

# STITCHING EUDAIMONIA: FRANKENSTEIN AND ARISTOTLE ON THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

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## INTRODUCTION Philosophy, Poetry, and the Noble Man

*“Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay,  
To mould me man?” – Milton*

When it comes to analyzing any classical literary work like Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, the temptation arises to flesh out the similarities of the novel and a certain philosophical theory. Generally, these inquiries tend to interpret the literature through the lens of a certain treatise in order to better examine a philosopher’s theory. These inquiries are often posed through hypotheticals such as ‘If Aristotle were right, how would that affect *Frankenstein*’s conception of X,’ or ‘If we apply Aristotle’s theory of ethics to *Frankenstein*, is the Creature Y.’

The problem that these inquiries create is that they are as limiting as they are inclusive. Though it might be helpful to use a literary piece as an example to show a certain philosophical theory, to do so would offer nothing more than greater clarification on the theory itself. The intention and authenticity of the literary work is lost so that it might become an exemplar for a certain philosophy. While finding examples for philosophy can be a productive and worthy task, inquiries

ought to aim at something deeper, and pursue the truth “with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness... to her hiding-places.”<sup>1</sup>

If a pairing is to be made between a literary piece and a philosophical work, it cannot be done through a mere re-viewing of the novel, which would change the lessons the author intended to be derived. Instead, to be properly done, the lessons of the novel ought to be fully extracted and compared with the conclusions of the philosophical work. The novel and philosophy ought to be chosen as worthy symbiotic pairs, with neither overbearing upon the other. When properly done, the lessons drawn from each work allow for a deeper understanding of the other, rather than a philosophical veneer being placed over the novel. The particulars of the literary work reveal the depth of the philosophical thought and allow for its application to be fully considered.

The works of Aristotle particularly lend themselves to inquiries such as this one, which aims to pair the contemplative philosopher with the imaginative *Frankenstein*. His theory of literature as laid out in the *Poetics* bridges the gap between poetry and philosophy and allows us to understand one in light of the other. Aristotle even asserts poetry to be more philosophical than the art of history.<sup>2</sup> Both poetry and history properly done seek to reveal truths, or ask deep ques-

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 41

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1451b4

tions, through a detailed account of particular events or experiences. The particulars of history deal with the reality of man as he is and reveal things to be only as they are. Poetry, conversely, reveals not what has occurred, but what can be imagined, and therefore deals with man as he could be, or “would come to be.”<sup>3</sup>

Aristotle’s theory of poetics seamlessly blends with his project of *teli*, or ends, from the *Ethics* and the *Physics*. Aristotle sought to explain the essential nature of each thing, including people, by examining their unique purpose in the world. Aristotle’s conception of philosophy, despite its focus on observation, was therefore more literary than historical. Its main concern was with what man ought to become in relation to his teleological nature, not with what man is discovered to be in the trenches of war, or dredges of politics. Literature is concerned with the same end, and all good authors seek to reveal truths about man and the world he lives in, either as he ought to be or could become

The Philosopher’s works, however, do not become impractical merely because they appear as literary. They are, in fact, no less practical to the real world than literature is. Reading his philosophical treatises can have the deepest and most practical effects on the world: his treatises, just like a good novel, touch at the soul of anyone open and willing, and therefore change the lives of individuals. Therefore, his *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* should not be confused with an ideal conception of an unattainable reality, like Socrates’ city in *The Republic*.<sup>4</sup> He holds his own works to a higher standard than he even does literature, stating that “in relation to the *poiesis*, it is better to choose a persuasive impossibility than something unpersuasive

and possible.”<sup>5</sup> In regards to his philosophical or political works, however, he aims only at the attainable.

One of the fundamental questions he asks in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, “Is knowing about virtue... sufficient, [or] is it necessary ... to try to possess the virtues and make use of them,” serves as a guiding principle for the sum of his philosophy.<sup>6</sup> Simply creating a city in speech without the proper action negates the end of philosophy, which ought to change how we view and act in the world. Where Socrates begged Glaucon not to put him to the task of unveiling the real possibility of his republic, Aristotle does the opposite.<sup>7</sup> He asks the very question of himself, being constantly concerned with the real and the possible, the understandable and the observable. Aristotle goes as far as saying that to some “knowledge is without benefit,” a statement seemingly unthinkable by the contemplative Socrates.<sup>8</sup>

Poetry not only matches with Aristotle’s philosophy of teleology, but the *telos* of poetry itself aims towards practical philosophy. In the *Poetics* he states that tragedy, which is the best of poetry, “[ought to be] productive of a feeling of kinship with [others].”<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Aristotle intended his philosophical treatises to be an educational tool, a guide towards a happy life, and an ordered soul. His works are not meant to be read in simple pleasure and then discarded, like those “pursuing each passion in turn,” but rather seriously contemplated upon and embraced for the betterment of self and others.<sup>10</sup> He states that “It should be through laws that we become good,” but only a wise man or a knower can truly create these laws.<sup>11</sup> Aristotle’s works allow for a comprehensive understanding of ethics and politics. They offer the opportunity for each person to

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1451b4

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, 473a

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1461b11

<sup>6</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1179b3

<sup>7</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, 473a

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095a9

<sup>9</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1452b39

<sup>10</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095a9

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 1180b25

reorder their lives and become a knower who can then actuate the good in themselves and others. He places a great importance on community, consistently stating that “man is by nature a political animal.”<sup>12</sup> He asserts this, however, knowing that only once we understand what it means to be a complete and ordered person can we begin to order ourselves, and that only once we order ourselves can we help others.

It is, then, of the utmost importance to know what the parameters are that constitute a human person, and the necessary and sufficient conditions for the attainment of true human happiness. In each of the “actions, arts, and sciences,”<sup>13</sup> no one doubts that the artisan or craftsman who is serious must first understand his work fully in order to bring its proper end into completion. Importantly, in the Greek Aristotle’s *spoudaios* or ‘serious person’ is the one who utilizes *poiesis*, the Greek word for both ‘poem’ and the making or production that is characteristic of a certain art. Even in the Greek language poetry and the art of living well, seriously, or happily, are inextricably linked. The very act of happiness that Aristotle refers to as an action in accord with right reason is its own *poiesis*, a creation of the individual that seems to mirror the creation of a poem.

The dichotomy between the creation of a serious life and poetry becomes even clearer when the end of each is considered. Both poetry and the serious life aim at *kalos*, another Greek word possessing the dual meaning of the noble, and the beautiful. The serious person is as noble in completion as the serious poem is beautiful, and yet the serious person is also beautiful, just as the poem is noble. The creation and cultivation of one’s own life into a serious work is therefore its own sort of poem, something to

be admired and appreciated for its own beauty, nobility, and merit.

Yet, in the case of the human person, many do not recognize that their lives are themselves unique works leading towards a certain end; Or, if they do recognize this, they often forget to begin at what Aristotle calls the *arche*, or beginning, when considering the end towards which they are striving. In error, they do not first determine what, who, or why man is as he is before they attempt to determine how he ought to behave in the world.

Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* offers a wealth of consideration on both the nature of man and how he ought to pursue happiness to its fullest extent. Within *Frankenstein*, the Creature is in a unique and peculiar situation, he finds himself created as an outcast, yet fully formed; alone, yet surrounded by vast commonwealths. No conventions or prejudices guide his thoughts, and all of his actions, therefore, come purely from human nature. To analyze someone in the same state and situation as the Creature is to analyze humanity in its most fundamental, bare, and raw state. In no other situation, in history or even in other novels, is man guided purely by his natural inclinations alone.

Before we can begin considering the deepest questions about the human condition, a certain objection must first be surmounted. It might be argued that the practical focus of Aristotle’s philosophy prevents any deeper understanding of either it, or a fictional novel like *Frankenstein*, if the two were to be put together. Or, in other words, it might be objected that pairings between literary works and philosophical treatises bear no real fruit. This objection is not applicable on two accounts. First, to Aristotle, it matters little to nothing that *Frankenstein* is fictional and invented. The lessons and beauty of *Frankenstein* are not derived because it portrays real

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<sup>12</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a2

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a5

people, but rather because it “is an imitation, not of human beings, but of actions and of life.”<sup>14</sup> To develop a feeling of “kinship... pit[y] or fear” with another person does not require them to be flesh and blood, or for us to project ourselves onto them, but rather, only for their actions and story to be believable and beautiful.<sup>15</sup> Aristotle recognizes that our nature has confined us such that we might only know of others through experience and action, and so any experience or action can be a lesson equal with any other.

Secondly, *Frankenstein* can be examined along with Aristotle in a unique way that many other literary works could not. This is because the full title of the novel is *Frankenstein; Or, The Modern Prometheus*. *Frankenstein* is therefore a modern tragedy paralleling the ancient *Prometheus* play and myth, which originated around the time of Aristotle. In the *Poetics* Aristotle even discussed the nature of Aeschylus’s play *Prometheus*, and the type of tragedy that it is. He stated that “there are four kinds of tragedy: the complex, of which the whole is reversal and recognition; the tragedy of suffering... that of character... and the fourth...” the simple,<sup>16</sup> “such as... *Prometheus*.”<sup>17</sup> Though Aristotle was not able to examine the particulars of *Frankenstein* itself, the predecessor and inspiration for the novel was so beautifully done that Aristotle used it as an example for a whole type of tragic play.

*Frankenstein*, therefore, ought to be a perfect pairing with Aristotle, as long as Shelley’s novel lives up to the *Prometheus* tragedy of old in its tragic parallel, gripping story, and deep questions. How, though, is *Frankenstein*, the miserable creator, truly the

new Prometheus, who stole the fires of heaven, and received eternal punishment? Most accounts, including the one referenced by Aristotle, do not include Prometheus as the creator of man, and yet Frankenstein’s creation is central to the book. There are, however, some accounts of the Prometheus myth in which Prometheus acts as both creator and guardian of mankind.

The primary account of Prometheus as creator is Pseudo-Apollodorus’s, who stated in the *Bibliotheca* that “Prometheus moulded men out of water and earth” giving them life.<sup>18</sup> He “gave them also fire, which, unknown to Zeus, he had hidden in a stalk of fennel.”<sup>19</sup> Pseudo-Apollodorus’s account reveals a different, often overlooked, connection between Frankenstein and Prometheus. Both were creators, molding their creation from what they had in-front of them. Prometheus made man from clay, and Frankenstein similarly stated that he “dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay [of the Creature].”<sup>20</sup> The language of molding from clay was not accidentally chosen by Shelley, for the epigraph at the beginning of the book also states, From John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, “Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay, To mould me man, Did I solicit thee From darkness to promote me?”<sup>21</sup> The act of molding from clay seems to be an essential component of the Frankenstein narrative, and it doubles as a parallel to the Prometheus of old.

If the creation of the Creature is not the ‘spark of fire stolen from the heavens’, as most interpret it to be, then what was the

<sup>14</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1450a15

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 1452b39

<sup>16</sup> The sentence quoted above has several words missing, and the type of tragedy *Prometheus* is listed as is lost. Later in the *Poetics*, however, Aristotle states that “Epic poetry should have the same kinds as tragedy; for it must be either simple, of a complex weave, of character, or of suffering”

(Aristotle, 1459b8). This seems to fill in the missing gap of the fourth kind, making *Prometheus* a simple tragedy.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 1455b33

<sup>18</sup> Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, 1.7.1

<sup>19</sup> Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, 1.7.1

<sup>20</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 41

<sup>21</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, X, 743-745

sinful transgression performed by Frankenstein, similar to that of Prometheus's? To understand the sin, the symbolism of the fire must be fully understood. Aeschylus in *Prometheus Bound* explains the "stolen source of fire... [as] a teacher to mortals... every art and a means to mighty ends."<sup>22</sup> The fire raised man up from barbarity, and separated them from the other beasts. Man received civilization in the flames, for it lit their minds ablaze to philosophy and art. Similarly, to Protagoras in the eponymic Platonic dialogue, "[Prometheus saw that] man was naked, unshod, unbedded, unarmed" and so he

[stole] from Hephaestus and Athena wisdom in the arts together with fire—since by no means without fire could it be acquired or helpfully used by any[. M]an acquired in this way the wisdom of daily life, he soon was enabled by his skill to articulate speech and words, and to invent dwellings, clothes, sandals, beds, and... foods that are of the earth.<sup>23</sup>

Through Prometheus's theft man gained the wisdom of Athena and the fire of Hephaestus; or, he gained rationality and capability of action respectively. Each of these traits are cornerstones for defining personhood, they seem to be the things that set men apart from beasts.

Shelley seems, therefore, to make Frankenstein the modern Prometheus, not as an exact copy of the Pagan myth, but a Christian Anti-thesis. Just like Prometheus, Frankenstein molded life from clay, but he did so only to neglect it's needs. Because of the neglect, Frankenstein's sins were of a Christian, not Pagan, nature. Prometheus defied the head god, where reverence and

obedience were duties. Frankenstein defied the natural law of the Father, who demands fellowship, humility, and charity in accordance with the ends of mankind. Prometheus was thus punished by Zeus for his grievous affront to the laws of Olympus, whereas Frankenstein was punished by God for his heinous crime against his fellow and child. His sin was withholding that life-giving fire that allowed for man to prosper and acquire the greatest arts and ends,<sup>24</sup> and because of rejection, the Creature fell into wretchedness.<sup>25</sup>

The fate of man, without the fire of civilization, is even shown in Protagoras' account of the Prometheus myth, where humanity gains the arts for daily life, but not for civic life, from the burning fennel. The state of humanity outside of the city, in isolation and solitude was inviable because

they were being destroyed by the wild beasts, since these were in all ways stronger than they... for as yet they had no civic art, which includes the art of war... and thus they began to be scattered again and to perish.<sup>26</sup>

Truly the Creature, denied the fullness of the civilizing fire, acts in accordance with Protagoras' account. Though unlike the men of Protagoras' myth, the Creature being of giant stature and stronger than his fellow man, becomes a wretched beast, with all the misery of solitary man, and the depravity of animals. Prometheus equipped humanity with wisdom and fire, but neither sufficed without the power of community to guide man to his end. The same held true for Frankenstein, who reanimated a corpse only for it to become wretched through neglect and lack of fellowship.

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<sup>22</sup> Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 110

<sup>23</sup> Plato, *Protagoras*, 320c-322a

<sup>24</sup> Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 110

<sup>25</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 126

<sup>26</sup> Plato, *Protagoras*, 322b-322c

This parallel between *Frankenstein* and *Prometheus* justifies a certain interpretation of Shelley's novel in light of the ancient world, including Aristotle, but not through a subjugation to it. This is to say that Shelley's work is not fundamentally ancient in its nature, but rather that Shelley, since Frankenstein is the *Modern Prometheus*, is bringing something forth from the old world and into the new. Understanding this 'bringing forth' of the ancient world is the aim of this inquiry; to understand the deep questions asked by Shelley about the nature of man and the pursuit of happiness in *Frankenstein*, in light of and in conjunction with the pinnacle of Ancient philosophical works: Aristotle.

All this being said, we can learn much from the tragic story of the Creature, who experienced a change in fortune "on account of some mistake," not out of a pure flaw of character but out of a certain circumstance.<sup>27</sup> The *Frankenstein* tragedy, in conjunction with Aristotle's philosophical works, can offer each person deep insights about their own nature as a human being. Aristotle's own theory of poetics, as has been shown, will serve as the groundwork for the pairing put forward in the rest of this inquiry. His work bridges the gap between the imagined world of Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and the real world that *De Anima*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and the *Politics* were written for. With these considerations in mind, the nature of happiness and man's seemingly unending pursuit after it will be examined according to both Aristotle and Shelley, and their works shall serve as practical examples for the use and development of good character in our own lives.

<sup>27</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1453a9

<sup>28</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a2

<sup>29</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 184a15

## CHAPTER ONE

### Frankenstein's Monster and the Nature of Man

*"What was I? Of my creation and Creator  
I was absolutely ignorant"* – Shelley

Before happiness can be understood, a certain complexity on the nature of man must be considered. Since man is "by nature a political animal"<sup>28</sup> as Aristotle says, it must be understood what it actually means to be a man *qua* man. Under the guidance of the Delphic exhortation inscribed at the Temple of Apollo, man must know himself before he knows all else. No human, without the knowledge of what it means to be a human being, can understand himself. His identity is tied to his essence; his character is built on the very fibres of his body and soul. The pursuit of happiness demands a certain ordering of the self, but how can man order what he does not know? How can he help to order others, or to relate to them, when he knows neither what they are, nor what he himself is? The road to happiness begins not at happiness itself, but with that ancient oracle, 'know thyself.'

The complexity of man must be tackled in the simplest manner, "from the things which are more knowable and obvious to us and [then] proceed[ing] towards those which are clearer and more knowable by nature."<sup>29</sup> Simply knowing the appearance of a thing is not enough to truly grasp its essence (*to ti esti*), or understand its being (*ousia*). "For" as Aristotle says, "we do not think that we know a thing until we are acquainted with its primary conditions or first principles, and have carried our analysis as far as its simplest elements."<sup>30</sup> The nature of man, therefore, must be demonstrated "concerning the being (*ousia*) and the 'what is it' (*to ti esti*)."<sup>31</sup> Since the essence is the moving principle of every

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 184a10

<sup>31</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 402a10

demonstration that inquiries into the nature of a thing, the being and the essence of man must be determined.<sup>32</sup>

Since man is composed of both “potentiality and completion,” being a composite of both matter and soul, as will be discussed later, it is only fitting that our understanding of the essence of man be derived from some actuality of a specific being.<sup>33</sup> Frankenstein's Creature serve this purpose perfectly. If in examining the Creature he is found to be a human, then the essence of man will be known fundamentally. Even if the Creature is not found to be human, the essence of man will be made clearer in understanding by means of the performed *via negativa*. Utilizing the Creature as the specific example for ‘a being’ (*ousia*) is therefore a worthwhile pursuit, regardless of the conclusion. To proceed, then, and uncover the essential nature of man, each Aristotelian cause must be discovered and examined, and those features that are essential to man’s being must be revealed.

Aristotle states that there are “four... causes” that must be known for a things essence to be understood; these causes are “the matter, the form, the mover, [and] ‘that for the sake of which’ [it is].”<sup>34</sup> Aristotle explains these causes analogically by means of a sculptor:

the art of the sculptor [and] the bronze are causes of the statue... the [latter] one being the material cause, the [former] the cause whence the motion comes[, or the efficient]... [another cause is the] essence- the whole and the combination and the form... [lastly is] the sense of the end or the good of the rest, [or the final cause].<sup>35</sup>

Of these four causes, the material cause and the efficient cause (or the mover), are the most readily apparent, while the formal cause and the final cause, or ‘that for the sake of which’ something is, are more obscure. First, then, the efficient cause will be examined according to the *Physics*, then the material cause will be grasped as laid out in Aristotle’s *Categories*.

To understand creation, according to Aristotle, one must understand first causality. Aristotle states that “we say that one thing comes to be from another thing, and one sort of thing from another sort of thing,”<sup>36</sup> and that these things that come from something else are effects, where “that out of which a thing comes to be and which persists, is called [a] ‘cause.’”<sup>37</sup> This is a fundamental principle of nature according to Aristotle, for “all things are [only] acted upon and set in motion by what is capable of acting upon them.”<sup>38</sup> All physical things are therefore caused or acted upon in some way, coming only from those things which have the potential to cause them. The seed is acted on by the soil, just as the soil is acted upon and moved by the plant as it grows, and so to with all other things in their own regard. This understanding of nature is not, however, unique to Aristotle. Shelley herself states, while talking about the creation of *Frankenstein*, that “Everything must have a beginning ... and that beginning must be linked to something that went before.”<sup>39</sup> Therefore, according to both Shelley and Aristotle, people must have some specific cause in which something acts upon them and causes them to be.

For the sake of this inquiry, the first efficient cause of all things, or as Aristotle states, the “one [that] is not physical [and] has no principle of motion in itself... [as] it

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 402b25

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 417a20

<sup>34</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 198a23

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 195a1

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 190a1

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 194b23

<sup>38</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 417a15

<sup>39</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Author’s introduction

causes movement, not being itself moved,”<sup>40</sup> does not need to be examined, or even fully understood. For the purpose of defining the essential nature of man, a general overview of causality and how it applies to the physical world will suffice. Experience teaches that a person comes into the world through a process of conception and then birth. This feature is shared alike between men and animals, for humanity is understood by means of a subject of which the genus ‘animal’ is predicated. Between man and women, then, the propagation of the species is naturally contained within them, “for those things are natural which, by a continuous movement originated from an internal principle, arrive at some completion.”<sup>41</sup> Men, therefore, are naturally begotten from other men, for it is a natural characteristic of animals to beget their like and continue the existence of their species.

Since the process of conception and birth is an internal and original movement to mankind, it must be and obviously is the natural process through which man is created. It therefore cannot be said that the Creature had a natural creation. The Creature was created in a laboratory, after Victor “collected the instruments of life around [himself, and] infuse[d] a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at [his] feet.”<sup>42</sup> However, that the creation of the Creature was not properly natural does not mean that he does not share in a efficient cause proper to having the essence of man. It could be the case that conception and birth are not a necessary cause, but rather a sufficient cause for the creation of a person. To understand why this is the case two things must be understood: firstly, Aristotle’s implied distinctions between natural, non-natural, and unnatural. Secondly, the way in which things can occur incidentally, or non-naturally, and yet still be

within the confines of reason and the possibility of a person’s efficient cause.

On the distinctions between natural, non-natural, and unnatural, what is naturally occurring has already been explained, that being by means of a self-contained principle. Next, then, what is unnatural must be examined. A thing that is unnatural is that which occurs when two contrary principles are found within the same thing. For example, a human being is a thing which cannot fly naturally. For a human to grow wings, and therefore fly, would be an unnatural occurrence: one that contradicts the original nature of the person. Similarly, for a human to suddenly be able to breath underwater, become omnipotent, or any similar thing, would be an unnatural occurrence, contradictory to the nature of mankind.

Of non-natural things, which seem to be a certain middle between natural and unnatural, they can best be explained by way of example. A certain table can be created from wood. Wood, from trees, grows in several different shapes, densities, and so on. For a piece of wood to be taken and shaped into a table would not be unnatural to it, for there is nothing contradictory about the shape of a table and the nature of the wood being used by an outside force to create something new. Yet, there is no internal principle within the wood that would cause it to intentionally take on that shape. A table, then, can neither be a natural thing, nor an unnatural thing. It must be understood as a ‘non-natural’ thing, something that is neither contradictory, nor naturally occurring.

In further understanding these distinctions in light of the creation of things, some recourse can be found in a thing’s ‘end,’ since the end is “that for the sake of which [it is]”<sup>43</sup> created. Therefore, what a ‘non-natural’ thing is can be better understood by understanding Aristotle’s distinc-

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<sup>40</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 198b1

<sup>41</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 199b14

<sup>42</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 44

<sup>43</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 198a23



tion between a *telos of nature* and a *telos of structure*. For:

the form indeed is ‘nature’ rather than the matter; for a thing is more properly said to be what it is when it has attained to fulfillment than when it exists potentially. Again, man is born from man, but not bed from bed. That is why people say that the figure is not the nature of a bed, but the wood is- if the bed [were planted and] sprouted not a bed but wood would come up.<sup>44</sup>

Aristotle further elaborates this point by stating that “We also spoke of a thing’s nature as being exhibited in the process of growth by which its nature is attained... [but] what grows qua growing grows from something into something... ‘Shape’ and ‘nature’, it should be added, are used in two [different] senses, [one coming to be unqualified, and one contrary to what comes to be].”<sup>45</sup> This shows that there are two ways that a thing can serve a certain end or purpose, one through its accidental structure only, and one through its natural structure.

This accidental, non-natural structure a thing could possess would create a *telos of structure*, the type of *telos* a table possesses. The same *telos* would be ascribed to any other creation of man that is not naturally occurring, such as a chair, boat, or house. A *telos* of structure, then, only arises from a ‘non-natural’ efficient cause. In all of these instances, the end of the thing is only determined by the shape that is imposed upon the natural materials in that thing’s origin, where the origin is not according to some internal principle. It does have this shape, however, in a way that does not contradict the nature of the materials making it, and so the table is therefore not ‘unnatural’. People,

however, do have a certain natural efficient cause contained within themselves for the further creation of man, and this is procreation. The question that must be answered, then, is whether or not a person could be created through means of an outside force shaping natural materials in a way not contradictory to the nature of man.

Aristotle’s exploration of incidentals gives us the answer to this question. According to the *Physics*, “a thing is something either in virtue of itself or incidentally,”<sup>46</sup> and can therefore either come into being through natural and internal means, or through a sort of chance. A person, then, could come into the world through a means other than birth as long as those means were incidental, and not unnatural. Aristotle says that there are countless examples of things which naturally occur in a certain way, yet occasionally occur in an incidental way. For example, leaves naturally drop from a tree during fall, yet they will also incidentally drop from the tree if an animal happens to snap them off while scurrying on a branch. It could not be said that the loss of a few leaves to an animal is unnatural to the tree, for there is nothing contradictory to the nature of the tree in losing a few leaves. Furthermore, Aristotle states that “things do, in a way, occur by chance, for they occur incidentally, and chance is an incidental cause. But strictly it is not the cause – without qualification – of anything; for instance, a housebuilder is the cause of a house; incidentally, a flute-player may be so [as well].”<sup>47</sup>

A human, then, could be created through non-natural means other than birth. This seems to describe perfectly the creation of the Creature in *Frankenstein*, for nothing about being created within a laboratory is contradictory to a thing becoming a human, though humans do not naturally occur this way. This is further shown by the fact that the

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<sup>44</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 193b5

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 193b10

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 196b20

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 197a7

Creature appears to be, generally, just as any other human in shape and “proportion” even if he is described as extremely grotesque in appearance.<sup>48</sup> Aristotle even considers this possibility, for he states that “if things made by nature were made also by art, they would come to be in the same way as by nature.”<sup>49</sup> In the case of the Creature this is true, for men are made by nature, yet Victor’s art made him the same as he would have been if he was made naturally. It is therefore the case that man can be incidentally made in a non-natural manner, whereas a table could only be made incidentally through a natural manner (say, if a tree somehow, by chance, grew into the shape of a table).

There is nothing, then, about the efficient cause of the Creature that prevents him from being a person, so the material cause must be examined next. According to Aristotle, there are ten categories of being that can be attributed to a thing, or that is to say, there are ten ways that a thing can exist. These ten ways are “Substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, or affection.”<sup>50</sup> In short, “Examples of substance are ‘man’ or ‘the horse,’ of quantity, such terms as ‘two cubits long’... of quality, such attributes as ‘white,’ ‘grammatical.’ [and] ‘double,’ ‘half,’ ‘greater,’ fall under the category of relation; ‘in the marketplace’... under that of place; ‘yesterday’... of time. ‘Lying,’ ‘sitting’... indicat[e] position; ‘shod,’ ‘armed’ [for] state; ‘to lance,’ ‘to cauterize’ [for action], ‘to be lanced,’ ‘to be cauterizes,’ [for] affection.”<sup>51</sup>

Of these categories, Substance is the most obscure, and will be dealt with last. This leaves quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, or affection to be considered. Of these, place, time, position, action, affection and state appear obvious in their essentiality to man. A man is no less a

man because he is from the past, in the present, or in the future. Furthermore, a man ‘on top of a mountain’ is no more a man than one ‘inside of a cave,’ or ‘in a house,’ or ‘in the fields.’ The same goes for position, where man can be sitting, lying, standing, kneeling, and all other sorts of things, as well as state, where he can be ‘armored,’ ‘prepared,’ ‘clothed,’ ‘helped,’ or so on. This also follows for the action a person might be performing in any moment, or any action being done to a person, for both of these must be predicated of the subject, which we understand to be the things substance, as will be shown later.

Quality, quantity, and relation, then, appear to be the only categories other than substance that must be examined at length. Within each of these categories, one of two things must be determined, either (a) whether or not any change within a thing in regards to that category affects what that thing essentially is, and (b) if a change does affect a thing essentially, what limits of excess or deficiency man has in regards to a certain category. For example, it has been shown that no change in time will affect the essence of what it is to be human, and it therefore has no range. Yet, it might be that if a human lost all its limbs, or instead gained hundreds more, that the change in both quality or quantity might alter what that thing essentially is.

The term ‘quality’ seems to be used in several senses, that of ‘habit or disposition,’ ‘capacity,’ ‘affective,’ and ‘shape.’<sup>52</sup> According to Aristotle, “habit differs from disposition in being more lasting and more firmly established” within one’s character.<sup>53</sup> Habit is therefore like a vice or virtue, where disposition is easily changed, such as a thing being hot, cold, diseased, healthy or however else. Of capacity, which is similar to habit, it “includes all those terms which refer to

<sup>48</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 44

<sup>49</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 199a12

<sup>50</sup> Aristotle, *Categories*, 1b25

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 1b25

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 9a15

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 8b25

inborn capacity or incapacity” and because of this quality “persons are called good boxers or good runners, not in virtue of such and such a disposition, but in virtue of an inborn capacity to accomplish something with ease.”<sup>54</sup>

A full treatment of habit and disposition will be dealt with later in this inquiry, as it is more properly discussed in relation to the final cause of man and virtue. For now, it suffices to show that no person loses their humanity from a habituation to vice, despite the degeneracy of this state. This is even shown by the fact that morally depraved people are called ‘brutish,’ which is a predicate to their subject, ‘person.’<sup>55</sup> Their ‘personhood’ is not lost in becoming a ‘brutish person,’ but instead the quality of being ‘brutish’ is merely added to what they were essentially, and that is ‘a person.’ The same holds true for anyone who becomes virtuous and therefore ‘god-like.’<sup>56</sup> For being ‘god-like’ does not make oneself a god, but rather adds this predication onto what they essentially were, which has not changed. This, too, holds true in the situation of the Creature, for even though he states that he “was a poor, helpless, miserable wretch,”<sup>57</sup> this would not lessen his humanity. Being in a state of brutishness, wretchedness, fiendishness, or anything of the like would not necessitate one to become ‘inhuman’. Perhaps, even, this sort of self-pity and loathing which “invade[d the Creature] on all sides” and caused him to “s[i]t down and we[ep]”<sup>58</sup> might show that he was more human than one would first think.

On capacity or incapacity, humans seem to possess a wide range of things they can do by their individual nature. Some are natural runners, fighters, climbers, jumpers, rhetoricians, musician, and logicians, while

others still are poor runners, fighters, climbers, and so on. Being naturally indisposed to be able to do any of these things, or anything like them, seems to not make someone no longer human. We do not say of the runner who had no natural ability, yet trained himself to become a good runner that there is something ‘less’ in him, rather we praise him for his work. Furthermore, we do not claim that such and such a person is less of a person because they are tone deaf, and therefore not naturally inclined towards the performance of music. This same holds true for all other similar characteristics, no person becomes less of a person simply because they do not have a natural inclination or capacity to do a possible thing, rather we view these things as potentialities, or even accidents, that individuate humans from one another.

In the case of the Creature, this seems to hold true, though his circumstance stretches our imagination. The Creature is reported as having great strength, being able to easily “descend mountain[s] with greater speed than the flight of an eagle.”<sup>59</sup> Since *Frankenstein* is narrated by the romanticist Victor, we should not take his literary metaphor as an exact measurement of speed. For this inquiry’s purpose it can be simply said that he descended the mountain extremely quickly, especially by human standards. Furthermore, the Creature was able to “easily elude”<sup>60</sup> Victor at any opportunity. Finally he “was more agile than [normal men] and could subsist upon [a] coarser diet; [and he] bore the extremes of heat and cold with less injury to [his] frame.”<sup>61</sup>

Though all of these instances seem to make the Creature superhuman, the mere presence of greatness of skill, or inclination towards it, does not necessarily make him of a different nature than man. One can easily

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 9a15

<sup>55</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1145a25

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 1145a25

<sup>57</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 90

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 91

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 134

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 86

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 108

conceive of someone with great speed and alacrity in climbing, by habit or by inclination, especially in descent, which is far faster in nature than ascent. Furthermore, being able to elude Frankenstein does not mean that the Creature is unable to be caught by all people, and to assert so would be to commit the fallacy of association. Syllogistically, it does not follow that ‘If Frankenstein is a human, and he cannot capture the Creature, then no person could capture the Creature.’ Frankenstein is shown throughout the book to be of a very anemic nature, prone to fits of ill health and weak in constitution. It is therefore very likely that many people would be able to elude Victor. Finally, even though the Creature himself states that he is able to endure things greater than man, and has a far greater inclination towards these extremes, this does not mean that he is not himself a person. The presence of a certain set of accidental characteristics, of which the essence of a thing is independent, as has been shown, would not affect the essence of that thing.

There are, however, certain natural inclinations that living things possess that men do not, and cannot. No man naturally possesses the means for flight, or to breath underwater, or to sustain himself without food, or so on. We can, therefore, say that there is a certain set of capacitive qualities that no person could possess, and a different set of capacitive qualities that any person could possess contingently. Furthermore, there appears to be one capacitive quality that every person must possess in order to be human. This is stated by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*, when he begins “all men by nature desire to know.”<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, in *De Anima*, he states that “a human being is a knower.”<sup>63</sup> It seems to be something both essential and natural to man that he is a

rational creature, desiring to know things. In fact, this quality appears to be the “differentiae... of the species and of the individuals”<sup>64</sup> that sets mankind apart from all other things. This distinction will be dealt with later when substance is discussed, but for now, let it suffice to show that in regards to the quality of possessing a rational soul, it is an essential feature of man.

Mankind, therefore, has a certain set of qualities related to him that no man could possess, of which the Creature has none. Furthermore, Mankind has a certain set of qualities that any person could possess contingently, of which the Creature has many. Finally, for anything to be considered human it must possess the essential differentiae of that species, that being rationality. The Creature possesses this quality, as is shown when he stated “I thought... [of] cause... [and] effects... I examined... [and I] watched the operation[s of the world].”<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, Victor refers to the Creature as a “thinking and reasoning animal,”<sup>66</sup> and this seems to suffice for the Author’s perspective.

In regards to the contrary of incapacities, it seems that the same would follow. Having a great inclination towards a certain skill or ability wouldn’t alter one’s essence. This is further shown by the understanding of habits and dispositions that has already been given. A natural inclination is to habit as a potentiality is to act. Though a person might be naturally inclined to a certain greatness of skill, they will still have to work to perfect that skill. And, if the perfection of that skill is a certain virtue or habit, then it does not change the essence of what a person is, as has been shown. This must be especially true if we consider one’s natural inclination towards a thing as a certain potential cause of a later completion. If something is possessed in its completion by a thing, and this does not alter

<sup>62</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 980a1

<sup>63</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 417a23

<sup>64</sup> Aristotle, *Categories*, 3b1

<sup>65</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 92

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 151

a things essence, then the potential inclination towards possessing it in completion would not alter a thing's essence either. Therefore, there is no quality that a person could lack, other than rationality, as was shown above, that would change the things essence.

Next, affective qualities and shape must be examined. Aristotle asserts that "affective qualities and affections of the soul... [are the] temper with which a man is born and which has its origin in certain deep-seated affections" and by this he "mean[s] such conditions as insanity, irascibility, and so on."<sup>67</sup> It appears obvious that a man born with a certain affective quality, such as being extremely irascible, or insane, would still be a man. This is especially true in our recognition that a person is irascible, which requires the question 'in comparison to what?' If the irascible thing were of a different nature than man because of its irascibility, no one could properly call it 'extremely irascible', as one of its defining and essential features would then be to be irascible. This sort of thing, then, would be just as irascible as it ought to be by its own standards, even if it is extremely irascible by human standards; no one would call a lion extremely irascible for attacking any and all strangers, even though a human would be so. Yet, since this is a sort of relative condition a thing has, in saying a thing is extremely irascible by its birth necessitates it to be of the same nature as the thing it is being compared with. Let this, then, be enough to show that affective qualities do not affect a things essence.

The last thing that must be considered in regards to quality "is figure and the shape that belongs to a thing."<sup>68</sup> It is evident that the Creature possesses all the general features of a human being, since even Victor stated that he "suddenly beheld the figure of a man"<sup>69</sup>

upon seeing the Creature at a distance. It is, therefore, not necessary to consider all the minute details of a person: The Creature possessed two arms, two legs, a head, two eyes, a nose, a mouth, hair, teeth, and so on. Even if the Creature were to lose one of these features, or both, such as his legs, this would still not make him 'inhuman,' since these features can be incidentally separated from a person, either at birth or throughout life, even if they ought to have them. On his shape, also, it must be noted that Victor made him "of a gigantic stature; that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionally large."<sup>70</sup> This height and proportion are well within the range of human conception for what a person can be, and in fact, several people have been just as tall.

Some concern, however, does arise when the Creature considers his own qualitative form. He states: "I was, besides, endowed with a figure hideously deformed and loathsome; I was not even of the same nature as man... my stature far exceeded theirs."<sup>71</sup> As has been shown, however, the reasoning he gives for why he thinks he is of a different species is faulty, even if Victor also thought it. Simply being of a larger stature, of a certain habit or disposition, and of a natural capacity, does not make someone inhuman. In fact, all of the features of the Creature within these categories are entirely possible within the spectrum of human existence: his rareness makes him a person of astonishment and greatness, not of detestability.

He therefore believes he is of a different nature falsely, just as someone who has been abused or enslaved their whole life might believe it is natural. Furthermore, holding such a belief is to be in a certain state, and it has already been shown that no certain state can alter someone's essential nature, as a state is always related to potentiality. It is, there-

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<sup>67</sup> Aristotle *Categories*, 9b35

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 10a10

<sup>69</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 85

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 40

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 108

fore, far more logical and realistic to associate the origin of this belief with what the Creature himself said, that: “[happiness] was all a dream; no Eve soothed my sorrows nor shared my thoughts; I was alone... [my creator] had abandoned me, and in the bitterness of my heart I cursed him.”<sup>72</sup> His misfortunate and sorrowful condition was the cause of his self-deprecation, not a real difference of essential nature.

It can then be stated that in regards to habits or dispositions, there are no qualities that necessitate a thing to be inhuman. Of capacitive qualities, there seems to be a certain set of things which a person could never possess, such as natural flight, and a certain set of things that a person could possess contingently, such as speed in running. There also seems to be one specific capacitive quality that all men must possess, that being a rational soul. Of affective qualities, it has been shown that no qualitative change can affect the essential nature of a thing. Finally, in regards to shape, there seems to be a certain set of things that man generally ought to possess, but that can be lost incidentally, either at birth or through the course of his life, and still remain of the same essence. How quality affects the essence of a thing, and that the Creature meets all the possible criteria for the qualities that man possesses necessarily or potentially, has thus been shown.

Whether or not quantity effects a thing essentially will not need to be addressed any more than it already has been in the analysis of quality and shape. Finally, then, relation must be examined. Relations, which “are [things] explained by reference to [a certain] other thing,”<sup>73</sup> similarly to the quality of habit, deal with virtue and vice, as well as certain knowledge, and social relations. Virtue and vice are relations since a thing is always a virtue or vice of a certain thing or in relation to a certain thing. It has been shown

already that to be a human does not require one to possess a certain virtue or lack a certain vice in relation to a certain thing, even if a person ought to possess all the virtues. The possession of these virtues, however, as has been stated, will be dealt with later in the examination of the final cause of humanity.

It might be argued that a certain relation of knowledge would be necessary for someone to be considered a person, since possessing rationality is essential. Requiring certain knowledge, however, appears to be problematic. Humans, when born, do not possess any knowledge of things properly speaking: man enters into the world unlearned and unaware, but with the proper abilities for knowledge. Only the capacity, then, and not the actual possession of any specific science or knowledge are essential to the human species. The same would hold true of anyone who became a slave or a master, for we call such a thing a ‘slavish person.’ Therefore, gaining the relation of slave must be a contingent predicate, meaning it is not the primary or secondary substance of a thing.

To fully understand this, however, what a substance is must be fully explained. According to Aristotle, there are two kinds of substance, “the primary substances... [and] those [secondary substances] which, as genera, include [all the relating] species.”<sup>74</sup> Accordingly, each thing has one, unique primary substance, and several secondary substances through their species and genus classifications.

The primary substance of a thing “is that which is neither predicable of a subject nor present in a subject... [such as] the individual man.”<sup>75</sup> The substance of each thing is its being (*ousia*), or that which it is in actuality. Furthermore, each individual substance can be understood by means of similarity to other substances, and the classifying categories made are “the species... and the

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 119

<sup>73</sup> Aristotle, *Categories*, 6a35

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 2a10

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 2a10

genus”<sup>76</sup> of those things. These secondary substances are the essential predicates, or definitions, of what a thing is, making them the things essence (*to ti esti*). The distinction between secondary and primary substances is vital in understanding the nature of what a thing is. A thing is first and foremost its primary substance, yet that substance contains within itself certain secondary substances that make it what it is. These secondary substances are classifications or categories that similar substances can be placed in. For this reason, “everything except primary substances is either predicated of primary substances, or is present in them, and if these last did not exist, it would be impossible for anything else to exist.”<sup>77</sup> Each primary substance (such as the thing ‘Frankenstein’s Creature’) that has a species ‘humanity’ predicated of it will possess the formal features of the species humanity. Furthermore, since the species humanity has the genus ‘animal’ predicated of it, the Creature will possess all animal attributes as well. In this way, the Creature, if human, will possess all the necessary conditions of his species and his genus.<sup>78</sup>

To further clarify a things essence, Aristotle scholars coined the term differentia. The differentia is that predicate which distinguishes a species from another species within a genus and, therefore, the “differentiae are predicated of the species and of the individuals.”<sup>79</sup> Further, this differentia (just as the species or genus) will not be present in a subject, even if the species and genus are predicated of it. Mankind will not be in Aristotle, though Aristotle will be a man, just as Animal will not be Aristotle, though Aristotle is an animal. Similarly, having a rational soul will be said of man, though man will not be besouled rationality itself. The

differentiae are then predicated of the species and all primary substances within that species, though they are not present in the subject, for by this it is meant by “present in a subject... [as] otherwise than as parts in a whole.”<sup>80</sup> This is to say that the differentia of a thing is not in the substance, but rather it is a part of the whole that is said of the substance, including the species and genus.

This suffices for the explanation of a thing’s substance materially, but not formally. According to Aristotle in the *Physics*, the substantial nature of any thing has “two senses, the form and the matter.”<sup>81</sup> A things substance cannot be understood through its material cause alone, which is what has been given so far. It is the combination, or the essential unity, of the formal cause and the material cause that makes a thing what it is. According to Aristotle, our understanding of the substance of anything should include an understanding of that things matter and its form in an essential unity. Since the substance of each thing must be understood as that individual thing, as has been stated, since it “underlie[s] everything else,”<sup>82</sup> each person must have their own individual material and formal cause. Accordingly, then, what the formal cause of a person is must be determined.

In *De Anima*, Aristotle states that a thing’s form “is the being (*ousia*)... corresponding to the definition (*logon*)... [or] the ‘what it was [and is] to be’ for such a body.”<sup>83</sup> Whatever the form of a person is must be that thing that gives the body its shape. Furthermore, since man is a living being, his shape must be given to him by means of “a continuous movement originated from an internal principle”<sup>84</sup> through which he becomes what he ought to be. There is just such a principle

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 2a10

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 2b1

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 2a10

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 3b1

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 3a30

<sup>81</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 194a10

<sup>82</sup> Aristotle, *Categories*, 2b10

<sup>83</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 412b11

<sup>84</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 199b14

inherent and internal to the nature of man, Aristotle argues, and that is his soul. According to Aristotle, it is the soul of any living thing that “is the principle of... and is defined ... by a nutritive [faculty], by a perceiving [faculty], by a thinking [faculty], and by motion.”<sup>85</sup> Through possession of some or all of these powers, a living body “arrive[s] at some completion.”<sup>86</sup> The soul of a living thing, whatever it might be for each living thing, is then the formal cause of that creature.

Because the soul is the origin of motion, growth, and shape within a living thing, it is apparent that “the soul and the body [constitute] the animal,”<sup>87</sup> as was shown in the analysis of substance. Furthermore, since “the soul is the cause and principle of the living body,”<sup>88</sup> nothing else could be the formal cause of man. Since substance is actuality the soul must be “the completion of such a body... [since] the soul [is the] being (*ousian*) as the form of a natural body.”<sup>89</sup> This does not mean that the soul is merely conceptual and understood as the body in its proper ‘shape’, but rather that the soul is the metaphysical principle that gives shape to the body. The internal principle from which the body originates and is ordered lies within the soul. Because of this, the soul must be understood as an immaterial thing possessing real ontology, not just a mere conceptual supposition.

That the soul is the formal cause of man only serves to explain its function, but does not explain what it is essentially. The soul, properly understood, is one cohesive whole. Accordingly, Aristotle states that a soul is “not separable in [reality]... but... [only] different in speech.”<sup>90</sup> This means that it can be divided in our understanding into six

different parts or powers, yet cannot be divided in reality since it is a metaphysical entity. The soul, then, “[consists of parts that are] not separable”<sup>91</sup> from one another, even if they must be understood in separation.

The Six faculties or parts of the soul that a living thing could possess potentially are the “nutritive [faculty], an appetitive [faculty], a perceptive [faculty], [a faculty] of setting in motion... [and a faculty] of thinking.”<sup>92</sup> Any living thing, such as plants, must possess at least one of these faculties, the nutritive, in order to be alive and be-souled. Other types of living things, such as animals, also possess the appetitive, perceptive, and locomotive. Man, however, is the only animal that possesses all of these and the last, the rational. Interestingly, Aristotle states that the rational faculty has two parts, “[the scientific,] by which we contemplate all those sorts of beings whose principles do not admit of being otherwise, [and the calculative,] by which we contemplate all those things that do admit of being otherwise.”<sup>93</sup> From Aristotle’s study of the soul, it is evident that there are six different faculties or conceptual parts of souls, and three different kinds of souls that any living thing could possess.

What kind of soul a creature has is vital to understanding the living thing, since the nature and end of the living Creature is determined by the type of soul possessed. The first type is the “nonrational... [and] vegetative”<sup>94</sup> of which the nutritive function is the primary power. Plants possess such a soul and are incapable of full sensory experiences (being only capable of growth and sustenance). The next soul is the one “characterized by desire”<sup>95</sup> which can be called the sensitive soul. This soul is held by animals,

<sup>85</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 413b10

<sup>86</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 199b14

<sup>87</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 413a3

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 415b7

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 412a20

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 413b25

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 411b20

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 414a30

<sup>93</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1139a5

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 1102b30

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 1102b30



who can utilize their sensory powers, locomotion, and their appetite.<sup>96</sup> The last soul is the rational soul, possessing all six faculties that a soul can have, and uniquely held by humans.

Since the soul is the form of the body, being both its cause and the internal principle leading to the completion of a thing, it is obvious that the affections of the soul have a comparative affection to the body. In passion, gentleness, fear, pity, courage, joy, loving, and hating, the soul “neither suffers anything nor acts [upon anything] without the [concurrent movement of the] body.”<sup>97</sup> Where the soul is moved by a passion of anger, the blood (so to speak) boils. Where love moves the soul the heart quickens, and so on with each affection. It is, therefore, well within the possibilities of a besouled thing, even a rational one, to be taken away by its passions.

The soul is therefore so intertwined with the body that to understand a person’s substance requires an understanding of them both together. For this reason, Aristotle states that what the actual substance of any person is “is the completion of such a body... [since] the soul [is the] being (*ousian*) as the form of a natural body.”<sup>98</sup> This means that “each body has its peculiar form and shape,”<sup>99</sup> both are unique to one another and inseparable substantially. The body (contrary to some views), is not a mere vessel that any soul could inhabit. Rather, the soul and the body are a unique pair that coexist only within one another. For this reason, “one man cannot be more man than another,”<sup>100</sup> for each person possesses a unique substance that is encompassed in the same species of human.

Since it is the soul that is the originating principle of the body, and the soul of man has been shown to be rational, rational-

ity must be found primarily within the soul. Aristotle therefore states that the soul must be the seat of all rationality, since “the soul is that by virtue of which... we are alive and perceive and think.”<sup>101</sup> The differentia of man, which was discussed earlier, is found in the soul, for “a human being is a knower.”<sup>102</sup> It can therefore be said that anything possessing rationality also possesses a rational soul, and that anything possessing such a soul must be a human, since by nature “man [in general] is among the knowers and the beings that possess knowledge [as man *qua* man].”<sup>103</sup> Since what has been stated has been shown to be true about the soul, it must also be true for Frankenstein’s Creature.

It might be objected that the Creature cannot be understood in this way, or in light of Aristotle’s philosophy on the nature of souls. It might be argued that his body was not caused or created by his soul, but instead shaped by victor in an already completed form. This objection, however, misunderstands what Aristotle means by the soul being the cause of the body. Aristotle states that “nothing itself generates itself, but it does preserve [itself].”<sup>104</sup> This means that nothing, including souls, cause themselves purely as and through themselves. The creation of anything requires some outside agent or action to act as a catalyst so that events might occur. All victor did was mold a shape proper to an individual soul and then infuse that body (through galvanism) into a living besouled thing. Where the soul of the Creature came from, what power created it, or how Victor was able to infuse it into his creation are unknown to us and cannot be determined. Yet, Shelley was aware of this principle, for she stated in her Author’s Introduction that:

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 1098a1

<sup>97</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 403a16

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 412a20

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 407b20

<sup>100</sup> Aristotle, *Categories*, 3b35

<sup>101</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 414a10

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 417a23

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 417a23

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 416b17

Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not exist in creating out of void, but out of chaos; the materials must, in the first place, be afforded: it can give form to dark, shapeless substances, but cannot bring into being the substance itself... Invention consists in the capacity of seizing on the capabilities of a subject, and in the power of moulding and fashioning ideas suggested to it.<sup>105</sup>

Victor gave a certain shape to the Creature's body, but he did not "bring into being the substance itself"<sup>106</sup>, meaning that he was not the true primary cause of the Creature's existence, only an intermediate cause. He acted as the infuser, conjoining his creations body with its proper individual soul and in doing so the soul was able to bring the Creature's substance, or life, into existence.

It might be enough also to show that "nothing is nourished that does not share in life, [since] that which is nourished would be the ensouled body."<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, that "in the soul's being present both sleep and awakens are [included]."<sup>108</sup> Since the Creature throughout Frankenstein satisfies both of these conditions, and in light of the examination that has been given, it can be said that the Creature possesses a rational soul and that this constitutes 'a man'.

Since he who "[combines his understanding] from both [the material and formal causes]"<sup>109</sup> gains the greatest and most accurate understanding of a thing, Shelley's presentation of the Creature would be among the most accurate descriptions of man, since (as has been shown) she considered both causes in creating her work. It is therefore evident that the Creature is a man according to his material and formal causes, and that his

efficient cause was not contradictory to his nature. The only remaining cause to determine is the final cause of man. According to Aristotle, "it is manifest that the soul is also the cause for the sake of which... [for] nature [makes something only for the sake of] nature's end."<sup>110</sup> Since the soul is the end towards which man is ordered, it must be fully examined what this end is according to both Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and Shelley as presented in *Frankenstein*.

Whatever the final cause of man is, it must be found through the soul, for this is the end for which the body is ordered. The actions we perform throughout our lives seem to stem primarily from a movement of the soul and affect the soul in turn. Furthermore, all actions are held to "aim at some good."<sup>111</sup> Whatever the good is that the actions fitting to the soul aim at, and whichever good is the most self-sufficient and complete, must then be the end or completeness of man. Aristotle states that "happiness appears to be something complete and self-sufficient, [and] it [is the] end of [all] our actions."<sup>112</sup> Happiness, then, must be the proper end of the soul and that at which all actions of the soul aim.

Aristotle's understanding of happiness is not merely a state that someone is in, or a fleeting passion, rather it itself is an activity, just like the activities that cause it. He states that "the human good becomes an activity of soul in accord with virtue, and if there are several virtues, then in accord with the best and most complete one."<sup>113</sup> Happiness, therefore, must be a certain virtue in itself, for any activity in accord with virtue belongs also to virtue.<sup>114</sup> Aristotle labels this activity of the soul in accord with the final end of man as *eudaimonia*, meaning happiness gained

<sup>105</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Author's Introduction

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, Author's Introduction

<sup>107</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 416b7

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 412a25

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 403b4

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 415b15

<sup>111</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a1

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 1097b20

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 1098a15

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 1098b30

through “living well and acting well”<sup>115</sup> in one’s life. Only through acting properly, in accord with the dictates of reason and the soul, can one achieve a state of *eudaimonia* and become a complete and serious person.

How one ought to act in their life, therefore, is of the utmost importance. Any action has the potential of affecting a person’s body and soul, but only the proper and fitting action will achieve each person’s desired end of *eudaimonia*. According to Aristotle, there are only three serious considerations for how any person ought to live his life. One can choose the “[life of pleasure,] the political [life, or] the contemplative [life].”<sup>116</sup> The first is characterized by pursuing pleasures, and avoiding pain, the second in pursuing honor, and the third in pondering upon truth through reason. Which of these lives is the most fitting for the attainment of *eudaimonia*, then, must be determined for the final cause of mankind to be known.

## CHAPTER TWO Virtue and Vice

*“[What a] promise of virtues... he had  
displayed on the opening of his existence.”  
– Shelley*

Since a proper foundation has been laid for understanding the pairing between

*Frankenstein* and Aristotle’s philosophical works, and an examination of the Creature’s humanity<sup>117</sup> has been given, the most fitting method of procession towards understanding happiness is to temporarily set aside *Frankenstein* so that Aristotle’s full philosophical framework can be grasped. Each potential life that a human could lead must be examined in turn, since each aim at happiness and attempt to achieve it, so that the best life can be understood.

As has been stated, according to Aristotle there are only three possible modes of life that could lead to *eudaimonia*. The life of pleasure will first be examined, then the lives of honor and contemplation will be turned to. Since the achievement of happiness to Aristotle is a certain “activity of the soul in accord with reason, or not without reason,”<sup>118</sup> each life will be examined by means of reason and the activity representative of each.

That the life of enjoyment or fatted cattle is improper to the pursuit of happiness as a unique work of man is evident. Categorically, pleasure cannot attain the highest happiness since “in general, then, pleasure is not good, because every pleasure is a perceptible process of coming into its nature.”<sup>119</sup> In the contemplation of any end something cannot be said to be both the end and the coming-into-being of that end. An end must be the work or product produced from a process, but it itself cannot be a certain process of coming-into-being, for the end and the

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 1095a15

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 1095b17

<sup>117</sup> As was argued in the first chapter of this inquiry, the Creature is considered human by Aristotelian standards. Whatever discoveries are made through Aristotle’s works about the nature of happiness will be applicable to any man, be it Frankenstein’s Creature or any other person. It need not be debated whether knowing the good “to ‘human being-as-such [qua mankind]’” or “to a given [individual] human being,” is more proper, for the essence and the species are the same for each, as has been shown, and so “in the respect in which

each is a human being, they will not differ at all” and so “neither the good-as-such nor [an individual] good thing will differ” (Ibid., 1096b1). Therefore, any conclusions that are drawn from Frankenstein’s Creature can also be applied to humanity at large. This is because when we examine the nature and final cause of the Creature, we are only examining that part of humanity that is within him and makes him what he is, not the individual accidents that make him different from other people, as understood through Aristotle’s *De Anima* and *Physics*.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 1098a8

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 1152b12

process must be separate, even if the end itself is a certain activity, that activity will be distinct and come from a certain preparation. Furthermore, as Aristotle explains in his examination of the political life, the moderate person is found to not excessively enjoy pleasures, since “pleasures are an impediment to prudent thinking.”<sup>120</sup> Pleasure cannot be the life leading to happiness, since it is a life contrary to an essential virtue of character dictated by right reason.

Furthermore, as has been said, since an end must be either a certain work or a certain activity in accord with reason, any life well lived must be arise from a certain art. Yet there is “no art of pleasure, though everything good is the work of an art.”<sup>121</sup> Since there is no art of pleasure, pleasure can be neither a work or an activity, it can only be a coming-into-being of itself caused by certain phenomena. This is not to say that all pleasure is inherently bad. Rather, Aristotle says that “some pleasures, at least, are highly choiceworthy – for example, the noble ones – but that the bodily pleasures are not, that is, those pleasures with which the licentious person is concerned.”<sup>122</sup> Though choiceworthy, pleasure is therefore not the mode proper to the pursuit of happiness.

Since the life of pleasure is inadequate for the achievement of happiness, it must be that a life well lived “is brought into completion well in accord with the virtue proper to it.”<sup>123</sup> The life productive of a state of *eudaimonia* must then be one of those two lives, that of honor or the contemplative, which are in accord with virtue, especially since according to Aristotle “happiness is [a certain] virtue.”<sup>124</sup> Aristotle's twofold virtues, consisting of the moral and the intellectual each accord with their own life, the political and the contemplative respectively.

The moral virtues of the political life are courage, moderation, liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, ambition, gentleness, friendliness, truthfulness, wittiness, and justice. These virtues are characteristics gained through habituation and are therefore not present in man by nature. These virtues are often desired by the “refined and active [who] choose honor, for this is pretty much the end of the political life” and “they [therefore] seek to be honored by the prudent.”<sup>125</sup> This pursuit of honor seems to coincide with the desired end of happiness, since “happiness belongs among the things that are honored and complete.”<sup>126</sup>

These moral virtues are understood through the three things present in a soul: passions, capacities, and characteristics. Passions are the desires, emotions, feelings, or affections people experience in relation to pleasure or pain. Since virtue is a proper action or response to pleasure or pain, each virtue relates to and governs a certain passion. Capacities are a person's ability to act differently in regards to a certain passion- we are capable of either a vice of excess, a vice of deficiency, or a certain mean between them which is known as virtue. Finally, a characteristic is “those things in reference to which we are in a good or bad state in relation to passions,” where to be in a bad state is vice, and good a virtue.<sup>127</sup> This engaging with one's own passions in relation to the world is how “habits [*ethos*]” are created, from which “moral virtue got its name [*ethike*].”<sup>128</sup> The more actions we perform, the more apt we are to act similarly in the future, and the harder it becomes for one to change.

Each of these actions can be placed into at least two different categories, and some can be placed into three. The first category is that which the action concerns.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 1152b16

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 1152b19

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 1154a6

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 1098a15

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 1098b6

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 1096b20

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 1102a

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 1105b19

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 1103a17

Each action is done with concern to something, be it fear or confidence, pleasure or pain, anger or caring, or so on. Just as each action has something that it is concerned with, each concern also has a virtuous or vicious response that is proper or improper to it. This is the second category, for each action can either be done “with whom [it] ought, then, and, further, in the way, when, [how], and for as much time as [it] ought,” or done as it ought not, to whom it ought not, when it ought not, and so on.<sup>129</sup> Because the proper action relative to the situation is the virtuous action, virtuous actions can only be categorized in regards to what it concerns, and whether it is a virtue or vice. Since each situation can only have one proper response, it is considered the mean between two vices. Finally, since the proper action is considered the mean, or middle, there must be two adjacent vices, one of excess and one of deficiency. This is the third category, in which only vices can be placed, for each vice is either one of excess, such as recklessness, or one of deficiency, such as insensibility.

Of the eleven virtues, two pertain mainly to the individual self. Courage and moderation, and their excesses and deficiencies of cowardice and recklessness, or licentiousness and insensibility respectively, are characteristics governing self-control in relation to fear, confidence, pleasure, and pain. Aristotelian courage primarily deals with situations that might lead to “a noble death and to any situation that brings death suddenly to hand.”<sup>130</sup> The courageous man still has some fear, being disgusted with and afraid of an ignoble or meaningless death, yet he has confidence and even a desire for a

noble and honorable end. He is therefore always willing to put himself in harm's way for the sake of a noble and good deed, unlike the coward who fears even a good death, or the reckless who fears nothing. Where courage deals with confidence and death, moderation is primarily concerned “with the bodily pleasures... namely the pleasures of touch.”<sup>131</sup> The licentious person places the pleasure of touch above all else, and is pained when such a pleasure is removed. The insensible person desires no pleasure from touch, and therefore lacks the ability for enjoyment even in a moderate amount, making him dull.

The eight remaining Aristotelian virtues deal with the interactions of an individual with another, beginning first with the issue of wealth. According to Aristotle, the giver of wealth acts when “advantageous to others, [which] consists in giving,”<sup>132</sup> and further “he will do these things with pleasure or without pain.”<sup>133</sup> In matters of small sums the gentleman, or virtuous man, possess the virtue of liberality, while the base man has either the excess of prodigality (overspending), or the deficiency of stinginess. In large sums, or the giving of great gifts, the gentleman is magnificent, while the base man either has the deficiency of parsimony or the excess of crassness.

Similarly to liberality and magnificence, ambition<sup>134</sup> and magnanimity deal with the smaller and the larger sum, though for honor instead of wealth. The magnanimous man possesses great virtue and knows what great honors he ought to receive in accord with the character he has cultivated. When a person of great virtue believes they

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 1125b31

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 1115a30

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 1118a2-30

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 1120a20

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 1120a20

<sup>134</sup> According to Aristotle there is no real name for this virtue that deals with small honors, sense in

some ways the vice of excess seems to be called ambition, and from others the mean seems to be called ambition. For clarity's sake, the virtue will be referred to as ambition, and the excess as over-ambition.

deserve less than they ought, they suffer from the vice of deficiency, and are pusillanimous. When a person believes that they deserve more than they ought, they possess vanity, the vice of excess. The ambitious person hits the mean in “longing for [smaller] honors.”<sup>135</sup> Where the magnanimous person seeks to be honored for his character, the ambitious person seeks to be honored for a particular noble deed.

The next Aristotelian virtue is gentleness, which governs the passion of anger. In excess anger makes a person irascible, and when deficient of anger a person becomes un-irascible. The gentle person is inclined towards forgiveness rather than vengeance and revenge.<sup>136</sup> Furthermore, the Gentle person “wishes to be calm and not led by his passion ... as reason may command.”<sup>137</sup>

The next three virtues considered by Aristotle deal specifically with social relations in regards to habits of living. These virtues are friendliness, truthfulness, and wittiness. On friendliness, one who pleases too much is either obsequious or a flatterer, while the person who doesn't please at all is quarrelsome. Importantly, friendliness differs from friendship itself, which will be discussed in the next chapter, in that friendship has a feeling of affection for the other, while friendliness the virtue “is not as a result of friendly affection... but as a result of being the sort of person he is.”<sup>138</sup> On the virtue of truthfulness,<sup>139</sup> he who is a deceiver is called ironic,<sup>140</sup> while he who speaks grand falsehoods is a boaster. Similarly, in regards to the virtue of wittiness, he who has no humor is boorish, while he who makes a joke of everything in excess is a buffoon.

How one finds themselves habituated towards one of these virtues or vices seems dependent upon several factors, including the nature of the virtue/vice being considered, human nature itself, childhood upbringing, the effect of regime and laws, and one's intention of the will. Each of these seem to affect the development of character and contribute to the development of the whole person.

According to Aristotle, human nature inclines each person to a certain excesses or deficiency that is more characteristically human than the opposite.<sup>141</sup> For example, in the case of moderation, licentiousness is more characteristically human than is insensibility. Though there is a certain vice that is more characteristically human, this does not mean that anyone possesses such a vice by nature, only that our nature inclines us towards a certain excess or deficiency over its opposite. Since habituation to a certain virtue requires precision in regards to the mean of action, a person has a greater chance to stray into vice than they do to happen upon virtue<sup>142</sup>.

For this reason, Aristotle says that “to obtain from childhood a correct upbringing with a view to virtue is difficult for someone not reared under laws of the requisite sort.”<sup>143</sup> The experiences a person has in their youth, which are the most formative years, prepare them for how they will act as an adult. If a certain habituation or education about the proper mean has “already been put into the proper order” in a child, they will “become habitual, [and] they will not be painful.”<sup>144</sup> It is for this reason that Aristotle says “for these matters – indeed, for life as a whole more

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 1125b5

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 1126a1

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 1125b25

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 1126b20

<sup>139</sup> Aristotle states that the virtue of truthfulness rests not in speaking of situations of agreement, but rather in speech and on the actions of one's life (Ibid., 1127a20).

<sup>140</sup> Interestingly, Socrates is the example considered by Aristotle.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 1126a30

<sup>142</sup> Though virtue *qua* virtue proper must be chosen for its own sake to truly be virtue.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 1179b30

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 1180a1

generally – we would need laws [for a proper upbringing towards virtue].”<sup>145</sup> Without laws to guide someone in their youth, when each person lacks knowledge and experience, we risk habituation and condition to vicious and improper action.

This is one of the essential difficulties of human existence. No man chooses his birth, nor is he often able to choose the regime that most influences his formative years. Each experience a person encounters molds and shapes their view of the world, slowly developing certain characters of habit. Yet, as children move into adulthood, they often forget some instances of pain or improper action, lose habits, or learn from mistakes. Adults, however, are far less susceptible to change. Once a habit has fully formed it is extremely difficult to alter, if not impossible in the later years of life. For this reason, Aristotle emphasizes that “once [children] have reached adulthood, they must also make a practice of these things and be thus habituated [of their own accord].”<sup>146</sup> The cultivation of these virtues within oneself however, or within others as the political life demands, requires a certain dedication to and understanding of justice and friendship, each in accord with prudence. And so if living the political life is the “activity of the soul in accord with reason,”<sup>147</sup> then justice, the final and greatest moral virtue, must be fully understood.

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 1180a2

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 1180a1

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 1098a5

<sup>148</sup> Reciprocity is here best understood as an action causing an equality among things, or the exchange necessary to cause a certain equality between two

## CHAPTER THREE

### Justice

*“From you I determined to seek that Justice which I vainly attempted to gain.” – Shelley*

Aristotelian justice seems to be the embodiment of those rules that govern social interactions, particularly in situations of transfer and exchange, contract, and reciprocity.<sup>148</sup> According to Aristotle, some believe justice to be “the greatest of the virtues,”<sup>149</sup> or that “Justice alone of the virtues is held to be another’s good.”<sup>150</sup> Because of its complexity, justice is spoken of in many ways, but fundamentally it can be said that the unjust man grasps for more than he ought and tends towards inequality, while the just man is both lawful and equal in his nature.

Real circumstances rarely allow for the unqualified good to be attained in unison with the relevant qualified goods. The just man’s central preoccupation is the attainment of unqualified goods within the confines of the qualified, or that is, to search for the real and ultimate good in light of one’s particular circumstances. Though there are many goods to be sought in the world, the just person aims for the unification between the ultimate good and his personal qualified good.<sup>151</sup>

For this reason, the just person is seen as lawful, since law properly instituted attempts to combine the ultimate good of all citizens with the particular qualified good of each citizen. The law pronounces on all things with an aim towards both the common good and the development of a person. In aiming at the common good, the law desires equality among its citizens, and in developing a person the law pronounces that each should

terms. For a further explanation of Aristotle’s definition of reciprocity, see the fifth chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

<sup>149</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1129b27

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 1130a3

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 1129b1

only grasp for what they ought by means of virtue. The law and the just man are therefore related, since each aim at the fittingness and equality that justice demands.

Justice's two aims, fittingness and equality, reflect the two types of justice that can be found.<sup>152</sup> The first type of justice deals with the fitting and deals with the development of what one is owed or ought to due by means of personal virtue. The whole of virtue is considered to be the first type of justice. In its whole virtue seeks after the completion (*teleios*) or perfection of a person's character, so that they themselves can be found to hit the mean, and neither grasp at too much nor too little by means of excess or deficiency. Primarily, this justice is the "exercise... in what concerns another person... pertain[ing] to all the things with which a serious person is concerned."<sup>153</sup> It enables a person to orient their virtues properly within themselves and is the noblest of actions "because it is the use of complete virtue"<sup>154</sup> towards others.

The second sense of justice is a "part of virtue,"<sup>155</sup> but not the whole itself, and deals with equality. This particular justice deals with one who is 'grasping for more' of those goods related to the ends of society. This justice differs from the first justice in that its concern "pertains to honor, money, or preservation [or, those societal goods]... and arises on account of pleasure associated with gain."<sup>156</sup> The mean being sought with particular justice is that of the equal, where the excess and the deficiency are the unequal. This equality is determined by means of the two parties involved in the exchange, and those things that are being exchanged and in what proportion. Unequal people ought to receive unequal things, while the equal ought

to receive the equal, each to be determined by the dictates of reason and prudence.

The roots of particular justice in equality requires that the virtue have two primary parts, and a special third: these are distributive justice, corrective justice, and equity. Of the first, a certain standard of equality must be accepted to precisely determine what particular justice constitutes. Merit, according to Aristotle, is agreed by all to be the best standard to determine proper distribution. But the proper definition of 'merit' is heavily contested; for "democrats say it is freedom; oligarchs, wealth; others, good birth; aristocrats, virtue."<sup>157</sup> Distributive justice is then a certain proportion in relation to equality as determined by the original standard of measurement for merit a society was founded upon. The unjust is what occurs when an equality is introduced into the system of proportions by means of someone grasping for more. He who is grasping for more than he ought performs the injustice, while it is said that an injustice was done to the one who loses the equality due to him.

The second part of particular justice is the corrective. The corrective is the portion of justice that deals with voluntary and involuntary transactions not in relation to proportion, but in relation to the proper arithmetic difference in the transaction. This part of particular justice includes both transactions in relation to trade and commerce, as well as punishments meted out by a judge (who acts as justice ensouled)<sup>158</sup> to those who have gained unjustly so that equal proportions might be restored. Those who have gained more than they ought of the public goods are the cause of such particular injustices.<sup>159</sup> Injustice in this sense then is primarily done

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 1130b5

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 1130b1

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 1129b25

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 1130a10

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 1130b1

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 1131a25

<sup>158</sup> For more information on the nature of judges and their role in properly determining proportions, see the fourth chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

<sup>159</sup> Though an unjust action might seem like it stems from a vice (such as licentiousness), the intention and goal of the action is the determining factor. If a person takes part in an affair for some gain, be it



contrary to the laws, since it is the laws that determine the proper distribution of these societal goods.

These injustices lead to the third and unique characteristic of justice: equity. Perplexingly, Aristotle asserts that equity is the just itself, yet also superior to the just in nature. Aristotle speaks of those actions which are corrections of the legally just, or the equitable (*epieikeia*). The equitable deals with those situations which the law either could not predict, or could not account for; or, that is, where the law demands a general edict, but a certain case requires a particular and different decision. The equitable then is a “correction of the law in the respect in which it is deficient because of its being general.”<sup>160</sup> Equity is therefore a certain sort of justice, more superior than distributive or corrective justice, yet applying only to a certain circumstance which most do not encounter.

Since injustices are bound to occur within any civil society some deem that reciprocity (*antipeponthos*) is the just unqualifiedly. Reciprocity, stemming from the verb meaning ‘to suffer in turn’ is the giving of goods or especially punishments in response to a certain action. Though reciprocity resembles justice, and appears as if it were corrective justice, “in many cases, there is a discrepancy [between reciprocity and what is just]... [such as] reciprocity in accord with proportion and not in accord with equality.”<sup>161</sup> Reciprocity is the function which allows for exchanges to maintain an already established standard of justice, for each receives as he ought based off of what they originally had and what the other gives.<sup>162</sup>

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monetary or for the sake of security, it is considered an injustice, not licentiousness. Yet, if someone were to attempt to make a monetary gain so that they might pursue later physical pleasures, the action would be one of licentiousness, not injustice.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 1137b25

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 1132b25

Where distributive justice determines the initial distribution, and corrective justice determines a means by which wrongs are righted, reciprocity allows for an exchange to occur between two unequal goods by means of proportion, usually through money. Yet reciprocity is not itself justice, since it is not a certain characteristic of a person, but rather a system of right proportion. For that reason, “reciprocity stands in relation to the just,”<sup>163</sup> but is itself neither the complete or particular form of justice.

There seems also to be a confusion between what is just according to convention, and what is just according to nature. Aristotle qualifies that “what is legally just is different from what is just in the primary sense.”<sup>164</sup> Some argue that all just things are unchangeable and have the same capacity everywhere, no matter time place or location. This, however, “is not the way it is,”<sup>165</sup> for even though there is a justice by nature alone, it is changeable. Since the justice spoken of is particular justice, and since particular justice “is something human,”<sup>166</sup> being the virtue in accord with the laws of a community, any natural justice must be changeable. For if the serious person is to be just by means of particular justice, the virtue encompassed by complete justice, he must be just according to the just proportion as determined by distributive justice. The just proportion is changed depending on the determined system of merit, to which natural justice, or the justice that is natural within us by our capacity to virtue, conforms to.

Natural justice, therefore, is changed based off of the system of merit as laid down by the regime one is in.<sup>167</sup> This does not make

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 1133a10

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 1134a20

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 1136b30

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 1134b25

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 1137a30

<sup>167</sup> Though Aristotle explains that natural justice is dependent upon the regime, regimes themselves are still beholden to a higher standard to, and must

natural justice conventional, or wholly created, since the parameters of justice are still determined by the nature of excess, deficiency, and mean, as shown through Aristotle's examination of the other virtues. Furthermore, particular justice must still conform itself to the achievement of complete justice, which is the whole of moral virtue; no regime, therefore, can change particular justice such that it wholly contradicts complete justice, or else justice itself would be lost.

Even this explanation seems to bring out further conflicts among the types of justice. Even though each regime creates a different standard of merit, a person can only become serious (*spoudaios*) by subjection to complete justice. Certain conflicts seem to arise between complete justice (which aims at the perfection of the individual), and particular justice (which seeks out the common good). Aristotle recognizes that "perhaps it is not the same thing in every case to be a good man and to be a good citizen,"<sup>168</sup> since the first provides for the perfection of oneself through virtue, while the other utilizes virtue for the common good. Because the standard of merit from which justice is derived differs between each regime, the actions necessary for a serious person to devote themselves to the common good must differ also. Though Aristotle does not give specific examples, it is not only feasible but also evident (since history has afforded several examples<sup>169</sup>) that the common good requires certain actions contrary to the perfection of the individual.

The internal conflict between complete and particular justice is further shown by the nature of equity and regimes. Equity, as a part of particular justice, requires that the

current ruler "rectify that omission with what the lawgiver himself would have said if he had been present."<sup>170</sup> Equity is not the correction of law to create the 'best regime' most in accord with complete justice, but rather to restore a particular regime back to its original foundations (which are presumed to be proper). A man might act unjustly, or contrary to equity, in altering the foundations of a regime so that virtue is of greater importance. The theoretical existence of a 'best regime' only proves that something is lacking in the other regimes, at least when that regime is compared with the whole of virtue from an individual standpoint. Yet, since their standards of merit are legitimate, even if they are not the 'best', they still contain justice, since "all lawful things are somehow just."<sup>171</sup>

## CHAPTER FOUR Contemplation and Friendship

*"There is something at work in my soul  
which I do not understand" – Shelley*

There still seems to be a further peculiarity about the nature of justice, or at least a certain thing like justice. Aristotle states that no one can suffer an injustice on their own account or by their own choice as long as they are the cause of the action.<sup>172</sup> Despite this however, Aristotle elaborates that there is a type of injustice that a person can cause not in relation to themselves, but to certain parts of themselves in their relation to one another. This type of 'justice' resembles "the slave

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conform their systems of merit to the idea of complete justice, since "everywhere there is only one regime that is in accord with nature, the best regime" (Aristotle, 1135a1, *Nicomachean Ethics*).

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 1130b25

<sup>169</sup> An easy example to consider for the conflict between personal perfection and the common

good would be Themistocles actions during the Peloponnesian War during the battle of Salamis. For a more information, see Plutarch's life of Themistocles.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 1137b20

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 1129b10

<sup>172</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1136b20

master or household manager,”<sup>173</sup> since it is the justice that orders the parts of the soul and determines which part rules or is ruled. And, since the human soul is comprised of the higher reasoning part and the lower un-reasoning, it seems only fitting that the rational govern the irrational.

Even in the rational part of the soul, however, Aristotle explains that there are two further parts. One part reasons about those things that are unchangeable, and the other those things that are changeable, the former being the ‘scientific’ (*epistemonikon*) and the latter being the ‘calculative’ (*logistikon*) or deliberative. Each of these parts have respective characteristics, or virtues, through which they can obtain the truth. In total there are five means by which the soul can obtain truth, those being “art, science, prudence, wisdom, and intellect.”<sup>174</sup>

The scientific part of the soul is not characterized by action or making, but rather the determination of the true and the false respectively. Science is not characterized of deliberation, since deliberation involves longing and the possibility of change, but rather only the things that are “knowable... of necessity,”<sup>175</sup> being unchangeable themselves. Science therefore is the understanding of those things that proceed of necessity from certain principles of nature.

For example, of things that have occurred in the past there can be no deliberation since what has come into being (say the sacking of Troy) does not admit of the possibility of *not having come into being*. Importantly, science is both teachable and learnable, since it neither admits of change in what is true, nor requires direct experience or deliberation of or on that truth for understanding. Science is closely related to, yet

different from another intellectual virtue, the intellect itself, which seems to be a virtue of the scientific part. The intellect is the “conviction concerning universals”<sup>176</sup> and “pertains to [knowing] principles.”<sup>177</sup> When the virtues of science and intellect are combined one finds wisdom, or knowledge of both universal principles and that which proceeds from them. Wisdom is therefore the “scien[tific] and intellectual grasp [*nous*] of the things most honorable by nature.”<sup>178</sup> Though the wise, such as Anaxagoras or Thales, are often accused of imprudence or impracticality, they still possessed great knowledge about things of wonder and fitting of a *daimon* (or the divine).

The second part of the soul is the calculative which, unlike the scientific, deals specifically with deliberation and choice that proceeds to moral action (*praxis*). These actions are governed by sense perception, the intellect, and longing. Of these three, acting in accordance with true reasoning and correct longing determines the praise or blame that an action deserves.<sup>179</sup> Hence Aristotle states that “there cannot be choice either in the absence of intellect and thinking or in the absence of a moral characteristic.”<sup>180</sup> Proper choice, or correct longing guided by right reason, is therefore the origin of all moral actions. These moral actions develop into habits, which build virtues as guided to by the intellectual virtue prudence (which determines the “good and bad for a human being”<sup>181</sup>). The virtue of art, or crafting, also seems to belong to the calculative part of the soul. Art is a process of coming-into-being primarily focused on making instead of action, where making does admit of being otherwise.

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 1138b5

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 1139b15

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 1139b20

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 1140b30

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 1141a5

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 1141b1

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 1139a15

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 1139a30

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 1140b5

The political and contemplative lives seem to stem from a dedication to one of these two parts of the soul. The political man dedicates himself to prudence, where the contemplative man seeks after wisdom. The prudent person will act rightly in political life in order to fulfill particular justice, and fulfill complete justice by possessing the whole of moral virtue.<sup>182</sup> The contemplative man will seek out wisdom in all things and therefore enjoy himself in what he learns.

Since happiness is the end of all human concerns, and each life corresponds with a part of the rational soul, either the action of justice, contemplation, or some combination of the two must produce true happiness. Between these two actions, Aristotle argues that happiness cannot be a characteristic, for if it were then even an asleep person could be considered happy.<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, happiness was shown to be a certain self-sufficient activity in accord with right reason, and choiceworthy in itself. Since happiness cannot be a characteristic, it cannot be the mere possession of complete justice with a view to itself, which demands only the achievement of all the virtues. Instead, the happy activity would be in accord with “the virtue belonging to what is best.”<sup>184</sup> The best is that which naturally rules, commands, and deals with the most noble and divine things; or, that is, the contemplative action in pursuit of wisdom is the best, since it is either divine itself or the most divine thing within humans.

This is further supported by the difficulties of justice as an action. The just or political cannot be fully self-sufficient, since it relies both on the necessities of life and also others towards whom and with whom just acts are done. This contrasts with contem-

plation, which can be done by someone in solitude for no reason other than contemplation itself.<sup>185</sup> Furthermore, happiness resides in leisure, and the activity of the virtues bound up with justice consist “in matters of either politics or war, and the actions concerned with these seem to be without leisure.”<sup>186</sup> The action of the politician at its core lacks leisure, since it requires constant engagement with fellow citizens towards the end of political office. Though preeminent in nobility and greatness, the action of justice in politics cannot be the ultimate activity of happiness in accord with reason, for it lacks leisure and self-sufficiency. Prudence and justice must therefore be inferior to wisdom and contemplation, even though the former is choiceworthy in itself.<sup>187</sup>

The action of contemplation is therefore proper to the life of the happy or serious man, and so Aristotle says that “wisdom produces happiness.”<sup>188</sup> Aristotle further says that the life in accord with moral virtue and justice are happy only “in a secondary way”<sup>189</sup> to that of the contemplative life. The contemplative life also seems to be the most divine aspect of ourselves, since contemplation relies only on the self and can be done in any circumstance without external dependence. The gods themselves, Aristotle says, seem to not even live such a life. The life of the gods is occupied with knowing and contemplating, and for this reason the rational aspect of our soul is considered to be the highest and most divine aspect of the human person.<sup>190</sup> “As a result” then, according to Aristotle, the action of “happiness would be a certain contemplation”<sup>191</sup> as much as it is possible.

It is therefore manifestly true to Aristotle that the action of contemplation is

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 1144b25

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 1176a30

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 1177a10

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 1177a30

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 1177b5

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 1143b30

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 1144a1

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 1178a5

<sup>190</sup> For more on the nature of the divine and how they are not focused on ‘the just’, see Ibid., 1177b30, 1178b5

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 1178b30

superior to the action of justice.<sup>192</sup> The action of a thing, however, is distinct from living the serious life of a *spoudaios* as a complete person seeking their *telos*. When considering these two actions which are the heart of the two lives, Aristotle purposefully excludes the consideration of the real attainability of each action, stating that the contemplative is only better in consideration “when these necessities [of life],” or external equipments, “have been supplied.”<sup>193</sup> No man is purely capable of contemplation at all moments of life<sup>194</sup>, for man by nature needs food, rest, exercise, and social interaction, since by nature he is a political animal,<sup>195</sup> and even more so a coupling<sup>196</sup> one. To demand of man constant contemplation would be to demand that he lives “not insofar as he is a human,” but rather “insofar as there is something divine present in him.”<sup>197</sup> One ought to strive at immortality and the divine, but only “insofar as that is possible.”<sup>198</sup>

“But,” Aristotle says, “a life of this sort would exceed what is human.”<sup>199</sup> Man is not a god, and he is incapable of achieving immortality in this life. Aiming for the divine is a noble pursuit, but to lose oneself in an attempt at elevation is to fall into insanity. Though the action of contemplation is self-sufficient, man cannot chose it solely, or he will lose his humanity, and the happiness being sought is the end of human concerns. This is especially true since the “one who is incapable of sharing or who is in need of

nothing through being self-sufficient is no part of a city, and so is either a beast or a god.”<sup>200</sup> The contemplative actions, though self-sufficient, cannot raise a man to godhood; man will therefore need to be political by his nature. Though political actions are inferior to contemplation, they are necessary for the completion and maintenance of any serious person.

Contemplation therefore is in no need of external equipment “with a view to the activity itself,”<sup>201</sup> but when a person aims to be serious and *spoudaios* they must aim at their end as a human person, not towards the action alone.<sup>202</sup> Aristotle asserts that the action of contemplation with a view to itself is best “when the necessities [of life],” or external goods, “have been supplied,”<sup>203</sup> especially because the activity can be done in solitude. Under this conditional, however, no person truly living the contemplative life would contemplate alone, for a true friend is “the greatest of the external goods.”<sup>204</sup> Any person leading the contemplative life would, by necessity, be engaged in dialogue and discourse on those goods worthy of contemplation. For, if the contemplator lacked friends then he would also lack the greatest of external goods, which is unseemly for a serious person.

Aristotle's assertion on the self-sufficiency of the happy philosopher (even in solitude) is therefore nothing but a logical impossibility,<sup>205</sup> for by definition the contem-

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 1177b20

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 1177a30

<sup>194</sup> Furthermore, contemplation requires a certain conducting of one's life, even past contemplating about things. For “Pleasure must be mixed into happiness... [and] It is reasonable that those who are knowers conduct their lives with greater pleasure” (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177a20)

<sup>195</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a1

<sup>196</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1162a15

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 1177b25

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 1177b30

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 1177b25

<sup>200</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a25

<sup>201</sup> See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1178b1.

Aristotle goes a step farther, stating that some external equipments might even be an impediment to the real action of contemplation, i.e., managing large sums of wealth.

<sup>202</sup> For Aristotle states that “For one who is a human being, external prosperity will also be needed... [for] it is not possible to be blessed in the absence of external goods” (Ibid., 1178b30-1179a1)

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 1177a30

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 1169b10

<sup>205</sup> Though a logical impossibility, Aristotle's clarification is still important for clarifying the

plative life is best only when true friends are accounted for, since they are the greatest of all necessary external goods. This only clarifies his claim in the ninth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that “happiness is a certain activity... and if we are better able to contemplate those near us than us ourselves ... [then] the blessed person will need [complete] friends, if indeed he chooses to contemplate actions that are decent and his own.”<sup>206</sup>

The conditional also illuminates Aristotle’s assertion that man, “insofar as he is a human being and lives with a number of others... chooses to do what accords with virtue.”<sup>207</sup> Importantly, Aristotle uses the word *prattein* from the root word *praxis*, or moral action, when he states that man seeks ‘to do’ what accords with virtue. Insofar as man is a human being he will choose to perform moral actions, as long as he is serious. What it means to be human is inherently linked to both acting morally and interacting with others, with the recognition of some dependency on external equipment.

The serious person is therefore “the human being... whose state is best both in body and in soul.”<sup>208</sup> And, as Aristotle asserts in the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that happiness aims for each thing to be “brought to completion well in accord with the virtue proper to it.”<sup>209</sup> Man, being made of both body and soul, must bring each into a state of completion and right order. Ignoring one aspect of the self is imprudent and prevents true happiness, because a person who ignores their body over their soul, or vice versa, is incomplete. The different parts of the soul must be nourished and sustained just as the body. Man must act politically and make effort to be prudent, since by nature he

is political, just as he must also seek after the truths of contemplation and wisdom.

The art that cares most for the production of the whole person is the political art, being both authoritative and architectonic.<sup>210</sup> The best ancient regime aims at the production of complete citizens, who are both the best men and the best citizens.<sup>211</sup> In creating these citizens, Aristotle says that lawmakers are “more serious about [friendship] than about justice,” since “friendship holds cities together” by means of *homonoia*.<sup>212</sup> *Homonoia*, the Greek word for one-mindedness, seems to be something like friendship, or even the foundation of any true friendship. Aristotle defines *homonoia* properly understood, stating that “to be like-minded is not for each to have the same thing in mind... but to have it in mind in the same way.”<sup>213</sup> The achievement of true friendship through virtuous *homonoia* is so coveted by political regimes because it allows for a person to care for his body, and each part of his soul in-turn, through contemplation with those dearest.

Aristotle dedicates a fifth of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to his ruminations on friendship. The development of character, engagement in philosophical conversation, help in times of need and supplementation of external equipment, as well as maintenance of the common good, are all desirable characteristics of true friendship. Not all friendships are equal in their benefit and nobility, however, and only one type can truly lead to the most serious person

According to Aristotle friendships can be for utility, pleasure, or the noble. Friendships of utility and pleasure resemble complete friendship but are lacking in an essential capacity. They are held as a means

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nature of contemplation as an action with a view to itself, for the action can be done in solitude, even if the contemplative man would never do so.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 1169b25-1170a1

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 1178b5

<sup>208</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, 1254a35

<sup>209</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a10

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 1094a25

<sup>211</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, 1278b1

<sup>212</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1155a20

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 1167a35

to their respective end only, and once that desired end (say, a trade deal) is lost, so too is the friendship.<sup>214</sup> Complete friendships, or noble friendships, differ from these lesser friendships in that they are done for the sake of another person as themselves with an eye especially towards the good.

Importantly, these complete friendships are both an action of ‘coming-into-being’ (*poiesis*) of a characteristic inside oneself and the production of a certain work (*ergon*) in another.<sup>215</sup> The three essential characteristics of these friendships are the intention, the character of those involved, and the habits produced. As has been stated, the friendship must be desired for the sake of the other, not the self. Most importantly, however, a complete friendship is the friendship between the good and virtuous, since “those who wish for the good things for their friends, for their friends’ sake, are friends most of all.”<sup>216</sup> Since both people within a friendship will be serious (*spoudaios*), they will benefit the other by encouraging moral action (*praxis*), and reprimanding anything viceful.

But friendship also requires a certain living together and development of habit, essential to the maintenance of any regime, and the development of the best man. Friendship causes delight and enjoyment which requires close and constant interaction, since one cannot be friends with another without constant engagement.<sup>217</sup> Friendship therefore begins with a general goodwill towards another accompanied with some

interaction that causes the development of proper habits of living (*sunetheia*). As the habits of living together develop friends become more and more ‘one-in-mind’ (*homonoia*)<sup>218</sup>, until finally a perfect and complete friendship (*huperbole*) is developed where “the friend is another self.”<sup>219</sup> In this way friends became a true extension of the self, loving each other truly for the other. As habits of living develop and *homonoia* is created, each person begins to aim for happiness in the same way, even if each person has a different need as their own person.

Since friendship cultivates one-mindedness through shared virtue, friendship allows for a certain leading of someone to something (*epagoge*), specifically the leading of a serious or almost serious person to virtue, contemplation, and the good. Acting properly and acquiring the moral virtues seems to require these sorts of friendships most of all, since “we are better able to contemplate those near us than us ourselves... So the blessed person will need these sorts of [serious] friends, if indeed he chooses to contemplate actions that are decent and his own, and such are the actions of a good man who is a friend.”<sup>220</sup> Since moral actions stem from a person's development of prudence, and the contemplation necessary for prudence is rooted in friendship, prudence seems to arise best from deliberation within complete friendship.<sup>221</sup> Furthermore, since wisdom contemplates on all things that are choice-

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<sup>214</sup> According to Aristotle “the [complete] friendship of good human beings, insofar as they are good, is friendship in the primary and authoritative sense, the remaining friendships being such only by way of a resemblance” (Ibid., 1156b30). For a more extensive explanation of Aristotle’s two lesser forms of friendship, see the third chapter of book eight in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

<sup>215</sup> The love that we have for the friends we benefit is viewed by Aristotle as our own “*ergon*” or work (Ibid., 1169a2).

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 1156b5

<sup>217</sup> The friend is a source of relaxation, which is a proper means dedicated to activity, but required to live properly in delight and virtue. Ibid., 1177a1

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 1167a20

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 1166a30

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 1169b35

<sup>221</sup> This seems especially true since, as Aristotle says, “those deeds that are accompanied by reason seem above all to be the ones done by people themselves, and done voluntarily. It is not unclear, then, that each person is this [rational] part” and governed by their intellect, “or is this above all,

worthy, and the moral and prudential are themselves choiceworthy, it would seem that the serious person would be led to wisdom by means of friendship as well.

Friendship seems especially important in the pursuit of happiness since both complete virtue and a complete life are required. Life is apt to present many reversals and extreme fortunes to each person, and even those who are flourishing can fall into ruin the next day. Yet Aristotle states that “[friendship] is more necessary, of course, in misfortune,”<sup>222</sup> because a friend can come to the aid of another when they are in need. Though a friend cannot entirely remove misfortune, or prevent them all from occurring, they can mitigate the losses incurred. Accordingly, then, Aristotle states that the “For the happy man, accordingly, there is need of friends”<sup>223</sup> and that friendship is “choiceworthy in all cases.”<sup>224</sup>

Friendship appears to be the most attainable mixture between the political necessities demanded of every person, and the ultimate good of contemplation that ought to be aimed for by all. Though the action of contemplation itself is superior to all else, man must live within the world he was born in, and react properly to each situation as prudence demands. To Aristotle, then, the contemplative life is choiceworthy, but only insofar as the political life is given its necessary due. Friendship in its most complete form seems to balance the conflict between the ultimate desire of man in contemplation,

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and that the decent person is fond of this especially.” (Ibid., 1169a1) Friendship aims at knowing and loving another as they most truly are. Because a person is most truly their intellect, whatever means we have access to their inner contemplation would be essential to knowing them as a person. Yet, we are limited by our physical bodies; we are only capable of experiencing things external through sensory perception. The actions of our friends, then, must serve as the means through which we assess their character and their soul. The actions of others as guided by reason (contemplated upon by our own

and the necessary precautions man must take in his daily life. With complete friends, man has the best chance to maintain external equipment, develop proper moral character for living will, and is furnished with ample examples and conversations for contemplation and leisure.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Frankenstein

*“My vices are the children of a forced solitude that I abhor.” – Shelley*

Now that Aristotle’s philosophy on virtue, happiness, and friendship have been fully considered, Shelley’s work must be revisited. Though the tragic story of the Creature does not serve as a glowing example of a serious person, the misery which he experiences contrasts with the joy of happiness, and heightens the importance of properly ordering one’s own nature with an aim towards humanity’s natural *telos*.

It has already been shown how the Creature was made by Victor, and so it must now be shown what came of his life and his virtues. After his genesis, the Creature fled from Ingolstadt into the world. As he journeyed the countryside he experienced hunger, pain, weariness, and the other normal demands of human life. Through trial and error, he learned how to sustain himself, and began to understand the world which he came

intellect) must then be the basis for our understanding of any other individual, and the guiding tool we use in determining the good that they need in their life, and deserve based off of the merits that they possess.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 1171a25. Importantly, Aristotle notes in the rest of the quote that “friendship is [still] noble in good fortune”

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 1169b20

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 1171b25. For more on the need for friendship in either life or in the attainment of happiness, see 1155a5, 1169b10, and 1170a15.



to inhabit. After some time, the Creature came upon a human town, but was driven out due to his ugliness and intimidating appearance. Eventually he settled in the shed of some cottagers whom, in teaching a foreigner the English language and the histories of Europe, unknowingly informed and educated the prying ears of the Creature. As his education progressed his desire for contemplation and virtue grew by the day. By the end of Shelley's novel, however, the Creature is wretched and wrought with despair. If the cause of the Creature's misery, which arose despite his growing virtues and contemplations, can be discovered, then his story will reveal something essential about the nature of happiness. Analyzing the failed fruits of his education and the developing character of the Creature, both intellectually and morally, will then reveal the lessons on happiness which Shelley's novel imparts.

It must first be shown what sort of education the Creature received, how his intellectual virtues developed, and what the nature of his contemplative actions were. While hiding with the cottagers the Creature learned the art of language and communication. The more he learned, the more his "thoughts exhilarated"<sup>225</sup> him, and the science of letters "opened before" the Creature "a wide field of wonder and delight."<sup>226</sup> He would eventually come to learn from the *Ruins of Empires* by Volney, and read *Paradise Lost* by Milton, the first volume of Plutarch's *Lives*, and the *Sorrows of Werter* by Goethe. "The possession of these treasures" the Creature reported, "gave me extreme delight,"<sup>227</sup> and "every conversation of the cottagers now opened new wonders."<sup>228</sup> Each of these different works incited a different feeling of wonder within the Creature.

With Goethe, the creature was either raised to ecstasy, or sunk into dejection. The story of Werter only focused his contemplation on his solitude and misery, preventing him from finding any happiness in thought. Plutarch, by contrast, taught him "high thoughts; he elevated me above the wretched sphere of my own reflections, to admire and love the heroes of past ages."<sup>229</sup> The more noble examples the Creature was furnished with, the greater his ardour for virtue rose, and so to with his abhorrence of vice. *Paradise Lost*, too, "moved every feeling of wonder and awe" within him.<sup>230</sup>

The Creature therefore had an expansive education. In fact, the education the Creature received was far more elevating and classical than some found in the modern day. After reading the various books he was able to contemplate on and ponder the deep nature of politics, theology, and philosophy of self. Had the Creature's contemplation truly aroused within a deep sense of happiness and tranquility, he could have pursued a greater plurality of books. Dedicating himself to a life of thought and learning was a real option for the Creature – no book could reject him on account of his hideous visage. Instead, however, Shelley presents the Creature as still in need, lacking something fundamentally human. "Like Adam" the Creature reported, "I was apparently united by no link to any other being in existence... I was wretched, helpless, and alone."<sup>231</sup> No matter how much the Creature learned or contemplated, he still had no relation with which he could sympathize and share his thoughts.

Turning next to the moral virtues of the Creature, as his education progressed so to did his desire to be upright. While the Creature lived with the cottagers he developed, or at the least began to develop, the

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<sup>225</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 103

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 106

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 115

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 107

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 116

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 117

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 117

virtues of courage, gentleness, moderation, liberality, ambition, and truthfulness. Unable to partake in society or engage in politics, the Creature was only able to develop these virtues, though it is very likely that he would have developed the others.

The first virtue the Creature developed was courage. The Creature recognized the inherent goodness in being willing to risk one's life for a noble end. Despite the fear the Creature had when he considered death,<sup>232</sup> he was still willing to risk his life for the aid of those who scorned him. Upon seeing a young girl:

running... suddenly her foot slipt, and she fell into the rapid stream. I rushed from my hiding-place, and, with extreme labour from the force of the current, saved her, and dragged her to shore. She was senseless; and I endeavoured, by every means in my power, to restore animation.<sup>233</sup>

Though the development of any virtue requires constant and continuous action to form the proper habits and relating characteristics, the quickness of the Creature's response shows the inner inclinations of his character.<sup>234</sup>

Furthermore, on gentleness, the fact that the Creature saved the girl's life revealed his willingness, initially, not to hold a grudge against all of humanity for the repetitive scorn he received. Only a few days before he saved the girl, he attempted to reveal himself to the cottagers, towards whom he secretly performed acts of kindness. Yet, the cottage

dwellers rejected him and fled without a second thought. Even after this rejection he did not take out his passions or emotions on the girl, or even hunt down the cottagers. Rather than allowing a hatred for all of humanity to fester within him, he was willing to forgive and act gently.

The third virtue the Creature developed was moderation. After leaving the laboratory, the Creature was forced to scavenge for food in the woods. Eventually he happened upon the cottage, and "[he became] accustomed, during the night, to steal a part of their store for [his] own consumption."<sup>235</sup> For a time, he stopped foraging from the woods, and sustained himself only off of these cottagers' food. He eventually "discovered one of the causes of the[ir] uneasiness... was poverty, and they suffered that evil in a very distressing degree."<sup>236</sup> As soon as he made this discovery, he abstained and satisfied himself with fruits, berries, and nuts from the nearby woods.

The Creature didn't stop there, however, for he soon realized that he could improve their condition by the similar means in which he degraded it. He watched the chores of the cottagers to learn where they needed the most help, and "during the night [he] often took [Felix's] tools, the use of which [he] quickly discovered, and brought home firing sufficient for the consumption of several days."<sup>237</sup> For the rest of the winter, when Felix, the young adult of the cottage, would go to fetch wood from the outhouse, he was in "perpetual astonishment, [as] he found his store always replenished by an invisible hand."<sup>238</sup> According to the Creature,

learned how to swim. Secondly, the Creature himself states that he saved the girl only through extreme labour, indicating the difficulty of this task.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 99

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 99

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 99

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 101

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 108

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 127-128

<sup>234</sup> It might be remarked that the Creature, possessing great strength and agility, was in no real danger when diving into the river. This is wrong, firstly, because swimming is not dependent on agility and strength alone, but also having learned the skill itself. Up to this point, no indication was given that the Creature had

he would work at night, collect his own food and wood for the cottage, as well as clearing all the walking pathways of snow.<sup>239</sup> The Creature persisted this way for over two years, aiding the cottagers and feeding himself from the woods, receiving nothing in return.

The Creature's ability to abstain from the Cottager's food and eat only from the woods reveals a sense of moderation. Undoubtedly, the food of the Cottager's tasted better than the assorted nuts, berries, and roots from the woods. The food of the cottagers would have been far more pleasant simply because of its texture, it would have lacked the hardness and sharpness of uncooked nuts, as well as the cold chewiness of roots or unwashed berries. Furthermore, throughout his whole stay at the cottage, the Creature doesn't seem to engage in any pleasures regarding touch.<sup>240</sup>

These events also reveal a sort of liberality the Creature developed, though not full liberality since he never dealt with money properly speaking. The work that the Creature put into helping the cottagers shows characteristic leanings towards liberal action. Instead of working for himself, gathering and storing food, fire, and other belongings, the Creature dedicated his time to helping the Cottagers prosperity because he recognized their need. He acts nobly and kindly, raising their condition little by little out of poverty. The Creature gave his labor nobly to those who needed it, and as he ought and in a good way, as well as with pleasure and enjoyment to himself, despite his loss in both time and energy, he acted, consistently, in a liberal way. It is then apparent that the Creature possessed some sense of liberality.

The final two virtues which remain to be examined are ambition and truthfulness. A sort of ambition is revealed within the Creature when he shows himself to the Cottagers,

with whom he has lived secretly for years. Over the course of his stay he aided them and did his best to alleviate their destitute condition. Finally, after years of gathering food, firewood, and shoveling snow for them, the Creature committed himself to confronting his supposed friends, in hopes of gaining great benefactors. The Creature longed to be honored and cared for by his fellow man, and he was willing to stoop himself to the lowest rung of servitude to receive this.

When the Creature decided to talk to the Cottagers, or more specifically the blind old man who was the head of the family, he stated that "this was the hour and moment of trial, which would decide [his] hopes, or realize [his] fears."<sup>241</sup> If the Old Man who lived in the cottage accepted the Creature, honored him for his noble deeds in helping the family, and took him in and cared for him, the Creature would finally be able to live within society. The Creature believed that he would gain close friendships, be able to share his troubles, and finally be allowed to pursue virtue, truth, and goodness with his newfound companions. He stated that he could not find any happiness in his condition, because he "ha[d] no relation or friend upon earth," and that he was "full of fears, for if [he] fail[ed] there [in talking to the Cottagers], [he would be] an outcast in the world forever."<sup>242</sup>

The Creature, therefore, put all of his hope and ambition into this plan. He entered into the cottage when the two grown children were not present, and explained his condition and situation to the Old Man. He stated that he had been living secretly with a family for some time, aiding them and alleviating their miseries so that they might one day accept him. He did not state from the very beginning that the Old Man's family was the one with whom he had been living. Instead, the Creature attempted to garner sympathy and explain the full plight of his condition, before

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 102

<sup>240</sup> Even if he might show curiosities about women

<sup>241</sup> Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 120

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 121.

he begged the Man to be his benefactor. This seemed to work, at first, for the Old Man said to him that he would help the Creature as much as he was able, if only he could understand his situation.<sup>243</sup>

Upon hearing this, The Creature stated: “You raise me from the dust by this kindness; and I trust that, by your aid, I shall not be driven from the society and sympathy of your fellow creatures.”<sup>244</sup> Only after hearing this promise, did the Creature finally explain to the Old Man that he had been secretly living with him the whole time. This exchange between the Creature and the Old Man reveals perfectly the Creature’s desire to be honored in small ways, for particular examples of acting nobly. Furthermore, the Creature’s willingness to share his story fully with the Old Man and tell him the truth that he had been living secretly with the Cottagers for some time, reveals the Creature’s willingness to tell truth. In fact, in every situation where the Creature engages with another person he tells them the truth, especially about how he views himself, and is never found to outright lie or deceive anyone with any malicious intent. In regards to the ambition and the truthfulness of the Creature, then, let this suffice to show his tendency towards these characteristics.

The Creature, therefore, as presented in the first half of *Frankenstein*, when he still had hope of entering into society, either possessed, was heavily inclined towards, or was on the path to habituating himself to the virtues of courage, moderation, liberality, gentleness, ambition, and truthfulness. As *Frankenstein* progresses, a turn of fortune plunges the Creature into misery and wretchedness, from which his vices spring. While he lived peacefully with the cottagers, the Creature had hope for eventual contentment and a chance at happiness. Something

caused a shift within him and a turn towards misery; the virtues and potential happiness he fostered were lost to the ensnarements of vice.

The turn towards misery that the Creature experienced stemmed not from a lack of virtue, nor from an inability to contemplate, but instead from the enforced solitude which he abhorred. The Creature eventually became agitated in his hidden and distant condition. He desired for his virtues to see the light of day so that he might be accepted, honored, and confided in by others.<sup>245</sup> Anxious for the future, he created a “plan of introducing [himself] into the cottage,”<sup>246</sup> hoping that they would be a gateway into society. While the cottage youth were away, the Creature entered to speak with the Old Man. Being poor in eyesight the Old Man did not immediately recognize any differences in the Creature from that of a regular person. The Creature explained his plight, and finishing just as the other residents returned, he was thrown to the ground and beaten until he fled. After receiving injury, the Creature’s “heart sunk within [him] as with bitter sickness,”<sup>247</sup> and he abandoned hope of connecting with the cottagers.

Fearing whatever had entered their home, the cottagers sold their home and left, never to return. In attempting to gain entry into their family the Creature lost his greatest chance to enter society. He was even denied the position he once held as a mere observer; he was cast back into solitude. After their departure, he stated that “anger returned, a rage of anger... [and with] a kind of insanity in [his] spirits, that burst all bounds of reason and reflection”<sup>248</sup> and so he burned the cottage to the ground.

With nothing left for him he began traveling in search of Victor, hoping to find

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 122

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 108

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 119

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 122

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 125

some restitution in the one who gave him life. While traveling he eventually came upon the girl which he saved from the river. The Creature was not rewarded for these actions, however, and instead the girl's father "darted towards [him], and tearing the girl from [his] arms, hastened towards the deeper parts of the wood. [The Creature] followed speedily ... but when the man saw [him] draw near, he aimed a gun... and fired."<sup>249</sup> Recoiling in pain, and dropping to the floor of the forest, the Creature's good actions were rewarded only with pain and rejection.

After being attacked the Creature's "feelings of kindness and gentleness, which [he] had entertained but a few moments before, gave place to hellish rage."<sup>250</sup> He vowed to hate mankind and enact vengeance at any instance, renouncing any life of gentleness. Despite promising to punish any person he came across, the Creature had spent too much time observing the gentle disposition of the cottagers. After nursing his wound in the forest for some time, he travelled, and eventually came across a child playing in the fields of Geneva. Upon seeing this child, he attempted to convince him, and even force him into giving him aid. When this failed and when the child threatened that his father 'Frankenstein' was a syndic, the Creature became enraged and strangled him to death.

Soon after, stealing away to a nearby barn to hide, the Creature discovered a sleeping woman. The Creature instantly thought to wake her and attempt to gain her favor, and even love. Yet, after having attempted to enter into society three times, and being thrice rejected, he cursed her and decided against it.<sup>251</sup> In anger, he placed a locket he had taken from the murdered child on the woman, intentionally condemning her to punishment for the child's death. This fourth and final action caused the Creature to lose any and all habituation he had to virtue. In abandoning his hope for fellowship and society, he lost all hope in achieving a state of happiness.<sup>252</sup> His former life was completely abandoned and all his inclinations towards virtue were lost.

These four main events explain the turn towards misery the Creature experienced. Only after constant and tedious pain did the Creature's character turn away from virtue and fall into vice. It took several misfortunes to dampen his kindled love for humanity. In losing these virtues, however, they were replaced with vices, and his disposition towards evil grew. In losing hope, the Creature did not gain every possible vice, or even an equal number of vices for the virtues he was inclined towards. The Creature developed insensibility,<sup>253</sup> irascibility,<sup>254</sup> over-ambition,<sup>255</sup> and in-justice. He allowed his

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 128

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 128

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 130

<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 118

<sup>253</sup> After his rejection, the Creature "wished to tear up the trees, [and] spread havoc and destruction around [him]" so that he might "[sit] down and [enjoy] the ruin... [and] luxury of sensation" (Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 123). Later, the Creature even gained pleasure from strangling Victims. He, with "despair [in his] heart; grasped [William's] throat to silence him, and in a moment he lay dead" (Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 129). Clerval was found with "no sign of any violence, except the black mark of fingers on his neck." Elizabeth also was found "lifeless and inanimate, thrown across

the bed, her head hanging down, and her pale and distorted features half covered by her hair" with "the murderous mark of the fiend's grasp... on her neck" (Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 181).

<sup>254</sup> The Creature had "a fiendish rage animate" his actions (Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 132). He "vowed eternal hatred... to all mankind" (Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 128). The Creature stated repetitively: "My feelings were those of rage" and "I, like the archfiend, bore a hell within me" (Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 123). Finally, "towards... [his] unfeeling [and] heartless creator" he "felt no sentiment but that of hatred" (Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 126).

<sup>255</sup> Coercion became the Creature's choice tool in gaining honor, for "an idea seized [him] that this

rage to fuel destruction, and gained pleasure wherever his vengeance wreaked havoc on the world. He fostered extreme anger within himself, and sought to rule over others' lives such as Victor, and he did not act towards others as he ought. When these vices took hold of his character they choked out the virtues that he had once nurtured.

The reason for the Creature's misery and loss of virtue stems from the isolation he endured. Attempting to act morally was not enough for the Creature to maintain his virtue, he required friends or relatives with whom he could contemplate and confide in. He continually repeated that he "was wretched, helpless, and alone."<sup>256</sup> Friendship was not a mere desire to the Creature, it was an absolute necessity for happiness. The Creature stated that he needed an "interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being."<sup>257</sup> He harmed others not from any form of malice, but only from his misery,<sup>258</sup> and therefore "If any being felt emotions of benevolence towards me, I should return them an hundred and an hundredfold; for that one creature's sake I would make peace with the whole kind!"<sup>259</sup>

In desiring social relations, mere friendship was not enough for the Creature. Instead, he sought after it in its truest and most complete form. The Creature was not seeking pleasure, rather he admired the cottagers because they "enjoyed one another's company and speech, interchanging each day looks of affection and kindness."<sup>260</sup> The Creature "admired [the] virtue and good

feelings and loved the gentle manners and amiable qualities of" the cottagers.<sup>261</sup> He desired these friends for their own sake and their own good, and also so that he might confide in them, loving them for the virtues they possessed. The Cottagers rejected him, however, and so he became miserable.

Had the Creature been able to find a complete friend, Shelley's novel shows that his virtues would have cemented. Instead, his rejection destroyed his initial inclinations, and sealed his vices. Hence, the Creature stated: "My vices are the children of a forced solitude that I abhor."<sup>262</sup> Solitude is therefore the primary cause of the Creature's unhappiness. It seems from the example of the Creature that a lack in societal bonding prevents a state of happiness from achieving fulfillment.

Shelley therefore emphasizes the importance of friendship, even more so than Aristotle. To Shelley, neither contemplation in solitude, nor the justice of the political life, are enough to satisfy the inner longing of men. Only through close comradeship, friendship, and relation, intertwined with the moral and intellectual virtues, can a person ever obtain happiness. In fact, to Shelley friendship might be the source of these virtues, through good conversation and the aid given to true friends in times of need. For this Reason, Shelley's book begins<sup>263</sup> and ends<sup>264</sup> with a longing for friendship, and each character, be it the Creature, Robert, or Victor,<sup>265</sup> fixates on it as their ultimate goal.

In the opening of the novel Robert expresses to Victor his "desire of finding a

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little creature was unprejudiced, and had lived too short a time to have imbibed a horror of [his] deformity" (Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 129) The Creature seized upon him, hoping to kidnap him, hoping to gain a "companion and friend" so that he "should not be so desolate [on this] peopled earth" (Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 129).

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 99, 117, 131, 134

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 131

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 131

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 132

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 99

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 108

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 134

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 16

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 195

<sup>265</sup> Victor reveals his desire for friendship continuously, saying "Clerval! Beloved friend! even now it delights me to record your words" (*Ibid.*, 142); "He enjoys one comfort, the offspring of solitude and delirium: he believes, that when in dreams he holds converse with his friends, and derives from that communion consolation for his miseries" (*Ibid.*, 194).

friend – of my thirst for a more intimate sympathy with a fellow mind than had ever fallen to my lot; and expressed my conviction that a man could boast of little happiness, who did not enjoy this blessing.”<sup>266</sup> Victor responds, “we are unfashioned creatures, but half made up, if one wiser, better, dearer than ourselves—such a friend ought to be.”<sup>267</sup> Throughout the novel, happiness is found wherever true friendship abounds, and misery inhabits isolation. Shelley therefore imparts on her reader the wisdom, that one ought to always “seek happiness in tranquility,”<sup>268</sup> and enjoy “friends, dear not only through habit and association, but from their own merits.”<sup>269</sup>

## CONCLUSION

*“[Love] for the friend’s own sake... for the friend is another self.” – Aristotle*

If to Aristotle the most secure and practically attainable form of happiness is friendship, and if to Shelley happiness itself is almost synonymous with friendship, then how could the Creature, a human being possessing a mighty intellect and once holding great virtue, fall into misery and wretchedness? Did the Creature not, in his pursuit for virtue and knowledge, also pursue friends and human relations with whom he could share his sympathies? If friendship is truly the answer to the great vanity of earthly toil and the great misfortune of man, then why is *Frankenstein* a tragic tale and not a hopeful exhortation? What lessons on friendship can be learned from a wretch who had no friends, nor virtue, nor sacred honor to call his own?

The Creature’s misery arose through no fault of his own. None around him understood the true nature of humanity – one after another, his fellow man viewed him as vile

and repulsive on the grounds of mere accidental features alone. Had they understood the true nature of man, that the *poiesis* or poetry of a person lies in the character of his soul, not the shape of his face – that the *kalos* and noble beauty sought after by all arises from the common love of virtue, not pleasantness of sight, then they would have known to love instead of hate. Had Victor understood the nature of man, he would not have rejected his creation and child. And had Robert sought to cultivate virtue within himself instead of seeking it within others, to be a friend to those in need instead of pining after one to possess, then he might have turned a *daemon* into a saint.

The condition of the Creature, regrettable and unfortunate as it is, is the expected condition of the solitary man seeking satisfaction within himself, either by chance or by choice. Man is accosted on all sides by woe, and the upheavals of life are constant and unforeseen. Sustenance, security, and activity are necessities of both body and mind, though all are scarce and scattered. Betrayal, ailment, and dolor round every corner and demons of our own invention spring forth from the night. Justice can sedate the sorrows of the world and bring some semblance of tranquility. But only by staining the self-sacrificial altar of that solitary and melancholy statesman who helms the ship of state can the tides of war and pestilence be stayed. Leisure is traded for security, community for lofty isolation, and misery for idle contentment.

The wise, in recognizing the folly of these human affairs turn inwards and reflect, yet fall prey to the same curse of isolation. And in the end, even they are bound and chained by their physical necessities. The body is not sustained from contemplation alone; the contemplative, though happy in the gardens of their inner selves, find only ephemeral nourishment. As if by ritual exodus

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 16

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 16

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 202

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 196

they quit their caves into the forests of man for food, only to recede from the world once again a short time later. But what happens when these philosophic men leave their caves as they are accustomed to do, only to find the forests that once nourished them burned and ravaged, be it from without or within, all occurring as they sat idly by in a self-imposed isolation?

Neither justice nor contemplation alone can satisfy the heart of man, which finds rest only in the complete happiness of the two. A human is a being made of two parts – a composite of thought and action, character and relation. Justice and its securities must provide for his body, just as thought provides for his soul. Each of these, when pursued on their own, by a man on his own, are found to be nothing but vanity and folly.

The juncture of literature and politics which unites Shelley and Aristotle offers a guiding path to some real semblance of happiness in the life of man. Happiness, to both writers, is bound up with friendship. Shelley's work, in highlighting the complexities of Aristotle's theories, draws out the new, ancient answer to the problem of man's miseries- one that focuses on the pursuit of happiness instead of the ideal manifestation of it.<sup>270</sup> Where Aristotle lays the foundation for understanding the nature of friendship, justice, contemplation, and happiness in themselves, Shelley charts a serious and thoughtful course in the pursuit thereof.

By portraying both the deep evidential miseries of man, and the intense hopes of friendship manifested in love, *Frankenstein* embodies the duality of the human condition with all its hopes and fears. The novel's unison with Aristotle refines the philosopher's arguments, and draws them towards a new yet familiar conclusion. At no point does Aristotle expressly consider the path to attain happiness in actuality. The philosopher only considers what the end being sought is, that action with a view to itself, so that the serious person can "tighten or loosen"<sup>271</sup> their soul in the pursuit of happiness thereof. Shelley too, in offering the tragedy of solitude, shies away from the real achievement of happiness as the only goal of man.

The answer to the question of happiness lies not in its attainment, perfection, or achievement. The goal of man resides only in that proper pursuit of the true, the good, and the beautiful; that Aristotelian "activity of soul in accord with reason."<sup>272</sup> The serious man does not seek to do a good, but rather to be good- he aims not at achieving a certain good action, but instead attaining a good soul by means of noble and virtuous characteristics. No person can guarantee that their actions will succeed in the world – chance and fortune bear to heavy a hand. Man as a poem can only write the lines for his own soul, and though he can offer guidance to his fellows, he can never build within them those noble and poetic virtues which happiness demands. Each person ought therefore only to reflect on how they can best be a friend<sup>273</sup> to all others,

<sup>270</sup> Shelley unearths the innate conflict between the ideal nature of perfect contemplation as an action, and the practical attainability of the contemplative life. Not even the Creature with his seemingly superhuman abilities was able to escape the Aristotelian problem dependence and equipment. Though Aristotle recognizes the importance if not necessity of friendship for happiness, he does not assert friendship as its own end. Man, to Aristotle, seems to dedicate himself to the political, the pleasurable, or the contemplative only. Though each life offers some good, they each have their

own flaw. The pleasurable life constantly leaves man wanting more, and can easily be taken away. The Political life demands constant care and leaves no room for leisure. The contemplative life, though the greatest in its nature, can only be obtained when man's external needs are met, but does not in itself meet these needs.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 1138b20

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 1098a5

<sup>273</sup> Importantly, acting as a friend to all opens one up to the opportunity of finding a complete friendship, a friendship of virtue and love for the



rather than seeking out friends for themselves. Only in acting as a friend and ordering one's soul towards right reason can one become good, and only in complete friendship can justice, pleasure, and contemplation live in seeming harmony with those miseries that haunt the condition of man. Friendship must be sought as the mean between ideal con-

templation, and absolute security. But, to find a friend in others one must first become a friend themselves. This will, undoubtedly, be the surest path to attaining a true state of *eudaimonia*.

## APPENDIX

### Table 1

Moral Virtues and Vices as beginning in Book II.7

The underlined excess/deficiency is the one *more opposed* to the Mean

	Concern	Deficiency	Virtue/mean	Excess	Where Treated	Thing Dealt With
1	Fear and Confidence	<u>Cowardice</u>	Courage	Recklessness	3.6-9	Pain and Pleasure, the body
2	Pleasures and Pains	Insensibility	Moderation	<u>Licentiousness</u>	3.10-12	
3	Giving and Taking of Money (Small)	Stinginess	Liberality	<u>Prodigality</u>	4.1	These virtues seem to

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other for the others sake, which is key to true happiness.

4	Giving and Taking of Money (Great)	Parsimony	Magnificence	Crassness	4.2	mainly deal with relations to community through serious things, through praise and blame itself
5	Small Honors and Dishonors	Smallness of Soul Pusillanimous	Greatness of Soul Magnanimous	Vanity	4.3	
6	Great Honors and Dishonors	Un-ambitious	Unnamed (Ambition for clarity)	Over-ambitious (for clarity)	4.4	
7	Anger	Un-irascibility	Gentleness	<u>Irascibility</u>	4.5	
8	Pleasantness found in life as a whole	Quarrelsome	Friendliness	Obsequious, or if for personal gain, then flattery	4.6	These deal with relations to Community through Rest and Play, which are necessary in life.
9	Truth	Irony (Deceiver)	Truthfulness/ “Plain Dealer”	<u>Boaster</u>	4.7	
10	Play	Boorishness	Wittiness	<u>Buffoonery</u>	4.8	
11	Sense of Shame	Shameless	Bashfulness (Not a virtue, but praiseworthy)	Shame	4.9	Not actual virtues
12	Pleasures and Pains at the Fortune’s that Befall One’s Neighbors	Spiteful	Indignation (Not a virtue, but praiseworthy)	Envious	Not discussed	
13	Grasping for more or Gaining Goods	?	Justice	?	Book 5	?

**Table 2**

Intellectual Virtues and Vices as enumerated in Book VI

	<b>Intellectual Virtue</b>	<b>Where Treated</b>	<b>Active condition of Soul governing</b>
1	Knowledge ( <i>Epistēmē</i> )	VI.3	Demonstration
2	Art ( <i>Technē</i> )	VI.4	Making
3	Prudence ( <i>phronēsis</i> )	VI.5	Determining the human good (concerning action)
4	Intellect ( <i>nous</i> )	VI.6	Directed at <i>archai</i>
5	Wisdom ( <i>sophia</i> )	VI.7	True discernment of <i>archai</i> ; consists of wisdom & knowledge

6	Politics (Political Art or Science) <i>Politikē</i>	VI.8	Action and deliberation of a city
7	Good deliberation ( <i>euboulia</i> )	VI.9	Correct determination of advantage in relation to end
8	Shrewdness ( <i>agchinoia</i> )	VI.9	Skill at Guessing
9	Comprehension or Good (Quick) Comprehension ( <i>sunesis</i> or <i>eusunesia</i> )	VI.10	Use of prudence
10	Judgment or forgiveness (Sympathetic judgment) ( <i>gnomē</i> or <i>sungnomē</i> )	VI.11	Decent
11	Cleverness ( <i>deinotes</i> )	VI.12	Capacity to achieve end (Not an intellectual virtue)

## GLOSSARY

### List of Greek terms and their definitions

*Antipeponthos* – Reciprocity.

*Arche* – The beginning, origin, or source of action.

*Epagoge* – The leading of someone to something.

*Epieikeia* – The equitable.

*Epistemonikon* – The theoretical, scientific aspect of reason.

*Ergon* – A certain work.

*Ethike* – Moral virtue.

*Ethos* – Habits.

*Eudaimonia* – The activity of the soul in accord with the final end of man, meaning happiness gained through living well and acting well.

*Homonoia* – One-mindedness, characterized not by thinking the same thing, but thinking in the same way.

*Huperbole* – Complete friendship.

*Kalos* – The beautiful, or the noble.

*Sunetheia* – Habits of living.

*Logistikon* – The calculative or logical part of reason.

*Logon* – Logic.

*Ousia* – Being.

*Ousian* – A being.

*Poiesis* – Coming-into-being, the creation of a thing, or poetry.

*Praxis* – A moral action.

*Spoudaios* – The serious person.

*Telos* – The natural end or intended completion of a thing.

*To ti esti* – The essence or essential features of a thing.

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