

Frankenstein's Justine Moritz: The Female Monster and Her Body

Monsters often test the boundaries and assumptions surrounding the question, “what does it mean to be human?” In a similar manner, so do women. They are not quite human, i.e. men, but they are also not completely monster. Which may be why Victor felt an *almost* sense of regret when he ripped the female creature’s body apart: “The remains of the half-finished creature, whom I had destroyed, lay scattered on the floor, and I almost felt as if I had mangled the living flesh of a human being” (Shelley 142). Almost, but not quite. For in Western philosophy and its descendants, we are constantly reminded that the female body is monstrous and therefore not in the same realm as the male body. Using Justine Moritz from Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) as a framework, the female body will be analyzed as a reproductive body, and how its difference from the male body has been used by philosophy to justify its objectification for patriarchal purposes. Then using the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, a possible solution will be offered through embodiment philosophy as a means to improve our cultural and philosophical relationship with both female and male bodies. Only by acknowledging that both female and male bodies are reproductive, can the monstrous qualities of deformity and dysfunction be removed from the former, and illuminate the invisibility of the latter in cultural perspectives on procreation.

Aristotle equated the female body with deformity and monstrosity: “For the female is, as it were, a mutilated male” (Book II, 737a, p. 33). The female form is thus a defective imitation of the original from which it was derived. He goes on to say:

Some children resemble their parents, while others do not; Some being like the father and others like the mother, both in the body as a whole and in each part, male and female offspring resembling father and mother respectively rather than the other way about. They resemble their parents more than remoter ancestors, and resemble those ancestors more than any chance individual. Some, though resembling none of their relations, yet do at any rate resemble a human being, but others are not even like a human being but a monstrosity. For even he who does not resemble his parents is already in a certain sense a monstrosity; for in these cases Nature has in a way departed from the type. The first departure indeed is that the offspring should become female instead of male; this, however, is a natural necessity...and the monstrosity, though not necessary in regard of a final cause and an end, yet is necessary accidentally (Book IV, 767B, p. 75-76).

He claims that not only is the female body a monstrous deformity of the male body, it is accidental and problematic – a fluke, a mutation. While it may have become necessary for subsequent offspring to be produced, nothing can erase the fact that it is still an aberration. Thus, he situates the male body as the normative standard for which bodies, monstrous and not, are to be judged. This trend continues in the current American medical community which views the female body as unwieldy and prone to the biological disasters of menstruation, hormone fluctuation, and pregnancy. Even in the field of obstetrics, in which the female body should be the normative standard, that body is viewed as dysfunctional. Discussing childbirth, the female body, and American medical culture, Davis-Floyd writes:

[T]he male body is metaphorized as a better machine than the female body. In form and function it is more machine-like – straighter-lined, more consistent and predictable, less subject to vagaries of nature...and consequently seems less likely to breakdown... [whereas female bodies] are seen as inherently subject to malfunction (1126).

This catastrophizing of the female body helps to explain why men are favored in medical labs and pharmaceutical trials as test subjects. In fact, until the US National Institutes of Health issued guidelines in 1994 that called for the evaluation of drug safety in relation to sex, women were excluded from the early studies of most drugs. Which meant that there was little medical information available regarding the effects of drugs on the female body.¹ The female body is too problematic, and framed in a precarious state of crisis.

While not going so far as his pupil, Plato's idea of the female is no less dangerous. He implies that this deformed body riddled with biological handicaps impedes women from developing higher spiritual and mental pursuits:

Those who are pregnant in the body only, betake themselves to women and beget children...but souls which are pregnant – for there certainly are men who are more creative in their souls than in their bodies – conceive that which is proper for the soul to conceive or contain. And what are these conceptions? – wisdom and virtue in general. And such creators are poets and all artists who are deserving of the name inventor (208e *Symposium*, p. 264-265).

¹ Holdcroft, Anita. "Gender Bias in Research: How does it Affect Evidence Based Medicine?" *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 100.1 (2007): 2-3. Web. 10 October 2018. <www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>

Though there is a tacit acknowledgment that women too can create wisdom and virtue, they may only do so by rejecting the very body they inhabit. Some scholars have gone so far as to applaud Plato for being an early feminist who argues for the equal education of women in the *Republic* (380 B.C.E.). However, such a position ignores the fact that in Plato's idealized city women may only be equal by emulating men. By being reared, educated, and trained as men. That is the only option to achieve the fullness of humanity. Even then, the text admits how absurd that might seem. When Socrates speaks to Glaucon about equality, he says: "What is the most ridiculous thing you see in it? Isn't it obviously the women exercising naked in the palestras [wrestling school and training ground] with the men?" (*Republic* Book V, 452a, p. 126). Even in a perfect world imagined by a philosopher, the female body doesn't cease to be problematic. For Plato, the philosopher's body is subordinate to the soul and the most creative endeavors are "wisdom and virtue", not children. Discussing beauty in the *Symposium*, which is the means by which the Good is instantiated, Plato claims that the beauty created by spiritual pregnancy is "more beautiful and more immortal" than that of physical pregnancy (*Symposium* 209c-d, p.492). There is a hierarchy to creativity. Considering the fact that women's financial, legal, and educational options were few during this period (500-300 B.C.E., Athens), and that women, then and now, still rely on marriage (with the understanding that children will be produced) for their well-being in many parts around the world, Plato's standard for philosophical production effectively excludes women.² Furthermore, his argument is not that women are equal to men and therefore

² Additionally, the global debate surrounding female bodily autonomy and their right to birth control (and the absence of concurrent contention surrounding male bodily autonomy and their right to birth control/reproductive planning and sexual freedom) illuminates how contentious the issues of female sexuality and reproduction are, and how they are conflated as fundamental feminine identity while men are able to dissociate themselves as "men" from "reproductive/sexual men". Women have no such luxury.

should be granted the same privileges. Rather, some women are better natured than other women just as some men are better natured than other men, and it's those women who should be given their share. Even if "lighter parts must be assigned to them because of the weakness of their sex" (*Republic* 457a, p. 131).³ Just as Aristotle's view can still be found in medical circles, glimmers of Plato's view can be found in psychoanalysis. For Freudians and a number of descending lineages, the female body was the root of all neurosis and identity problems. Specifically, it's the mother's body that embodies all that is disgusting worth sublimating and all that is threatening worth repressing.⁴ In Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), he builds his argument for the Oedipus complex and claims that in order for boys to become men, they must denounce the mother and refuse to identify with her: "We recoil from the person for whom this primitive wish [identification and affection] of our childhood has been fulfilled with all the force of the repression which these wishes have undergone in our minds since childhood" (223). Women are not so lucky and develop penis-envy because they are unable to dissociate themselves from the mother as a female body – the very body they inhabit.⁵ While men can take the metaphorical high road and sublimate away, distancing themselves from the female body and transcending to new levels of cognition, women will fail at this patriarchal endeavor because they inhabit the very body they are supposed to get away from to objectify. Platonic standards for transcendence can therefore be observed in this oppressive psychological model that equates women's bodies with the root cause of their failure to achieve spiritual and mental maturity.

³ This is explicit in his opinion via Socrates: "Women share by nature in every way of life just as men do, but in all of them women are weaker than men" (*Republic* 455d, p. 129).

⁴ Kahane, Claire. "Freud's Sublimation: Disgust, Desire and the Female Body." *American Imago* 49.4 (Winter 1992): 411-425. *JSTOR*. Web. 27 June 2018.

⁵ "Penis-envy" is the Freudian theory that as girls grow, they realize that they have incompatible genitalia with their mother, and in desiring a sexual relationship they develop a wish for a penis and a subsequent envy of their male counterparts who possess the object of that wish.

While all bodies are objectified to some degree in civilization, the female body is especially so. In society, women are unable to disentangle themselves from the *female body as an instrumental object*. In order to reproduce social structures and produce goods, communities need children and are willing to go to extreme lengths to make sure woman “make the right choice”. Equating the female body with the maternal not only produces future workers, but it also creates an industry built around this imperative that caters to that body. For example, Babypod is a device designed to be inserted into the vagina so that the fetus can listen to music in utero. The problem is not that these industries exist or that they cater to women, it’s that they reduce the woman to her body and elide it specifically with reproduction. From a young age, girls are encouraged to play “mommy” with dolls and this structure is most obvious during pregnancy. Amy Mullin in her critique of Western philosophy’s view on pregnancy rightly asserts that for women “pregnancy is a time when they are very insistently reminded that they are bodies” (Mullin 32). Their body, a vital aspect of their self, becomes co-opted and women often find themselves on the receiving end of sanctions by doctors, family, friends, and even strangers. During Shelley’s era, birthing books were prolific and concerned with the discipline/management of pregnant wives (Schoene-Harwood 145). Even now, natal sections of book stores are filled with texts that advise women on what they should or shouldn’t eat, how much and what kinds of activities they should perform, thoughts they should think, and an endless number of directives. These micro-interactions and the internalization of maternal imperatives from society regulate women and reinforce the paradigm of *the female body as a reproductive body*.

On a macro level, the state is preoccupied with reproduction and will subjugate the female body for its own purposes. The 1960s Socialist Republic of Romania banned abortion

and birth control in order to boost population. Post-Mao China in the late 1970s limited couples to one child, imposed abortions, and forced involuntary sterilizations to enforce the policy. In both examples, it is the female body and not the male body that is the sight of reproductive oversight and control. The female body is an instrument dissociated from subjectivity for the purposes of those around her. She becomes a commodity. In analyzing such commodification, Lesly Sharp writes:

[W]omen consistently emerge as specialized targets of commodification, where the female body is often valued for its reproductive potential. Such bodies may, in turn, require regulation...so that they are reduced to vaginas, wombs, or breasts. Consider, for example, wet-nursing as a legitimized exploitative, often class-based social practice, or the elaborate, long-standing debate on the exchange value of women-as-wives in anthropology (294).

Though men are necessary for reproduction, they are often invisible in scholarly analysis concerning the reproductive body. There is no one reason for this. First, the womb is the incubation site for the fetus and the female role extends months whereas the male participation is momentary. Second, female bodies are easier to regulate in misogynistic cultures that rob them of autonomy and subjectivity. Lastly, it is the female body conceived of as monstrous that elides the feminine and reproductive. It is the *deformed* female after all, as Aristotle has pointed out, that is monstrous – that undergoes transformation, mutation, and is unable to be controlled by its subject who is laid low by her own physiology. Thus, the male body has rid itself of the dirty business of childbirth and moved to a higher existential plane of existence which women can

never know. For Plato and Aristotle, the natural consequence of eliding the female with the grotesque body was to elide the male body with wisdom and philosophical pursuit.

Turning to the *Frankenstein* narrative, the issue of the female body as a monstrosity is explicated and by analyzing how this trope is treated in recent modern social conscience we can unpack it. *Frankenstein* scholars have rightly analyzed the mothering and childbirth anxieties present in that narrative. However, some like James Twitchell mistakenly assert that it is the female experience of these anxieties via an androgynous text that the author seeks to elucidate: “One does not have to delve very far below the surface to see that even in her 1831 introduction to the third edition she [Shelley] is still working out her own mothering anxieties” (57).⁶ Rather, it is the *male* insecurities about birthing that is central to the text. Barbara Waxman notes that by writing a male protagonist who experiences the pregnancy and birth of this creature, “Shelley is breaking down the usual distinctions between the male and female psyche, the emotional perspectives that western culture has erected over centuries” (16). Not exactly. Reminiscent of Plato, the male pregnancy is still associated with the spiritual and mental: “I *conceived* the idea...” as Victor says (Shelley 180, emphasis mine). While the text is filled with procreative language, Victor’s body never actually undergoes pregnancy and his creative energies remain cerebral. Furthermore, much of the dialogue is couched in violent masculine sexuality: “They [natural philosophers/scientists] penetrate into the recesses of nature, and shew [sic] how she works in her hiding places” (Shelley 30). However, as Waxman points out, in the narrative many of the complicated relationships experienced during motherhood are undergone by Victor: creative and destructive energies, life and death, love and hate. Though Victor may never have

⁶ He is also unfairly critical of Shelley’s novel, and seems to think the narrative survived in spite of its author: “It is awkwardly written, inconsistently plotted, peopled with a host of seemingly superfluous characters, and full of the kind of inappropriate *longueurs* that characterize artistic immaturity” (46).

been physically pregnant, he does experience a Platonic spiritual pregnancy. It's just not the clean, idyllic version Plato imagined. Instead, Victor creates life out of death and thereby causes the death of others. Much in the way Shelley's own pregnancies were mixed up with both life and death. By experiencing creation that mirrored the complicated and messy process of actual pregnancy that has little to do with wisdom and virtue, Victor came to know the inherently paradoxical relationships embedded within reproductive bodies (Waxman 16). When contextualized by Shelley's biography, her intention to blur the boundaries of reproduction and criticize the masculine disregard for it becomes clear. Her father was known to be distant and emotionally aloof, even going to far as to chastise her for depression after the death of her second child William:

Above all things, I entreat you, do not put the miserable delusion on yourself, to think there is something fine, and beautiful, and delicate, in giving yourself up, and agreeing to be nothing. Remember too that, at first, your nearest connections may pity you in this state, yet that when they see you fixed in selfishness and ill humour, and regardless of the happiness of every one else, they will finally cease to love you, and scarcely learn to endure you. (F. Marshall 1: 255-256).

Considering that she was still abroad and barely surviving in poverty with a fickle husband who was having an affair with her half-sister Claire Clairmont, Godwin's words seem especially harsh and unsympathetic to her maternal loss. Her husband Percy was likewise unsympathetic to the pains, dangers, and trails of pregnancy. In one episode, a pregnant Shelley mostly walked

from Paris to Switzerland while he rode their shared donkey after having sprained his ankle the first day of their trip. He was still technically married to Harriet Westbrook at the time who was pregnant with their second child, and wrote to letters inviting her to join him and Mary (and presumably Claire as well) on their European adventure. Scholar Miranda Seymour calls Percy's behavior "tactless, bizarre and entirely characteristic" (Seymour 106). Victor, who was modeled after her father and husband, may experience the ghost of pregnancy via the creation of his creature, but he nonetheless occupies a male body and is situated in a male perspective. Waxman is too optimistic to applaud Victor for "walking in women's shoes" and empathizing with the reproductive process of the female body. In fact, he adopts a patriarchal and narcissistic view that ends in tragedy. He never accepts responsibility for his creation, manipulates the bodies around him, and sees himself as the victim while other people die as a consequence of his actions. This tendency is brought out even more explicitly in the later adaptations that feature the female creature/Justine. Justine is an underappreciated character in the novel that is significant in Shelley's critique in the treatment of women's bodies, and may elucidate our own understanding of philosophy's treatment therein.

Justine is a loyal servant to the Frankenstein family, and is executed for a crime she didn't commit. The creature frames her for his murder of William, Victor's younger brother, by placing a stolen locket on her sleeping body. Only on that circumstantial evidence and despite testimony on her behalf, she herself is murdered. Before her impending death, Victor visits her and laments: "Despair! Who dared talk of that? The poor victim, who on the morrow was to pass the dreary boundary between life and death, felt not as I did, such deep and bitter agony" (67). Once again, it is his suffering that is central and is so transcendent that no other person can understand. Justine's body is used first used by the creature whom places evidence to convict her

with. Then by the courts as a means to settle judicial affairs. Finally, by Victor on two levels.

The first as doppelgänger for his guilt as guilt: he created the creature who killed his brother. The second as a means to sublimate his guilt: her suffering is incomparable to his so it is really he that is undergoing punishment while she, the innocent, moves on to heaven. In the 1818 novel, her body is an object to be substituted for other guilty bodies – the creature’s and Victor’s. In later adaptations, her body is used for its parts to make bodies. Though in the original text, Victor never states where he acquired the female body for the creation of the second creature, Justine is often used as the source in subsequent narratives.

In the novel *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter* by Theodora Goss, Victor brings Justine back to life after her execution and she is on the run from the male creature who used her body as a source of comfort and progeny: “And so began a period of my life that – I do not wish to dwell upon. For months, we lived as man and wife. I did what he bade me” (345). Though she makes a reasonable argument for her subjectivity, the creature is determined to build a new race through her: “I would be his Eve in that distant paradise. Eventually our children would return to Europe and rule over civilized men, who had grown weak and overconfident through their use of technology” (347).⁷ Though Victor does better the second time around as a parent by rearing and educating Justine, he too can’t help but assert his will on the female body: “[I]n the process of assembling me, my father had removed the organ popularly believed to cause hysteria. From an excess of caution, I suppose” (346). This caution may allude to the original text that cites Victor’s anxiety about the power of the female creature to spawn a new superior race. Or it may allude to an anxiety about an indestructible and powerful female body prone to

⁷ “I am not a *you*,” I said. “I am Justine, and I am a rational creature, capable of determining my own actions. I have no desire to go to some desolate place, nor yet to be miserable...no promise my father made to you before my birth can bind me. I am capable of reasoned thought, and therefore free, so says Monsieur Rousseau” (344).

catastrophies projected on it by the male perspective: hysteria, menstruation, PMS, hormonal imbalances, and menopause. A giant PMSing woman bearing a new race and literally going on a rampage may indeed be the stuff of Victor's nightmares.

In the original text, Justine's social body is metaphorically deformed. She goes from a "the most grateful little creature in the world" to someone with "so much depravity and ungratitude [sic]" (Shelley 46, 59). She is a body that is not fully autonomous. Her reputation hinges on how well she performs her place, and as a social entity she is worked through by others. By the creature, Victor, and society. She is a fractured being whose body becomes the body of another. In the Aristotelian sense, when she becomes a monstrous aberration of the normative order her body is no longer useful and it becomes expendable/executable. The patriarchal upper class Genevan society that sheltered her for only so long as she conformed, expelled her when she deviated; when she "lost" her gratitude by supposedly lashing out at that society by murdering one of its young members. This point is made apparent when Elizabeth, Victor's cousin and fiancé who represents the quintessentially feminine body imbued with the values of submission, speaks on behalf of Justine at the trial. But this only elucidates the contrast between the two. Elizabeth who represents the established order and Justine who has fallen from that order. When she testifies to Justine's character as "most amiable and benevolent", it incites the crowd against Justine who doesn't deserve such declarations and charges her "with the blackest ingratitude" (Shelley 64). The contrast is beyond toleration, and the deviant body is disposed of. How the female body deviates from that order is further illustrated by the juxtaposition of Victor's two attempts at monster making. While the male creature is described as "beautiful", the female creature is "horrible" and "filthy" (Shelley 39, 137). The latter is the more monstrous of the two, and Aristotle would agree. Going further, Goss' adaptation illustrates

the Platonic dysfunctional narrative in Justine's body, which has had a "non-vital" organ removed to correct it. In both cases, the nefarious mechanisms of Aristotle's and Plato's philosophy come to their horrific conclusions concerning the female body. It is a deformed and dysfunctional object to be used or discarded at will by men and by male society.

Frankenstein is therefore a Gothic tale that features the dismemberment of the female body for the sake of male procreation amidst male anxieties. The female subject is reduced to her womb and to anything else her male keepers find fascinating about her. Just as Victor claims his right to create, so too does the creature claim a right to the female body: "You must create a female for me, with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being...I demand it of you as a right" (Shelley 118). Margit Stange notes that this language of objectifying the womb/virtue of women mirrors the liberal Republican ethos of Shelley's era, which advocated the freedom of, and universal love between, men grounded by the sexual enslavement of women in the familial sphere (311). The shared desire for women became the foundation through which philosophical discourse could talk about humanity and building a humane society – for men. Dana Harrington in her article "Gender, Commerce, and the Transformation of Virtue in Eighteenth-Century Britain" (2001), ties this ethos to the development of the middle class and capitalism: "Middle class domestic ideology...functioned to sanction the pursuits of commercial activities by creating a separate moral sphere to compensate for the corruption of civic virtue traditionally associated with commerce" (45). The division of the moral and the civic, plus the feminizing of virtue, allowed the British economy to flourish via the unethical capitalistic practices of colonialism by placing the responsibility of moral duty with wives at home.⁸ Ironically, though women were estranged from the political and civil spheres,

⁸ By "feminizing virtue", I mean the association of virtue with the feminine as a quality of and the responsibility of that particular gender.

they were obligated to uphold and correct it through their “virtue and love”. By civilizing their husbands through womanly virtue, British women could save the moral fabric of society while British men were embroidering it with silk from the East. Not surprisingly, the characteristics in terms of womanhood and the maternal that were supposed to moralize were defined by the very men that excluded them.

In a similar manner, the female creature/Justine as a female body is objectified for the sake of men in the novel while denied her own subjectivity in the narrative. For example, Josh Bernatchez analyzes subjectivity and torture in *Frankenstein*, and argues that by denying the creature access to a female, Victor evicts him from human community:

Victor denies his Creature’s needs when he insists that “there can be no community” between them because the Creature is fiendish and undeserving of compassion. Victor compounds the problem when he destroys the female companion, denying his creation an alternate community. He initially agrees to create her, conceding that “there was some justice in his [the Creature’s] argument” and that “his tale, and the feelings he ...expressed, proved him to be a creature of fine sensation”. Yet the Creature’s categorical monstrosity is finally cited as justification for Victor’s destruction of the female (208-209).

The female creature is reduced to an object, a gateway by which the creature can gain access to community and humanity. Her body is what matters, her subjectivity is nonexistent. Though he later addresses Justine, it is in context of her parallel persecution/expulsion/execution as a stand-in for the creature’s, and the role she plays in a triangle with him and Victor. Again, she is

reduced to a body and the means by which it can be used to moralize (perhaps love can rehabilitate the creature), reproduce (what the creature wants and Victor fears), or uphold civic virtues (the trial and execution). Though the male characters attempt to reduce Justine to a mere object, there is always resistance. For example, the creature knows that she would deny him his “right” to her body, and he uses this as justification for framing her.⁹ For the creature, the subject is the problem. Even Victor acknowledges this obstacle when he fears that she “also might turn with disgust from him to the superior beauty of man” as a person capable of reasoning (Shelley 138). But for Victor, who is already part of the social order and entitled to the female body, it’s the female body that poses a bigger threat and why he rips apart the female creature lest it threaten “the very existence of the species of man” by creating a superior species (Shelley 138). Her life and death become a matter of choice for the men surrounding her. In the original 1818 text, Victor first refuses to save Justine by confessing his crimes and then refused to give her life by destroying the assembled body. In the graphic novel *Monster & Madman* (2014) by Steve Niles, the creature unknowingly helps Jack the Ripper murder women to create a female creature. Forced to relive the last moments of her various murders, the creature decides “Dead is better” and kills her. Thus, both the murderer and the creature decide when women should die and how they bodies may be used. The graphic novel *Madame Frankenstein; or the Feminine Monstrosity* (2015) by Megan Levens and Jamie S. Rich is explicit in its title which links the female body to monstrosity. Spurned by the woman he loves, Vincent (analogous to Victor) is fortuitously given the opportunity to recreate her when she dies in a car accident. When she fails to meet his expectations, as any newly reassembled person would, he locks her in the basement and seeks comfort in the arms of live women. When she escapes and lashes out at his new lover,

⁹ When first coming across Justine, the creature laments “Here, I thought, is one of those whose smiles are bestowed on all but me” (Shelley 118).

he disassembles her and places her head in a jar with the presumption that she will live immortally. Though she cries out “I’ll be better” and “I’ll be what you want” as Vincent/Victor saws apart her body, her pleas are met with mockery. The last vignette chillingly depicts her own hand reaching out to her head from the surgical table as she utters one more “Please” before the basement room falls into darkness.

Through Justine, we see the dangerous assumptions of Plato and Aristotle regarding the female body play out to their inevitable end. Why is the female body conceptualized thusly by Western philosophical thought, and how can we transcend those limitations? The work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in embodiment philosophy provide answers to both these questions. They claim “that the very properties of concepts are created as a result of the way the brain and the body are structured and the way they function in interpersonal relations and in the physical world” (37). Briefly, their understanding of epistemology is grounded in neuroscience and the body, and they argue that our conceptions are metaphorically based on our physical experience. For example, the metaphor “time flies” is understood as a subjective judgement regarding the passage of time, but it is based on the sensorimotor experience when a body moves forward as time passes; such as walking down a street and reaching the other end five minutes later (Lakoff 52). Metaphors therefore allow us to uncover how we fundamentally understand ourselves and the world around us. Primary metaphors are those developed in early childhood, and undergird that understanding. Examples include *affection as warmth* and *intimacy as closeness*, and would be developed in our interactions with our parents or caregivers. Those primary metaphors become layered as we gain more embodied experience and result in complicated maps of metaphor: *goals as destinations + plans as itineraries + a person living as*

a traveler = a purposeful life (a person living with a plan towards a goal) is a journey (Lakoff 62).

Our very conception of bodies themselves is likewise influenced by that phenomenological metaphor building. We experience bodies as form, as shape. A human body with two arms and two legs can be said to conform. But a human body with 4 arms and 4 legs does not, it is misshaped or *de-formed*. Similarly, the body is metaphorized as function. Children learn how their body should function, and are confused or experience pain when it malfunctions or *dys-functions*. As children, there is little difference visible between the genders with the exception of genitalia, and many parents are conservative when it comes to explicitly explaining that difference hoping to defer “the talk”. Those differences become noticeably visible during puberty and are exacerbated during pregnancy when the female body undergoes change in both form and function. Building upon those primary metaphors developed in early childhood, the female body is delineated to the categories of deformity and dysfunction once it is perceived to have violated the normative categorical constructions imposed upon it. From the male perspective, it does not conform to what a body should be, i.e. a male body. In shape, it deviates with respect to breasts and genitalia. When impregnated, the female body deviates even further as it engorges. This body does not conform, and is therefore *deformity* – echoing the words of Aristotle. Additionally, the mature female body functions differently with respect to hormones, menstruation, and pregnancy. Its deformity performs unnaturally. Taking this metaphor further, the female body does not function properly with respect to the male form and thus is limited. Deformity and dysfunction are hallmarks of monsters, from the deformed gorgons with snakes as hair to the dysfunctional cyclops with limited sight. Summarily, the complex metaphor for the

female body becomes *the female body as deformity + the female body as dysfunction = the female body as a monster*.

An explicit example of this metaphor is used in the film *Frankenstein Created Woman* (1967). Frankenstein's servant Hans is wrongfully executed and his lover Christine, whose body is burned and with a limp, commits suicide as a result. Baron Frankenstein takes the opportunity to try his experiment of transferring a soul into a new body as a way to cheat death, but his assistant Dr. Hertz hesitates because Christine's form is "twisted, deformed, broken" (*Frankenstein* 1967). Oddly, though Frankenstein's hands are badly burned and deformed as well, the focus is on his intellect rather than his body. When the Christine/Hans creature comments on this, she/he is quickly corrected that it is inconsequential to Frankenstein's brilliance. Thus, the female body is nothing but form while it is inconsequential in the male body. The female body erases the subject, and this is demonstrated after Hans' soul is transferred into Christine's body. When she/he asks "Who am I?", Dr. Hertz replies "You're a very, very lovely girl" (*Frankenstein* 1967). Even male identities can't escape the negation of subjectivity in the female body. Hans is reduced to a body, now reformed and beautiful according to Frankenstein's ideal. That body is a site of disorientation, and this can be found in questions of abortion. Is the fetus part of the female body, or something independent? Does the answer change over the course of its development, and at what stage does that change occur? The female body blurs the lines of identity, and Hans is caught up in it. When he in Christine's body confronts one of the men (Aton) responsible for his death, he is asked who she/he is and replies "Does it matter?" When asked what she/he is doing, the creature replies "Is it important?" Aton agrees that both questions are indeed laughable because they and she/he don't matter. In the final scene after having wreaked her/his revenge, Frankenstein tries to lure the creature away from a

cliff's edge by promising to finally tell her/him their identity. The creature smiles and says "I know who I am" before jumping, thereby suggesting that the only way for female subjectivity to be instantiated is through violence and death. In the 1818 novel, the male creature is the site of questions concerning the body, soul, and parental obligation. But the female creature, both in the original text and the latter adaptations, takes this idea further and questions the very nature of the female body itself in terms of subjective identity. She is an even more liminal boundary in the history of monsters where orientation becomes a hopeless endeavor.

Or, near hopeless. In Lakoff and Johnson's work, there may also be a solution to the problem metaphorizing the female body as deformity and dysfunctional. This paper has demonstrated that it is so because of the reproductive qualities, responsibilities, and burdens associated with female body. The solution would be either to remove that paradigm completely, or to share it with the male body. Since the former would be impractical as some *body* must bear the metaphor of reproduction for a species that reproduces, the latter avenue seems to be the most practical option. Therefore, in order for the female body to have the veil of monstrosity removed from it, the male body must be viewed not only as the site of philosophical inquiry capable of wisdom in the Platonic sense, but also as an inherently reproductive body in the Aristotelian sense. Thereby overcoming the mutual exclusion of "grotesque body" and "enlightened mind". Additionally, because monsters are mirrors of difference, both bodies could not occupy the same metaphor. In order to know a monster, there must be a comparison to a non-monster. It is unlikely in the social conscience for male bodies to suddenly become monstrous and the female body normative given the entrenched patriarchy evident in global history. Since it is unlikely that the male body will be rebranded as a monstrous reproductive entity as the female body has given its privileged status, when the male body becomes "reproductive" it has the effect

of normalizing reproductive bodies. Thus, when the male body becomes visibly embodied in terms of its reproductive role, the female body will become less horribly so and cease to be reduced to it.

One criticism that may arise, is that the male body is already sexually objectified and therefore implicitly embodied as a reproductive one. For example, men that don't conform to the stereotype of hyper-masculinity (bulging muscles, excess testosterone, deep voice, etc.) are acutely aware of their failure to meet this gender standard and therefore know they are their bodies. In response, I differentiate between objectification and embodiment. The former is removal of subjectivity and the reduction of a person to an object. It does the opposite of embodiment because it reduces the body to a separate thing, it does not acknowledge the sentient nature of a person as their body. The latter is an acknowledgement that we are our bodies, and therefore our basic rights are implicitly grounded in it. Furthermore, our moral decisions surround it. As mentioned earlier, men are typically invisible in reproduction because the burden of pregnancy and birth falls on the body with the womb. This is one reason why research for male birth control has stalled for decades. A promising clinical trial by the World Health Organization was halted by an independent committee after deciding that the side effects, such as weight gain, mood swings, and acne, outweighed the possible benefits.¹⁰ For women who take birth control and experience the same symptoms along with decreased sex hormone levels, painful bleeding, cramps, and the increased risk of heart attack and cancer, this may seem insulting. While it remains open if women and men share the same kind of reproductive burden, there is little debate that men share in it and their bodies produce it. Even Plato admits that men

¹⁰ Behre, Hermann M., et al. "Efficacy and Safety of an Injectable Combination Hormonal Contraceptive for Men." *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* 101.12 (December 2016): 4779-4788. Web. 18 Sep. 2018. <<http://press.endocrine.org/doi/10.1210/jc.2016-2141>>

can be “pregnant in the body” (*Republic* 208e, p. 264-265) and thus acknowledges men as reproductive bodies. Furthermore, it would be unreasonable to prejudice female bodies for the same reproductive quality, however much it may qualitatively vary, present in their male counterparts. Doing so not only limits the experiences men can have as reproductive bodies, such as their investment in parenting and the cultural importance associated with that role, but will also keep the female body oppressed as the site of control. It will remain fractured, an object that does not belong to its subject. Only by acknowledging that the male body is also a reproductive body, can both female and male bodies be recognized as *human* bodies, and not as deformed monsters to be assembled and disassembled at will. When that metaphorical turn happens, aspects of the human experience that have been neglected because of their association with women can be illuminated. Only then can women, and thus the human, be fully explored. Until that time, the female body is relegated to being an empty shell incapable of matching the authentic experience of its perceived superior form – too incapacitated to produce philosophical wisdom and to be used solely for parts or procreation. Consequently, the human experience through philosophy will be fixed as a uniquely masculine enterprise. Unable to escape this dichotomy, the rich nature of human subjectivity and its consequence for philosophy will be forever beyond our understanding. The move from “female bodies as reproductive monsters and men as normal non-reproductive bodies” to “two bodies that can form a body” will mark another step towards valuing embodied subjects, and granting them the dignity they are entitled to therein.

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