN *FRANKENSTEIN* AND *THE HEART OF A DOG*: A COMPARATIVE READING

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ABSTRACT

The present study compared Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Heart of a Dog* in the light of Sigmund Freud's theory; "Narcissism", and how narcissist parents affected on their children. The both writers tried to show readers, two creatures were monsters. But the researcher attempted to prove, the creatures were not the monsters at the beginning, but after the narcissistic behaviors of their parents. The creatures looked like as the monsters because their reactions to their parents' narcissistic actions. This research allowed to understand who the real victims were in this two novels.

Key terms: *Frankenstein*, Narcissism, Sigmund Freud, *The Heart of a Dog*

1. Introduction

Many writers have written stories about the human creation; in these kinds of works we can see the relationship between a creator and his creatures. This relation may be considered as a relationship between a father and his son. The present dissertation critically examines two novels; *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and *The Heart of a Dog* by Mikhail Bulgakov under the light of Freud's perception of parenthood. By comparing these two works, we can understand clearly the results of lack of a healthy relationship between a father and his offspring. So we can see, the disorders of the creatures, in two novels, are because of their parents' behavior.

The researcher has tried to give a clear and accurate account of almost all aspects of the narcissist creator and his creature's relationship; the creator as a narcissist father and his creature as his child, and the effects or role of the society on children. Since these two novels deal with psychoanalytical issues, one can go deep into the

psyche of creator as a parent and creature as a child and effects of parenthood on child's identity and characterization. The researcher focused on the important role of father (creator) and the effect of his behavior towards his son (creature). Shelley's and Bulgakov's selected novels examine the psychological and emotional effects of parenthood and consider how their absence affects a child's life.

Living in a society without crime or in such a utopian society is a dream and ideal to many people. Even before the modern psychology emphasizes the importance of the parents' role on their children, in many literary works such as *Frankenstein* and *The Heart of a Dog* this emphasis can be seen. However, even today, in many cases, lack of parental attention on the relationship between children and parents can be seen. Bulgakov (1891-1940) and Shelley (1797-1851) portrayed, why this ideal could not be performed in their most famous novels; *The Heart of a Dog* and *Frankenstein*. Many critics such as Burgin (1978), Glenny (1968), Gomel (1988) and professor Zholkovsky (1996) have

mentioned Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* as a one of the literary predecessors of Bulgakov's novel *The Heart of a Dog*. *The Heart of a Dog* is called a Russian *Frankenstein*. Bulgakov justified what Shelley did not, he emphasized on creature's destruction more than creator's life. In Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, all events expressed from the perspective of father (creator) and son's (creature) voice could not be heard, then reader is not able to understand son's motives in his behavior with his father. But in Bulgakov's *The Heart of a Dog*, all events were narrated from the perspective of son (creature); a son who criticized his own creator as a father and he mentioned him, his shortcomings. Then these two works complete each other in showing a father-son relationship. They emphasized the importance of the role and influence of parents in their works. In these two works because of narcissistic parents (creator) and their irresponsibility; the creatures were driven to victims of their parents' disorders. By thinking and reading deeply these two works, we realize the vital role of parents in training healthy children in the family and more important in the society. It will make healthy society and state without crime.

1.1. Mary Shelley and *Frankenstein*:

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797-1851) was born in London, later known as Mary Shelley. She was the daughter of William Godwin; a journalist, a philosopher and a novelist. Her mother was Mary Wollstonecraft, an educator and a feminist philosopher, who dies only eleven days after Mary Shelley's birth. Shelley led a complicated private life and suffered much ostracism due to her affair with the married man Percy Bysshe Shelley, which later became her husband. Mary Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Polidori and Lord Byron had decided to hold a contest, and each one wrote a horror story, and later compared them, eventually Lord Byron proposed Mary Shelley's the best story. The central idea came, when she had a nightmare and later she started to write her masterpiece. First she wrote a short story, but Percy encouraged her to expand it into a novel; *Frankenstein*. This is the summary of novel that Sherman Dorn wrote in his research "Accountability

Frankenstein": "Victor Frankenstein abandoned his creation, after being revulsed at the first sight of him...He hides his work for years, until he heads home and discovers that his creature has killed his own brother...Even then, Victor Frankenstein listens to the person he created and agrees to create a companion until he decides the risk of a second creature too great..." (14)

1.2. Mikhail Bulgakov and *The Heart of a Dog*:

Mikhail Bulgakov was born in Kiev in May 1891. He graduated as a doctor from Kiev University in 1916, but gave up the practice of medicine in 1920 to devote himself to literature. In 1925-6 he completed the satirical and allegorical novel *The Heart of a Dog*, which remained unpublished in the Soviet Union until 1987 because in this novel he mocked the rickety state of affairs that Vladimir Lenin's heirs had inherited. He suffered at the hands of the censor. He died in 1940.

Michael Glenny wrote a summary of *The Heart of a Dog* when he translated it: "A rich, successful Moscow professor befriends a stray dog and attempts a scientific first by transplanting into it the testicles and pituitary gland of a recently deceased man. A distinctly worryingly human animal is now on the loose, and the professor's hitherto respectable life becomes a nightmare." (N.P)

1.3. Method:

Sigmund Freud was one of the pathfinders of modern-day psychology. As the originator of Psychoanalysis, he is distinguished as an intellectual giant. Freud was born in Moravia, where is Czech Republic now, in 1856 and he died in 1939 in the United Kingdom.

Freud wrote about narcissism in 1905 in Three Essays; it referred to earlier stage in instinctual development and it will be succeeded by instinctual "object choice" and normally the child's first choice for "love object" is his own body. In 1911, Freud gave the name of "Narcissism" to this stage. As Nikolaas Treurniet, a member and training and supervising analyst of the Dutch Psychoanalytical Society, wrote in his essay "Introduction 'to on Narcissism'":

Freud assumed that narcissism exists from the moment the infant has a rudimentary awareness of himself. This primitive self, however, is a product of the undivided pleasure principle in that the infant attempts to maintain all that is pleasurable aspect of the object. This fusion of the pleasurable aspects of the self and object is called 'Primary identification' and result in the 'purified pleasure ego'. The process of primary identification causes the state of Primary narcissism. (78)

Narcissism starts, when an infant becomes aware that he/she has a separate individual from his/her mother and starts to know own self (primary identification) then infant tries to satisfy his ego and achieve pleasure. This needs for pleasure causes for creating primary narcissism. After the child concentrates himself as a love object, he/she will be directed toward another object; his mother or his nurse who cares about him. His mother plays important role in his primary identification. As Leon Grinberg wrote in his essay "Letter to Sigmund Freud" in the book of FREUD's "on Narcissism: An Introduction": "His mother promotes the narcissistic perfection of childhood and plays apart in the establishment of the child's love for himself, thereby giving rise to development of the ideal ego"(99).

Sigmund Freud divided mind, human psyche, into three categories: ID, Ego and Superego. ID is more responsible for physical and instinctual needs without moralities. "Ego is the more organized and realistic part, which experiences and senses the outside world. It can be seen as the individual's image of him/herself, as a self-conscious being [...]" (Thurschwell 82). The Ego needs to find a balance between the primitive drives and reality. "The Superego is the self-critical aspect of the Ego; that which judges the conscious and unconscious decisions of ID and Ego" (Thurschwell 91).

R. Horacio Ethchegoyen, the president and analyst of Buenos Aires psychoanalytic association and the chairman of psychiatry and medical psychology (U.N.C) and the president of the IPA, wrote in his essay "'On Narcissism: An Introduction' text and context": "Secondary narcissism, that the libido flows back to the ego by virtue of the illness, following an already existing path which must then

necessarily stem from a primary narcissism" (58). If the ego didn't limit primary narcissism at childhood it would continue up to his adulthood; so the primary narcissism will become secondary narcissism. In the psychology, the secondary narcissism is classified as a disorders that in the excessive model cause to serious mental disorder. The secondary Narcissism is the mental disorder. Narcissism process is basically the saving of libidinal energy in the ego. On the other hand, his/her libidinal energy comes from the outside world in to his/her ego. "For it enters into the deeper problems of the relations between the ego and external objects" (Freud 69). One of the reasons which leads to narcissism, is a tight moral society or a dogmatic society, such as the repressing sexual tendency and loving the other; libidinal energy focuses on ego. In one of the narcissist type, there is no tension between ego and superego, and there is no power of sexual desire needs. In the Secondary narcissism is the investment of libidinal energy, in the ego and his main interest is directed to self-preservation. It is necessary to consider that there are three types libido; erotic, narcissistic and obsessional. Narcissistic libido; there is no tension between ego and super-ego. The subject's main interest is directed to self-preservation. Freud wrote in the book of *Civilization And Its Discontents*: "the narcissistic man, who inclines to be self-sufficient, will seek his main satisfactions in his internal mental processes; the man of action will never give up the external world on which he can try out his strength" (14)

In 2013, American Psychiatric Association named nine features of narcissism based on Freud's theory and the others:

These nine criteria are: a) A grandiose sense of self-importance; b) Preoccupation with fantasies of unlimited success, brilliance, beauty or ideal love; c) Beliefs of being special and unique; d) Requirements of excessive admiration; e) A sense of entitlement; f) Interpersonal exploitative; g) Lack of empathy; h) Envy of others; and i) Arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes. (Nezue 450)

2. Argument:

2.1. Frankenstein:

In novel of Frankenstein, Victor's parents behave with him like that he is an object of his parents love, Victor is "their playing and their idol" (Shelley 19). And;

Christopher has a small suggests that in Victor Frankenstein's description there is a 'strained emphasis on felicity'...As Victor claims, everything was centered on fulfilling the mother's wishes, one must wonder at the son's extravagant account of the love left over for him: 'The seemed to draw inexhaustible stores of affection from a very mine of love to bestow them upon me' (Shelley, 33). (Bloom 105)

In other part, Victor says: For a long time I was their only care" (Shelley 19). One day his mother tells him: "I have a pretty present for my Victor - tomorrow he shall have it" (Shelley 21). Since, Victor's mother gives him Elizabeth as a present, Victor accepts Elizabeth as a gift, whom she must plays him to make him happy. Elizabeth behaves kindly, as if they expect her. Based on, what Heinz Henseler, Professor of Psychoanalysis, Director of Department of Psychoanalysis and past president of the German Psychoanalytical Association, wrote in his essay "Narcissism as a Form of Relationship": "Freud describes...the parents envelop the child not only in care and protecting, but also in wishful dreams of greatness and uniqueness, in which they themselves take apart. They are under a compulsion to ascribe every perfection to the child....and make him the center and core of creation" (199).

Freud wrote in "An Introduction to Narcissism": "Parental love, which is so moving and at the bottom so childish, is nothing but the parent's narcissism born again, which, transformed into object-love" (16). Narcissist's parents lead their self-love to their child. Victor's parents lead their loves and wishes to their child, Victor, and they make him their object-love, Victor was core of the creation for them. Since he grows up, he believes it too.

At the beginning of *Frankenstein*, Captain Robert Walton writes about Victor Frankenstein in 4th

letter to his sister: "He excites at once admiration and my pity to an astonishing degree" (Shelley 12). In these part of the novel, Victor Frankenstein enjoys from others admiration more than usual. When Victor Frankenstein tells his story in chapter 4, he says: "...which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source... No father could claim the gratitude of his child as completely as I should deserves theirs" (Shelley 40). He fantasizes to create a new and perfect species. He feels superiority like he is a god. The reader understand selfishness and irresponsibility of Frankenstein more and more, in chapter 4:

Two years passed in this manner, during which I paid no visit to Geneva, but was engaged, heart and soul, in the pursuit of some discoveries which I hoped to make. None but those who have experienced them can conceive of the enticements of science... and the same feelings which made me neglect the scenes around me... also to forget those friends who were so many miles absent, and whom I had not seen for so long a time. I knew my silence disquieted them, and I well remembered the words of my father: 'I know that while you are pleased with yourself you will think of us with affection, and we shall hear regularly from you. You must pardon me if I regard any interruption in your correspondence as a proof that your other duties are equally neglected'. (Shelley 36-41)

The ignorance of his duties is his regular feature. He simply, ignores his family, friends and responsibility to them, for his desires. But later, when he creates his creature and he doesn't look like as perfect as, what Frankenstein wants. He describes his creature: "How can I describe my emotions at the catastrophe, or how delineated the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? ... I had selected his features as Beautiful. Beautiful..." (Shelley 43). He tries to create a beautiful and perfect species, or in another words a new love object for himself; a person, who admires Frankenstein as much as possible, but after creating his creature, he could not have loved him. He says: "The beauty of dream vanished and breathless and

disgust filled my heart" (Shelley 43). He runs away, when he sees his creature. Just because, he loses to achieve his dreams. He leaves him without a shelter, food, knowledge and even a common name, in other words his creature or his child was completely helpless and rejected. Frankenstein has not cared about his homeless child or he isn't curious about his creature, until he comes back home for his little brother, whom was killed. He sees his creatures; in chapter 7: "...instantly informed me that it was the wretch, the filthy demon, to whom I had given life. What did him there? Could he be (I shuddered at the conception) the murderer of my brother... I thought of pursuing the devil; but..." (Shelley 63).

Frankenstein says: "...I hope...that all these employments are now at end, and that I am at a length free" (Shelley 46). Frankenstein believes that his work completed, after he creates his creature without any attention to him. It shows the selfishness of Frankenstein's ambition.

Later In chapter 9, Shelley wrote: "...When I reflected on his crimes and malice, my hatred and revenge burst all bounds of moderation. I wished to see him again... avenge the deaths of William and Justine" (79). When Frankenstein comes back his home, understands his little brother murdered by his nurse. Although he knows; his nurse is not guilty and the murder is his creature, but he says nothing to save the life of his brother's nurse. Because at that moment, he just thinks about his honor and his family's reactions, when they understood the reality. Then again, he shows that he is the center of his own world and he is a selfish person.

Later when he visits his creature, Victor calls him "a lifeless thing" (Shelley 43). His creature is just a thing for him and he refers him as "it" (Shelley 44). He notices his creature: "unearthly ugliness rendered it too horrible for human eyes" (Shelley 86). Frankenstein doesn't think about his creature as a human, he is a monster for him and monster's face is not pleasurable for a human eyes such as himself. The creature tells him about his loneliness and how the society rejected him: "But where are my friends and relationship? No father had watched my infant days, no mother had blessed me with smiles and cares" (Shelley 109). Or "All men hate the wretched; how then must I be hatred, who am miserable

beyond all living things. Yet you, my creator, thy creature...you purpose to kill me. How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine toward you and the rest of mankind" (Shelley 86). His creature feels the loss of a father and mother, he blames Frankenstein for his irresponsibility. The creature reminds him, he is his creator. But also, in this part; Frankenstein is empty from sympathy for his creature. The creature of Frankenstein requests from his father to create him a female partner to fill his loneliness. At first Frankenstein accepts his request, but in the middle of creating, he refuses to do such a thing, although his creature threatens him.

At Frankenstein's wedding night with Elizabeth, He does not tell Elizabeth about his fear, he leaves her alone; prepared to fight with his creature to save his life and kill him, at the result that Elizabeth is murdered on their wedding night. And Frankenstein catches by thought of revenge because the creature destroys his new love object and deprived him of having pleasure. Frankenstein tries to shows his sense of clarification by telling his story to Captain Walton.

Frankenstein's parents were narcissists, therefore he became a narcissist too. Reader can see a chain of narcissistic parents in novel of Frankenstein. Victor Frankenstein is a narcissistic father for his creature.

2.2. The Heart of a Dog:

In *The Heart of a Dog* by Mikhail Bulgakov, he addressed the creature's behavior and his motives more than the creator's motives and behavior.

Professor Philip Philipovich says: "Food...is a subtle thing. One must know how to eat, yet just think-most people don't know how to eat at all. One must not only know what to eat, but when and how" (Bulgakov 36).

Sharik describes him as a gentleman, because he looks good and eats well. But who did eat well in the Soviet Union? The citizens of Soviet Union suffered from lack of enough food. Professor eats well. He does not care about the bad situation of poor people. He cares about himself and he does not have sympathy of poor people. He is a self-centered. It looks like that Professor is a stranger

with his own society and people live in it: In chapter 5, Sharikov mentions to what Shvonder says too. Sharikov says: "here's one guy with seven rooms and forty pairs of trousers and there's another guy who has to eat out of dustbins" (Bulgakov 94).

Philip Philipovich knows himself higher than the others, even he calls a politician to show them his power:

Philip Philipovich lifted telephone receiver...said into it: '...put me through to Pyotr Alexandrovich...Pyotr Alexandrovich? Hello, how are you? ... I am afraid your operation is cancelled. And so are all my other operations. I'll tell you why...I am just having a visit from four people, one of whom is a woman distinguished as a man...' (Bulgakov 30-1)

He shows his power to them. He is selfish too, because all the Soviet Union lives in these situation, but he can't accept it for himself. He sees them as an abnormal people.

'I want to ask you'-here the woman pulled a number of coloured magazines...- 'to buy a few these magazines in aid of the children of Germany...' 'No, I will not' said Philip Philipovich 'Why not?' 'I don't want to.'... 'Can't you spare 50 kopecks?' 'Yes, I can.' 'Well, why won't you, then?' (Bulgakov 32)

He does not feel any sympathy for others, He avoids helping poor people or children. In chapter 3, Professor Philip Philipovich decides to do an operation on Sharik's brain and transfers him to a man. He does it, because his own pleasure. He wants to show his power and he is unique and brilliant in his work by doing an incredible operation on a dog; he makes him a human. But he does not think about the results of this work: "The surgeon's scalpel has brought to life a new human entity. Professor Preobrazhensky- you are a creator" (Bulgakov 66). But Professor forgets his role in creating Sharik as a human. He does not know, how to treat Sharik as a creator/father. He cannot accept him as his creature/child, because Sharik's behavior makes him ashamed. And also, he cannot accept him as a human.

'Take that trash off your neck. Sha...if you saw yourself in a mirror you'd realise what a fright it makes you look. You look like a clown. For the hundredth time - don't

throw cigarette ends on to the floor. And I don't want to hear any more swearing in this flat! And don't spit everywhere! The spittoon's over there. Kindly take better aim when you pee. Cease all further conversation with Zina. She complains that you lurk round her room at night. And don't be rude to my patients! Where do you think you are - in some dive?'

'Don't be so hard on me. Dad,' the man suddenly said in a tearful whine. Philip Philipovich turned red and his spectacles flashed: 'Who are you calling "Dad"? What impertinent familiarity! I never want to hear that word again! You will address me by my name and patronymic!' (Bulgakov 73)

Philip Philipovich orders to Sharik, and he must obey. He gives him a list of rules, but he does not do anything more to help Sharik learns to behave well. Professor does not try to increase Sharik's knowledge.

'Oh, why can't you lay off? Don't spit... Don't smoke . . . don't go there, don't do this, don't do that . . . sounds like the rules in a tram. Why don't you leave me alone, for God's sake? And why shouldn't I call you "Dad", anyway? I didn't ask you to do the operation, did I?' ... 'A nice business -you get an animal, slice his head open and now you're sick of him. Perhaps I wouldn't have given permission for the operation... I bet I could sue you if I wanted to'. (Bulgakov 74)

When Professor rejects him as his son, and does not allow to call him "Dad"; Sharikov shows his creator/father that he knows his own rights, and he threatens Professor to sue him, because his operation was without his permission. From now on, Professor sees Sharik as a threat for his own fame.

"One must, after all, be realistic. Don't forget that you are . . . hum, well ... you are what you might call a ... an unnatural phenomenon, an artefact..." (Bulgakov 77). Professor treats him as an underbred creature, although he knows the most people humble, except his assistant; Bormenthal. Professor knows himself as a superior to the others.

So Sharik chooses himself a name:

'And what surname will you take?'

'I'll use my real name.'

'You're real name? What is it?'

'Sharikov.'

.....

'God dammit, I've never heard anything so ridiculous in my life. He wasn't born at all...'

'That's your problem,' said Shvonder ... 'That the bearer is a man created during a laboratory experiment by means of an operation on the brain and that he requires identity papers' (Bulgakov 78-9)

Professor does not give his creature a human name. Then it shows his irresponsibility. Although, Professor cannot accept him as a human, the society accept Sharik as a citizen, and at Sharik's identity documents, they write Professor's name as his father.

In chapter 6, Sharikov says to Professor: "There you go again-calling everybody fools," (Bulgakov 95). Sharikov nags Professor's behavior, and blames him for calling everyone fool. As he calls Sharik a fool and now he is calling Engels a fool too. Professor enjoys the others admiring him; for example Bormenthall admires him over and over again, and he knows just Bormenthall deserves to communicate with him. He hates being criticized as much as he likes to be admired. After Sharikov criticizes Professor, Professor loses his temper and he says: "'You belong to the lowest possible stage of development,' Philip Philipovich shouted him down. 'You are still in the formative stage. You are intellectually weak, all your actions are purely bestial. Yet you allow yourself in the presence of two university-educated men to offer advice...'" (Bulgakov 95-6) These part exactly show the reader how does Professor think about Sharikov or even many people in the society. He thinks; he knows everything better than the others and he does not need to any advice because he is well-educated.

When Sharikov begins to criticize Professor's behaviour, Professor decides to return everything to before Sharikov becomes a human. Then he decides to do another operation on Sharikov to make him a dog again, just because he does not behave as Professor wants.

3. Conclusion

In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Victor Frankenstein's parents have narcissistic features.

They chooses their own child as a love object, and they focus their self-love on their love object. They cherish their own child. That is why Frankenstein remembered his childhood's sweet memories well. Because his parents prepared all of his primary narcissistic needs. When he grows up, his Primary narcissism goes to the next stage; secondary narcissism. Secondary Narcissist, who chooses himself as his own love object. Frankenstein is a narcissist like his parents. He wants to satisfy his desire egotistically. Frankenstein has 6 features from 9 features of a narcissist; he is selfish, sense of self-important (self-centered), the beliefs of being special and unique, ambition of unlimited success, a sense of empowerment, lack of empathy and requirements of extreme admiration. Frankenstein's parents make him the center of their attention. He makes a dream to create a new kind of perfect and ideal human, in order to satisfy his narcissistic pleasure. But he fails in creating a perfect and beautiful creature and he cannot love his own creature, therefore he understands his desires have been destroyed. He leaves his creature helpless. Frankenstein refuses to accept and help him as his creature/child. He is not able to assume responsibility of his own creature. Because he concerns his creature will become the center of people's attention more. He sees his creature as a monster, and declares the reason of hating is his deformed face. In other words, he tries to release himself of feeling guilty. But the reader understands, Frankenstein sees his creature as his rival from the first moment of his creation. Although Frankenstein leaves his creature and hates him so much, but the creature loves and adores his creator/father. Since the son's love fixation is not stronger than his hate. He is a victim of the father who does not consider the needs of his child, because Frankenstein is a narcissist, and also he doesn't love his son, or care about his creature, or even he can't protect his family, because he is concerning himself more than the others, like many narcissistic people. He ignores the responsibility of the creator/father to his creatures/child. A father should take care of his child and protect his creator as a dutiful father. Although he fails to create a beautiful human, but he should not ignore his duties as a creator. A father

is responsible to care about the physical and mental needs of his children. He must try his children to be healthy, happy and well.

In Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Heart of a Dog*, Professor Philip Philipovich, as a surgeon, has 7 features from 9 features of a narcissist: he is selfish, self-centered (sense of self-important), preoccupation with fantasizes of unlimited power and brilliance, lack of empathy, requirements of excessive admiration and beliefs that he is special and unique and has haughty behavior. He satisfies his narcissistic pleasures by transforming a stray dog to a human. Although he doesn't accept him as his child, also Professor gives Sharikov shelter, food, educative and cultural orders because of the sense of responsibility. These two novels are similar, but there are differences between those, professor behaves more responsible than Victor Frankenstein. At least he gives his creature the food and shelter, and he is responsible to primary needs of Sharikov, but the reader must remember the both of them are narcissists. And the creatures are not monsters but they are victims of their narcissistic parent's behavior.

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