

**T.C.
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Master Thesis

**DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN LANGUAGES AND
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Master Thesis

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON MARY SHELLEY'S
FRANKENSTEIN; OR, THE MODERN PROMETHEUS AND
AHMED SAADAWI'S *FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD***

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JULY 2023

ELAZIĞ

DECLARATION

I declare that all the information in my master's thesis titled "A Comparative Study on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* and Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad*", which I prepared in accordance with the thesis writing rules of Fırat University Graduate School of Social Sciences, is correct, that I complied with the rules of scientific ethics in producing and presenting the information, by citing all the sources I used; I declare that I have specified all institutions/organizations and individuals who have financial and moral support, and that I have never used the data and information I have provided here for the purpose of obtaining a title.

04.07.2023

Kamiran Shivan OTHMAN

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ABSTRACT
**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON MARY SHELLEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN*; OR,
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In literary discussions, the terms like “hypertextuality” and “adaptation” are frequently used. It is customary to discuss how one work influences the other when comparing two works of fiction, whether plays or movies. Even though the two works were written at different times or in different contexts, it is still possible to draw parallels between them to highlight how one work influenced the other. By bringing back Mary Shelley’s legacy and putting it in a new setting, award-winning Iraqi novelist Ahmed Saadawi proposes a new look at the violence and horror that were part of everyday life in Iraq during the US occupation in 2003 and the following civil war. The work is unique in Arabic fiction because of its stunning writing style and bravery in addressing reality and responding to the hidden fears, concerns, and goals of many parts of the population. Saadawi removes the differences between the living and the dead, between the victims and the people who hurt them, and between reality and illusion.

This study analyses Shelley’s legacy and reveals how a Western text influenced Saadawi’s Arabic text through the concept of the postcolonial monster. Thus, the thesis draws parallels between the two versions of the Frankenstein story. *Frankenstein in Baghdad* was written with a lot of inspiration from Mary Shelley’s novel. But Saadawi’s Frankenstein is the product of a separate culture with its own signs, symbols and language. The novel emphasises the need to realise the current situation in Iraq. This study examines the colonial context common to Mary Shelley’s novel regarding the concept of the post-colonial monster. This is what prompted Saadawi to create a terrifying character who appears in the form of a protest in the gothic scenes of the bomb-ravaged Iraqi streets. This study explores whether Saadawi’s work is a simple copy of Mary Shelley’s novel, an adaptation, or a contextualised change of the concept through the sufferings of contemporary Iraq. In this study, we aim to discover how the characters in the novels share many similarities but also undergo a metamorphic change. This study also tries to analyse the novels in the context of post-colonialism and the metaphor of Iraq’s monster and its relationship with Iraq’s current situation. The term monster will be interpreted in the context of colonialism and post-colonialism, thus, shedding light on how the other is dehumanised to exercise power in society.

Keywords: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*; or, *The Modern Prometheus*, Ahmed Saadawi, *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, monstrosity, colonialism, postcolonialism.

ÖZET

MARY SHELLEY’NİN *FRANKENSTEIN* YA DA *MODERN PROMETHEUS* VE AHMED SAADAWI’NİN *FRANKENSTEIN BAĞDAT’TA* ADLI ROMANLARI ÜZERİNE KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Edebiyat tartışmalarında “hiper-metinsellik” ve “uyarlama” gibi terimler sıklıkla kullanılmaktadır. İster oyun ister film olsun, iki kurmaca eseri karşılaştırırken bir eserin diğerinden nasıl etkilendiğinden bahsetmek olağandır. İki eser ayrı zamanlarda veya farklı bağlamlarda yazılmış olsa bile, bir eserin diğerini nasıl etkilediğini vurgulamak için aralarında paralellikler kurmak yine de mümkündür. Ödüllü Iraklı romancı Ahmed Saadawi, Mary Shelley’nin mirasını üstlenerek ve yeni bir ortama yerleştirerek, okuyuculara 2003’teki ABD işgaline ve iç savaş sırasında Irak’taki günlük yaşamın bir parçası olan şiddete ve dehşete yeni bir bakış sunuyor. Eser, çarpıcı yazım tarzı ve gerçekliği ele alma ve toplumun büyük bir nüfusunun gizli korkularına, endişelerine ve hedeflerine yanıt verme cesareti nedeniyle Arap kurgu edebiyatında benzersizdir. Saadawi, yaşayanlar ile ölümler, kurbanlar ile onlara zarar verenler ve gerçeklik ile yanılsama arasındaki farkları ortadan kaldırıyor.

Bu çalışma, Shelley’nin mirasını analiz ederek Batılı bir metnin Saadawi’nin Arapça metnini nasıl etkilediğini sömürgecilik-sonrası canavar kavramı üzerinden ortaya koymaktadır. Böylece tez, Frankenstein hikâyesinin iki versiyonu arasında paralellikler kurmaktadır. *Frankenstein Bağdat’ta*, Mary Shelley’nin romanından çok fazla ilham alınarak yazılmıştır. Fakat Saadawi’nin Frankenstein’i kendi işaretleri, sembolleri ve dili olan ayrı bir kültürün ürünüdür. Roman, Irak’taki mevcut durumun farkına varılması gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır. Bu çalışma, Mary Shelley’nin romanı için yaygın olan sömürgecilik bağlamını, sömürgecilik-sonrası canavar kavramı bağlamında incelemektedir. Saadawi’yi, bombalarla yıkılmış Irak sokaklarının gotik sahnelerinde bir protesto biçiminde ortaya çıkan korkunç bir karakter yaratmaya iten de budur. Bu çalışma, Saadawi’nin eserinin Mary Shelley’nin romanının basit bir kopyası mı, bir uyarlama mı yoksa günümüz Irak’ının acıları üzerinden bağlamsallaştırılmış bir kavram değişikliği mi olduğunu araştırmaktadır. Bu araştırmada, romanlardaki karakterlerin nasıl birçok benzerliği paylaştıklarını, ancak aynı zamanda metamorfik bir değişim geçirdiklerini keşfetmeyi amaçlıyoruz. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda romanları post-sömürgecilik bağlamında ve Irak’ın canavarı metaforu ve mevcut durumu ile ilişkisi bağlamında incelemeye çalışmaktadır. Canavar terimi sömürgecilik ve post-sömürgecilik bağlamında yorumlanacak, böylece, ötekinin toplumda güç kullanmak için nasıl canavarlaştırıldığına ışık tutulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein ya da Modern Prometheus*, Ahmed Saadawi, *Frankenstein Bağdat’ta*, canavarlık, sömürgecilik, sömürgecilik-sonrası.

1. INTRODUCTION

The study attempts to conduct a cross-referencing and exploration of two significant works, *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus* by Mary Shelley and *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, by Ahmed Saadawi, through the light of postcolonial ethos. By the 20th century, Saadawi creates a monster enacting interminable postcolonial themes. One is familiar with the fact that the nineteenth century was marked as the era of Industrialization, and the conflict between the ideas of faith and of science was very evident in literature produced during that period. In Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the scientist named Victor Frankenstein creates a monster while dabbling with the idea of creating a new life that faintly resembles a scientific experiment. Later, he is compelled to abandon the monster, and the plot thickens to reveal that both the creator and the monster share some commonalities, and the monster is now seeking vengeance for bringing him to life. The novel revolves around the scientist and the monster sharing their stories from their point of view, with the monster taking revenge for his existence. The primary focus of Saadawi's book *Frankenstein in Baghdad* is on the conspiracies behind the US invasion of Iraq. A junk dealer creates the monster, and the monster becomes alive with a revenge motive against those who had killed the innocents with the reckless bombings of the city. Both novels have a common theme and characteristics of taking vengeance for the situation and consequences that are faced. This study, thus, draws a parallel between the two novels, having found similarities in the creations of two monsters who seek vengeance for the wrongdoings they have experienced.

The study borders on the theme of the expansion of colonial powers of the Western world, which led to the exploitation of the colonies to foster their gains. The postcolonial scenario, as depicted in many works of literature, is seen as a destructive force imposing the subjugation of the colonial identity. This recurrent theme, mirrored by the creation of the monster's subjugation in both novels, ultimately leads to the denial of the humaneness of "all attributes of the humanity" of the colonised world (Frank and Michael, 2009). In other words, the creators of the monsters, in one way or another, create a dehumanised form of monster. The study, at this point, would like to draw attention to the fact that both authors may have been subjected to a battle within themselves which led them to create a monster who would help them to avenge the wrongdoings inflicted on society. The study begins with placing Frankenstein, the monster, under the lens of postcolonialism in the context of oppression, slavery, alienation, and marginalisation of the local inhabitants prevalent in the 19th and 21st centuries. While conducting the study, the thesis will consider colonial misgivings, anxieties, and the journey of the postcolonial monster.

The thesis shall expand by explaining some key and oft-repeated terms around which the study has evolved. Postcolonialism examines the political, social, and economic effects of a country's exposure to colonial rule and exploitation. Historical evidence reveals that in order to meet their demand for low-cost workers in manufacturing and agriculture, European governments (or colonialists) set up colonies in different parts of the world to exploit their natural resources by enslaving people and bonding labourers worldwide.

Empowering and subjugating countries under Western rule had been made possible by the superpowers due to their superior warfare and armoury. Western occupying forces were the oppressors because they wielded better weaponry. An intriguing connection may be made when considering who should be responsible for vanquishing an enemy or putting an oppressor down.

Countries like the Balkans, the Baltics, and the Caucasus used to dominate America, the Middle East, Africa, and the Indian Peninsula. A large population was not necessary for dominance which emphasises the importance of strategic warfare. The world wars witnessed the control of a few over many alliances; imperialism, nationalism, and other forms of power conflicts played a significant role in initiating both world wars. History teaches us that power is not related to numbers but to the attitude of the oppressors who frequently misuse their power.

Frankenstein in Baghdad, by Saadawi, was initially published in Arabic in 2013. Following the enormous popularity of Saadawi's work and the widespread acclaim it received in the realm of literary genre, Jonathan Wright translated the novel into English in 2018. The novel is set in the chaotic and terror-ridden condition of post-invasion of Iraq, where poverty, unemployment, suicide bombing, and lack of basic infrastructure are a part of daily life. The novel also highlights sectarian violence by introducing the atmosphere of a magical world steeped in the idea of good versus evil. Like Shelley's monster, Saadawi's monster itself is not free from its misgivings. It is constantly worried about its identity and the manifestation of a deformed body, hatred by people, and being a target of abuse. Thus, he transforms himself into a more wrathful creature full of hatred and evilness. At this point, an inference can be drawn to present-day Iraqi society, which is being subjected to trauma, torture, and victimisation in its path towards transformation.

In this respect, the study tries to unearth the meaning of a monster – Is it just a deformed body? (Jani, 2015: 323) Is it an inherent characteristic of an evil mind that surfaces at times? Is it a trait inherent in every human which, at times, affects their social identity? To lead the reader to the answers, Saadawi's novel portrays a drunken junk dealer, Hadi, who gathers body parts mainly from suicide bombing victims and those killed in other explosions. Hadi starts stitching those apparently different pieces together to create an ugly creature similar to that known as Shelley's monster. The body is, then, taken over by a wandering soul who is seeking revenge against those who have killed innocent people in Iraq. This reflects the quintessential fight for justice and avenging wrongdoings by those who could not seek any form of righteousness when alive. The study focuses on Saadawi's monster, as the monster is referred to in the book, which is similar to the one in Mary Shelley's novel in that it does not have any human characteristics, making it impossible for anybody to empathise with it. Both novels reveal that the unleashing of panic and violence might result in the creation of figures unrelated to human qualities during a battle – a reality of living on corpses and a surge of hatred against humanity, hatred against the existing system, law, and order. In this respect, both monsters have a postcolonial fight back against the power holders.

Frankenstein in Baghdad is set in a geographical area that has suffered from the mass devastation of people and its geopolitical environment. The depiction of everyday violence, explosions, blood, gore, and macabre scenes of mangled body parts and decapitated bodies are regular sites that one must navigate while trying to lead a neo-normal life. The novel's horror is set in an atmosphere where violence and the decline of humanity are at their peak. The author, however, warns its reader not to jump to quick conclusions about labelling good and evil and indicates multiple factors that are responsible for creating a monstrous identity, which is not merely a physical attribute but a result of complexities affecting social identity (Mukherjee, 2020).

Going back to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which inspired Saadawi's work, Shelley uses basically three narrators and how the world evolves around them. These characters are primarily

Captain Walton, whose narration can be found in the compilation of written messages as a communication tool to expose his excitement about the Arctic expedition to his beloved sibling, Margaret Saville. The second character is the young Swiss, Victor Frankenstein, who is the creator of an unsightly creature, and finally, the ill-favoured monster, Victor's incredible creation. Britton depicts the framework of a hideous creature indicated as a "complex shape" (2015: 6). According to the writer, the three visible characters were chosen by Mary Shelley since she used her own approach to impart the message to them, and all along, the characters remained in contact with her (2015: 7). Furthermore, with the addition of Victor as the modern Prometheus, Shelley draws a comparable connection to Robert Walton, who is an explorer playing a vital role in the formative years.

As per the critics who viewed Mary Shelley's work through various lenses, Shelley intended to make her novel a ghost story. For this reason, she depends on a certain character who would voice her thoughts through her writing. Although it is a "ghost-like" story, there are no free-floating spirits but an ethereal invention of a man who suddenly brings a monster to life. The monster has been made grotesque and abhorring so as to evoke fear by just looking at him. The monster cannot be a creation of its own or sent from another planet (a concept not so prevalent at that time); hence, Victor, the scientist, was required to create it and be responsible for the monster. Indeed, the scientist was inexperienced and helpless and discovered an incredible power that equipped him with the potential capacity to create a living creature. The novel would not have progressed or gained popularity if the readers did not accept the concept of the monster. The monster needed a form, a structure, a look that would gain everyone's approval through their hatred for the creature. Victor Frankenstein provided the soul into the monster and created a distorted living thing; therefore, the monster is referred to as a *non-human being* rather than a *human being*. Doctor Frankenstein perhaps wanted the reader to acknowledge that a monster is like an "animal" (Shelley, 2003: 53). As seen later in the literature, the monster signifies a dynamic form that is made by certain components.

In consequence, Walton describes his initial impression regarding the monster as a figure who has the appearance of a man, but it is obviously of a giant proportion. It is depicted in the scene of the monster while riding the sledge and commanding the dogs like a supernatural figure (Shelley, 2003: 14). In his article, Petsche argues that this ugly gigantic figure is neither a complete human nor an animal as it is made up of some different components of humans and animals that have been interlinked and complementary with each other (2014: 98). The monster is described as a hybrid being because the parts of the monster are merged and collected from the slaughterhouses. In a similar vein, Hadi's creature's main body part is the deformed body of Hadi's best friend, who dies in an explosion causing his own body and his horse's body to stick together.

When seen through the lens of postcolonialism, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is a book that effectively sheds light on the worldwide impact of European colonisation from the centuries of 16th to the 19th. From a postcolonial perspective, Victor Frankenstein is an upper-class family member who has a smooth and wealthy life. Similarly, the wealthy, powerful, and French-born Delacey family stands out as the ideal European colonisers (Shelley and Bolton, 2018). The two most influential Christian figures in Safie's life, her mother and Felix, are exclusively responsible for her education. As a result, the novel's portrayal of Safie's independence fully incorporates Western culture on purpose in order to contrast it with her Eastern heritage. This disparity is further

emphasised by the deliberate concealment of her cultural heritage, which necessitates that she learns a new language in order to be accepted in society. Because of this, the readers can infer that her mother is somewhat responsible for the feeling of Westernization and independence that she enjoys while travelling by herself. In the postcolonial context, the monster acts as Safie's antithesis, the non-idealized being for colonisation, since he lacks every trait that would make him submissive to colonial power. Safie's classification as the "colonised" enables us to see that not all colonisable identities will have the desirable qualities of Safie, as observed in the characterisation of the monster. The monster becomes a symbol of this fact. Those who oppose the idea of colonisation, just like the monster, have the potential to react violently (Botting, 2019).

Examining the past of the 'coloniser,' the Delacey family and the 'colonised,' Safie helps us illuminate DeLacey's role in a postcolonial reading of *Frankenstein*. According to the family tree, the patriarch of the Delacey clan was "descended from a noble French family. He had the esteem of his superiors and the affection of his peers throughout his life in the country. His son was raised to serve his nation, and Agatha had been included among the most prestigious women in society" (Wilson, 2022). It is also mentioned that DeLacey, an inhabitant of fashionable Paris, was an indulgent man who enjoyed a joyful life and a life of excitement, which helped him to refine his mind with moderation as his wealth could afford.

In this respect, the Delacey family serves as the symbol of European elites, especially the French upper class, and superiors who amassed great wealth during the colonial era of the 16th and 17th centuries, as evidenced by the old DeLacey's French nationality and the affluence, difference, refinement, and opulence, which is often missed by the rest of the family. It is often noted that this superior elitist sense of class divide in society is admired by some but despised by many others; as a result, the global political order depends, at least in part, on European hegemony. Shelley implicitly critiques the European hegemony through the families of *Frankenstein* and DeLacey. Their disregard and otherisation of the monster metaphorically portray the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised or between master and the slave. The issues of justice and revenge the monster brings forth should be read through a colonial and postcolonial understanding in this respect.

In his critical work *Orientalism*, Edward Said elaborates on the idea of positional superiority, noting how the colonial process institutionalised such culturally manufactured judgments in order to maintain the West's "upper-hand" dominance over the "oriental backwardness" (quoted in Webster, 2018). In order to justify their cultural genocide against the people of the Middle East and India, the West invented the idea of 'Eastern' culture. In this sense, a postcolonial interpretation of *Frankenstein* shows how Safie's background cast her in the role of the subordinate and hence, an idealised and submissive 'colonised' female. Safie's portrayal in the book is illustrative of Said's theoretical definition of Orientalism, and the novel provides evidence for Said's assertion that postcolonialism may alter a particular colonialist narrative in binary thinking. In this respect, this study aims to deconstruct how colonial and postcolonial issues are depicted implicitly in Shelley's novel and explicitly in that of Saadawi.

The concept of monsters in literature is nothing new and goes back to old English literature with the portrayal of *Beowulf* and medieval Arthurian romances such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Shakespeare, too, did not refrain from portraying monsters or supernatural beings in his plays, as is seen in *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, where Puck worries that his "mistress with a

monster is in love” (Swander, 1990: 83). Caliban and Ariel in *The Tempest*, the famous three witches of Macbeth, the “civil monster” (4.1.64) of Othello, *Love’s Labor’s Lost*’s “monster ignorance” (4.2.23), and King Lear’s confrontation with the “monster ingratitude” (1.5.40) are all some other references to monstrosity embodied either in humans or non-humans. In most of his plays, Shakespeare had given a new dimension to monstrosity, whether in the form of evil lurking in Shylock’s mind or a guilt-ridden Hamlet. In the 19th century, the concept of monstrosity received a new definition in Shelley’s work, as this novel made mankind think of what precisely a monster could be. This monster is a hideous creature created by the curiosity of a scientist. It is a character seeking revenge on humanity, or a part of every human character, an evil lurking in everyone’s mind that remains dormant in most cases but comes to life under duress.

The concept of monsters seems to fascinate readers across the globe, and many monsters have been created and recreated in literature. Critics from the academic world have dissected them to find their semblance to humankind or at least curious to know what led to the creation of such monsters. Dana Bizuleanu discusses the continuity of the monster’s generation in her article “The Monster’s Myth: From Ideology to Herta Muller’s Imaginary,” which contributes to the development and interpretation of how the monster is inscribed in the reader’s perception (2015: 209). Monsters have been reckoned with by readers from children to adults and have found refuge in ballads, horror stories, and in fairy tales written for children. John Eppard released a book entitled *Monster* in 2013, in which he pointed out that monsters had existed in myths, folklore, and fairy tales for millennia. Due to this, many people have accepted that monsters do not exist; many argue that they do exist, while some have even claimed to have seen them (Eppard, 2011: 4).

Dragan (2019) emphasises that zoomorphic and anthropomorphic monstrosity are a figment of imagination that takes shape in a distant land, travels in travellers’ tales, and gets amplified and coloured by people’s imagination. Their physical presence can be found in lands that have never been travelled and are elusive to human eyes, like “Yeti’s,” found in the faraway kingdom of Nepal close to Mount Everest, but never captured once in a photograph or seen by a human in broad daylight. These are mere conjuring of a traveller’s tale of a shadowy creature witnessed by sleepy or tired eyes, which the individual cannot comprehend or assimilate in his imagination, thus giving rise to a tale to be narrated to others. These monsters are often a result of clouded imagination that does not fit the description of common sense or morality and projection outside the realms of the real world.

Monsters came into existence from the figment of people’s imagination or an unexplained phenomenon that they failed to comprehend, and it conjured in their minds a vast and looming large creature towering over humans with its deafening growl. Rarely have we noticed monsters who are puny, insignificant and get lost behind the rocks. Hamilton explores the concept and observes that when individuals were exploring around the world, the existence of mystical beings would come out either with fascination or horror (2007: 4). For instance, when the Mariners return from the mysterious ports, they have strange stories of enormous sea monsters. So, these stories can find a permanent place in the cultural norms and be passed down from generation to generation and be placed in the form of a story by a writer originating from the culture. The sizes of creatures transformed into monsters, particularly mythological monsters, are frequently exaggerated in stories which talk about never-before-seen giant monsters. This is especially true of stories about mythical monsters.

Francesco Tonelli notes that different periods and statuses significantly impact the shape of monsters (2012: 121). He alludes to the etymology of the term, rooted in Latin, a derivative of *monere* “to remind, bring to (one’s) recollection, tell (of); admonish, advise, warn, instruct, teach” (Online Etymology Dictionary). The meaning of these words is later utilised with a different interpretation, describing horrible and strange occurrences. According to him, monsters are unidentified fictitious existences commonly represented in poetry or legendary tales, including mermaids, harpies, and sphinx, all having allegorical and symbolic importance in imaginary tales. Cosmin Perta’s article, “Pursuing a Subtle Monster in Philip K. Dick’s *Ubik*,” presents a different categorisation of monsters (2014: 277). He quotes Ambroise Pare’s classification, which is related to the 16th-century monsters that illustrate various aberrations, including the sea and sky monsters, in different circumstances. Using his perspective as a guide, he could decode the reason behind the monster’s inherent appearances in various forms and descriptions. He explicitly illustrates the beast in terms of its pros and cons related to the substantial life of the monster. The solid definition explains how a monster enters the world due to something that has already gone drastically wrong and resulted in a lack of perfection during its creation. In this sense, the etymologic background of the term gives us a significant clue about the function of the monsters. They represent wrongness or evilness, which warns, instructs, and teaches people. If monstrosity is analysed, it will lead people to understand the reasons behind it. Therefore, postcolonial monsters also represent evilness by warning people about the reasons for creating them.

Tonelli has brought religion as an interpretation of the monsters and noted the moral norms which are very essential for the Middle Ages communities, who often defined monstrosity with a strong adherence to the powers of the churches (2012: 121). For that reason, monsters usually were embodied in Christian beliefs, especially in the Middle Ages. The churches were ornamented, whether with snakes of two heads or men with the head of an animal. Based on the belief that the actual and fictional experiences were jumbled up with no sharp difference between the real and fabulous creatures, each of them has a specific symbolic or ethical significance for the believers. As another representative of Western power, the church has used the image of monsters to oppress and exercise power on people. The monster is, thus, described as the evilness in human beings, which must be fought against.

Dragan (2019) defines monstrosity as something external that is perceived by people as an extreme form of physical abnormality and, at times, when interacted with, shows mental abnormality too. It can be single or multiple manifestations of such deformities or infirmities in an individual that can be innate, gradually developed, or imagined by the character and is indicative of apparent forms of degeneration. In the present-day context, the term monster is no longer considered as something divine and a creation of God out of wrath towards humanity, but an inherent trend of diverse identities as exhibited by people across the world (Mukherjee, 2020). Thus, monstrosity is mostly accepted as inherent in human beings, which might appear in certain circumstances as it happens in the postcolonial context. While the colonised is described as the monster at first, the coloniser is put in the position of the monster in the postcolonial texts. Just like in Shelley’s and Saadawi’s writings, the question of “Who is the real monster?” is problematised in postcolonialist understanding.

Regarding how monsters and monstrosities are handled by the writers and also power holders in history, it is possible to say that Mary Shelley depicts a significant story of monstrosity that is

based on the relationship between power holders and oppressed identities. In this sense, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley is a literary work that compels the reader to sympathise with the monster. The Promethean scientist Victor Frankenstein's irresponsible decision to abandon his own creation and subject it to the cruelties of society results in transforming an innocent creature into a veritable 'monster'. Victor, as the power holder, exercises power on his creature, which will return to his creator as a contra-attack. Through a postcolonial approach, he creates a monstrosity as a coloniser; however, he cannot take control of this monster. Like in Saadawi's novel, the oppressed and the colonised monster strives for justice and revenge, which turns against its creator.

Ahmed Saadawi reflects Shelley's topic of power relations and its connection to monstrosity in a different context but with similar mechanisms. Under the setting of Baghdad, Saadawi's novel inherits many themes from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. According to Teggart (2019), *Frankenstein in Baghdad* is considered the first novel set in an Arabic society in which the components of Shelley's novel address the matters that are significant in Iraq nowadays. The writer exposes a monster emerging in Iraqi society out of the ravages of war following the American involvement in the battle and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein effectively in 2003. Hadi Al-Attag, a junk dealer in Iraq, is unnerved by the fact that there are so many dead bodies strewn all around the city as a result of suicide bombing or sectarian violence. Those bodies are even denied a decent ritualistic burial. His mission of giving these hapless bodies a decent burial results in the creation of a vengeful monster who pursues the circle of killing and bloodshed, just as Shelly's monster does. Hadi's primary aim is to stitch the body parts together as a whole so that they will not be treated as discarded rubbish and, therefore, worthy of a proper burial.

The thought with which the creation begins is very noble and is devoid of any evilness or malice, or revenge motive. Victor's motive was also a noble one: the development of science and technology. However, one needs to note that, unlike Victor Frankenstein, the intention was never to recreate life in the form of a human but to give a decent burial to the body parts. The intention gets distorted when the wandering of Hasib's spirit, a hotel security guard murdered in a bomb assault, decides to take refuge in this badly stitched deformed body, which is called *Shesma* in Arabic by the Iraqi people meaning Whatsitsname. The name alludes to Shelly's monster, who does not have a name. The implication is that the creator, or the power holder, is so ignorant of its creation that a name or an identity is not given. Just like the coloniser, the colonised is deprived of any name or identity. Therefore, the colonised, or oppressed, has to create his own identity through violence and fight against the oppressor.

This study analyses the dynamics behind the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed in a postcolonial context, referring to Shelley's and Saadawi's novels that accept monstrosity as a result of colonial oppression. With a focus on the works of Shelley and Saadawi, this study deals with the multifaceted relationships between the oppressor and the oppressed from a postcolonial perspective. It focuses on how the novels explore the concept of monstrosity as a consequence of colonial rule, providing an in-depth analysis of how this relationship is portrayed. By critically analysing the novels, it provides valuable insights into the complicated power relationships and the effects of colonialism on marginalised and oppressed populations as depicted in the works of Shelley and Saadawi.

Chapter 1 provides a comprehensive exploration of the colonial and postcolonial backgrounds in the novels of Mary Shelley and Ahmed Saadawi. The Industrial Revolution and

European colonialism had a significant impact on the colonial context in Shelley's early 19th-century novel. Saadawi's novel, on the other hand, addresses the involvement of the British Empire in Iraq and the consequences of the American occupation, shedding light on the socio-political dynamics and power structures at play. This part establishes connections between these historical contexts and their influence on Shelley's novel as well as Saadawi's portrayal of Baghdad.

Chapter 2 provides a thorough analysis of Shelley's and Saadawi's approaches to addressing the themes of terror and monstrosity. It explores the socio-political remarks, the postcolonial measurements, and the symbolic significance of the monster in both novels by highlighting the writers' unique perspectives and their critiques of oppressive norms and systems of authority. This chapter helps readers gain a clearer understanding of how horror, monstrosity, and postcolonial themes are frequently intertwined in these works.

Chapter 3 focuses on the depiction of postcolonial monsters in the novels of Shelley and Saadawi. It addresses the influence of colonial oppression and ideology on the development of these monstrous figures. It explores the themes related to the concept of postcolonial monsters, such as the origins of postcolonial monsters as a result of colonial exploitation and oppression, their experiences of loneliness and exile, their pursuit for justice and revenge as symbolic representations of the oppressed, and the existence of evilness within a cyclical framework. This chapter provides a thorough and comprehensive exploration of postcolonial monsters with critical insight into their representation in the selected novels.

2. THE COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL BACKGROUND IN SHELLEY'S AND SAADAWI'S NOVELS

2.1. The Colonial Background of Shelley's *Frankenstein*

The 19th century was a time of expansion and dominance for European colonialism. During this period, several European powers collaborated to found colonies, protectorates, and spheres of influence on various continents, including Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The consequences of colonialism were multifaceted, including both positive and negative impacts on the people and the natural resources. Among several positive impacts were the introduction of new technology, educational initiatives, and physical infrastructure. However, the negative legacies can be seen through the exploitation of natural resources, the use of slavery, and the oppression of regional cultures and customs. European colonialism profoundly impacted the world and influenced the political, economic, social, and cultural landscape of many colonised regions. It contributed to the European powers' rise and other societies' fall. This has made a foundation for many geographical conflicts and inequalities that still exist today.

Historically, the early 19th-century context, particularly the Industrial Revolution and European colonialism, impacted Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The novel was influenced by two significant factors of its time: the Luddite disturbance of 1812–1817, which involved machine-breaking and forced proletarian revolution, and the vitalist-materialist controversy at the Royal College of Surgeons from 1814–1819, which involved the question of whether the phenomena of life could be fully illustrated by physics and chemistry or living things were fundamentally different from non-living things because of the presence of an immaterial “life force” or “vital principle” (Williams, 2000: 367). In this respect, Shelley's novel problematises industrial and technological developments that blur the borders between human and non-human beings. The novel explores the moral arguments that are related to Frankenstein's experiments and the danger of “playing God” (Russel, 2019: 303-319) by exercising power on other beings who are not accepted as equal to him and his society, which reflects the colonial ideology of its time.

European imperialism prevailed by several Western nations, such as Britain, France, and Spain, attempted to establish colonies worldwide. During Shelley's lifetime, European empires were able to expand their influence all around the world. As historically indicated, the British Empire was one of the most powerful empires, with colonies in India, Africa, and the Americas in that period. The dominance of Europeans over non-Europeans was the most apparent trend in the history of the late 19th century. They dominated the territories – “a grand total of roughly 85 per cent of the earth was colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions, and commonwealths” (Said, 1993: 8) – through various forms of economic penetration, annexation, and cultural domination. In the aftermath of the Soviet Union's fall, the broad discrediting of Marxist and Leninist analysis, and the end of the Cold War, scientists and historians reached a conclusion to look at 19th-century imperialism more favourably. According to well-known contemporary historian Niall Ferguson (2012), the British Empire likely contributed more to the world than the Marxist-poisoned historians of the past generation. Particularly, the British Empire, which preserved international law and benefited everyone by ensuring free trade flow, is frequently used as an example of a “liberal” empire (Pollack, 2005: 160-162). Despite the favourable comments on colonialism, many intellectuals, in the past and today, have been harshly against colonialism. Mary Shelley was one

of the pioneers who were highly aware of how Western colonialism was bringing damage to the world.

Both colonialism and imperialism were powered and promoted by a powerful ideological framework that supported the system (Hevešiová, 2019). Literature is a significant ideological framework. Literary masterpieces of the day, like Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, emphasised the harmony between European high culture and imperialist colonisation. *Mansfield Park* serves as an example of how culture and imperialism operate together, as well as how literary works are connected to imperialist colonial expansion abroad (He-jun, 2009: 69-72). The idea that Europe is superior to other parts of the world that are uncivilised, culturally behind, and need to become civilised results from Europe's ideology of dominance in many spheres of life. This mentality fosters negative phenomena like racism, which opposes the rights of other races, and colonialism, which seizes land owned by people from different cultures. From an imperialist perspective, the world was the one, and Europe had the right to colonise it. The manner in which European colonial powers, particularly England and France, constructed the values of subordinate cultures and built relationships between the centre and outsiders, which has been critiqued by postcolonial writers (Hadžija, 2020).

The Age of Enlightenment, with its emphasis on and belief in science, reason, logic, liberty, progress, fraternity, constitutional government, natural law, and separation of church and state, is usually seen as connected to the French Revolution that happened in 1789. Shelley sided with liberty, progress, and other aspects of the Enlightenment but did not agree with the heavy focus on science, logic, exploitation, and colonialism. She was more aligned with Romanticism and its belief in the importance of feeling and with the critical stances of Romanticism and Radicalism about social changes, including industrialism and colonialism. This can be seen in her writings, such as *Frankenstein* (otherising human and non-human beings, science without ethics, the hubris of science not considering consequences), *Lodore* (rights of women), and *Valperga* (political power and moral principles). Shelley was writing when the Enlightenment gave way to Romanticism, which was part of the counter-Enlightenment movement. Thus, her writing includes the criticism of colonialism, industrialisation and urbanisation, science without ethics, and the lack of rights, freedom, and liberty for all human beings.

Shelley witnessed the historical changes in her time, and she was well aware of the historical facts as her family had a great interest in politics and social issues. Most of her writings were shaped by the political perspective of her family because she was born into a politically radical family. Mary Shelley's father, William Godwin, adhered to libertarian ideology. Her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, was a writer who stood for feminist principles and liberal issues. Both of them were conscious of the policies of colonialism and imperialism carried out by the British government. In *Frankenstein*, Shelley says, "Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. His success would terrify the artist; he would rush away from his odious handiwork, horror-stricken" (2018: 186). She mostly refers to the potential outcome of any possible human attempt to change the system on behalf of the powerful. Her work stimulates the reader's interest in the concept of fear. The aspect of the recent work that is recognisable to contemporary readers is the concept of battle and fear between the oppressor and the oppressed. Hindle (1994) states that Shelley gives readers

a greater feeling than the Gothic novel. Shelley intends to speak to the mysterious fears of our nature and awaken thrilling horror which is caused by the power holders and oppressors.

Shelley's experience of colonialism is also derived from her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley. He was a supporter of the French Revolution, liberation, and even anarchism. The period had a critical influence on Shelley's view because she was born in 1797, the ninth year of the French Revolution, and seven years before Napoleon Bonaparte's declaration of himself as the emperor, with the consequent start of the wars that ravaged Europe until 1815 (and which took decades to recover from). Shelley herself saw the carnage left by Napoleon's campaigns when she and Percy Shelley, later her husband, travelled through Europe in 1814. Her observations and her radical tendencies informed much of her writing style in addressing the themes of colonialism, power, and oppression. Her works, other than her famous literary novel *Frankenstein*, are no less important. For instance, in *The Last Man* (1826), she depicts a society collapsed by corruption and political chaos. The novel is interpreted as a warning notification about the magnificent danger of imperialism and the deficiency of the political system to meet the people's needs. In this sense, the colonial and imperialist aspects of her period are implicitly or explicitly reflected in her writings.

2.2. The Colonial Background of Saadawi's *Frankenstein*

2.2.1. British Colonisation of Iraq

The introductory part of the study referred to the present scenario of Iraq fraught with poverty, killing, and sectarian violence. In order to understand the present condition better, this part will shed light on the history of Iraq. It will first reveal the onset of the colonisation of Iraq prior to and after the world wars, and then it will focus on the American occupation of the country.

Prior to the start of the First World War, British governance held responsibility over the three Ottoman provinces of Basra, Mosul, and Baghdad. Each of these had its own distinct characteristics in terms of race, culture, religious identity, or even style of living. Basra was more inclined towards Persia through the trade routes, while Baghdad showed an inclination towards Palestine and Damascus, again due to their trade ties which impacted their culture. Most people in Mosul were Kurds of Euro-Persian descent and looked towards the country's north to find cultural affinity. 1918 did not see an impoverished Iraq. On the contrary, the picture was completely different. Tribal leaders and Sheikhs ruled the prosperous provinces and were not subjected to a unified central government. David Fromkin (1989), in his book *A Peace to End All Peace*, speaks about the domination of the initial British occupying forces, and he mentions that the tension between the diverse population was evident and posed a more significant problem for the British about the unification of the tribal lords. The Bedouins and the Kurds were challenged to be subjugated. The country was riddled with incoherence, communal strife, and chronic disorder that was prevalent amongst the intermittent peace and prosperity of the nation.

England discussed its overall arrangement for Iraq and resorted to a particular sort of layout. Two ways of thinking affected the arrangement in London. The first, supported by the Provincial Office, focused on a strategy of direct control to safeguard British interests in the Persian Bay and India. Evaluating British arrangements in India, this group might be known as the Indian way of thinking. The other group, expecting to assuage Middle Easterner patriots, prompted indirect control. In Iraq, British specialists were partitioned on the issue. Some, affected by Sir Arnold

Wilson, the acting common magistrate, supported direct control; others, frightened by developing disappointment with the British organisation, prompted roundabout control and recommended the foundation of a native system under British watch. England was as yet uncertain about which strategy it ought to pursue in the 1920s when developing conditions in other Middle Eastern nations fundamentally changed the conditions in Iraq (El Habbouch, 2019).

During the Second World War, there were a lot of British troops in Iraq. After the war, the UK set up a provincial government. British forces fought for more than ten years to unite the country in response to the Iraqi resistance, which included a significant rebellion in 1920. They employed fighter aircraft, defensively armoured vehicles, firebombs, and poison gas. It was hard for the outside power to combine Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra into a single political entity and make a country out of the different religious and ethnic groups in these areas. This goal could only be accomplished after the conclusion of the Second World War. The situation in the new Iraqi state was quickly fixed due to the work of the British military experts during the war and the rise in patriotism. As a result, it led to a different course of action during the post-war years until Iraq became a free political entity in 1932 (Jacobsen, 1991).

The 18-year-long British involvement from 1914 to 1932 in Iraq can be separated into four distinct phases. Significant changes in British governmental strategy marked each phase as the state attempted to meet its global obligations while also resolving domestic concerns and maintaining control over an increasingly chaotic Iraqi population. Despite these efforts, the British government needed help allocating the time, money, and expertise to fulfil its obligations to Iraq. Consequently, the project of constructing a stable Iraqi state remained unattainable, and the nation continued to confront political and social challenges long after British involvement had officially ended.

The unification of Iraq had begun in 1918 with Basra and Baghdad under a civil commissioner. To restore the lawlessness among the tribes, political officers were deployed to major towns and cities whose main attempt was to settle disputes between the tribes and the local government. A chain of command was put into place from the lowest administrative officer going all the way up to the High Commissioner. Although administrative workers were employed to look after irrigation, flood control projects, supplies of military forces, compensation for war damage, or to protect communication lines, they were often young and inexperienced military or civil officers who had little knowledge of the culture, language, law, codes of custom or traditions of the place.

Great Britain's influence on Iraq carried on till 1958. The British affairs ended, but the effects of the rule remained in the country, now loosely tied into a coerced unification with little or apparently no commonality between its people. It faces the problem of implementing democracy and a cohesive and functional system uniting different ethnic and religious groups. Following the collapsed regime of Saddam Hussein, the country was propelled into violent confrontations and grievances of the Shia, Sunni, or Kurdish populations, and stability was a farfetched dream among Iraqi populations. British lack of understanding of the culture, some Iraqi people's aim to establish a Pan-Arab nation, and the minority religious groups trying to rule over the country led to the modern-day conflicts faced by the citizens of the country. The colonisation of Iraq by the British was motivated by their self-serving needs and did little support to the regional people, thus, resulting in negative impacts on the country.

Between the First and Second World Wars, there was a significant shift in the political and social climate of the globe, which is one of the primary reasons why England was so unsuccessful in Iraq. The dramatic shift in the political and social climate landscape between the First and Second World Wars was one of the main reasons for England's failure in Iraq. The drawn-out and obliterating nature of the Second World War and the subsequent ascent to the predominance of the US of America were all side effects of bigger underlying changes to the worldwide request. The war extraordinarily diminished the force of England, France, and Germany, leaving every one of the three powers to recapture homegrown dependability and worldwide impact. The aggregate impacts of these changes – military, financial, institutional, and sociological – proclaimed the end of England's authoritative occupation in the worldwide framework. This permitted the US and, afterwards, the Soviet Union to become central participants, setting the universalising belief systems of Capitalism in opposition to Communism in a battle for matchless quality (Sharp, 2011). The climax of this conflict prompted tyrannical leaders, such as Saddam Hussein, to settle on the state becoming the authoritative unit of a country within the global framework. This marked the end of the pre-war colonisation practised by European powers in terms of expanding regional territory and establishing territorial domains (Strachan, 2007).

War is always in excess of a tactical conflict between nations, countries, or gatherings. It is undoubtedly the obliteration, destruction, and dislodging of an enormous number of blameless people. Besides these conspicuous, unmistakable impacts, war damages the individuals impacted by the horrendous viciousness on the two sides, the trespassers and the attacked. Wars that are the consequence of magnificent powers influence the existence of a group as well as their way of life and customs. In a colonised country, one can perceive how individuals attempt to get to know the new culture forced by the colonisers, who carry with them various qualities, convictions, customs, and propensities. This part of colonisation has existed for a long time among colonised countries and continues to the current day. Without a doubt, the colonial nations keep on influencing the lives of numerous Eastern individuals today (Lazarus, 2006).

2.2.2. American Colonialism in Iraq

Regarding the Middle East, Evans mentions that Westerners see the Middle East as a part of the outside world that must be ruled by people from the Middle East itself (2003: 281). The 2003 invasion of Iraq by America was a mere repetition of history to colonise another country with serious ramifications for both Iraq and the American public as well as the global community. From a geopolitical point of view, one cannot deny the Middle East's significance as an important trade route among different continents, including Asia, Europe, and Africa. With 67% of the current oil output and 73% of the oil reserve, it has financial significance. It is well-known that oil has become the gold fuelling the global economy. The importance of the Middle East grew to an abominable height in the eyes of those who wanted to colonise it for their further gains. The agreement of Sykes-Picot signed in 1916 between the two powerful nations, Britain and France, split the vast Ottoman Caliphate (Ottomans) into fictitious borders that maintained the area in a continual state of unrest and instability. In 1953, the United States of America joined the arena in Iran by re-enthroning Shah and, thus, gaining control over the oil companies. In 1953, neo-colonialism was ushered in with puppet rulers and brokers who would facilitate and transfer the natural resources as brokerage fees in the form of external assistance and payoffs (Evans, 2003).

As stated in the Sykes-Picot Agreement, according to Sandy Tolan (2022), the US strategy was to focus on the Middle East's geography. Tolan claims that this effort is a well-developed strategy to control oil flow in the Middle East and ensure Israel's military supremacy in the area. In that period, the objectives of the transition away from tyranny in three great countries, Iraq, Syria, and Iran, were seen from different perspectives. This neo-imperialist worldview is a throwback to the days of British colonial authority before the Second World War. To meet the essential criteria of colonisation as clearly defined by international law, such as territorial invasion, government by outsiders, and control of natural resources, some plans and suggestions were raised by senior officials of the United States to govern Iraq with smooth assistance of US companies under the condition of a no-bid agreement to rebuild the country. Iraqis' misery intensified after the American occupation in 2003. This occupation was guided by the worldwide alliances of horrendous power that had brought the nation into chaos. This occupation enhanced other catastrophes that confounded the circumstance incredibly. Such misfortune set off the obliteration and disturbance by which Iraq is disarranged in a particularly extreme manner.

The colonial background of Iraq is well-reflected in Saadawi's book, showing how dangerous it is to exercise injustice power. The story takes place soon after the terrible events of the US attack in 2003, depicting Baghdad as a complicated mix of the natural and supernatural, with frequent suicide bombings, ghosts hunting for the flesh, storytellers gathering over coffee houses, the evenings of gunshots, reporters chitchatting with prostitutes, roads lined with dead bodies, families grieving the loss of their dead loved ones, government agencies consulting astrology, and many other conflicting, Gothic, violent, and sometimes even supernatural events happen. Saadawi's monster shows that colonialism and neo-colonialism are at the heart of the problem. Different powers see the monster as a force for justice and a voice for unity, but not a threat at first. However, Saadawi shows how the saviour of justice quickly turns into a violent monster. Similar to Shelley's monster, *Whatsitsname* becomes a symptom of the colonial and neo-colonial background of society.

2.3. The Triangle of Power Struggle, Colonialism, and Terrorism

Colonialism can be interpreted in various ways that lead to counter-terrorist attacks. Colonialism and terrorism are linked in several ways. Colonialism and neo-colonialism have been recognised as the primary causes of terrorism in the twentieth century since they led to the oppression and exploitation of millions of people. They make the local citizens feel alienated and resentful, keeping them always under threat and in jeopardy. One of the most significant ways of exercising power over people is through establishing control and subsequent suppression of the local citizens' culture, language, economy, and traditions (Mazumder, 2008: 14). In some instances, the colonial powers have used violence and oppression to achieve their goal of controlling the local citizens. This intention further exacerbates tensions and violent resistance.

The use of force by the colonial power sometimes radicalised a group of people to use more extreme techniques, such as terrorism, to achieve their goals. The legacy of colonialism has also played a role in the rise of neo-colonialism, which has been related to the growth of terrorist acts in certain regions (Alzubairi, 2019: 19-49). On the other hand, the exploitation of natural resources and the imposition of economic policies support the colonial power at the expense of the development of local citizens. This causes poverty, inequality, and instability in society. All of

them increase the chance of producing an environment that can be supportive of the growth of terrorist groups. Martin agrees when he states that:

Political violence, including terrorism, has systematic origins that can be ameliorated. Social and economic pressures frustrated political aspirations, and in a more proximate sense, the personal experiences of terrorists and their relations, all contribute to the terrorist reservoir. (2010: 6)

Overall, the impact of colonialism can leave deep tensions that can continue to exist for a long time, even after the end of colonial rule. These continual tensions will drive violence in the form of terrorist attacks and contra-terrorist violent responses to them.

Postcolonial studies emphasise the immense power of standardising the races, which sometimes results in terrorist demonstrations and activities. This understanding is well-known by those living in postcolonial social orders that are frequently ignored and unrequested (Goyal, 2017). Iraq's colonial history depicts a similar picture. The colonial powers face a contra-attack in postcolonial Iraq, especially after the US invasion. A postcolonial analysis of the United States found that it caused global conflict, and its strategies for fighting terrorism were linked to fear-based wars. This resulted in more fighting between the oppressor and the oppressed, which had happened before (Gregory, 2004).

The reaction to the September 11 assaults showed up as a defining moment in worldwide relations, according to some scholars and strategy producers (Barkawi and Laffey, 2006). The worldwide reaction impelled by the US – furthermore upheld by Western powers – should be visible as a continuation of past provincial power strategies in managing discontent in their regions (Barkawi and Laffey, 2006). The idea of a “special case,” which means suspending law and order in a conflict out of fear, has become the norm in foreign policy. This has led Western countries to use oppressive tactics like torture, a “unique version,” to battle against terrorism. However, as another type of terrorism, using terror in order to eliminate it only creates a circle of vengeance and violence, which is observed implicitly in Shelley's *Frankenstein* and explicitly in Saadawi's adaptation through their monsters.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is usually considered a commentary on colonialism and oppression, particularly in the monster's character and its relationship to its creator, Victor Frankenstein. The monster is constantly subjected to discrimination and violence because of his appearance, which is different from the traditional norm. This can be depicted as a metaphor for how vulnerable people are in society. The monster is essentially colonised and oppressed by the dominant human society, and Shelley uses his story to critique how such oppression can lead to contra violence and suffering.

The monster is an outsider because Victor Frankenstein immediately abandons and rejects him. He is treated as an insane animal and denied the fundamental rights and privileges that are given to other entities. In time, the behaviour of the monster turns into terrorism because of society's rejection and his creator's ignorance, which leads to his desire for vengeance. Shelley's monster looks like an example of the period of the Reign of Terror, which begins with noble ideas of freedom and equality but turns into unjust radical attacks. In a similar vein, Saadawi's monster consists of the body parts of Iraqi people who have experienced oppression in one way or another. The oppression and injustice, thus, make the monster use contra-violence and terrorism as a response.

3. HORROR AND MONSTROSITY IN POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXT

One of the most ancient and strongest emotions in humans is undoubtedly the emotion of fear and its extreme form, horror. Fear was responsible for establishing the concept of faith and religion, especially when power holders wanted a fantastic intervention to protect them from the fear of death, decay, and suffering. This sense of fear stemmed from the unknown and mysterious phenomena, which people were unable to explain with their limited knowledge of such paranormal acts, and hence, they started labelling them as the acts of gods or unnatural psychic realms that wielded a higher power and had the capacity of destruction by deciding the fate of mere mortals. Very soon, literature in the form of ballads, songs, and epics started getting filled with unexplainable phenomena to whom people started attributing a shape or a form that was benevolent or grotesque in nature. Both humans and nonhumans were associated with superhuman abilities and eternal life in ancient and later on in popular culture.

People's creativity has no limits and can take any shape – the writers create beings which do not even have bodies. The most familiar fictional characters in literature appeared as ghosts, spirits, and sometimes extra-terrestrial beings or aliens who had come from other worlds to kill humans and make trouble for them. Early on, in the form of oral narratives and later in written form, the legends spoke of many extraordinary powers. Horror became a genre that still inspires writers and artists today, who use these myths and folktales as their motivation. Horror can be categorised into three major categories, each with minor variations. These categories are science fiction, fantasy, and horror, forming the so-called 'great triangle,' and are typically based on fear and imagination.

Several authors have tried to explain horror and how it differs from other types of stories, such as science fiction and mysteries. There are few differences, and the writers have put in much work to develop the necessary areas and get around the problems that come with familiar things in one genre but not in another. Horror can be found in many types of literature, such as gothic and demonic novels. In his essay "An Introduction to Studying Popular Culture" (2000), Dominic Strinati tries to define horror as a category that stands for the need to explain violence and oppression in societies and among people.

In contrast, there are a lot of aspects of horror that are incredibly challenging to categorise. There are some theorists who divide and organise horror into various subgenres. For instance, Todorov defined three types of horror as a genre in his book *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Concept* (1973) (Prohászková, 2012). These three types are the marvelous (which is characterised by the presence of supernatural or inexplicable events), the uncanny (which involves the blurring of boundaries between reality and fantasy), and the fantastic proper (which is marked by the temporary uncertainty of whether the events depicted are real or imaginary). It is important to note that while these categories are related to horror, Todorov's broader focus is on the genre of the fantastic, which encompasses a range of literary forms and themes beyond horror.

The horror genre developed in the 18th century, parallel with the establishment of gothic literary works. The notion of horror began with gothic literature and then was followed and evolved by the gothic period. The writer had the chance to provide a shape to a character to become a symbolic icon for the horror genre, such as monsters and vampires. The extraordinary components of horror fiction paved the way for the creation of a fantastical universe and science fiction.

The earlier horror novels focus more on tangible things, like extraordinary figures with shape and appearance, and on the readers' feelings, like fear, hopelessness, anxiety, and so on. It is mostly

stated that (Mocná and Peterka, 2004) horror is considered a genre much focusing on the creation of terror, tension, and anxiety in the reader. Thus, the first category includes concrete beings. The archetypal characters in horror stories are mainly vampires, werewolves, zombies, monsters, mad scientists, demons, ghosts, eternal wanderers, serial killers, psychopaths, bad children, possessed persons, anti-religious people, or even anarchists. The context in which the tale takes place is highly essential. Initially, the horror places are graveyards, ruined fortresses, dark forests, and old houses. These places are usually endowed with mysterious things. This is even true for modern horror stories, which are set in the backdrop of macabre scenes, killings, blood, gore, and death, which typically evoke fear and abhorrence in individuals.

Extra-terrestrials are also horror items; they are abnormal and symbolise the limits of human comprehension. The magnificent horror here is related to a supernatural phenomenon. In this second category, the extraordinary figures cannot be seen, but their existence is understood mostly at the end. It is also common that these mysterious stories embrace the tales of unseen vampires, wolves, demons, and other supernatural creatures. The third category, horror fantasy, has not given any obvious explanation for irrational matters. Instead, it provides various alternatives. For this reason, the readers have been given a chance to decide whether they can illustrate the phenomena as the existence of supernatural figures or the delusion or the illusion of the major protagonist. Any existence is problematic in this category.

Punter provides a thought of postcolonial literature and its implications in his work *Postcolonial Imagining: Fictions of a New World Order* (2000). Punter illuminates the role of storytelling in dismantling the legacies of colonialism, highlighting how authors use fiction as a tool for subversion, resistance, and the reimagining of societies. Through the lens of horror, Punter's argument emphasises the significant influence of horror stories on postcolonial civilisations, enabling a greater understanding of the complicated nature of oppression and struggle. Critics like Botting (2013) have expressed concern about the possibility of readers being misled and falling into immorality and corruption. But it is precisely the combination of feelings and blurry limits that makes these stories so important to the world. They explore the deep contrasts of the human experience by embracing the interaction between pleasure and sorrow.

According to Botting, the readers are interested in terrifying items that can stimulate and evoke emotions of dread, aversion, and recoiling from such dreaded objects. Worry, fear, and pleasure are the perfect accompaniments to stimulate the reader's taste of wish for adventure (Botting, 2013: 9). "If fear causes one's imagination to expand, horror shows the moment of restriction and recoil," Fred Botting expresses (1997: 10). Beville admits that horror is a "limited experience" but also thinks that it provides an opportunity for basic human desires by "merely hinting" at the wicked and horrible (O'Sullivan, 2023: 15).

The horror genre has become very functional in order to depict topics that are related to justice, oppression, and power struggles, which are common in colonial and postcolonial literature. In this sense, horror and monstrosity become two inseparable parts of postcolonial writing. In the post-colonial period, monsters have been heavily portrayed in literature and film. There is room for thought if someone needs to argue that horror is used while undermining the capitalist, colonialist, and neo-colonialist systems. Nevertheless, this horror genre presents the dominant and the oppressed culture and tries to fulfil an ideological function. This genre is usually seen as the

portrayal of community. It portrays the preferences of the forces that drive the pursuit of profit, hegemony, and patriotic nobles. Additionally, it portrays the reactions against them.

Two more well-known horror theories concerning monstrosities and monsters are significant in this sense. We can start by looking at Fredric Jameson's observation that unpleasant things can persist in being classified as anything with a different perspective on people's perceptions. For instance, the so-called barbarian people have different customs and adhere to their culture. When a woman with genetic predispositions is among them, the rule castrates her. Secondly, Julia Kristeva's theory of *abjection* – a theory that does not recognise boundaries, places, or laws, demonstrating the weakness of the law or the region where senses collapse – is what makes monstrosity functional to stand against sovereignty. It shows some of our fears, desires, and sins and the extent of our oppression by institutions and the social system. It prevents readers or viewers from requiring explanations about where one ends and the other starts.

Monsters had a variety of purposes in early modern Europe's visual culture. According to Tina Marie Boyer, an assistant professor of mediaeval German literature at Wake Forest University, "monsters do not emerge out of a cultural void; they have a literary and cultural heritage" (Boyer, 2013: 2). They are a person's extreme and violent legacy, instead. Monsters want to be in control of other people just like men do. Monsters are distinct from humans in constantly looking for ways to harm them. The idea is demonstrated by the fact that Mary Shelley's monster is such a being because that is what people initially believed it to be. Monsters have historically been linked to evilness, frequently ignoring social norms. In his book *Monsters: Evil Beings, Mythical Beasts, and All Manner of Imaginary Terrors*, David Gilmore (2003) makes a similar claim. He claims that monsters were frightening because they broke expectations and performed some deeds that ordinary people could only imagine. Since they have no respect for laws or restrictions and will attack and kill without feeling guilty, monsters are the kind of spirit that readily agrees to anything against the law (Gilmore, 2003: 12).

Michel Foucault says that a monster is a mix of things that have some strange shapes and are, in some ways, hard to put into a single category (2003: 79). According to Foucault (Sharpe, 2003), the monster is a combination of the Middle Ages and the Eighteenth Century. It combines elements from the animal and human worlds, including ox-headed beings and men with bird-like feet. It combines two different animals; the monster has a pig body and a sheep cranium. It blends the qualities of two individuals. Those with either two bodies and one brain or two skulls and one body are considered monsters. The monster is a combination of the two sexes; it possesses both masculine and feminine characteristics. Thus, it is abject and the other according to societal norms. A monster is an embryo generally born with a look that makes survival impossible but lets it live for a short time. It combines elements of vitality and mortality. A monster is a being that mostly lacks organs or body parts; it is a combination of forms. So, the real problem with monstrosity is that it goes against classification and natural limits (Wright, 2013: 48).

When people can relate to something they find impulsive and want to refuse or get rid of, it makes them feel good. Horror stories and monsters have a similar function. In horror stories, the monsters take on symbolic meanings and may even be used to do something terrible. Besides many literary works, the films have also used horror and monstrosity to address colonial and postcolonial issues. For instance, *Bacarau* (Filho and Dornelles, 2019) and *Karnan* (Selvaraj, 2021) are postcolonial horror films that have much to do with many of the mentioned topics. We already

know that these movies mix magical realism and horror. *Bacurau* talks about things by bringing in characters and images from classic Western powers, mainly to criticise them and then get rid of them in the end. The story takes place in a rural area that is not well-run and can be oppressive and backward. There is much fighting between classes, races, natives, and foreigners. However, through its different plots, it also explores the ideas of love and family, mythology, and redemption.

These films, almost the same as literary works, show how the locals oppose colonial oppressions and how they stand together as subjugated people. These horror movies hint at the complexity of politics through the way they show classes, the struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor, and the isolation of those who have lost everything in the conflicts. In these works, the idea of the monster is widespread; it grows more vital in a lawless society and degenerates into peculiar practices, criminal killings, and protests that pursue and kill not only the oppressors but also local indigenous people. Similar to the main function of these movies, many novels like that of Shelley and Saadawi analyse the colonial rule and the divisive role of terror in postcolonialist and neo-colonial societies through the metaphor of monstrosity.

3.1. Mary Shelley and Her Postcolonial Monster

Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley (1797-1851) had been brought up in an intellectual circumstance and thus was acknowledged in the social and political atmosphere of her time. Mary's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, was one of the first feminists who published *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* and was in France during much of the French Revolution. Although her mother died soon after Shelley's birth, her mother influenced her work a lot, especially through her father, William Godwin. William was a radical political figure, a pioneering anarchist, with a strong emphasis on women's rights and political justice – he tried to keep his wife's work on women's rights in the public eye. Mary married Percy Shelley, the English romantic poet, who was a colleague of her father and a radical. The relationship between them was a creative and intellectual partnership that influenced both writers' work and helped shape the Romantic literary movement.

Mary Shelley developed a very famous fictional figure in 1818, at the age of nineteen. She released *Frankenstein* in three different versions: a three-volume edition in 1818, a two-volume edition in 1823, and a single-part, heavily revised edition in 1831. Despite having no name in the novel, the readers named the monster after its creator's name, and the monster became known as Frankenstein. It is one of the most well-known characters in fiction. The inspiration for the idea came from Lord Byron's suggestion for a competition during the night when Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, Percy Shelley, John Polidori, and Lord Byron got stuck in a house close to Genova in 1816 because of a snowstorm. The challenge required participants to compose a unique horror story. When Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*, she did not probably know that this character would live for centuries.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is a proto-postcolonial work, among other things. Shelley was an intellectual writer, and she was conscious of colonialism. It was no accident that Robert Walton, a traveller attempting to navigate the northern seas, recounted the story of her outstanding work. Walton's efforts to find a route across the North Pole aim to open up new possibilities for colonial success and mastery. After hearing Victor Frankenstein's story and talking to his monster, the sailor gives up his main goal and returns to shore (London, 1993).

In the time of Shelley, men generally travelled in pursuit of better opportunities. The motivation for travelling far and wide has remained the same throughout history and is still the pursuit of opportunity. The path to the last choice, a construct of realms full of difficulty, debasement, and mistreatment, is always challenging and full of danger and fear. Despite how tiresome the journey may be, the novels based on colonisation and conquering are also filled with hopes of creating a better world (Abdalkafor, 2018).

Frantz Fanon's notable works, such as *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), analyse the psychological, social, and political impacts of colonialism on colonised populations. He examines the dehumanising effects of colonialism, the internalisation of racial inferiority, and the quest for liberation from oppressive systems. Fanon's work sheds light on the broader themes of colonialism, oppression, and liberation that can be applied to Shelley's *Frankenstein*. By analysing the novel through a postcolonial lens, readers can discover additional levels of meaning and draw parallels between the experiences of the monster and the struggles of those subjected to colonial and postcolonial systems.

Spivak says that the frenzy of patriarchy and the discourse of racism (which is the inner world of imperialism seen as a social purpose) create the language for (the withdrawal of) sexual reproduction rather than a specific subject in *Frankenstein* (1985, 255). Sexual reproduction is one of the many ideas quietly displayed throughout Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. However, the novel is mainly about the views of Victor Frankenstein and his monster, based on the racial ideas of a post-abolitionist British imperial society in the 19th century.

The novel depicts the main purpose behind Frankenstein's creation and how the monster's emotions fluctuated wildly depending on how much of a master-slave connection there was. In the article "Frankenstein and Slave Narrative: Race, Revulsion, and Radical Revolution," Alan M. S. J. Coffee claims that Shelley's use of the master-slave relationship illustrates how their destinies intersect and how one's wickedness affects the morality of another (2019: 2). This study focuses on this moral story in order to understand both points of view. The main focus is on the master-slave ideology or the conflict between Frankenstein and his creation in the colonial era.

In the late 19th century, Shelley lived in a British imperial society that was familiar with slavery and the birth of capitalism. It was the outset of the modern era of transformation. People from developing countries had begun emphasising their happiness and well-being as the Western world continued to develop and improve. It was a time when the invention was at its peak, making its mark on all fields of science and reshaping economies for the betterment of humanity. These historical facts are reflected in her novel. At the same time, when Mary Shelley was growing up, going to school, and being in the intellectual circle, there was a considerable rise in anti-slavery activity in the United Kingdom (Smith, 2004: 209). The British government outlawed the transatlantic slave trade in 1803, and by 1833, there had been a significant effort to liberate the enslaved people who had been held in British possessions. The creation of *Frankenstein* was closely linked to numerous contentious debates about the reform movements of the period. According to Smith, race-related issues and slavery became essential to the developing English culture, in which Mary Shelley actively engaged (2004: 209).

Worried about the British transatlantic slave trade, Shelley and her father, William Godwin, supported the movement to abolish slavery (Sawyer, 2007: 20–21). In *Political Justice* (1793), Godwin wrote that he strongly opposed the rise of racism in response to the claims that a person's

race determined his or her natural intelligence and intellectual success. However, he accepted the stereotype that African Americans had early sexual development and were more passionate than Westerners (Malchow, 1993: 95). Shelley's perspective on life was mostly affected by that of her father. She was against slavery and even avoided sugar products because, as she wrote in her book, they were produced using slave labour. She read Bryan Edwards's *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (1798), which provided a stereotypical view of enslaved workers, even though it was written in the 19th century. Mary, according to Sawyer, was captivated by the book, possibly due to her tendency to identify with the weak and the oppressed (2007: 21). Her novel *Frankenstein* portrays these biases based on race in great detail.

This portrayal does, however, also invite severe critique. Paul Gilroy asserts that pre-modern ideas of "race" diversity included the concepts of the savage and the cultured, which have since evolved into significant cognitive and artistic indicators in the mechanisms that produced a cluster of discourses, making slavery a significant ethical and political issue today (quoted in Smith, 2004: 209). The story of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is supported by artistic cues that define the identities and senses of the figures of slavery. These characteristics include a firm criticism of the racial injustices and prejudices that catalysed the development of the characters. In this respect, the plot of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* depicts various characters regarding the issues of colonialism and slavery and their approach to these issues. One of these traits is the protagonist's connection with racist or speciesist ideas, which later makes the monster also a speciesist who hates human beings. Thus, postcolonial concern, including anti-racism and anti-slavery, lies behind the story of *Frankenstein* before postcolonialism was theorised in the twentieth century.

As mentioned above, Mary Shelley did not choose the name "Frankenstein" for the tragic monster in her book. The Latin *Francus*, which gave rise to "Frank" and "Frankenstein," connotes opportunity. In German, the name Frankenstein translates to "stronghold of freemen". Those who speak English are well aware of what "Victor" means. Together, the title suggests the opportunity for freemen might conquer. The title proclaims the possibility of the victory of the powerful. However, the power shifts from the creator to the created in the novel. This approach also makes the novel focus on the relationship between the power holder and the subject of this power. In this sense, the relationship between master and slave indicates colonial issues in the nineteenth century, and it is reversed by Shelley on behalf of the slave.

The conflict between eighteenth-century illumination and nineteenth-century sentimentalism is obvious in Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*. She resists her father's determinism by challenging the notion of complete freedom. Shelley was fascinated by the idea that man was a machine that could be designed for and meticulously managed. To challenge the social belief that beauty is a reflection of character, the novel shows the creature being mistreated. Shelley gives the moral precept that excessive pride brings about destruction. Frankenstein hints at a wish for the readers to transform by structuring their plots in a way that evokes empathy for the creature (Colleen, 2014). Whether Victor Frankenstein is to blame for creating the creature is one of the novel's numerous ethical and social problems. Because no two parts of a man's life are the same, his fate will depend on how well he can adapt to new situations. Considering this, everything will ultimately fail. The book also makes a subtle reference to how France changed by suggesting that the evil change in the animal's personality mirrors how the French Revolution went from early hopes for freedom, communication, and organisation to the dark days of the Reign of Terror.

Frankenstein acknowledges his defeat in all these as he recalls how he had imagined rest and peace, but things shifted so quickly and are now a cause of misery for him. People with much emotion saw nature as beautiful, though it could be upsetting, while people with much insight saw it as giving. Shelley's novel is set in the harsh Swiss Alps, with their rushing rivers and rocky, snow-covered peaks. By doing this, Shelley captures the heartfelt meaning of such beautiful splendour, which can also turn into a place of chaos. The fight between Frankenstein and his animal that happens in the same place reflects this idea.

The postcolonial approach is significant in order to understand *Frankenstein* as a story of master and slave dialectic. Colonial and postcolonial literature is based on "the encounter with the other" (Gunew, 1997: 231). Depending on how each party responds to the other's activities, the outcome of the agreed-upon meeting with the *other* may result in either conflict or unity between the two parties. When analysing the novel *Frankenstein*, the conflict between human society and the monster is clear. The monster is seen as the "other". Besides, the monster that Victor Frankenstein created gets the sympathy of the reader. In this sense, the metaphorical colonial oppression is reversed with a postcolonial point of view, which aims to accept the existence of the other.

Due to its ugly look, the monster is excluded from society, and thus, he tries to integrate himself into society. Despite his *otherised* position in society, he constantly pursues his goal of conforming to an average human. The monster is compelled to seek refuge in a hovel close to a cottage that houses a family because the villagers reject and try to hunt him due to their fear of his appearance. The creature pays very close attention to how the family members behave, as well as how they communicate with one another verbally. The monster wants to learn more about language and communication – he "ardently desired the acquisition of knowledge" (Shelley, 2003: 42) because language resembles divine wisdom. The monster works hard to understand the family's language and quickly learns common words like "fire," "milk," and "bread", but his inability to speak the language well prevents him from communicating with people. He is tenacious and unfazed by the language barrier (Shelley, 2003: 130). This language barrier reminds the colonial oppression, which makes the other an alien even in her/his own land. Although Victor creates the monster, he does not teach him language. Therefore, Victor condemns the monster to the position of the other, like the coloniser obliges the colonised to the language barrier.

Post-colonialism often depicts the monster as a representative of someone who gives up her/his own culture and adopts the culture of the other while letting the other, usually the white supreme power, have complete control over her/him. Shelley's monster hopes to gain acceptance from society by engaging in such an endeavour. He believes that by doing so, he has given society no reason to reject or exclude him. Shelley's monster at first reflects this psychology, and he eventually gathers the courage to approach De Lacey, the cottage's blind owner, but he soon realises that his efforts are in vain.

The otherised position of the monster is strengthened when he encounters other family members. After the monster becomes a friend of their father – as the father is blind, he is not aware of the monster's ugliness and *abnormality* – he considers that the others will also accept him as he is. One day, unexpectedly, Felix, Agatha, and Safie, the other three cottage occupants, arrives after their stroll in the forest. When they see him, Felix gets angry, and he believes the monster will hurt his father and other family members. In order to pull the monster out of the hands of his father, he

attacks the monster brutally (Shelley, 2003: 163). The creature leaves the cottage and returns to his hut, where he is heartbroken because all his attempts to communicate with humans have failed. He is once again the oppressed and excluded *other*. Shelley alludes to how colonial rulers did not accept their subjects as equal beings but instead assigned them a second-class, submissive position in society. Even though the monster makes the most significant effort to acquire the family's language and communicate with them, he is rejected because the family members are unwilling to listen to him out of their fear of the otherised beings. The family rejects him – because he is the other – despite all his attempts.

These family members can be portrayed as self-dominating and largely unaffected by the adaptation and integration efforts of the monster. They fall under another category of responses to the Other or as the colonial authority ruling over the submissive few. This group is reluctant to accept members of the outgroup or individuals who do not resemble them or are viewed as inferior by them and whose features or appearance are frequently thought to be abnormal. As a result, the creature or monster is not accepted by the family living in the cottage, just as the colonial authority does not adopt the suppressed other. Even if the obedient party entirely abandons its own culture and tries to imitate that of its colonial master, it will still conflict with the dominant or superior culture because the sovereignty's main aim is to use the oppressed for its advantage. Such confrontations produce hostility and hatred in society, as happens in Shelley's novel, and profoundly impact the lives of both the oppressor and the oppressed.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* shows the postcolonial view of blending in with others throughout the novel. The monster is personified as the one who encounters the colonial power that is personified as human society. The creature or monster tries hard to fit in with the human culture. This is a metaphor for how the ruled try to fit in with humans or the ruling power. However, they are cruelly rejected and exiled, literally or metaphorically, and discarded due to their otherness, which will lead them to be monsters.

For more than two hundred years, Dr Frankenstein and his monster have kept audiences engaged in a tightly connected revival of academic reflections. Mary Shelley's description of suffering raises questions about the problems that will always happen and are much worse for today's societies. The feeling of suffering might result from feeling alienated in the male-dominated or Western-dominated world of the nineteenth century. While male-centric belief systems were wreaking devastation, the monarchies were abusing many colonised groups on the scale of their spectacularly harmful endeavours. The recent French change had upset the way that Europe had previously thought. The men and the women of that period were in anguish for Shelley. After reading *Frankenstein*, we still think about the people who are hurt by otherising – domination by patriarchy and colonialism. Women's advocates and postcolonial scholars have drawn attention to Mary Shelley's foresight, which they see as hostile to society's less-than-beneficial dominant character and standard (Edan, 2022). In this respect, Shelley's monster is a reaction to oppression, domination, and exploitation, which are all related to oppression and colonialism. Thus, it is possible to call it a "postcolonial monster" that tries to revenge this system and its people.

Shelley's social and political beliefs formed by her personal experiences influenced most of her writings. In her works, she gives the idea that freedom can be achieved once the oppressive system withdraws, and the autonomy of people can be a way to political and social change. Mary Shelley is one of the writers who embodied the community in her writing, portraying modern

society through the lens of colonialism and imperialism. Her work is still vital for contemporary society to understand the impacts of colonialism and imperialism in the nineteenth century, which have centred on power, oppression, and an uncontrolled desire for scientific and technological development. This understanding will lead the community to address the injustices and inequalities that are still felt today – Andrews describes the shift from the old system of imperialism to the new as “liberal imperialism” (2021: 111). Today, within the framework of the new system, colonised regions are historically transformed into cooperative communities that support humanitarianism and universalism as the core values of the Enlightenment. This shift might be observed in Saadawi’s novel, sharing similar concerns to Shelley, though after two hundred years.

3.2. Ahmed Saadawi and His Postcolonial Monster

To analyse how the topic of *Frankenstein* functions as an allegory for society, we should look at many critical interpretations of Shelley’s novel. In Mary Shelley’s novel, the character of the “monster” shows how society’s problems worsened over time (Friedman and Kavey, 2016: 9). Many scholars have compared this monster to societal problems in Shelley’s period. The monster in Shelley’s novel has been rethought in many ways, some similar to what Shelley had in mind when she was referring to societal issues. Saadawi clarifies in his interview with Najjar that his strategy must also address Shelley’s concerns. However, he carefully points out that his adaptation of *Frankenstein* is different from Mary Shelley’s original work. Saadawi takes the idea and style of European *Frankenstein* and adds issues and events from another culture, especially those unique to Iraq’s social and economic situation.

The first Arabic adaptation of Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, is based on the story of a human monster born to take revenge. The plot is based on the events revolving around this main character. Although there are many similarities with Shelley’s monster, there are only two mentions of the name *Frankenstein* in Saadawi’s novel. This monster, called Whatsitsname, changes its name depending on who speaks about him. He is sometimes an individual with no name, sometimes called Criminal X, and sometimes a monster. According to Saadawi, “*Frankenstein in Baghdad* handles an alternative topic from that of Shelley’s *Frankenstein*” (Najjar, 2014). Saadawi’s *Frankenstein* is a composite representation of Iraq’s enduring problems. Despite many similarities with Shelley’s novel, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* is an Iraqi novel. It handles the issues in the social, historical, and political context of Iraq. The narrative is sometimes different from that of Shelley. However, documentative writing is also observed in this novel. In this sense, the comparison to Shelley’s writing is primarily metaphorical, and the distinctive social milieu is reflected in the narrative.

To fully understand Saadawi’s novel and its colonial, postcolonial, and neo-colonial background, we need to know about the social, political, and cultural setting in which it takes place. Understanding the novel’s themes and events will also help readers better understand Iraq’s current political, social, and historical context. Numerous local initiatives to overthrow the interim administrations and unite members of various ethnic groups and political parties characterise Baghdad’s social and political life while it is under US control. The descriptions of Iraq’s culture and history in the past two decades can be found in *The Modern History of Iraq* by Phebe Marr and Ibrahim Al-Marashi and *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace* by Ali A.

Allawi. These pieces would shed light on the most likely postcolonial reading of the novel and the conclusions Saadawi is trying to draw.

Iraq's three most significant racial groups are Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims, and Kurds. Iraq's history of racism and sectarianism makes it hard for the country to form a solid national identity. According to Marr and Al-Marashi, the religious division between the Sunni and Shia branches of Islam is the second most significant issue in Iraq after the geographical division (Teggart, 2019: 6). Throughout the 20th century, Shias have outnumbered Sunnis (Marr and Al-Marashi, 2017: 10) while Sunnis have dominated governmental power. Due to the numerous violent demonstrations, disagreements, abuses, and deaths of civilians caused by the conflicts and chaos, Iraq has been under tremendous pressure.

One of the essential ideas in Saadawi's writings is that ethnic, political, and rigid divisions cause people to die for no reason. Even though the first reason for many deaths seems to be the US, the destructive effects of the Iraqi governments in the 20th century were precise and common. The reign of Saddam Hussein was highly destructive. He was the most critical member of the Sunni Ba'ath Party. In 1979, he took over Iraq and made his government. After just a single year, Hussein guided the country into the eight-year Iran-Iraq War. This choice, in the words of Marr and Al-Marashi, "the beginning of a continual downturn in Iraq's fortunes (Marr and Al-Marashi, 2017: 145). The conflict intensified party differences and badly damaged Iraq's infrastructure. Due to the ambiguity regarding political resistance or supposed support for Iran, Hussein's Sunni government deported many Shias. The majority of the Iraqis embattled by Hussein's government were not Sunnis (Hoeveler, 2003).

As a consequence, a number of Kurds decided to return to Iran. Then, in the spring of 1987, the government started to attack the Kurdish populace using chemical weapons, which killed 50,000–100,000 Iraqi Kurds. Even though there were divisions in Iraq prior to the fight, they were quickly strengthened. As political and ethnic divisions in Iraq grew, so did death and devastation. In 1991, the protests against the system started, and the government's reaction to them was described as the wish to butcher them. The public authorities used explosives, shot at unarmed citizens, and limited the rights of the political opponents, leaving them in exile in order to maintain control and suppress the resistance. This battle is well known by the people of Iraq and many other countries. In its report on the global security opportunity, the US Department of State talked about how the Shia people in Iraq were used by the Sunni government (Teggart, 2019: 7).

Evidently, there was a distinct separation of troops and groups in Iraq. As a result, people had to deal with the effects of insecurity and weak governments for a long time. The uprisings of the 1990s resulted in countless deaths, as stated by Marr and Al-Marashi: "Although those murdered by the radicals may most certainly be counted in the huge thousands, or perhaps numerous thousand, those killed by the regime could have been over and above 100,000" (Marr and Al-Marashi, 2017: 183). Many of those who were murdered and executed were not guilty of terrible crimes but were mainly targeted because of their various political ideologies. Undoubtedly, there were more individuals imprisoned or exiled. The social, geopolitical, and socioeconomic factors led to the US attack on Iraq, which increased bloodshed, conflict, and difficulties for the Iraqis (Inbaraj and Jinnah, 2022).

Saddam Hussein and Iraq were engaged in the battle on dread, which had started following the September 11, 2001, attacks. The US government accused Saddam Hussein of exercising

tyranny and oppression on his people and keeping chemical weapons that could kill many people. The US and UK collaborated in attacking Iraq in 2003. After a three-week of struggle, the US took over the country and formally overthrew Saddam Hussein. The US military and other foreign groups were alien to Iraq's political, cultural, and economic landscape. Because of the US's weakening military power, a social and political gap appeared. Besides, as the Iraqi police agency was destroyed, a gap in security was widespread.

After Baghdad collapsed in April 2003, several groups started protests against the US authorities, which led to the ongoing bombardment, shooting, and chaos. The conflict between voluntary troops and US forces was ongoing at the same time. Allawi states that as they wanted to make the government give up control and spread much fear, some volunteer forces left (Allawi, 2007: 181). As a result of the ongoing danger of death, the rise of extremist and radical forces, and other widespread unease and dread, Iraq became a place of chaos – *Frankenstein in Baghdad* took place in this environment (Bahram, 2022).

Ahmed Saadawi, an Iraqi citizen, grew up in these conditions. He was motivated to compose a novel by the things he witnessed. In a review of Ahmed Saadawi's novel, released by the Grove Atlantic Literary Hub, Zahra Hankir explains the inspiration for Saadawi's writing, stating, "Ahmed Saadawi believes he should recount the conflict in Iraq" (Hankir, 2018). Before becoming a novelist, Saadawi worked for BBC Arabic as a researcher and writer. Saadawi, however, did more than this. He looked into the unforgiving aspects of Iraq as a columnist. As a reporter, Saadawi has been subjected to the brutal realities of Iraq and has had the opportunity to examine them.

Personal interactions with the Iraqi military also affected his work. In a meeting and open reading with the Manchester Metropolitan College Writing Centre, Saadawi provides more details about his upbringing in Iraq. Saadawi's father, his two brothers, and he all served in the Iraqi army during the war. His uncle was killed in another war. He claims: "All my life I have suffered from the consequence of war... The American invasion was just one event of this series of miseries and tragedies in Iraq" (Teggart, 2019: 9). Many catastrophic events happened in Iraq, of which the American attack was only one. Without a doubt, Saadawi wrote his fictional work to creatively show what he had seen and done in the real world.

When Najjar interviewed Saadawi on this subject in an interview, Saadawi was clear that the main emphasis of the novel is distinct at some points from Shelley's (regarding the pursuit of knowledge, natural versus artificial life, and the ethical issues about science) (Najjar, 2014). His use of the monster serves no purpose but to emphasise how horrific life is in Iraq, particularly during the war. Saadawi incorporates the Western themes and genre of *Frankenstein* but also adds regionally specific worries and viewpoints typically found in the Iraqi context.

The personal encounters he had while working as a correspondent for the Iraqi army had an impact on his writing. The media had convinced people in the West that the US involvement was necessary and reasonable by showing the US as a power to solve the conflict in Iraq, thus, justifying the attack (Artz and Kamalipour, 2005: 223). In this respect, Iraqi writer Saadawi urges readers to consider their presumptions about who is correct and who is incorrect. In his novel, the boundaries between right and wrong become blurry. Saddam Hussein is hardly mentioned, and the American role is purposefully diminished. Saadawi presents a fresh viewpoint on the Iraqi war and its effects. He undermines the idea of a fair fight, particularly the conventional understanding of the distinction between right and wrong. Saadawi takes the idea of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and applies it to

the city of Baghdad. He does it by putting the focus on how gothic the city is. This is meant to show the problem of social conflict and its effects. Saadawi intensifies his already excessive tension in some parts. In order to emphasise the evident realism of battle and its aftermath, the novel uses the themes of fortune-telling and spirits. In an interview at the Manchester Conference, he asserts, “I don’t believe there is actually a split or divide between supernatural and real aspects of life” (“Writers at Manchester Met”, 2018). Saadawi’s writing presents the supernatural and extremely terrifying elements of the gothic genre in the background of Baghdad. Saadawi does not consider gothic only as a genre. His life involves a gothic atmosphere and the horrific results of conflict and its aftereffects. Thus, he uses gothic to define the neo-colonial and postcolonial atmosphere in Baghdad. To allude to the difficulty Iraqis had because of the horrible events taking place, a gloomy and mysterious portrayal of reality is given as follows:

Dead people had emerged from the dungeons of the security services and non-existent people appeared out of nowhere outside the doors of their relatives’ humble houses. There were people who had returned from long journeys with new names and new identities, women who had spent their childhoods in prison cells and had learned, before anything else in life, the rules and conventions for dealing with the warders. There were people who had survived many deaths in the time of the dictatorship only to find themselves face-to-face with a pointless death in the age of “democracy”—when, for example, a motorbike ran into them in the middle of the road. Believers lost their faith when those who had shared their beliefs and their struggles betrayed them and their principles. Nonbelievers had become believers when they saw the “merits” and benefits of faith. The strange things that had come to light in the past three years were too many to count. (Saadawi, 2018: 199)

The novel takes place in Baghdad and has many gothic elements, apart from the monster, since it was written during a time of violence and fear. The situations he explores are based on what he saw and experienced first-hand while working as a reporter in Baghdad. Saadawi claims that Baghdad’s climate in 2005 was incredibly gothic, horrifying, and deadly. During his interview with Al-Mustafa Najjar, Saadawi claims that “The Frankenstein-esque atmosphere of horror was strongly prevalent in Iraq during the period covered by the novel” (Najjar, 2004). Bomb explosions and the deaths of innocent people abound in this novel. In 2004, the number of deadly explosions in Iraq gradually rose. These explosions seemed to occur frequently, and they instantly killed many individuals. This atmosphere is portrayed in the novel through various personalities and images. One of the main ways Saadawi illustrates the tragic nature of war is by describing Baghdad as a city where mortality accompanies the city, such as a virus (Murphy, 2018: 6). The chaotic city of Baghdad is where the monsters unexpectedly appear, escaping from their lairs (Murphy, 2018: 64). Baghdad is filled with horror, sorrow, and concern.

Another gothic element in the novel is Elishva, an older woman who lives in the Bataween neighbourhood and refuses to leave her home. Saadawi associates her with two key female gothic figures who practice witchcraft and have hysteria. Her terrifying memories merge with her particular grief over her son’s death in the war. In Saadawi’s work, which portrays the pain and loss that the Iraqi people experience due to the war, all the elements of the medieval horror genre are also present: demons, fires, fear, dreams, wreckage, secrets, ambiguity, death, and violence. The gothic monster that haunts the novel is not only the result of the writer’s creative genius but

the constant danger of death and violence and a general sense of isolation and fear that dominated life in Iraq.

Frankenstein in Baghdad, a Gothic novel, puts the Iraq War and its effects back into perspective. It is known that the media is the primary source of knowledge for Westerners about Iraq. However, Saadawi's work, written in Arabic and then translated into other languages, helps people from other countries learn about war and its effects, especially in US-occupied Baghdad. In "Strength Makes Right: News Reportage as a Digressive Weapon in the Conflict in Iraq," an article by Mike Gasher, the topic of US media coverage of the Iraq War is addressed. He explicitly references how the *Times* and *News* covered the attack on Iraq in 2003, emphasising the vast differences between American and Iraqi military technology and tactics. Furthermore, how they talked about these differences was eventually accepted as a fundamental and satisfying norm. These media depictions of the US war urged Western viewers to accept it as essential and justified because the US was presented as the victor in a battle between power and corruption (Wilson, 2022).

William B. Hart and Fran Hassencahl's "Culture as Persuasion: Metaphor as Weapon" (2005) explains a tactic the US press frequently used to cover the Iraq War. These scholars looked at how Saddam Hussein and the Iraq War were shown in official US stories and media. They talked about how the pictures, especially of the enemy, helped more people support the war. When they looked at what was in the comics, they saw drawings that compared Hussein and the Iraqi military to snakes, barbarians, criminals, and devils. They examined how these pictures tried to win political support by making US actions look like they were based on justice and morality and fought against evil (Sharp, 2011).

Saadawi asks his readers to reconsider these assumptions. The novel starts by describing what separates the honourable from the dishonest and the truth from the lie. Saadawi is given a chance by Shelley to create a story about a fantastical creature who embodies both good and evil in himself. He worked on revising the story of *Frankenstein*, which fits his subject matter. Saadawi says that in 2006 while visiting a cemetery in Baghdad, he saw an Iraqi man looking for his sibling's body and receiving instruction from a mortuary worker on how to create a body for his son (Ibrahim, 2022). This inspired him to use Shelley's monster as a subject matter for his novel by dealing with postcolonial issues.

The counterpart of Shelley's Victor is Hadi in Saadawi's novel, a junk dealer who spends his days searching through garbage cans looking for valuable domestic items that he can sell to others. He is an elderly guy who lives alone and is not connected to the rest of society (Amin, 2022). His aim in creating his monster is different from that of Victor. Indeed, he is very dissimilar to Victor. Hadi is not a scientist or a physicist, or a man with ideals. The garbage collector's horrific stories of war and destruction are well known in Baghdad cafés. He likes making up stories about extraordinary things that happen in Iraq. The irony is that many extraordinary things he tells look ordinary when compared with daily happenings in Iraq. Unlike Victor, his creation has no bearing on his quest for knowledge and experiences. Instead, he tries to give his friend, who died in a car attack, a dignified funeral by composing his body parts. It is admirable that Hadi is driven to develop respect for him. He does this out of respect for his close friend Nahem and to demonstrate his deep commitment to his memory. Hadi is not emotionally attached to his creation like Dr Victor is. However, as the reader can see throughout the novel, he hates himself later on as he creates such a brutal character, like Victor Frankenstein experiences.

Hadi's demonstration of creation lends credibility to the belief that he is like a leader because he serves as the driving force for events. Through his deeds, he distinguishes himself from the numerous other figures in the narrative. It is admirable that he is trying to collect the parts of dead people that were neglected and left. Hadi's creative anger serves as his ultimate defence of fundamental humanity, both for those who have passed away and for those who are still alive. Thus, his attempt is a contra-attack against colonial oppression. We know that a postcolonial analysis is a social study that examines colonialism and tries to show how colonisation has affected certain groups of people. In this sense, Ahmad Saadawi reveals how important it is to fight colonisation.

By creating a fictional postcolonial monster, he shows how the US military occupation of Iraq affected the country. His writing is seen as a fantastic moral story about how Iraqi people were also brutally violent in Iraq after the US invasion. The writer uses a counter-colonial point of view to talk about Iraq's political, social, and economic conditions in his fiction. The writer makes up a monster with a complicated personality to show how confusing things are in his era, like in the time of Mary Shelley. Saadawi uses his postcolonial monster to discuss the issue of fairness and justice by showing how colonialism has mutilated Iraq. In this respect, this study aims to look into the concept of the postcolonial monster, which is the product of the centralisation of the West and exploitation of the East. As a response to the created postcolonial monster, this research also shows how Saadawi reveals that people depend on their beliefs and history to stay true to their past selves and fight against the dominance of Western colonialism (Crook, 2012).

Several movies based on the legend of *Frankenstein*, which came out in the twentieth century, show how the monster has the potential to turn into a criminal. Although in the original, the monster's revenge is a result of the reaction of others to his terrifying face, in Saadawi's novel, it is a clear result of colonial and neo-colonial powers. Indeed, both of them reveal the oppression of the non-Europeans by the Europeans. This mythical figure that appears in Ahmed Saadawi's novel shows how the horrible traits of colonialism and neo-colonialism hurt a big part of society. The terrifying misdeeds of this postcolonial monster that is wandering in Baghdad and killing people to pursue his existence are described in Saadawi's novel from an anti-colonialist point of view.

4. THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF POSTCOLONIAL MONSTERS IN THE NOVELS OF SHELLEY AND SAADAWI

4.1. The Colonial Exploitation and Oppression Creating Postcolonial Monsters

Colonial oppression used many tools to exercise power on the colonised countries. In this sense, the development of science and technology in the Western world was vital for colonisation. European colonial powers extensively used scientific research and technological innovation to exercise their dominance over the territories they colonised. On the other hand, using science and technology have impacted countless colonised people because of oppression and exploitation. It is obvious that the rapid development of science and technology has been terrible, as indicated in Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*. The novel can be seen as a critique of the time's dominant scientific and cultural ideologies and how they are linked to Western powers' imperialist and colonialist aspirations. The notion of a monster's creation without considering its outcomes may be interpreted as a metaphor for the colonial endeavours of the West.

As mentioned earlier, Victor's family is a symbol of the Western world. His family represents the Western world and its power operating with money, science, and technology to exert supremacy over the world. Victor's father is a wealthy and influential man who represents the power and dominance of Western civilisation. On the other hand, his mother symbolises nature's delicate and beautiful aspects, which modern society frequently disregards or exploits for its own gain. It is worth mentioning that Shelley prepares the readers to be aware of the rapid development of science and technology and how it might overcome those who create it and desire for their own good.

Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* is depicted as a critique of colonialism's effects on colonial societies and the West's obsession with power. Percy Shelley writes the preface to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which is considered the most critical introduction to the novel, referring to "Dr. [Erasmus] Darwin, and some of the physiological writers of Germany, as not of impossible occurrence"¹ (Shelley, 2018: 203) that those philosophical writers provide some touches on the Gothic genre, the science fiction genre, and the medical genre. Percy intends to put *Frankenstein* in the context of other novels so that it would not be just a "mere tale of spectres" (Shelley, 2018: 203). He accepts it as a more general novel that provides a perspective on the dangers of scientific progress and the consequences of human desires for it.

In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, a recurrent theme highlights the dangers of science since science is a tool that can be utilised for both good and evil purposes. The main character, Victor Frankenstein, is obsessed with science and technology. Ultimately, Victor's downfall is caused by his pursuit of science and the embodiment of his obsession with the monster. Victor Frankenstein is a talented scientist obsessed with learning to create life from an early age. He becomes very interested in alchemy, which focuses on using the powers of science for his benefit. His connection

¹ Physiology is branch of biology which studies living organisms and how parts of the body function. Mary and Percy Shelley were personal friends of William Lawrence, a noted expert on the theories explored by some of the most famous German physiologists including J. F. Blumenbach (1752-1840) and Friedrich Tiedemann (1781-1861). The Dr Darwin referred to here is the scientist and poet Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), whose early theories on evolution were developed by his grandson, Charles Darwin (1809-1882), the author of *On the Origin of Species* (1859). (Colp, Ralph, 1986: 1-24)

to science goes deeper once he realises that he is able to animate a non-living object in a graveyard by using galvanic current or electricity and creating life from dead parts. This is considered a reflection of Western culture's desire to master and manipulate other people, other nations, and all other beings. The monster is, thus, a warning against uncontrolled scientific progress, as well as a metaphor for the colonial exploitation of other nations and people, which will result in catastrophic consequences.

Compared to the Gothic era, the current obsession with modern science and technology causes depriving people of all types of intuition and initiative. Shelley does not adopt a totally negative perspective on the development of science and technology. Instead, she sees it as a powerful tool that could become a dangerous monster if it is not controlled. Shelley's inspiration is figured out by her use of technological growth in *Frankenstein*. She indicates that technology's power will go further as far as we allow it to. This fact can be seen in the character of Victor Frankenstein, whose major focus is on his desire to create life. The novel demonstrates that Victor has been deeply connected to the thoughts of philosophers, and he comes to this conclusion: "natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated my fate; I desire, therefore, in this narration, to state those facts which led to my predilection for that science" (Shelley, 2003: 34). The perception of many scientists has focused on the possibility of creating life, as seen in how Victor has been dominated by this idea to make it a reality. Victor is a significant example for Shelley, who intends to warn society and make them recognise the consequences of scientific development used by colonial powers.

Victor Frankenstein dedicates much time to acquiring science in depth, particularly in "the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life" (Shelley, 2003: 36). He promises to discover the secret of life and death and to "banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death" (Shelley, 2003: 36). Although Frankenstein comes from a well-educated and prosperous family, he cannot identify the consequences of creating a man-made creature, which leads him to work without stopping to complete his creation. He does not consider his invention's potential consequences and devalues human life. However, he regrets at the end, advising Robert Walton not to pursue knowledge: "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" (Shelley, 2018: 28). Victor guides Walton through his actual experience, stating: "Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquisition 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, 2003: 53). Many characters die at the end of the novel, and Victor has lost a happy life and got a miserable situation. This refers to the fact that he has not considered the consequences of his action, which leads to devastation and insanity. In this sense, Shelley warns the reader against inconsiderate scientific works which are used for colonial purposes and could result in catastrophes both for the coloniser and the colonised. Thus, her concern about oppressing and dominating other human and non-human beings by using science and technology is obvious.

Victor Frankenstein is comparable to how today's culture views technology as an obsession. Many people are thinking about how to speed up evolution to better their lives. Victor seeks to redefine his own identity as a god-like figure by bending the laws of nature to his will, but it leads him down a dark path once he fails in his scientific experiment. However, his creature is unbreakable and hard to fit into society. Among other things, Victor asks himself, "Had I right, for

my own benefit, to inflict this curse upon everlasting generations?” (Shelley, 2003: 203) This is an appealing sign of what technology will look like in the future. It should be significantly important for those who create technology since they are the ones who must wisely incorporate it into society because technology has a broad impact on society.

The ancient myth of Prometheus demonstrates two distinct forms: *Prometheus pyrophoros* refers to one of the aspects of the ancient mythological figure Prometheus, which means fire-bringer, while *Prometheus plasticator* refers to the shaper. The initial form serves two primary purposes: it refers to the mythical story of Prometheus’s acquisition of fire from the gods and bringing it to humanity. The action is portrayed as a representation of rebellion against the gods and the protagonist’s aspiration to bring upon humanity the ability to utilise fire, which is essential for food preparation, warmth, and technological developments. On the other hand, Prometheus is primarily connected to the idea of a shaper or creator of human beings. This concept is associated with creating human beings from clay, giving them divine elements, and instructing them in cultural practises.

In Shelley’s novel, the story of Victor Frankenstein is construed as a modernised representation of the Prometheus myth, exploring similar themes and concepts as those present in the original myth. Like Prometheus, Victor endeavours to acquire science and technology through scientific methods to create a new life and enhance the state of humanity. His pursuit of science and technology “for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body” (Shelley, 2003: 58) inspires him to override what is considered permissible in his society. Bringing up a dead body is considered an astonishing and terrifying notion that leads to tragedy and becomes a source of fear and violence. The stories of *Frankenstein* and Prometheus refer to the challenges of scientific progress. Both stories have similar connections, particularly in involving a creator who aspires to attain god-like power and drive with the results. This god-like power reminds the lust for colonial powers, which had gained un-destroyable sovereignty in Shelley’s time.

Shelley depicts Frankenstein as a careless scientist who disregards the consequences of his actions; thus, he is motivated by oppressive motives. Regarding this, she criticises Romantic-era thinkers and scientists who have “anatomised and melted human entities as if they were so much inert matter” (Said, 1978: 116). Frankenstein is similar to the scientists of this period, who usually make faulty decisions to implement plans without considering second thoughts. Frankenstein constructs his creature from dead body parts collected from the charnel houses and says, “a new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. I might in process of time (although I now found it impossible) renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption” (Shelley, 2003: 54). This refers to the wish for oppressing and colonising other beings, whether for good or evil purposes. The above quote provides insight into Victor’s wish for power, showing his ego that his creature will hold him in high esteem. Here, the portrayal of Victor is interpreted as that of a power holder.

Shelley allows Mr Walton to clarify Frankenstein’s actions and the reasons behind his regret, even though he is in a position to kill the monster. It is not easy to believe that a person whose mind was once enamoured with the magnificence of virtue could have done such things as he did in the form of his scientific experiments. Shelley’s novel shows that the monster has internalised his strangeness because of the oppressive attitudes other people show. The monster says that he used to be as innocent as a new-born baby, but bad things have happened to him, and now he is such a

dreadful guy, he is the victim of a seemingly endless stream of acts of violence and rejection. The colonial exploitation and oppression make the monster internalise his inferiority in the eyes of the power holders. Rosemary Jackson's view holds that the creature stands in for Frankenstein's separated personalities, which he longs to unify with (Jackson, 1981: 100). She thinks the monster is one of the parts of himself that he has split up and is now trying to put back together (Smith, 2004: 219). In a postcolonial reading of Shelley's novel, similarly, the creature is seen as something that Frankenstein first ignores and oppresses and then fights against. The monster's traits show how he feels about people of different races. Frankenstein has difficulty getting close to the creation because he does not resemble a person of his species or class. Frankenstein's treatment of his monster shows signs of his innate racism. Now that he has grown bigger and stronger, the monster has no choice but to disrespect, revolt against, flee from, or battle against everything that threatens him. The monster's enormous size (Shelley, 2003: 14), a constant racial stereotype of enslaved people in the British West Indies, is another sign that Victor Frankenstein is afraid of his contra-power. Frankenstein is aware that the oppression the monster experiences might result in a contra-attack, which eventually happens.

Ahmed Saadawi's adaptation of Shelley's novel reveals the idea of how colonial ideology and oppression create postcolonial monsters more apparently. His monster is an exact result of colonial and neo-colonial powers who exercise oppression over the colonised. As a response to this oppression, postcolonial monsters are created, and they respond with violence.

The main part of the story of *Frankenstein in Baghdad* is how Iraqis deal with the ongoing problems that were caused by their colonial and neo-colonial history. The monster is being created to represent an Iraqi existence filled with pain due to ongoing killings. Even though the monster is created for a good purpose and represents the idealised force that wants justice and fairness in society, he wants to get the power back and be treated with respect by whoever is in charge of them, whether it is the local government or a government from another country.

In Saadawi's story, the monster is not seen as a freak or something to be thrown out by the local people. Instead, he is seen as a passionate being who cares for the local people. The political ideas in the novel show a brutal history of colonial invasion and oppression and the neo-colonial oppression of the Iraqi governments with all of their side effects. By the depiction of the monster, Saadawi illustrates that he thinks political reform can solve the problems in the world today. However, Iraqis must put aside their racial and religious differences in order to get a united country. In this sense, he reveals the idea that as oppression and unjust power create postcolonial monsters, unjust contra attack and violence should also be prevented.

The novel begins with the story of how the monster is created. After many blasts and suicide attacks occur throughout the city, Hadi, a drunken lower-class junk dealer, begins to collect body parts. The main plot of the novel begins at this point. In order to get respect for the endless victims who have not received a formal funeral or even just respect, he aims to unite a body from various dead parts. However, after it becomes alive, the mysterious object slowly escapes Hadi's control, just like what happens to Frankenstein's monster. To take revenge for the murders of the human body pieces that make up him, the monster goes on a violent attack. Thus, it is possible to say that the violence and colonial oppression the owners of the body parts experienced led to vengeful postcolonial monsters.

The novel's first chapter is a report from a special committee that includes representatives from the US and Iraqi security agencies. At the novel's beginning, a special committee comprised of American and Iraqi representatives jointly reports on the monster. According to the agencies, the nearly 250-page report must remain top secret. However, it eventually makes its way outside of the Tracking and Pursuit Department. In the novel's first few chapters, brief and mysterious details catch the reader's attention, making them feel excited and unfamiliar as well as suspicious. This increases the suspense as the reader waits to find out what the report is and what it says (Webster, 2018). During this time, the Department's astrologers, fortune-tellers, and unnamed writers attract and cast doubt on the reader's ability to predict what will happen.

The novel starts with short, vague pieces of information, creating ambiguity. As the reader grows more eager to learn what the report is and what it states, this fosters a feeling of fear (Webster, 2018). There is a hint that these events occurred in Iraq in 2005. At first, things are tense because the Tracking and Pursuit Department astrologers try to predict the spots of terrorist attacks. After this, the narrative goes into a memory that spans several weeks, focusing on the Bataween neighbourhood and its many residents in Baghdad.

Saadawi presents many characters who experience oppression in Iraqi society in different ways. Elishva is a Christian Assyrian who lives in Old Bataween and is a typical member of this community. She hopes and prays that her missing son, Daniel, will return home safely from the Iraq-Iran War, where he served in the military. She suffers from the loss of her family. Hadi appears as a storyteller who documents the tragic events. A reporter named Mahmoud gets mixed up in Hadi's tale of the *Shisma* (or Whatsitsname). Some days before the novel opens, Hadi's companion Nahem Abdaki is killed in a car bombing, and Hadi is also mourning his loss. After Abdaki's passing, Hadi goes to the graveyard to retrieve his body. Frustrated, he investigates the area and finds dismembered body parts thrown around. Hadi decides to pull Abdaki's damaged body out of the wreckage of the car explosion so he can be buried properly. Hadi finds the missing body parts to complete the body of Abdaki, and the last part is a nose found in the wreckage of a car explosion that happened in the meantime. It is the beginning of the corporeality of the postcolonial monster because all body parts have been affected by colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Hadi keeps watching when another car explodes. This time, it was caused by a garbage truck that crashed through the front door of a hotel and killed a young man named Hasib Mohamed Jaafar, who was sitting at a table nearby. After the explosion, Hasib's ghost explores the city for his body and finds the body Hadi has composed in his yard instead. Hasib's spirit enters into this body and makes it alive. Hadi tells this same story to a gathering of people in a tea shop, but they do not believe in him and start making fun of him when he explains what happened to the dead body. The journalist Mahmoud is also present at this teahouse. Ali Baher al-Saidi, the journal's director, serves as a role model and mentor to Mahmoud in his professional life. Mahmoud aspires to achieve the same achievements – career, money and power – as his mentor did. When Elisha, the neighbour, sees this monstrous body at her home, she thinks that her son has come back home. The novel ends sorrowfully, with Hadi looking like the character he created after undergoing plastic surgery to repair the damage he was given by another explosion. Because of the severe pressure to find the murderer in Bataween, the authorities arrest Hadi and accuse him of all the crimes the monster committed. Locals rejoice in the streets after the arrest while the real Whatsitsname is looking at them through a window.

The story shows that all of the characters are victims of wars, oppression, and sovereign power in this society. The monster is the representative; however, Hadi, Elishva, Hassib, and Mahmoud are all victims of politics “under direct political pressure from the Iraqi side” (Saadawi, 2018: 10), and their lives are tragically formed by the decisions made within the political sphere. Although Shelley’s novel emerged more than 200 years ago, Ahmed Saadawi uses her themes to describe and show the reality in Iraq. According to researchers Friedman and Kavey (2016), Shelley’s issues are universal – they looked at many versions of Shelley’s work to understand how and why this creature and concept have endured in popular culture. Saadawi touches on several of these topics throughout his writing.

The Iraq War and its consequences are especially relevant to portray the power dynamics Shelley has pointed out in society. These vital insights include, among other things, how colonial ideology and power result in the birth of postcolonial monsters. The quote from Friedman and Kavey about the work states: “Shelley provides a dynamic and ultimately influential tale of two lost and lonely beings who, instead of comforting and perhaps even loving each other, cause their mutual destruction” (2016: 207). This comment fits quite well in Saadawi’s context. Similar to them, the Iraqi citizens of the war-torn, dark, violent, cruel, and occupied city do not cooperate or support one another. As opposed to that, they try to get rid of one another. *Whatsitsname* is only a tool to depict how oppression is expanded in society to each person.

Whatsitsname is a cruel, homicidal, lonesome, violent, and desperate version of Mary Shelley’s monster operating with the same mechanism of oppression and its results. Ahmed Saadawi depicts unlawful oppression once more in the context of Baghdad. The 2003 American assault and occupation of Iraq as part of the so-called “Global War on Terror” may have been the catalyst for the civil war, forced emigration, and ongoing bloodshed. Violence was everywhere, as shown by the fact that “clashes between rebels and occupying forces got worse” (Schwartz, 2008: 253). All national, tribal, and sectarian conflicts, as well as “spontaneous incidents of ethnic violence” among the country’s multi-ethnic population, were made public when the government collapsed” (Zeidel, 2011: 22). In this sense, Saadawi portrays how each person in colonial lands has the potential to turn into a monster, especially when the power holders carry over the conflict and oppression.

Besides colonial oppression, Saadawi’s book refers to the tyranny of neo-colonial governments and initiatives. Michael Schwartz’s insightful book *War Without End: The Iraq War in Context* gives a complete picture of Iraq during and after the American military power that took over Iraq. Schwartz (2008) says that these people “now lived in controlled and nearly sanitized communities” and that they led “normal theatrical lives”: To get around the city, the people must go through different areas controlled by the militia and switch back and forth between the frontlines (2008: 252). Schwartz refers to the Iraqi administration as the “Do Nothing Government”. It is commonly known for vanishing and corrupting. The worst example of the administration’s weakness was its inaction to stop the bloodshed that was consuming Baghdad, Schwartz states (2008: 253). Saidi and the brigadier claimed to have the solutions to the nation’s problems while the people in charge lacked the motivation to do so: “all these problems could be solved in half an hour, at least in theory, if people genuinely had the will to solve” (Saadawi, 2018: 73). Significant crimes like murder, attempted theft, and kidnapping do not seem to have happened often when there was a government in charge. Even though the US was able to get rid of Saddam’s government,

it could not bring law and order back to Iraq. The Iraqi people suffered a great deal from this defeat. Furthermore, the only thing keeping Iraqis from believing in the Americans as trustworthy partners is their failure to provide security services for Iraqis. In Iraq, it has become normal for the US government to regularly break international agreements and commit war crimes. In addition to the now-famous examples of brutality, violence, and crime at Abu Ghraib prison, which is now known to the entire world with the help of the media, the United States has neglected international law that governs military invasion and violated the entirety of Iraqis' national and democratic values, cultural, civil, institutional, and legal protections, resulting in a chaotic state of disorder and violence for the entire country (Association of Iraqi Jurists, 2010). Mahmoud observes the issue in silence, realizing that there are now two conflicting forces at work. On one side, the government and Americans are present, while on the other side, various anti-government militias and terrorist organizations exist. Anyone who disagrees with the government, or the Americans is routinely labelled as a "terrorist" (Saadawi, 2018: 73).

The systematic nature of these violations is a piece of strong evidence that the law is gravely flawed and needs to be altered. According to the Bush Administration, the invasion would have made a big difference in how much the Iraqi people respected their freedoms and their government. Instead, it created an atmosphere of chaos and violence, which fed a cycle of violent conflict that does not seem to end and will keep happening until problems with justice are fixed. The United States broke a fundamental international law when it let many of Iraq's social, religious, cultural, and civic groups and their property be stolen. This has had a terrible effect on the Iraqi people and their history. The Association of Iraqi Jurists (2010) says that the United States also made the situation more chaotic, leading to more violent crimes, especially against women and children, because there was no plan to ensure public safety.

In the novel, Elishva, who blames the barber Abu Zaidoun responsible for her son Daniel's disappearance and murder, is another revenge seeking character. She prays for the death of Abu Zaidoun and is pleased when he dies. She takes revenge through Whatsitsname, who kills Zaidoun. Elishva, who is trapped between being good or evil (although she is innocent and good, she lusts for revenge and the death of Abu Zaidoun), shows how Ahmed Saadawi does not discuss goodness or evilness in a simple and unilateral way. Furthermore, despite the writer's claim that some of the country's numerous suicide bombs are driven by fear, they are actually more directly driven by revenge because the various sects are engaged in an unending battle for vengeance.

According to Schwartz, the "puppet government" did not acknowledge American authority because it had "slipped away" (2008: 255). Everything spiralled out of control during this unstable time, and the dispute over who would oversee the mixed-race neighbourhoods only got worse. Shia and Sunni groups fought a brutal war with all the weapons they could use, like car bombs and death squads. Minorities like Christians, Kurds, and Palestinians were marked out in these ethical purity campaigns and either driven from their homes or executed. The problem of ethnic cleansing has come into focus as violence in Baghdad has grown (Schwartz, 2008: 255). The neo-colonial and local oppression by local people turned each group or person into a monster.

The consequences of Whatsitsname's deeds are experienced by a variety of people representing different groups and ideas in Baghdad. These groups, once conflicted and divided, find themselves increasingly consumed by their own monstrous actions and the chaos they cause. Each group is driven by its own conflicting beliefs, desires, and motivations. As the violence

escalates, the city “becom[es] a place of murder and gratuitous violence” (Saadawi, 2018: 197) and the groups begin to resemble the monsters. This highlights the tragic cycle of violence and the transformation of regular individuals into monsters through the context of continual conflicts.

A powerful allegory, *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, shows how the desire for vengeance and justice can pervert human principles and turn into a cycle of destruction. It raises challenging concerns regarding the nature of monstrosity and the inherent evilness existing in people even in the most tough circumstances.

4.2. Loneliness and Exile of the Postcolonial Monsters

Loneliness and exile are central elements in literature, particularly in both Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Ahmed Saadawi’s *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. It delves into the experiences of individuals who have been marginalised and expelled from the dominant societal norms. Many individuals were forced into exile, whether internally displaced or physically exiled from they belonged. This theme is employed to depict the psychological and emotional implications of living in a community that has enforced cultural, political, and social standards that are alien to one’s own. Specifically, postcolonial monsters can be depicted as tragic figures in literature, with their isolation and solitude presented as significant sources of grief. The utilisation of these figures frequently serves as a means of exploring the themes of loss, identity, and belonging.

In postcolonial literature, the monsters emerge as a result of the colonial encounter and its subsequent consequences. They function as the symbol of the oppressed and marginalised and are commonly linked to the concepts of exile, relocation, and loneliness. Being alone for a long time will have negative impacts, including psychological and physical effects. Thus, the figures of the monster act out fatally. Man has originally been isolated from other people and places. Adam, “the man [formed] from the dust of the ground [by the Lord God]” (Syswerda, 1993: Gen. 2.7), is a prominent illustration of isolation. After he commits his first sin, he departs “from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken” (Syswerda, 1993: Gen. 3.23). Adam is deprived of the protection and wealth that the garden provided him. Mary Shelley connects the story of Adam and his first sin to support her character, the creature-monster, linking it to Adam: “[l]ike Adam, [he is] apparently united by no link to any other being in existence” (Shelley, 2003: 154). On the other hand, the creature, Victor Frankenstein, also shares a similarity with the story of the first human but also plays a different figure, God. “God created man in his own image” (Syswerda, 1993: Gen. 1.27); contrary to Frankenstein, “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Syswerda, 1993: Gen. 1.31).

The monster in Shelley’s *Frankenstein* acts with outrage because he comes to life without companionship and guidance. The feeling of anger has boiled in his body since he never had the opportunity to express his emotions to anyone in return. He receives a life of loneliness. Though there are “numerous desperate efforts to integrate himself into society,” the creature realises he is unable to succeed without Frankenstein’s support. This is why he asks for a mate and also because “he is merely trying to find a social context for his own existence” (Schoene-Harwood, 2000: 154). That is what makes his deadly actions more harmful, and he takes responsibility for many unnecessary deaths. He states, “If any being felt emotions of benevolence towards me, I should return them a hundred and a hundredfold; for that one creature’s sake, I would make peace with the whole kind!” (Shelley, 2003: 175). He shows his internal feeling that he only needs one companion

to be kind towards him and not feel lonely anymore. Victor promises to create a female companion for the monster but ultimately destroys her because of fear. This decision angers the creature to explode, and he vows to avenge Victor by destroying everything he loves. The sole thing that the monster wants is to feel what others feel in the general landscape. Affection is interpreted as a necessary sensation that determines how a person will behave in the presence of other people.

Once Victor has finished forming the monster, the reader is given the first depiction of the creature. Victor's original vision for the monster's appearance does not appear to have been fulfilled. Victor experiences the feeling of hatred for the monster even before it comes to life because of the fact that his appearance is completely monstrous.

His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips. (Shelley, 2003: 58)

Victor discovers that the monster must be an animal because its pupils do not look like a person's. Victor dislikes him because his creation is inherently animalistic, and Victor can see and feel that animalism in its appearance (Petsche, 2014: 101). According to Petsche, Victor's fear and loneliness are a reaction to the monstrosity in humans and the humane in animals – Victor eventually concludes that the only way to distance himself from the monster's humanity mentally is to refer to the creature as a monster (2014: 102). In these situations, the creature and the creator bring to life the impacts of isolation and loneliness through their pasts, social statuses, emotions, dreams, and desires.

Due to his disgusting appearance, Frankenstein runs away, leaving him in a state of isolation and sorrow. This allows the monster to wander in society. Jackson Petsche states that the monster is ugly because he lacks any possessions and thus feels alone (Petsche, 2014: 104). Petsche says that since the monster's animal DNA keeps him from having 27 traits, he cannot have any links to human property or social interactions (2014, 105). The monster has an abnormality, is rejected by society, and is kept out of it. Even though the writer makes the monster seem like a scary force, it is essential to remember that his pain and discontent come from being left alone and not being loved, as well as from being unable to connect with any human or non-human being. This forms the foundation for his destructive behaviour. The reader initially perceives the monster as a means of revenge against the creator. Consequently, the creature takes revenge on Victor Frankenstein and his family without worrying about the consequences. The prism of parenting gives the monster a more compassionate reaction. The unnamed and rejected monster is hard to confront life without a parent's care and love. This gap of loneliness stimulates him to find out a partner or a father, even after identifying the creator, Victor Frankenstein, as his guardian. The creature tells Frankenstein that he is Adam, God's beloved creation, in response to his question about who he is (Shelley, 2003: 114). Adam was created for companionship and was regarded by God as a companion. It is praiseworthy to think of Frankenstein as a divinity, but it is not easy to see any similarities between Frankenstein and the divinity. The monster is frustrated by having no support and being forced to kill innocent people. He laments, stating: "Our lives will not be happy, but they will be harmless,

and free from the misery I now feel. Oh! my creator, make me happy; let me feel gratitude towards you for one benefit!” (Shelley, 2003: 176)

The main three characters, Robert Walton, Frankenstein, and the monster, experience solitude in the novel. In *Frankenstein*, Shelley frankly explains the motif of loneliness as something unpleasant if someone cannot endure the feeling of isolation. It helps the readers understand that intimacy is essential and loneliness can lead to a state of depression. Shelley’s message for the importance of companionship is significant and clearly revealed in Walton’s letter to Margaret Savile, the sister of Robert Walton, because he “bitterly, for I longed to see my native town and my beloved friends” (Shelley, 2003: 74). Walton is one of the characters who are also unable to connect to their surroundings. He suffers from being lonely as he clearly shows his desperate need for a companion. The reader can understand Walton, who owns no one “to participate [his] joy” (Shelley, 2003: 7). Walton needs people around him in order to feel liveliness, not to feel loneliness, during his voyage.

As mentioned above, Shelley tries to draw the readers’ attention to the loneliness theme, particularly with the monster. She demonstrates that isolation is unpleasant and leads to depression. Throughout the novel, the monster reveals to Frankenstein that he saw a boy and thought he “could seize him and educate him as [his] companion and friend, [he] should not be so desolate (Shelley, 2003: 170). The theme of loneliness here shows the readers that the monster is in a state of desolation because of loneliness. On another angle, he compares himself to the devil and heartbrokenly states, “even that enemy of God and man had friends and associates in his desolation: [he is] alone” (Shelley, 2003: 274). Because of his hideous appearance, he thinks that there is no possible opportunity for him to have a companion. Additionally, he states: “If I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear; and chiefly towards you my arch-enemy, because my creator, do I swear inextinguishable hatred. Have a care: I will work at your destruction, nor finish until I desolate your heart so that you curse the hour of your birth” (Shelley, 2003: 175). Victor’s carelessness has caused the monster to feel alienated and exiled significantly. The monster feels alone and utterly rejected as a result of Victor’s lack of concern and thoughtfulness. The monster finds it difficult to understand how someone could fall in love and be happy while still being accountable for other people’s deaths. The monster’s withdrawal, which was a result of his ignorance, leaves Victor abandoned and alone in a state of loneliness and solitude.

A person’s choice and behaviour in the past always influence the future. For instance, when Frankenstein was young, he was well known for his behaviour of isolation from people. He made the decision to “avoid a crowd and to attach [himself] fervently to a few [schoolmates]” (Shelley, 2003: 32). Sometimes, a person is classified by society and will remain in that classification for the rest of her/his life. Some individuals, such as Victor Frankenstein, would not find these emotions problematic. When Frankenstein “leaves home to attend the University of Ingolstadt, he immerses himself in his experiment and forgets about the family who lovingly supported him throughout his childhood” (Telgen, 1997). Victor Frankenstein has limited friends, but at the same time, he sacrifices his social life once he creates the monster and “[is] now alone” (Shelley, 2003: 42). Shelley also provides some hints that isolation is also essential in some points, particularly at the time of creating the monster because he peacefully focuses on his project and achieves his goal. Having a sense of loneliness allowed Frankenstein to be free from all outside distractions. However, from the beginning of the novel to the end, Shelley keeps on a reference that isolation is unpleasant

and delivers a message on the importance of companionship. Isolation leads to an unpleasant future and takes the person out of society. Although “[Frankenstein’s] father had wished him to seek amusement in society [he] abhorred the face of man” (Shelley, 2003: 227). This moral dilemma is obvious as he feels that he has no right to share their intercourse (Goldberg, 1958: 31). The state of isolation only serves to worsen Frankenstein’s condition and his creation. Just like children do with their parents, Frankenstein’s monster takes on the traits of the person who made it. Because of the creator’s habits and traits, the creature ends up as alone and separated from the creator. After being rejected by Frankenstein, the creature is left alone, “searching in vain for a few acorns to assuage the pangs of hunger” (Shelley, 2003: 121).

Parenting and its absence eliminate many aspects of the monster’s life and position him for revenge and, ultimately, murder. At the beginning of the novel, Victor Frankenstein recalls his childhood and the time of happiness he spent with his father. His childhood has influenced him to the extent that “[his] father had taken the greatest precautions that [his] mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors” (Shelley, 2003: 51). It is obvious how ironic it is that Victor rejects nature and instead creates a supernatural being. His association with his parents did not create good parenting skills for his parental experience. From the moment the body is put together, the creator feels alienated: “now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart” (Shelley, 2003: 59). As a parent, he was careless in his parental obligation towards his son. The monster’s only appeal to Victor is for a family and being away from isolation: “I am alone and miserable, man will not associate with me” (Shelley, 2003: 173).

Victor’s behaviours, the representative of the Western colonisation, refers to bad parenting of Western civilisations towards the colonised nations and people. The coloniser in Shelley’s *Frankenstein* demonstrates a kind of neglectful and negligent parenting that reflects the actions of those who oppress and dominate colonised nations. In Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Victor Frankenstein is one of the characters who is seen as a metaphor for the coloniser and exemplifies the characteristics of an irresponsible parent. He abandons his creature and surroundings for his persistence in knowledge and power. The ignorance and disrespect for the colonised people are reflected in his abandonment.

Ahmed Saadawi’s *Frankenstein in Baghdad* refers to the concept of postcolonial theory regarding how the colonial powers have shaped the cultural representations of the “others” and how these entities have continued to integrate with postcolonial societies. The characters in *Frankenstein in Baghdad* are a diverse collection of individuals from diverse backgrounds who share their experiences of violence and loss in devastated Baghdad. Each of them has a different story of struggling with trauma and loneliness living in a city where bombs, sectarian violence, and instability are common.

In *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, the capital city is portrayed as a disintegrated economic centre and a place of the blown war zone. The situation pushes the citizens to choose whether to stay or leave the country. Those who stay are destined to a certain degree of loneliness, which is made worse by the fact that friends and family are always at risk of dying in a terrorist attack. At the same time, they get help from networks of solidarity as people try to make up for the widespread insecurity. But ultimately, a few characters conclude that solidarity is insufficient; the most significant connections in their lives are those related to a sense of home, which is itself an interaction of memory and family. This idea of “home” explains why some individuals want to

remain in Baghdad while others, whose actual “home” is somewhere else, prefer to depart “till things calm down in the capital” (Saadawi, 2018: 175). The existing social, economic, and cultural institutions in colonised territories were frequently shattered as a result of colonialism, which resulted in the displacement of the local population. Local communities were deprived of their lands and resources, which were frequently appropriated by colonial forces and placed under their control. A holistic approach is required when addressing homelessness in a postcolonial context. This approach must acknowledge the historical injustices and structural inequities that were passed down by colonialism and aim to correct these imbalances. Besides the physical exile, the novel *Frankenstein in Baghdad* also explores exile’s spiritual and emotional dimensions. Particularly, the characters, Hadi, a junk dealer, and Mahmoud Al-Sawadi, a journalist, have been impacted by the situation and encounter trauma and its psychological effects. They are exiled from their own self-feelings and seek meaning in their lives.

The monster in *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, Whatsitsname, is exiled from the harmonised human community and struggles to find peace within the community. His composition from different individuals’ body parts leads him unable to connect with others. Whatsitsname is made up of the body parts of people who have been killed, plus the soul of another victim, and has been given the name of another victim. He is a composite of victims seeking to avenge their deaths so they could rest in peace. He was created to obtain revenge on their behalf (Saadawi, 2018: 113). His position as a revenge seeker contributes to his loneliness and exile.

Saadawi utilises monsters in his work as a figurative representation of the fractured nature of Iraqi society (Teggart, 2019: 4). This experience is observed in the conditions of both the colonisers and the colonised, frequently rejected by them. Due to their perceived differences, they are considered outsiders and a potential threat to the established social order. As a result, creatures are compelled to reside outside of the societal model, experiencing isolation from the dominant cultural norms. The notion of hybridity is clear as creatures represent the cultural and societal problems that arise from the combination of diverse traditions. They can neither unite the nation nor separate them. Moreover, the novel *Frankenstein in Baghdad* does not give a solution to the theme of loneliness and exile. Instead, it delves into the conflict of attaining justice amid brutal conflict in Iraq rather than seeking social interaction to alleviate loneliness (Forbes, 2018). While the original *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley mainly tackled the themes of prejudice and isolation clearly, Saadawi’s novel implies them as some reasons that create chaos in society.

Whatsitsname is a contemporary interpretation of Mary Shelley’s monster, and like Shelley’s creation, Whatsitsname possesses his characteristics, like being isolated and feeling in exile. He embodies the collective trauma and grief of the Iraqi people, who have been torn apart and left isolated from each other by years of conflict. Despite being created with body parts of multiple individuals, Whatsitsname is a creature that struggles to find a sense of identity and belonging in a world that has rejected him (Alhashmi, 2022: 58). His physical appearance sets him apart from others, and his inability to communicate effectively only serves to isolate him further. Campbell argues that Saadawi’s work “poses migration and exile as the rational choice for anyone who can afford to leave. In an Iraq where the response to a wrecked and occupied country is to try to enforce a univocal national identity, exile is a matter of survival for religious and ethnic minorities” (2020: 2). Campbell describes the conditions under which some Iraqi citizens were compelled to leave the country for a secure place for a living. Even though they cannot leave the country physically, they

leave certain places by confining themselves to their little circumstances. That is the result of the colonial and neo-colonial chaos and conflict created in society. In this sense, what we call postcolonial monsters confine themselves to their limited circumstance not to feel belonging to any people or place.

Throughout the novel, Whatsitsname's loneliness is driven to despair and tragedy. He longs for connection and understanding but is constantly used by the people he encounters because they all ask him for revenge. His only friend is Hadi, the junk dealer who brought him to life from "collected body fragmentations" (Alhashmi, 2022: 58), but even their relationship is strained by the violence and chaos that surrounds them.

At the beginning of the book, various characters appear destined for solitude. Elishva, an elderly Christian woman, also represents isolation and loneliness. She appears destined to wait out the rest of her days for her dead son Daniel to come home from the war, although her son has been lost in the war. The daughters of Elishva who still listen to their mother's desires are Hilda and Matilda, who are currently residing in Melbourne, Australia. Elishva's daughters are also concerned about her safety and "were shocked when they found out that their mother was alone in a big house in a troubled city where the demons had broken out of their dungeons and come to the surface all at once--at least that was how they imagined it" (Saadawi, 2018: 59), because of the violence and political unrest in Baghdad. Elishva decides to "live alone in a seven-room house with only a cat" (Saadawi, 2018: 17) and Daniel's memory. She lives estrange from her neighbours and the wider community, who view her as a reminder of a previous era. She is also separated from her own sense of identity and purpose, which is tied up with her son's fate. As the novel progresses, Elishva's loneliness deepens as she becomes increasingly involved in the story of Whatsitsname. She is one of the few people who sees Whatsitsname as something other than a monster and comes to accept him as a protector and avenger. However, her connection to him only highlights her isolation from the rest of society, and she adopts the monster as if he were her son, Daniel, who was lost during the Iran-Iraq war. Her existence in the novel reflects the larger social and political isolation experienced by minority communities in Iraq. She is a symbol of the grief and loss experienced by most Iraqi people, particularly those excluded from mainstream society. The novel explores how sectarian conflict and violence can fracture communities and leave individuals struggling to find a sense of belonging and connection. Elishva is a significant example of this theme.

Despite this feeling of isolation, the novel shows, in some parts, that individuals are not always as alone as they believe. For instance, when Hadi's neighbour Abu Salim sees the incident from a distance and notices the people, he attempts to help them: "He watched from the balcony till he saw the interrogators come out with some stuff in their hands, then get into the truck and drive off fast" (Saadawi, 2018: 168). He arrives to help after Iraqi security officers beat him up in his house. Abu Salim yells out

some of his children and shouting for some of the young men who lived nearby. They burst into Hadi's house, and when Hadi came round from his delirium, Abu Salim's youngest son ran home to get bandages, disinfectant, medical gauze, and medicine, because he sold such things in a stall in the Shorja market and had considerable knowledge of first aid. (Saadawi, 2018: 168)

This unexpected show of unity demonstrates that the neighbourhood is covered with protective networks. Even Hadi, who lives alone, can gain from his neighbours' protection. This shows that people are not always as lonely as they think since they are a member of a social

environment that can offer security and comfort. However, the character of Hadi, the main protagonist, is one of the characters mostly reflecting the state of isolation in his role. His main occupation as a junk dealer who collects body parts to create a whole body shows his lonely position in society. His attempt to stitch a whole out of scattered and broken pieces reflects both his inner experience of loneliness and the greater societal disintegration brought on by colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Some characters deal with their loneliness by escaping into a fantasy world (escaping from reality) where other people constantly surround them. Mahmoud recruits a prostitute named Zeina because he is well aware that his love for Nawal al-Wazir, a woman widely considered his boss Saidi's lover, would probably never be more than a fantasy. He wants to fool himself into believing that Zeina is actually Nawal so that he can have the privilege of making love to Nawal. Mahmoud, on the other hand, blows up the relationship. He behaves aggressively towards both of the women in the end. Zeina states that she does not want to be called Nawal: "never talk about that woman Nawal al-Wazir in front of me again, okay?" (Saadawi, 2018: 43). He responds aggressively and subsequently, "cover[ing] her dark body with kisses" (Saadawi, 2018: 188) against her will. These actions shed light on the shadowy aspect of Mahmoud's character, which is that he is self-centred and focuses on his own desires. He lacks empathy, all of which prevent him from integrating into society. He would rather force his desire on these women rather than respect what they want. His loneliness turns into aggressive oppression, which reminds the oppression of any power holder. Although gender relations are not the focus of this study, it is possible to say that Saadawi integrates power relations into the lives of his characters in one way or another.

In conclusion, the characters in *Frankenstein in Baghdad* are symbolic references to how power relations, colonialism, and oppression fracture communities and cause minorities to confront difficulties and lead the individuals to isolation and struggle to feel belonging. They reflect alienation and disconnectedness that can occur as a consequence of residing in an environment that is hostile and unsafe. Loneliness and exile are core components of societal conflicts and struggles. Throughout the novel, Whatsitsname's loneliness is driven to despair and tragedy. He longs for connection and understanding but is constantly rejected by the people he encounters. His loneliness and lack of human interaction push him towards violence, and he decides to take on the role of a monster. Even his relationship with Hadi is strained by the violence and chaos that surrounds them. The adventure of Whatsitsname is portrayed in the novel as a heart-breaking reflection of war and violence on people's humanity and their desire for connection and meaning, emphasising the damaging effects of isolation, exile, and social negligence.

4.3. The Search for Justice and Revenge of the Postcolonial Monsters

In postcolonial literature, the theme of a monster looking for justice and revenge is depicted as a metaphorical portrayal of the oppressed for the injustices in history. The voices of the colonised are embodied in the monster. The concept of the postcolonial monster searching for justice and revenge refers to the legacy of colonialism. In this context, justice and revenge can be framed under the spectrum of historical response and the continuity of inequalities, as it is still common in several postcolonial societies. The notion of justice is the core of many postcolonial conflicts, involving a desire for revenge against oppressors and colonisers. At the same time, revenge is interpreted as a sense of empowerment for the oppressed people through causing violence. Consequently, the

challenge for societies that have emerged from the legacy of colonialism is to find a way of solution to rectify the injustices and inequalities without committing to vengeance or making the situation even worse.

The postcolonial monster's desire to search for justice and revenge reflects the conflicts for freedom, honour, and sovereignty in several postcolonial societies. The effect of colonialism has had a profound impact on societies overcoming the social, economic, and political impacts of imperialism. In the aftermath, the communities who are oppressed by colonialism always confront difficult matters like poverty, injustice, discrimination, and marginalisation. Postcolonial monsters' desire to search for justice and revenge is complicated and varied, symbolising the instability of situations and conflicts with freedom and independence in postcolonial civilisations. In this context, the monster refers to those communities that colonial powers have oppressed.

The aim of life is to strive for what is right during tough times. In Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the protagonist, Victor Frankenstein, goes through many difficulties just to find and respond to justice. In the beginning, he behaves in an unjust manner towards society, and his pursuit of justice ultimately leads him to death. The significance of his search for justice contributes to the story's main theme, which is social rejection. Even though the reader is at first under the impression that Victor Frankenstein is a person who defends justice, the fact is that he is one of the characters who primarily contribute to injustice. Throughout the novel, many people are sacrificed because of Victor's selfishness. For instance, the innocent lady, Justine Moritz, is blamed for a murder:

Yet she appeared confident in innocence and did not tremble, although gazed on and execrated by thousands, for all the kindness which her beauty might otherwise have excited was obliterated in the minds of the spectators by the imagination of the enormity she was supposed to have committed. (Shelley, 2003: 90)

Although the monster kills the victim and Victor knows it well, Victor does not confess it. Victor has the knowledge to secure justice, but he lets the girl be executed for the crime. The monster's thirst for revenge against a society that has rejected and wronged him is what motivates him to the action. Victor now starts to get direct threats from the monster, who claims, "I will be with you on your wedding-night" (Shelley, 2003: 206). Throughout the novel, the monster is eager to take revenge by causing harm to Victor's friends. Victor continues to prepare for his wedding, and on his wedding night, he "heard a shrill and dreadful scream. It came from the room into which Elizabeth had retired" (Shelley, 2003: 241). The monster's final attack on Victor is the murder of Elizabeth since it makes Victor's existence pointless. Victor perishes alone in the middle of the ocean since he is left without his father, brother, wife, or any friends. Due to the moral injustices, his life becomes miserable. Victor has subsequently been experienced since "Victor's parthenogenetic creation of the monster can be seen as, among other things, an emblem and consequence of psychic bifurcation" (Bloom, 2009: 90).

Shelley challenges the reader to form an opinion about Victor's character by demonstrating how he disregards his obligations while those around him do not. The work heavily explores issues of justice and blame, as well as themes of justice and injustice. Typically, fair and just characters are those who accept responsibility for their own actions as well as those of others. Elizabeth, for instance, defends Justine in court after Justine is charged with William's murder, sent to jail, and given the death penalty. Victor is aware that the monster committed the act, but he chooses not to reveal it or cannot do so. However, Justine's confession is the crucial element of the case. Elizabeth

states, "I believed you guiltless, notwithstanding every evidence, until I heard that you had yourself declared your guilt" (Shelley, 2003: 97). After Justine is found guilty, she requests to get absolution from the church, and Elizabeth accepts her word saying, "I will proclaim, I will prove your innocence" (Shelley, 2003: 98). Expressing confessions, listening to others and making oral promises are all considered the main components in the novel. Elizabeth will not consider the facts, proof, or the fact that Justine's comments reflect her actual beliefs only if she admits she is guilty. Except for Victor, every single character in the novel listens to each other: Mr Kirwin pays attention to Victor's words, the monster listens carefully to the De Lacey family, Felix obeys Safie's father, Walton's daughter listens to her father, and finally, Walton listens to Victor and his crew. Here, the notion of listening helps differentiate justice from injustice. Victor's denial of his creature is indeed a crucial interpretation of his character and has significant implications throughout the novel. His denial encompasses fear, sin, and his avoidance of taking responsibility for his desired actions. Shelley depicts that Victor does not only play with God's matter when he creates the monster. He also improperly acts as the accuser and judge.

This act of selfishness was conducted to prevent himself from getting into problems with his father. At the same time, a few characters in the novel are involved in the justice contamination as it gets affected by Frankenstein's injustice. This demonstrates that Victor was unfair and that many people were affected by his unjust ideology. Moreover, due to many unfair things that Victor committed, most of his life was just for seeking justice and acting the right things. Victor shows regret and realises the agony he has caused with his deeds, "blasted as thou wert, my agony was still superior to thine; for the bitter sting of remorse will not cease to rankle in my wounds until death shall close them forever" (Shelley, 2003: 277). Victor acknowledges that the monster has gone through an enormous amount of pain and has been "blasted," which most likely refers to the monster's exclusion from society. However, Victor feels that his pain is infinitely worse despite the monster's pain. He believes his guilt is a deeper, longer-lasting cause of misery than the monster's obvious suffering. Victor claims that the 'bitter sting of remorse' is still with him and is what torments him continuously. He suffers from the results of his deeds and his guilt for creating the monster. The image of rankling wounds emphasises his deep and lasting guilt, implying that it is still growing and tormenting him. This state stands for Victor's reflection and realisation that justice and revenge do not just happen to people. Instead, he confronts regret, which he considers much worse than the monster's suffering. It highlights the themes of personal responsibility and the psychological implications of guilt and regret.

Lastly, Victor confronts death. His life is full of regret and challenges due to his wrongdoings and stubbornness towards society. After his unfair commitment, he tries to seek justice just for relief. Throughout his journey of searching for justice, he is falsely accused of a murder of his friend, Henry Clever, that he did not commit. It demonstrates Victor's self-perception as a victim of unfairness and his own state of abandonment and misery. He has the impression that he is an "abortion," a creation that was not wanted by society and was rejected. Victor likens himself to something that is unacceptable and treated with harshness. Because of this consequence, he finally understands that his actions negatively impact people's lives. As time goes on, he pursues the monster in order to get the monster under his control and punish him for every single unfair crime that he committed. Unfortunately, his plan of action leads him to death. This proves that different ideas occupied the monster, while Victor's intention was just to find justice.

All creatures have a great desire to be accepted, adopted and sympathised with. However, society and the monster's creator, Victor, refuse to interact with the creature. That is the reason the monster seeks justice. The rejection of society and his creator is accepted as unjust by the monster. The monster states this once he meets Victor in the forest: "I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel" (Shelley, 2003: 114). The monster explains his state of existence and resembles himself to Adam, the first man created by God in the history of creation. His desire to be seen as an innocent and pure creature to be a companion to his creator, Victor, is like Adam's relationship with God. This point highlights the monster's sense of injustice and his yearning for companionship. He expresses his frustration and bitterness about the inequality he sees in the world as follows: "I am alone and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me" (Shelley, 2003: 173). He wonders why he is alone and rejected in contrast to the equality he observes in nature, where even animals have companions. The monster's remarks reveal his need for justice and the suffering that motivates him to seek revenge on Victor Frankenstein, his creator. This scene indicates societal exclusion and the results of denying compassion and acceptance.

Shelley gives the monster a complex depiction that emphasises his preference for both good and evil. The monster shows moments of compassion and a need for friendship despite committing horrific crimes including the murder of innocent people. This contradiction makes the readers doubt if the monster's acts are motivated by a sincere desire for justice or by a misguided notion of revenge. However, Victor thinks of his options and considers the consequences of his actions if he takes revenge or kills the monster. It also indicates that Victor is aware of the risk involved in rejecting the monster's request and is aware that doing so could have serious consequences. This decision reflects Victor's desperate acts and the profound consequences the monster's existence has had on his life. Victor acknowledges that he will fulfil the monster's yearning for vengeance if he cannot grant the monster's desire for a companion: "Shall each man, cried he, find a wife for his bosom, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone? I had feelings of affection, and they were requited by detestation and scorn" (Shelley, 2003: 205).

This is ironic, and the monster tells Victor by saying, "You accuse me of murder; and yet you would, with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature. Oh, praise the eternal justice of man!" (Shelley, 2018: 115). Generally, the importance of justice in *Frankenstein* relies on the notion of being accepted by society. The monster's search for justice is effective, but in the end, he regrets his severe convictions. When the monster talks of himself as the fallen angel, he emphasises the fact that he is an unwanted and hated figure in society. The monster considers himself comparable to Lucifer in that both were driven out of heaven for breaking God's commands. He is aware of his capacity for goodness and connection. However, the monster's understanding of its rejection by society sheds light on its multifaceted nature. The monster has a deep desire for connections and an eagerness to be understood despite the violent crimes he commits. He seeks connection and educates himself about human feelings and ethics in order to be engaged with the community. In his confession, the monster says that he committed the murders out of a desire for vengeance against his creator: "Impotent envy and bitter indignation filled me with an insatiable thirst for vengeance" (Shelley, 2003: 273). Because of this, the monster begins a bloody attack. The consequence is that Victor is made to suffer for the loss of his close family members while the creature takes pleasure in causing devastation to his creator. Hereafter, the monster vows to seek

revenge on Victor: “[he] will revenge [his] injuries: if [he] cannot inspire love, [he] will cause fear” (Shelley, 2003: 175). He believes that if he frightens Victor, he will get justice for the misery he has been through. He also demonstrates his intention to look for revenge for the harsh time he has endured. He thinks if he cannot gain the love and acceptance of others, he will instil fear and disturbance in them instead. Thus, the monster’s feelings underscore his inner conflict in finding a place and being accepted in society.

Victor and the monster illustrate a sophisticated interaction between the call for justice and the appealing prospect of revenge. Their experiences of injustice and their desire for revenge motivate them. Justice and injustice are depicted in different ways and from different perspectives. Consequently, the novel digs into the concerns of responsibility and accountability when the monster pursues justice for Victor’s neglect; thus, he crosses a thin line between revenge and justice. Justice can be viewed in various ways depending on the perspective. In this respect, they overstep the limits of justice and fail to recognise the consequences of causing harm to others.

The novel, *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, examines the concept of injustice by depicting various characters, tackling the consequences of the violence and turmoil that have persisted in the city of Baghdad during the course of the story. The story digs into the moral difficulties as well as the ways in which individuals are transformed by the circumstances they find themselves in. The writer, Ahmed Saadawi, portrays a terrifying image of modern-day Baghdad by illustrating the misery and anxiety of the Iraqi people as well as the horrors and terrors of living in such terrible circumstances. By expressing his disapproval of violent behaviour throughout this story, Saadawi intends to illustrate how dangerous Baghdad can be. The writer uses this issue to highlight violence and unrest in Iraq and shows that retribution is not always ethically justifiable, even when taken for a legitimate reason. Whatsitsname is certain that he is on a holy mission to avenge the murders of the people whose body parts have contributed to his existence, many of whom were murdered in bloody attacks by sectarian groups competing for dominance. He was made by Hadi, who, after a suicide bomber killed Nahem Abdaki, put this hotel guard’s nose on the deceased friend’s face. In a way, Hadi’s anger over his friend’s senseless death gives rise to Whatsitsname, who gains consciousness and immediately comprehends his purpose.

At the beginning of the novel, a suicide bomber causes chaos in Tayaran Square, which is located in the core city of Iraq. The atmosphere is narrated as follows: “The smell suddenly hit his nostrils—the smoke, the burning of plastic and seat cushions, the roasting of human flesh. You wouldn’t have smelled anything like it in your life and would never forget it” (Saadawi, 2018: 24). It presents an unsettling image of what happens after violence and disaster. A horrible scenario that has never been seen before comes to mind, particularly during the explosion that “cut electricity wires and killed birds. Windows were shattered and doors blown in. Cracks appeared in the walls of the nearby houses, and some old ceilings collapsed” (Saadawi, 2018: 25). Saadawi draws attention to the horrifying effects of war as well as the devastation that such wars take on human life. The permanent smell is a potent reminder of the tragedy that has taken place and its profound impact on the individuals who have witnessed and experienced it. The novel explores the implications of violence and its tremendous effects on the lives of those affected by it.

Hadi Al-Attag, a junk dealer, is troubled by the fact that the victims of suicide bombings and sectarian violence in Baghdad, whose corpses are blasted to bits, “that had been left in the streets like trash” (Saadawi, 2018: 30) are never afforded the courtesy of being given a proper burial; thus,

he decides to collect body parts and stitch them and give the newly created body a decent burial. He continually visits the bombing sites to “[look] for something in particular amid this binge of death and devastation” (Saadawi, 2018: 26). Once he sees a body part that he has been looking for, he picks it up and “wrapped it in his canvas sack, folded the sack under his arm, and left the [place]” (Saadawi, 2018: 26) for his house in Al-Bataween district. A soul animates the dead body and seeks revenge on those whose body parts formed his creation.

In this way, Saadawi draws the fundamental topic of “revenge” from Shelley, whose monster is just as revengeful as that of Saadawi. Saadawi divides the characters in sectarian violence into two categories in *Frankenstein in Baghdad*: those who caused the bloodshed, including the magician, the sophist, the enemy, their followers, and the three madmen. Whatsitsname recounts the people he has exacted revenge upon when recounting his story on the tape recorder:

[He] killed the Venezuelan mercenary in charge of the security company responsible for recruiting suicide bombers who had killed many civilians, including the guard at the Sadeer Novotel, Hasib Mohamed Jaafar. [He] killed the al-Qaeda leader who lived in Abu Ghraib and who was responsible for the massive truck bomb in Tayaran Square that killed many people, including the person whose nose Hadi picked up off the pavement and used to fix my face. (Saadawi, 2018: 132)

Whatsitsname is well aware of the mechanisms of hatred and revenge. He states, “You can win the trust of the group that’s opposed to the person you’re targeting” (Saadawi, 2018: 132), and he also indicates the people who want to take revenge when he understands that he has been trapped in a never-ended cycle: “my list of people to seek revenge on grew longer as my old body parts fell off and my assistants added parts from my new victims, until one night I realised that under these circumstances I would face an open-ended list of targets that would never end” (Saadawi, 2018: 132). The problem with retributive justice is that it can result in a never-ending cycle of violence and death. Here, Whatsitsname is considered a “true Iraqi citizen” (Saadawi, 2018: 127). This true Iraqi citizen is formed by the diversity of body parts of Iraqi society combined together to be a proper individual. Hadi illustrates that “[he] made it complete so it wouldn’t be treated as trash, so it would be respected like other dead people and given a proper burial” (Saadawi, 2018: 30). Hadi’s purpose for assembling the body that takes the name Whatsitsname is made clear by his own justification and by indirect remarks about his mental state following the murder of his friend Nahem Abdaki. Hadi explains to his listeners at the coffee house that he has felt disturbed by the disorganised body parts in the morgue he had been and by the lack of concern for the victims’ humanity. He thinks about giving a decent burial to his friend by putting the pieces of the body together and making a whole one. This combination can shed light on the Iraqi community’s different religious backgrounds and ethnicities. It also reflects the common point they share: the lack of justice, the hatred they feel, and the revenge they want to take.

The monster tells Hadi that “the soul of Hasib Mohamed Jaafar was demanding revenge, and he had to kill the person who had caused Hasib’s death” (Saadawi, 2018: 112). Hadi extends that Whatsitsname is “a composite of victims seeking to avenge their deaths so they could rest in peace” (Saadawi, 2018: 113). Based on this justification, the creature believes that he is carrying out a “noble mission” (Saadawi, 2018: 114) to exact revenge on the deceased. However, the purity of this purpose is compromised while he is gathering his followers.

Whatsitsname begins his recorded speech about the recent occurrences at his property in Dora: “the prayers of the victims and their families came together for once and gave those sinews a powerful impetus. The innards of the darkness moved and gave birth to me. I am the answer to their call for an end to injustice and for revenge on the guilty” (Saadawi, 2018: 123). Whatsitsname describes his ambition for revenge. He feels driven to take revenge on those whose bodies were spliced to form him. Whatsitsname thinks he has a significant destiny, much like Hadi. Words like “sinews” and “innards” allude to Whatsitsname’s horrific origins. On the other hand, Elishva, who blames the barber Abu Zaidoun responsible for her son Daniel’s disappearance/murder, is another revenge-seeking character. She prays for the death of Abu Zaidoun and is pleased with it. She takes revenge via Whatsitsname, who kills Zaidoun, rather than via God. Furthermore, despite the writer’s claim that some of the country’s numerous suicide bombs are driven by fear, they are actually more directly driven by revenge because the various sects are engaged in an unending battle for vengeance.

The concept of justice is also mentioned in Mahmoud’s flashback to his childhood in Amara, where he writes an article about the three sorts of justice: “legal justice, divine justice, and street justice” (Saadawi, 2018: 147). Through these three sorts of justice, it is believed that Whatsitsname initially thinks he first carries out the acts of divine justice and then turns to street justice, where he begins killing people and becomes a killer by taking revenge.

Saadawi interprets the existence of Whatsitsname in three ways: first, it can be seen as a representation of any Iraqi citizen, as a reinforcement of different ethnicities and sects; second, it can be seen as a representation of the saviour who will secure justice and take revenge on behalf of all victims; and third, it can be seen as “the epitome of mass destruction and crime” (Saadawi, 2014). Whatsitsname resembles a lot to Shelley’s monster and states that “they have turned me into a criminal and a monster, and in this way, they have equated me with those I seek to exact revenge on” (Saadawi, 2018: 124). In his interview with Najjar, Ahmed Saadawi states: “The Whatsitsname reflects our personal standards of justice, retribution, revenge, and punishment” (Najjar, 2014). Whatsitsname himself describes his mission as follows:

I am the answer to their call for an end to injustice and for revenge on the guilty. With the help of God and of heaven, I will take revenge on all the criminals. I will finally bring about justice on earth, and there will no longer be a need to wait in agony for justice to come, in heaven or after death. (Saadawi, 2018: 123-124)

The ideas of justice and revenge appear to be combined in the monster. Justice can only be served by those who kill innocent people for their worst offences. The monster believes the only way to take revenge is to kill the perpetrators of the most horrific crimes. Saadawi has seen this mentality mirrored in the several actions of the militia because revenge seemed to follow the same pattern after the conflict in Iraq. Whatsitsname “[is] a composite of victims seeking to avenge their deaths so they could rest in peace. He [is] created to obtain revenge on their behalf” (Saadawi, 2018: 113). Whatsitsname’s acts cannot bring about true peace or even exact revenge for the deaths. In truth, his efforts to end the suffering of the victims who make up some of his bodies are utterly fruitless. Neither he nor the deceased ever finds peace. He comes to the realisation that he needs to continue killing to survive and add more victims to his list of those who have died in order to take revenge. Instead of achieving the anticipated result of peace, Whatsitsname’s pursuit of justice and revenge results in more violence and disorder. Despite its best efforts, the creature’s acts add to the

cycle of violence and maintain the sense of injustice that dominates Baghdad, a city that has been devastated by war.

In conclusion, postcolonial monsters in both Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* exemplify a complicated interaction between the yearning for justice and the desire for revenge. Shelley's monster is rejected by society due to his hideous appearance. At first, he searches for justice and simultaneously longs for acceptance by society. However, the infinite rejection and separation he confronts motivate him to take revenge on his creator and those who mistreat him. Similarly, Saadawi's monster is a collage of body parts gathered from the victims of war. He is thirsty for justice and reflects the pain of society. Although he strives for achieving justice for the victims, he realises that he is gradually overwhelmed by a desire for vengeance against those who are responsible for continuing the cycle of violence and injustice. These two postcolonial monsters are the perfect examples of how complex it is to find justice in a society where violence is prevalent. They shed light on the profoundly underlying inequities that motivate their actions by highlighting the transformational power of revenge as a response to the ongoing rejection of justice. The novels of Shelley and Saadawi drive us to address the underlying inequalities that develop these monsters and to understand the need for justice and restoration in colonial and postcolonial societies.

4.4. The Circle of Evilness for the Postcolonial Monsters

The concept of evil in postcolonial theory refers to the analysis of the destructive, exploitative, and repressive aspects of colonialism, as well as the long-term impact of colonialism on colonised societies. Postcolonial literature, theory, and discourse frequently address the several dimensions of evil connected with colonialism. These evil dimensions include the colonial system's moral, social, cultural, and economic consequences. It usually highlights the fundamental inequality of power between colonisers and colonised. It is believed that colonial rule's oppressive characteristics – including resource exploitation, forced labour, cultural erasure, and violence – suppress and dehumanise the colonised population. The colonisers also sought to impose their own values, languages, and belief systems on the colonised population. They frequently undermine their culture and identities. This cultural oppression is sometimes seen as an evil act threatening the colonised society's independence, leading to the loss of one's identity and social memory.

In *Discourse on Colonialism*, Aimé Césaire argues that colonialism is not simply a political or economic system but a profoundly rooted ideology that dehumanises both the colonised and the colonisers. He exposes how the colonial powers oppress and abuse colonisers and destroy their cultures. His *Discourse on Colonialism* significantly contributes to postcolonial literature and political theory. It sheds light on the destructive impact of colonialism and emphasises the urgent need for decolonisation, cultural revitalisation, and the recognition of all people's inherent dignity and humanity. Césaire clearly highlights the brutality of colonialism as he states that “between coloniser and colonised, there is room only for forced labour, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self-complacency, swinishness, brainless elites, and degraded masses” (2001: 42). He argues that colonialism is a fundamentally unjust system that promotes several forms of oppression and degrades humanity.

The concept of evil is frequently discussed in the context of colonialism and its impacts on people and society in Frantz Fanon's writings as well. In his writings, Fanon explores the

psychological and social impacts of oppression as well as the dehumanising effects of colonialism. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, he highlights the devastated nature of colonialism, stating: “Colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence” (2007: 23). Fanon demonstrates his conviction that colonialism is fundamentally violent and oppressive. He states that colonialism is a violent system that fosters evilness. According to Fanon, in order to oppose and collapse the oppressive systems that uphold the injustices of colonialism, it is essential to face and resist imperial violence.

J.M. Coetzee, the British writer, also addresses the concept of evilness in postcolonialism and its moral impacts. His writings frequently analyse power relations, oppression, and the evil side of human nature in postcolonial contexts. In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Coetzee explores colonialism, violence, and the dehumanisation of others. The narrative’s protagonist struggles with moral dilemmas as he considers his own society’s oppressive customs and its treatment of native people. Another writer, Joseph Conrad, is a well-known British author who also addresses the issue of evil within the context of colonialism. He published several literary works that analysed the moral implications of European colonialism. In his significant work *Heart of Darkness*, he depicts brutality within the colonial endeavour. It also demonstrates the experience of colonialism, particularly in the word repetition of “The horror! The horror!” (Conrad, 1990: 71). This repetition illustrates the moral gap that colonialism causes in humans as well as the depths of human depravity.

In Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, the complicated issue of evilness is portrayed through the actions of multiple characters. According to the novel, social alienation is both the root of evil and its ultimate punishment. The monster makes it clear that his isolation from humanity leads him to become a murderer: “My protectors had departed and had broken the only link that held me to the world. For the first time, the feelings of revenge and hatred filled my bosom” (Shelley, 2003: 165). A feeling of isolation also leads Victor Frankenstein to make bad choices and get punished because of them. Frankenstein works alone when he creates the monster “in a solitary chamber, or rather cell” (Shelley, 2003: 55). His ambition has dangerously risen due to being “solitary”. Victor is the real monster in *Frankenstein* because of his carelessness as a parent and his merciless treatment of his creation. He initially demonstrates his carelessness and responsibility when he creates the monster: “Frankenstein, who throughout the creation process, works himself into a frenzy of hatred for the monster, abandons the monster upon his first awakening” (Lancaster, 2008). Victor dislikes his creature even before he comes to life, and when he is animated, Victor is disgusted and in shock:

I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life. (Shelley, 2003: 59-60)

Initially, Victor is shocked by the appearance of his creature and horrified by its monstrous form. He leaves the monster behind and refuses to accept responsibility for his acts as a parent and a creator. This abandonment denies the monster the love and guidance that are crucial for a being to develop ethically and emotionally. The monster’s behaviour changes due to its treatment by society. Because of this, Shelley represents the monster as a complex character since he can be capable of violence and emotional desire simultaneously. His transformation into a figure of evil is

a tragic result of rejection and abandonment. However, in reality, the real monster is his creator. He animates a pure creature who will ultimately take the evilness from his creator. The idea that drives the plot is that the monster emerges as “Victor’s double and that the evil he commits is Victor’s evil” (Soyka, 2: 1992). When the monster comes to life, his physical appearance is disgusting, leading Victor Frankenstein away from him and making him an outcast. This is his first action of evilness as he “[leaves] the monster even more detached from society because, just as the monster has no history, he also has no creator to connect him to society” (Lancaster, 2008). The monster also highlights the consequences of his experience with the continual rejection by society. It symbolises a crucial period in the monster’s growth and acceptance of evilness as a way out: “evil thenceforth became my good. Urged thus far, I had no choice but to adapt my nature to an element which I had willingly chosen” (Shelley, 2003: 273). He confesses that as a result of the ongoing abuse he experiences, he is forced to adopt a darker character and connect himself with evilness.

Several concerns are explored in Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, including the concept of evilness. The moral complexity of human beings and the existence of evil are among the issues raised in the novel. The main point is the pursuit of knowledge and legacy that brings mass danger. The protagonist, Victor Frankenstein, portrays the catastrophic possibilities of unrestrained desire through his constant pursuit of creating life, which eventually results in tragedy and misery. A significant myth exists behind the novel’s criticism of intelligence, which Shelley alludes to. She refers to Victor Frankenstein as “A Modern Prometheus,” comparing him to the heroic but ultimately tragic figure of Greek myth who challenged the gods, stole the fire to offer it to human beings, and endured the punishment by Zeus by being tied on Mount Caucasus so that eagles would eat his organs. Victor’s failure to accept responsibility for his creature and his abandonment move the monster into evil acts. The story strongly emphasises the value of carefully considering the effects of one’s choices and the sense of responsibility associated with behaving as a god. The monster usually reflects his sense of Victor’s action: “I am malicious because I am miserable. Am I not shunned and hated by all mankind?” (Shelley, 2003: 174). The monster’s remarks reflect a profound sense of isolation, abandonment, and loneliness. He is mistreated by society, and his wretched life is the main cause of his evil deeds. This scene can demonstrate the connection between individual suffering and the birth of evilness, arguing that external conditions and a lack of empathy can influence the growth of evil tendencies. It also raises questions about good and evil by encouraging readers to feel the monster’s suffering and think about how human behaviour affects the emergence of evil.

Peter Heymans argues in “Animality in British Romanticism: The Aesthetics of Species” that “Frankenstein abandons his creature not because it lacks the margins of error that define human identity, but because his physiognomic belief in the correlation between facial appearance and moral character deludes him into thinking that the monster’s intolerable ugliness must be a sign of supernatural evil” (2012: 125). Due to the social construction of beauty in society, this is the monster’s first experience of despair and rejection. Without even realising it, Frankenstein and the rest of society have instinctively accepted this societal standard and used it to affect how they interact with one another and go about their day-to-day lives. This is caused by the reinforcement that beautiful is good and ugly is bad. Most probably, Victor Frankenstein and the rest of society

would not have abandoned his monster if there were no socially built hierarchies or representations of beauty.

Victor's regret is demonstrated as he states, "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, 2003: 53). It highlights the cautionary message about pursuing knowledge without considering its consequences and moral implications. The idea that humans are driven by excessive ambition to exceed human limitations could result in pain and catastrophe. He advises others to take his experience seriously and states that his activities have resulted in great unhappiness and conflict: "But it was all a dream; no Eve soothed my sorrows nor shared my thoughts; I was alone. I remembered Adam's supplication to his Creator. But where was mine? He had abandoned me, and in the bitterness of my heart I cursed him" (Shelley, 2003: 156). It clearly reflects Victor's state of disappointment. He acknowledges the evil inherent in his desire for knowledge and creation by becoming bitter and blaming his monster. As mentioned above, exterior aesthetics is a significant social morality indicator. Society instinctively associates the monster's horrible appearance with a similarly dreadful personality. The creature transforms from a good-hearted being to an evil monster that runs against humanity as a result of persistent rejection and hatred. The continued existence of dominant ideologies and social structures creates monsters. The inequity and rejection that result from these societal systems' oppressive power could be eliminated if these ideas were opposed.

Furthermore, the subplot about Justine Moritz contributes significantly to the novel's focus on the impacts of evil acts. Her situation exemplifies the easy prevalence of evil in the novel regarding her unfair trial and having been found guilty. Her tune is felt when "[she] did confess; but [she] confessed a lie. [She] confessed, that [she] might obtain absolution; but now that falsehood lies heavier at [her] heart than all [her] other sins" (Shelley, 2003: 97). She expresses her inner conflict and sorrow at pleading to the unlawful act. It almost illustrates the discrimination she encounters and has occurred from the evil acts of the real criminal. Although Justine is not depicted as evil, her portrayal illustrates how evil can appear in society through unjustified allegations, harsh judgements, and the misery of innocent people. Her tragic climax points out the problematic moral issues surrounding immoral deeds and their tragic consequences.

Frankenstein in Baghdad explores the nature of evil in a war set with a metaphorical reflection on the consequences of chaos and complexities. Ahmed Saadawi, the Iraqi writer, was profoundly influenced by the evil that dominated his homeland. The city was destroyed by the war's brutality as well as the crimes that were inevitable. After seeing these negative impacts on the city, Saadawi felt obliged to write and try to bring some clarity to the chaos that had taken over the city. As we know, the novel *Frankenstein in Baghdad* tells the story of Hadi, who creates a monster that will immediately seek revenge on those people who are responsible for creating violence and death. Saadawi also mentions in his interview that "Frankenstein in this novel is a condensed symbol of Iraq's current problems" (Najjar, 2014), which results from and in evilness.

When the monster begins on a mission for vengeance, it stands as a symbol of the embodiment of evilness that has emerged in the name of abolishing it. The theme of good and evil is one of the most significant themes in *Frankenstein in Baghdad* and is considered a confusing theme. The work as a whole provides an analysis of traditional concepts of morality, in which the

monster initially desires vengeance, then gradually develops consciousness and faces the consequences of its own acts. This moral complexity draws attention to the aspects of evil and encourages readers to think about the roots of both good and evil in a setting where violence and destruction predominate.

The novel explores the manner in which conflict can dehumanise people. The continual hostilities in Baghdad desensitised the people to violence and led to a loss of compassion. This dehumanisation is reflected in the creation of the monster itself, which is a horrific combination of the dead body parts of several different people. The act of creating such a creature can be considered a sign of how the dehumanising effects of war have damaged society. The portrayal of the monster as a creature of war, conflict, and chaos reflects the nature of evilness. One of the main other characters, Hadi, is also transformed by the influence of evilness. The novel is set in wartime and analyses the consequences of outbreaks of violence and the ethical implications of human deeds. The development of Hadi's character is a reflection of evil's destructive inclination in turmoil. Hadi is initially shown as a cheerful and energetic person. However, the shock of his friend Nahem's death changes his actions and how he sees the world. Hadi's change is sparked by the evil actions carried out in the conflict area, especially the brutal death of Nahem. The tragic loss of Nahem impacted Hadi and caused him a notable change in his character and behaviour. His friend's death leaves a mark on his psyche.

The shock of Nahem's death changed Hadi. He became aggressive. He swore and cursed and threw stones after the American Hummers or the vehicles of the police and the National Guard. He got into arguments with anyone who mentioned Nahem and what had happened to him. He kept to himself for a while, and then went back to his old self, laughing and telling extraordinary stories, but now he seemed to have two faces, or two masks—as soon as he was alone, he was gloomy and despondent in a way he hadn't been before. (Saadawi, 2018: 28)

Hadi's anger is a symptom of his grief, and he bursts with rage and frustration. Hadi's psychological state also has an impact on how he interacts with others. He becomes aggressive and hostile, particularly in response to the death of his friend Nahem. Hadi becomes intolerant of talk about or references to the event as a result of his grief. He also keeps himself away from social interactions and seeks refuge and lives in. He seeks vengeance and uses violence to express his pain in order to demonstrate the destructive power of evil because of his loss.

Hadi's contradictory personality also portrays the nature of evilness. He conceals his inner pain caused by war and gets back to himself once he is in public with humour and storytelling. When he is alone, he feels despair and misery. This duality illustrates how evil is inherently complicated because it takes different forms depending on the context and circumstances. Generally, Hadi is used in the novel as a means of analysing the issue of evilness in a devastated society. His transformation highlights the nature of evil and its impact on interpersonal connections. Evil appears as a personified being, and evil is a common force brought up by the war's bloodshed and destruction. The novel depicts the effects of such violent actions on people like Hadi, highlighting the moral and psychological implications they experience when exposed to the acts of violence in their environment.

The theme of magic and superstition (a form of evilness) is used to indicate the city of Baghdad as a place “where the demons had broken out of their dungeons and come to the surface all at once” (Saadawi, 2018: 60). In Baghdad, mysterious things are attainable and local citizens

have a solid faith in these without any questions. That is why the story of *Frankenstein in Baghdad* can ideally fit in this context. The notion of evilness is also clearly introduced through Elishva's neighbour because she has a perception of her. Elishva's neighbour leaves the neighbourhood as she believes that Elishva has practised some magics: She "accused [her] of practising some kind of black magic on her two little boys and said she had prevented one of them from speaking even at the age of six. She was frightened of the old woman, especially after she found her talking to pictures or to the many cats that roamed the house" (Saadawi, 2018: 59). The fact that Elishva has a sort of communication with her cats and the picture of Saint George arises several questions in their minds. "Once [the neighbour] told her husband that one of the cats spoke back to the old woman and had a conversation with her. She even said she suspected the cats were, in fact, human and that Elishva had transformed them into cats with satanic magic" (Saadawi, 2018: 59). These magic acts frequently interact with the characters' religious points of view, particularly in the sense that Elishva's neighbours decide to slaughter a sheep as a sacrifice to God if He abandons the barber Abu Zaidoun, a member of the Baath party, due to his cruelty in sending young people to fight in the battle. Especially Elishva, who is trapped between being good or evil (although she is innocent and good, she lusts for revenge and the death of Abu Zaidoun), shows how Ahmed Saadawi does not discuss goodness or evilness in a simple and unilateral way.

Elishva's views on the meaning of the Saint's image and her exploration of it convey an unfulfilled sense of immobility in her inner life.

She looked at the picture of the saint hanging in front of her, his lance raised and the dragon crouching beneath him. She wondered why he hadn't killed the dragon years ago. Why was he stuck in that posture, ready to strike, she wondered. Everything remains half completed, exactly like now: she wasn't exactly a living being, but not a dead one either. (Saadawi, 2018: 172)

Elishva's own situation is depicted as a reflection of this image's metaphorical interpretation. She feels as though she is in a condition of uncertainty, neither entirely living nor fully dead, neither good nor evil. It implies that she feels trapped or stuck and cannot move on from her current situation or find peace.

This is the writer's style of referring to religious beliefs. In one of the scenes, the other neighbours and Elishva's companion Umm Salim yells violently at Faraj, saying, "God curse you this evening, Faraj, God take you" (Saadawi, 2018: 84). They detest Faraj. It is a curse, which causes one of them to quickly feel like a weight has been removed from her: "[S]uddenly she didn't hate Faraj so much" (Saadawi, 2018: 84). This illustrates that there is a psychological and therapeutic side to the curses and beliefs that have been transmitted down through the generations. On the other hand, magic also functions as a symbolic notion when Mahmoud and Saidi have a talk over a drink. Saidi suddenly tells him, "How I wish I was in your place", and Mahmoud is shocked and observes the situation, saying that "the words alone were like the wave of a magic wand, fulfilling [Mahmoud's] impossible dream" (Saadawi, 2018: 94). He has the desire to place him and want to become him. Indeed, he likes to take his wealth and seize his position; however, when it happens, Mahmoud seizes the position of magazine editor, and the work pressure suffocates him. In spite of the fact that Saidi's girlfriend, whose phone number starts with the numbers of 666, Mahmoud has a great desire to have this number as he thinks, perhaps, he could find a certain allure in embracing elements that are typically associated with the supernatural elements. In literature,

the number 666 is often associated with the themes of evil or the supernatural in various cultural and religious contexts.

Justice and fairness are beyond human control operating with pervasive insecurity. Mahmoud believes one should acknowledge the role of luck and chance in life. Life turns into a form of fate when brutality is prevalent, death is random, and punishment is unjustified. The novel concludes that instead of seeking to bring about violence in others, one should attempt to coexist as calmly as possible. Conversely, using force just results in more destruction and creates cycles of evilness.

The metaphysical phenomena comprise a significant part of the Tracking and Pursuit Department's work. At the first meeting, Brigadier Majid illustrates the plan to Mahmoud and states, "We have analysts in parapsychology, astrologers, people who specialise in communication with spirits and with the djinn, and soothsayers" (Saadawi, 2018: 70). Whatsitsname, who serves as the novel's main example of magic and supernatural elements, is frequently found by one of Majid's astrologers using "the djinn and familiar spirits and made use of Babylonian astrological secrets and the sciences of the Sabeans and the Mandeans to find the aura of the name surrounding the body of the criminal" (Saadawi, 2018: 98). The djinn is the ancient Arabic/Islamic soul of devils. One of Whatsitsname's supporters, known as

the Magician used to live in an apartment in Abu Nuwas, just west of Bataween, and he says he was part of the team of magicians that worked for the president of the old regime and that he cast spells to keep the Americans away from Baghdad and to prevent the city from falling into their hands. But the Americans, besides their arsenal of advanced military hardware, possessed a formidable army of djinn, which was able to destroy the djinn that this magician and his assistants had mobilised. (Saadawi, 2018: 125)

Whatsitsname embarks on his mission to take revenge on those whose body is comprised of. No one is aware of his mission except Hadi, who knows the true mission, which is why Whatsitsname becomes known as Criminal X on the social channels: "the television channels were covering the criminal almost every day, showing Identikit drawings of his face, with a caption stating the reward for anyone who provided information leading to his arrest" (Saadawi, 2018: 178). The monster becomes "a television star and when the brigadier caught him, he too would immediately become a celebrity" (Saadawi, 2018: 178). As a result, Whatsitsname decides to broaden the scope of his goal to "taking revenge on people who insult [him], not just on those who did violence to those whose body parts [he is] made of" (Saadawi, 2018: 157). At the same time, the body of Whatsitsname starts to rot away piece by piece in his never-ending attempt to replace his body parts: Whatsitsname

realised that under these circumstances I would face an open-ended list of targets that would never end. Time was my enemy, because there was never enough of it to accomplish my mission, and I started hoping that the killing in the streets would stop, cutting off my supply of victims and allowing me to melt away (Saadawi, 2018: 132)

His mission goes out of his control, and the supply of victims that he requires turns into producing victims who have no direct relation to his plan of vengeance. He gathers a group of followers who are eager to replace the monster's mission based on their ideological thoughts. A hierarchy of power emerges among the individuals closest to Whatsitsname. The three primary assistants of Whatsitsname are indeed referred to as The Magician, The Sophist, and The Enemy.

They have significant roles in the novel as compared to the secondary characters such as the young madman, the old madman, and the eldest madman, “who kept interrupting [him] when [he] started recording this” (Saadawi, 2018: 126).

Whatsitsname considers his most valuable follower to be a former Baathist government official who took part in war crimes. The Magician is in charge of devising secret passages through the city’s destroyed buildings so that the creature can move around without being seen. The Magician is now dedicated to Whatsitsname’s mission. The focus is on the fact that no one is ever entirely innocent or entirely guilty. Instead, everyone has the capacity to engage in both good and evil activities that are covered under the responsibility of the Magician. The Magician also sees that there will probably be conflict in the future because of the disagreements between Whatsitsname’s followers, and that is what actually happens. Later, the rival Sophist assassinates the Magician because he is jealous of the Magician’s influence over their leader.

The second assistant of Whatsitsname is a treacherous, cruel figure who competes with the Magician. The Sophist is a skilled rhetorician who is exceptionally experienced in the art of influencing people’s opinions. This person is skilled at pushing his own agenda by deceiving others and manipulating language and thinking in order to achieve his plans. His lack of morals is clear when the fight between the three groups of Whatsitsname’s followers happens, and he kills his friend, the Magician.

The third assistant who helps Whatsitsname is a member of a counterterrorism unit. He has chosen to work with Whatsitsname because he is not satisfied with the government’s efforts to secure justice. He provides hidden information about the government, but the government starts to be suspicious of what he is doing. The Enemy informs Whatsitsname that he is being investigated and then disappears. This strange ending indicates that the government has probably put him in jail or even killed him.

The writer Ahmed Saadawi managed to capture the attention of readers all around the world with the work that combined the aspects of the supernatural, the tragic, and social critique. His portrayal of the monster in the context of Baghdad’s unrest has become a compelling metaphor for the implications of violence and the ongoing struggle for humanity and compassion in the face of evil. This metaphor was made by the fact that Baghdad was in a state of instability and turmoil.

The concept of evil is prevalent in both Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Ahmed Saadawi’s *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. It leads to the formation of a cyclical structure in both novels. In Shelley’s work, the act of creating the monster out of desire and an unbearable desire for power and knowledge leads to the monster’s evil deeds and vengeance. These events take place after the monster has been created. The never-ending cycle of bloodshed continues as the monster pursues its vengeance on the person who created it, which feeds into the ongoing cycle of destruction. Similarly, in Saadawi’s work, oppression, corruption, and deception extend throughout the characters and the city of Baghdad, following an endless cycle of darkness and despair. Both writers explain how the seeds of evil planted can go out of human’s control, creating a deadly cycle that seems difficult to stop.

5. CONCLUSION

This study focused on how Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* deal with the concept of postcolonial monsters. Within the context of postcolonial themes, this study investigates the ways in which Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* interact with one another in this respect. Both of the novels include the creation of monsters that are intent on exacting revenge for the wrongs that have been done to them. The study shows the recurring topic of colonial powers and the influence that they have on the subjugation and dehumanisation of those who are colonised by finding parallels between the two works and highlighting how they are similar.

The monsters created by Shelley and Saadawi are reflections of humanity; they represent human beings' innate arrogance, tendency to evil, forbidden passions, destructive reactions to violence, and never-ending explanations given in the name of God, justice, or even mistaken ideals. Through their writings, Shelley and Saadawi both express the worries and concerns that are prevalent in their societies. Terror, according to Punter, occupies an important place in eighteenth-century Gothic literature, acting as "an exorsive force for the fears, desires, and anxieties that plagued society as it developed towards capitalism" (Punter, 1996: 23). In light of this, Shelley's *Frankenstein* "articulate[s] fears to do with the power of science, godlessness, social anarchy, and privation" (Punter, 1996: 23). These concepts reappear in the postmodernist era, where terror is "at the centre of political discourse" (Punter, 1996: 23), particularly after the onset of industrialization and colonisation. Shelley's work reflects the terrors of the Romantic era, particularly in terms of the "coming of industry" and the "rapidly changing world" driven by scientific developments (Punter, 1996: 112, 23), and Saadawi also expresses "the terrors of war, its violence, and the way it distorts the psyche both ethically and emotionally" (Schimmel, 2012). According to Mertz (2018), "the dystopian elements of the novel are not rooted in its speculative, supernatural elements but rather in the very, real nightmarish violence of 2005 Baghdad".

On the other hand, the novels place an emphasis on the significance of recognising the dehumanisation of the "other" in society for the purpose of exercising power. One example of this is the interpretation of the word "monster" within the framework of colonialism and post-colonialism. The presented study sheds light on the complicated relationship between the idea of the monster and the reality of Europe in the 19th century and the current reality in Iraq, which contributes to a deeper comprehension of the power dynamics that exist within society. Saadawi's novel can be seen as an Arabic narrative that counters the challenges of American and Western mainstream narratives, focusing on the traumatic experiences of people in Iraq. Besides, Saadawi's work serves as a representation of the shared sorrow and fear within the city itself. This study situates Saadawi's work within the framework of postcolonialism and the metaphor of Iraq's monster, revealing the transforming nature of the characters and the profound relationship between the sufferings of contemporary Iraq and the idea of the monster. It emphasises that Saadawi's novel is not a mere translation or adaptation of Mary Shelley's work, but a contextualised modification influenced by the colonial framework present in both works. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of cross-cultural impacts on literary works and their ability to interact with and respond to one another. Through the exploration of Mary Shelley's legacy and the analysis of Saadawi's Arabic work, this thesis provides unique insights into the enduring themes of violence, terror, and power and their manifestation in various cultural settings.

In the genre of Arabic fiction, Saadawi's work stands out due to its magnificent writing style as well as its bold exploration of truth and illusion. It removes the barriers between the living and the dead, the victims, and the perpetrators, and responds to the irrational fears, concerns, and ambitions of various segments of the population. What's its name in Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* turns out to be a frightening monster, serving as a symbol for the outrage and destruction that can be found in the bomb-ravaged streets of Iraq. It is a rewriting of Shelley's innocent creature that turns into a monster because of the oppressive and exploiting attitudes of the representatives of Western colonialism in the novel.

Both Shelley and Saadawi utilise violence within their writing to explore its portrayal, motivations, and consequences, aiming to arouse feelings of fear and a desire for vengeance in their readers. The inclination towards violence reflects the fundamental essence of humanity, which incorporates both the drive for transformation and the innate desire to cause destruction. When writers present violent acts in a realistic manner, it functions as a mirror, forcing readers to confront the dreadful, offensive, and abhorrent parts of human behaviour. Unfortunately, not all acts of violence "is condemned; not all forms of violence receive widespread disapproval" (Stanko, 2003: 12). This acceptance of violent behaviour could develop the "banalization of violence," which could eventually lead to the "habituation of fear" (Gupta, 2011: 174). There have been times throughout history when the use of violence has been recognised as an appropriate strategy for achieving one's goals. On the other hand, Hannah Arendt thought that "violence can be justified, but it will never be legitimate" (1969: 52). Moreover, Hogle suggests that Saadawi's "literary monster" compels readers to confront their own fears, uncovering deeply suppressed aspects and recognising that the "abnormalities that we would divorce from ourselves are a part of our selves, deeply and pervasively" (2002: 12).

Generally, gothic literature plays a crucial role in fostering comprehension amidst social injustice and political violence. As Punter highlights:

The individual comes to see him- or herself at the mercy of forces which in fundamental ways elude understanding. Under such circumstances, it is hardly surprising to find the emergence of a literature whose key motifs are paranoia, manipulation and injustice, and whose central project is understanding the inexplicable, the taboo, the irrational. (1996: 112)

Therefore, Gothic literature enables us to gain a deep insight into our inner selves as well as the complexities of our existence. Beville states that Gothic and postmodernism have become intricately entwined, giving rise to what she describes as a "literary monster" (2009: 16).

Its fascination with terror, the negative and the irrational, and its hostility towards accepted codes of reality, place it firmly in the realm of revolution. What is often terrifying is that this revolution is against humanity itself. (Beville, 2009: 16)

From a different angle, Saadawi's "uncanny" body represents life within death and is paradoxically stimulated by dead parts that have been sewn together. Although it is made up of inanimate parts, it has a strong spirit that is motivated by a desire for vengeance and a good cause. It is actually more sinister and terrifying than Mary Shelley's monster. Each rotting part is quickly replaced, and the reader's imagination is continually aroused by the constant horrible images. The body, protected even from police gunshots, continues to be a constant source of horror. The fear continues to grow throughout Saadawi's novel with each additional body component that is

described: arm, leg, and eyeball. In this respect, this postcolonial body has the potential to do great harm. It is a reflection of the evil deeds by the colonial powers.

Shelley's myth inspired Saadawi, and he is aware that *Frankenstein* in Shelley's novel refers to the scientist rather than the monster. It raises the question of whether Saadawi purposefully and profoundly refers to the scientist from Shelley's narrative as the cause of horror, engaging in a dialogue with oneself and stimulating deep philosophical reflection in the process. Alternatively, Saadawi simply aim to address those readers who commonly misunderstand Shelley's title, believing *Frankenstein* to be the name of the monster. In doing so, Saadawi conveys another message by reflecting the terrors experienced by the people and the chaos of the city. This compels readers to condemn acts of violence and acknowledge that no one is completely blameless.

This study analysed the themes of colonial oppression, slavery, alienation, and marginalisation in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. The emphasis is on the dehumanising effects of the postcolonial setting. The main comparison between the two works is based on the dynamics of power between the oppressor and the oppressed. Victor Frankenstein creates a monster in Mary Shelley's novel, illustrating the tensions between faith and science amid the Industrial Revolution. Similar to this, Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* explores the conspiracies that led to the US invasion of Iraq. In this novel, a junk dealer creates a vengeful monster in response to bombs in the city. Both Shelley's and Saadawi's monsters challenge oppressive authority and reject social norms, symbolising the ugliness and horrors brought on by colonialism, which the West frequently caused. As a whole, this analysis reveals the complex relationship between power, oppression, and the ongoing consequences of colonialism by providing a thorough exploration of the themes, historical settings, and critiques present in both Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad*.

The novels conclude that the two writers did not provide explicit solutions for the aftermath of colonialism. The two works primarily focus on exploring the negative consequences of violence, oppression, and revenge resulting from historical and contemporary contexts influenced by colonialism. That is the reason that these works serve as powerful critiques of the destructive nature of revenge and violence and prompt readers to reflect critically on the effects of such actions by highlighting the complexities and moral dilemmas surrounding these themes. However, it is essential to consider these works as literary representations and not to expect them to provide precise solutions to the problems that occur in the real world. At the same time, it is necessary to look beyond these works and engage in real-world efforts to effectively address the remaining impacts of colonialism and its negative aspects and strive towards a society that is inclusive and equitable.

It is observed that both novels have a dark and pessimistic outlook on life. These works dive into gloomy and complex themes, exploring the implication of violence, injustice, and the circle of evilness in human nature. The narratives emphasise the destructive nature of vengeance and the tragic events that occur from these actions. In Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, there are significant scenes of revenge actions, but a contrary one is when Elishva cuts up the portrait of Saint George when she is leaving Baghdad at the end of the novel. The picture represents two distinct parts: the figure of Saint George and the dragon he is depicted slaying. The picture of Saint George has a symbolic meaning. Elishva

looked at the picture of the Saint hanging in front of her, his lance raised and the dragon crouching beneath him. She wondered why he hadn't killed the dragon years ago. Why was he stuck in that posture, ready to strike, she wondered. Everything remains half completed, exactly like now: she wasn't exactly a living being, but not a dead one either. (Saadawi, 2018: 172).

Elishva's inner thoughts shed light on her feelings of uncertainty and frustration. She questions why the Saint has not been able to defeat the dragon and put an end to the suffering and chaos that persist in their world. The Saint is in a ready position to strike but is seemingly unwilling to do so. This might symbolise other possibilities rather than revenge and death. Elishva's cutting the picture and taking the Saint out of the picture shows that she is not lustful for vengeance anymore.

In terms of hope and forgiveness, Shelley's *Frankenstein* indicates some moments that pursue the possibility of hope and forgiveness. However, the overall tone of the novel is more tragic and despairing. One instance of hope can be seen in the character of Elizabeth, who is considered a beam of light in a time of darkness because she represents the qualities of kindness, compassion, and love. In addition, the creature has an instantaneous feeling of acceptance and compassion as a result of the connection that develops between him and the De Lacey family. This companionship alludes to the possibility of understanding and forgiveness. However, it is essential to point out that even though there are occasions of optimism and forgiveness depicted in the novel, these moments are frequently replaced by tragedy and the negative consequences that result from the evil actions of the characters. Despite the prevailing sense of darkness in *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, there are also instances of human connection and empathy. For instance, characters like Elishva and Hadi demonstrate some acts of kindness and compassion towards others. These moments of humanity give a light of hope at the possibility of forgiveness within the novel. Although exploitation, oppression, loneliness, revenge, and evilness appear as the prominent themes regarding the postcolonial monsters, some hints of hope are observed as the characters seek reconciliation with their past actions for redemption and healing. Whether they are going to achieve it could be a question of another study.

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