

UĞUR EYLÜL YÜCEL THE PARADOX OF HORROR OR THE VALUE OF NEGATIVE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES Bilkent University 2019

THE PARADOX OF HORROR OR THE  
VALUE OF NEGATIVE AESTHETIC  
EXPERIENCES

A Master's Thesis

by  
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Ankara  
May 2019



*To my mother, my grandmother, my grandfather, my step father and my cats*

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NEGATIVE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences  
of  
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

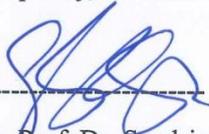
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In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS IN PHILOSOPHY

THE DEPARTMENT OF  
PHILOSOPHY  
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA

May 2019

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Philosophy.



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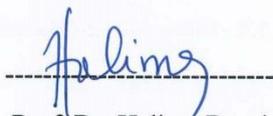
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## ABSTRACT

### THE PARADOX OF HORROR OR THE VALUE OF NEGATIVE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES

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David Hume (1982) in *Of Tragedy* asks the question that how is it possible for audiences to get pleasure from disagreeable emotions? My dissertation addresses the contemporary version of the paradox of tragedy that raises the same aesthetic concern, that is, the paradox of horror. The question raised by the paradox of horror as follows: why do we like to experience horror art experiences we would normally avoid in real life? There are some replies to the paradox which explain the reason why in such a way that horror stories are about proving the existence of a monster that is disgusting and terrifying or some people can enjoy negative emotions if there is an understanding that people do not in general like negative emotions. In this dissertation, however, I offer a different standpoint. I argue that a rich account of our aesthetic enjoyment of horror art must take human emotional development into account. That is, the capacity for sympathy, which is an important part of our moral education, we have for others can be shaped and so developed by reading and watching tragedies. My dissertation focuses on 18<sup>th</sup>-century philosophers' arguments on sympathy with regards to the paradox of tragedy. After establishing whether sympathy helps us solve the paradox of tragedy, I apply the notion of sympathy to the paradox of horror by using Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as an example.

Keywords: Horror, Monster, Paradox, Sympathy, Tragedy

## ÖZET

### KORKU PARADOKSU VEYA OLUMSUZ ESTETİK DENEYİMLERİN DEĞERİ

Yücel, Uğur Eylül

Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü

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David Hume (1982) *Trajedi Üzerine*'de seyircilerin rahatsız edici duygulardan zevk almalarının nasıl mümkün olduğu sorusunu sorar. Tezim trajedi paradoksuyla aynı estetik kaygıyı ortaya çıkaran ve onun çağdaş versiyonu olan korku paradoksunu ele alıyor. Korku paradoksunun gündeme getirdiği soru şu şekildedir: normal hayatta kaçınacağımız korku sanatı deneyimlerini deneyimlemekten neden zevk alıyoruz? Paradoksun nedenini, korku hikayelerinin iğrenç ve korkutucu bir yaratığın varlığını kanıtlamak ya da eğer insanların genel olarak olumsuz duygulardan hoşlanmayacağı anlayışı olursa bazı insanların olumsuz duygulardan hoşlanabileceği şeklinde açıklayan bazı cevaplar vardır. Ancak bu tezde farklı bir bakış açısı öneriyorum. Korku sanatından estetik olarak zevk almamızın zengin açıklamasının, insanın duygusal gelişimini hesaba katması gerektiğini savunuyorum. Yani, ahlaki eğitimimizin önemli bir parçası olan ve başkalarına karşı sahip olduğumuz sempati kapasitesi korku filmleri izleyerek ya da korku romanları okuyarak şekillenebilir ve gelişebilir. Tezim, 18. Yüzyıl filozoflarının trajedi paradoksuna ilişkin sempati konusundaki argümanlarına odaklanmaktadır. Sempatinin, trajedi paradoksunu çözmemize yardımcı olup olmadığını belirledikten sonra, Mary Shelley'nin (2013) *Frankenstein*'ini örnek olarak kullanarak, sempati kavramını korku paradoksuna uygulayacağım.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Korku, Paradoks, Sempati, Trajedi, Yaratık

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

People do not, in general, enjoy living through situations where their lives are in danger. Such negative situations creating negative emotions are avoided in real life. However, where the horror genre is at issue concerned, people seem to be eager to experience negative emotions such as fear, terror, disgust, etc.<sup>1</sup> This is how the paradox of horror arises. Why, do people seek, through horror-art, experiences they would normally avoid in real life? In order to understand the paradox of horror clearly, I would like to introduce it as the following inconsistent triad:

- (A) We do not enjoy being scared or disgusted.
- (B) Horror movies scare or/and disgust us.
- (C) We enjoy horror movies.

There are contemporary philosophers who tried to resolve the paradox by explaining the reason why we enjoy horror-art in different ways. For example, Noël Carroll (1990) argues that the reason why we enjoy horror-art is that horror stories are in general about proving and disclosing the existence of a creature whose existence is in fact thought to be impossible by people because it is contrary to our conceptual schemes. According to Carroll's point of view, despite having the idea that the existence of monsters is the opposite of our real-life beliefs about the nature of things, the idea of monsters exist constitutes part of those narratives. This is why audiences are in general curious about whether the monster's existence will be confirmed or whether it will be destroyed by the characters throughout the narrative. Thus, Noël Carroll attributes the real reason why we enjoy horror-art to monsters since they have unknowable features by playing a role in raising our curiosity.

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<sup>1</sup> I will use "people" and "we" to refer the audience who like to enjoy horror movies throughout the whole thesis.

Another solution to the paradox is proposed by Berys Gaut (1993). In his article “The Paradox of Horror”, before offering his own solution to the paradox, Gaut criticizes Carroll's solution. Gaut finds Carroll's solution unsatisfactory because it is restricted to monster movies even though there are type of movies that focus on psychopathic, but human, serial killers. Gaut argues that the horror genre need not only focus on monsters. As well as objecting to the Carroll's restricting the horror genre to monsters, Gaut critically examines the notion of curiosity proposed by Carroll. He claims that horror movies which are about monsters are so stereotypical that, it is, in fact, difficult for those movies to raise curiosity in the audience successfully even though he agrees with Carroll by claiming that we would try to avoid disgust and fear if we were to encounter such creatures in real life.<sup>2</sup>

Having objected to Carroll's solution, Gaut explains the reason why we are so enthusiastic about watching horror movies in his own way. He grounds his solution on evaluative theory by pointing out the idea that negative emotions aroused in us by watching horror movies need to be considered with respect to evaluations they are embedded in. What he means by evaluations is that, for instance, when we are disgusted by something, this situation is a result of we evaluating that thing as disgusting or when we are angry at someone, it is because we evaluate the actions of that person as inappropriate, etc. That is to say, for Gaut, the real difference between negative and positive emotions, in fact, relies on the difference between our negative and positive evaluations.

It follows that Berys Gaut notes the idea that, we do in fact get pleasure in watching horror movies by applying the idea of “necessarily *typically*”(Gaut, 1993: 342). Namely, “necessarily *typically*, if someone desires something, then the idea of achieving it gives her pleasure” (Gaut, 1993: 342). In order to support this idea, he goes on claiming that there are various atypical cases that have a role of creating atypical emotions and arousing enjoyment in atypical people. What he means by

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<sup>2</sup> I will demonstrate Gaut's example about the criticism of curiosity in the second chapter.

atypical is that there are people who enjoy watching horror movies because they know that what they are watching is actually fiction so no one in the movie is really in danger. However, Gaut emphasizes the idea that, in order for this situation to be acceptable, there needs to be a background understanding of typical unpleasant responses that are not enjoyed by people in general.

In this Master's Thesis, I also support the idea that there is nothing paradoxical about watching and enjoying horror movies. However, my attempt to solve the paradox is quite different from both Gaut's and Carroll's. The reason why my proposal is different is that I argue that while, on the one hand, Noël Carroll's solution seems to revolve around only monsters which has a restricting feature- as Berys Gaut argues too- Gaut's solution, on the other hand, is too simple to explain why we really enjoy horror art. I believe that- as it is also argued in Matthew Strohl's (2019) article "Art and Painful Emotion"- the horror genre provides us with a safe environment by enabling us to experience negative emotions artificially despite the fact that we tend to avoid those emotions in real life.<sup>3</sup> In addition, in this thesis, I argue that a rich account of the question created by the paradox, that is, why we take pleasure in the horror genre, needs to take human emotional development into account.

In this Thesis, my aim is to introduce what the paradox of horror is and to provide an understanding of whether there is a paradox at all. In order to show that there is nothing paradoxical about having an interest in watching horror movies, in **Chapter 2**, I will first introduce the paradox in detail through the inconsistent triad that creates the paradox. I will then address Noël Carroll's and Berys Gaut's solutions which are distinct from each other by arguing that neither of them offers a satisfactory solution to the paradox. The reason why is that, whereas Carroll's understanding of the horror genre and our enjoyment of it are restricted to monsters and to the notion of curiosity

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<sup>3</sup> This explanation for the paradox is stated as control theory which explains the idea that when we have a sense of safety and control, it is possible for us to enjoy horror genre even though Strohl thinks that this theory does not fully explain the positive pleasure we get from horror genre but instead it has a role of removing obstacles for explaining this positive pleasure as a background condition .

aroused in us by means of their unknowable features, Gaut's proposal is, on the other hand, too simple to understand the complexity of the phenomenon.

This is why I propose a different solution which I believe puts emphasis on the complexity of why we enjoy the horror genre by claiming that the enjoyment we get from watching horror movies must take human emotional development into account. What I mean by human emotional development is to imply the development of the capacity for sympathy we have for others. In order to give a clear understanding of my proposal, in **Chapter 3**, since the paradox of horror is a contemporary version of the paradox of tragedy, I will touch upon 18<sup>th</sup>-century philosophers' - Adam Smith's (2017), David Hume's (1981) and, Sophie de Grouchy's (2019)- accounts of the notion of sympathy on the paradox of tragedy. I will analyse their discussion with regards to the idea that there is nothing wrong with enjoying tragedies under three headings: tragedy as a remedy for boredom, tragedy as a tool for developing sympathy, and the relation between sympathy and arousal of strong feelings. I will analyse David Hume's *Of Tragedy* and Sophie de Grouchy's *Letters on Sympathy* to illustrate that tragedy is a cure for boredom as well as showing that reading and watching tragedies help us develop our capacity for sympathy by filling the gap that the boredom creates in us. I will use David Hume's *Of Tragedy*, Sophie de Grouchy's *Letters on Sympathy* and Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* to show that tragedy enables us to feel compassion and sympathy by arising strong feelings in us when we are in a position to see others' moral and physical pains.

My aim will be in **Chapter 4** to apply 18<sup>th</sup>-century philosophers' accounts of sympathy to the paradox of horror by using the gothic novel *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* written by Mary Shelley (2013). The reason for choosing this novel is to develop the idea that the horror genre can have an effect on our emotional development in terms of developing and shaping our capacity for sympathy. I will show that even though Dr. Frankenstein's creature is described by him as repulsive

and terrifying as the creature is completely opposite of the human nature according to the description of Carroll, it is, in fact, possible for us to feel sympathy for the creature. That is to say, I will put emphasis on the shift of sympathy from Frankenstein and other human characters to the creature as he is left all alone by his creator, namely Frankenstein, and treated badly by the villagers as well as shifting the feeling of disgust from the creature to monstrous treatment of human characters especially Frankenstein. Thus, I will conclude that, despite raising curiosity, disgust, and fear and providing us with a safe environment, another explanation to the paradox might be that the horror genre has also an effect on human emotional development pedagogically in terms of shaping and developing the notion of sympathy. This is why I believe that there is nothing wrong with enjoying the horror genre.

## CHAPTER 2

### WHAT IS THE PARADOX OF HORROR?

David Hume in *Of Tragedy* describes the paradox of tragedy as follows: “It seems an unaccountable pleasure, which the spectators of a well-written tragedy receive from sorrow, terror and anxiety, and other passions, that are in themselves disagreeable and uneasy” (Hume, 1981: 136). What he means by his description of the pleasure we get in tragedy is that even though the feelings aroused by tragedy are negative and disagreeable and they are in general avoided in real life, yet people get pleasure from these feelings when they watch or read tragedies. Studying Hume’s discussion of the paradox of tragedy is helpful if we want to understand a contemporary version of the paradox, namely, the paradox of horror.

The paradox of horror and the paradox of tragedy are closely related because passions of terror and anxiety are found in the horror genre as in tragedy. Accordingly, we can, in fact, find elements of the horror genre in tragedy for example Prometheus having his insides eaten by an eagle in Aeschylus’s (1932) *Prometheus Bound*, the multiple deaths in the Oedipus trilogy (1978), as well as his stabbing of his own eyes, the murders of Theseus's bride and children in Euripides's (1985) *Medea*, etc. Thus, tragedy is basically horror in all its genres such as supernatural, slasher, monster, etc. The paradox of horror highlights an apparent conflict in our aesthetic behavior: why do we seek through horror-art experiences we would avoid in real life? The paradox can be stated as the following inconsistent triad:

- (A) We do not enjoy being scared or disgusted.
- (B) Horror movies scare or/and disgust us.
- (C) We enjoy horror movies.

Each of these statements is *prima facie* true, and yet they cannot be true together since it does not seem to make sense that some people feel scared and disgusted by horror while at the same time enjoying the negative emotions it arouses. In order to understand the nature of this inconsistency, we need to question each of the three statements and ask whether they are in fact all true. Let us begin with the first one. Do we really not enjoy being scared? Yes, as we do not, in general, enjoy experiencing negative emotions in real life at all and try to avoid them. In general, people do not enjoy living through a situation in which their own lives or that of their loved ones in danger. So, let us turn to the second statement. Do horror movies actually scare us? The answer is yes. We get scared by the plots, characters, supernatural events or monsters that are depicted in horror movies. Their effects even continue by making us feel anxious afterwards, especially if we watched them alone at home in the middle of the night. We might even worry that we should be chased by the zombies while walking back home after watching a movie about zombies eating people's brains. Yet, we can still ask, turning to our third statement: do we really enjoy watching horror movies? The answer is yes. From gothic literature to contemporary horror fiction, the horror genre has become extremely popular. People are clearly attracted to the supernatural and horrific elements of the genre. So, when we consider the triad once more, it seems that we do enjoy being scared by watching horror movies while at the same time we tend to avoid experiences which will make us feel scared and this is the inconsistency that creates the paradox.

In this dissertation, I will argue that there is no such thing as the paradox of horror, that is, our enjoyment of horror is not paradoxical. We enjoy horror-art because we enjoy experiencing strong emotions in a safe environment and it is often easier to experience strong emotions when we are exposed to negative emotions. Before I develop this argument, I will present the analysis of Noël Carroll's and Berys Gaut's attempts at solving the paradox of horror. I will argue that while neither offers a satisfactory solution, some of what they say is suggestive of where the solution lays.

## 2.1 Noël Carroll's Solution to The Paradox of Horror

In his book *The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of The Heart*, Noël Carroll (1990) addresses the paradox of horror by noting the idea that "how it is possible for audiences to derive pleasure from any genre- including not only horror but tragedy as well- whose objects were things that ordinarily cause distress and discomfort" (Carroll, 1990: 179). This means that, if we were to encounter a ghost in real life, it would not be a situation we would enjoy but rather, it would be upsetting. According to Carroll, it is obviously the case that what we see on the screen or read on the page is, of a piece of horror-art, in fact, something quite disgusting which we normally wish to avert in real life. If, however, this is the case, he notes, then why do we search for it when it comes to art and fiction and how do we get pleasure from it? Although I will be arguing that the so-called paradox of horror is best solved by understanding horror-art as providing a safe environment in which to experience strong emotions, here I focus on Carroll's own solution.

Noël Carroll also supports the idea that our interest in the horror genre is not paradoxical. In order to give a plausible account to the paradox of horror, the first attempt Carroll makes is to appeal to Hume's account on the paradox of tragedy. That is, Carroll thinks that just like tragedy, the horror genre has a narrative form. What this actually means that what makes horror genre interesting, pleasurable and appealing does not primarily depend on the object of horror itself-i.e., the monster. Instead, the narrative might lie at the center of our pleasure and interest. Thus, what we find interesting and attractive in the horror genre does not need to be only about the object of horror-art but rather how the disclosure is represented as a functional element in the whole narrative structure.

Another point made by Carroll that explains the reason why people have an interest in the horror genre is the notion of disclosure. That is, Carroll defines the horror genre in such a way that horror stories are in general about "proving, disclosing, discovering

and confirming” the existence of a creature whose existence is thought to be impossible and which is, in fact, contrary to our conceptual schemes (Carroll, 1990: 181). Despite the fact that horror narratives are the opposite of our real-life beliefs about the nature of things, yet, the idea of monsters exist is the part of those narratives. This is why, throughout the whole story, audiences are curious about whether monsters' existence will be confirmed. Carroll argues that it might also be the case that having curiosity about whether the monster exists can be transformed into curiosity about whether human characters in horror stories will prove the existence of the monster. According to Carroll's point of view, horror stories often develop around series of discoveries. That is, at first the readers will happen to learn about the existence of the monster and then some of the characters in the story, then some more do and so on. The notion of disclosure is the main factor that underlies the horror fiction.

Carroll touches upon the case that horror stories are in general about proving and discovering the existence of the monster in a story as well as disclosing the power and identity of that monster. For Carroll, monsters are the main factor that engender such curiosity and support the drama of proof as they are impossible creatures. Since monsters are impossible and unusual beings as well as being outside of our cultural categories, they arouse a desire in us to learn and know more about them. Thus, Carroll concludes that "Monsters are, then, natural subjects for curiosity, and they straightforwardly warrant the ratiocinative energies the plot lavishes upon them” (Carroll, 1990: 182).

Despite acknowledging all narratives might include the desire to know such as the desire to know about the consequences of the interactions and events in a given plot, Carroll claims that horror fiction has, in fact, a different feature with regard to general narrative structure since what lies at the center of it is something impossible and unknowable which is contrary to our conceptual schemes. Because of this reason, the main point in a given horror story lies behind establishing whether the monster exists

and disclosing the properties of the monster. After establishing the existence of the monster, it has to be confronted by the human characters in a horror story and throughout the narrative, the question arises whether the monster can be destroyed. This process can also continue further through further discoveries which reveal whether the features of the monster can make it easier or prevent the destruction of the monster.

That being said, Carroll places emphasis on the idea that monsters are the only appropriate objects of discovery and proof because they are unknown beings but not in the sense that the murderer in a detective story is unknown since monsters are beyond the boundaries of our knowledge or in other words, they are opposite of our conceptual schemes. It seems to me that, in the case of detective stories, what Carroll tries to explain is to demonstrate the idea that the villain protagonists in detective stories are humans as opposed to monsters. That is, they do not arouse disgust and curiosity in the way monsters do because whereas monsters, for instance, can have three eyes or massive mouths which are not the features people do normally possess so that such features attract audiences' attention by raising their curiosity, the villain human characters, on the other hand, do not arouse such curiosity. Thus, even though they seem to be the same, the notion of disgust the horror genre includes creates a difference with regards to raising our curiosity. Accordingly, Carroll argues that since the nature of monsters is unknowable and it requires confirmation through discovery and proof when we apply this account to the paradox of horror, the pleasure we get in horror fiction and the reason of our interest results from the process of disclosure, proof, and confirmation.

Carroll's main point of view on the paradox of horror reflects the idea that we get pleasure in the horror genre which contains disgusting and repulsive creatures or monsters that raise distress and fear in us since they are contrary to our conceptual schemes as well as raising curiosity in terms of proving, disclosing and confirming their existence. This is Carroll's solution to the paradox of horror. At first glance, his

solution seems plausible as the plots of horror movies are in general based on supernatural creatures that have unknowable features and raise our curiosity in order to prove and disclose their existence as such. When we go back to the inconsistent triad again, we can understand the reason why his solution to the paradox seems plausible at first glance:

- (A) We do not enjoy being scared or disgusted.
- (B) Horror movies scare or/and disgust us.
- (C) We enjoy horror movies.

By considering the triad once more, it is clear that we do not like to be scared and disgusted but this is the case for real life as opposed to fiction. Thus, as irritating as being disgusted and scared in real life may be, yet, experiencing such emotions fictionally from our comfort zone through supernatural characters such as monsters, can attract our attention as we discover their existence by having a curiosity of what they look like or who they will kill in the next scene etc.

However, there appear to be some problems with his solution to the paradox. It seems to me that Carroll tries to explain the horror genre by restricting it to monsters which arouse disgust, fear, and distress in us. Other than disgusting and horrific creatures, there are different supernatural elements we can find in the horror genre. For example, in the case of gothic literature such as *Mysteries of Udolpho* written by Ann Radcliffe (2001), we do not experience the same feeling that we experience in the horror fiction which applies to Carroll's account. In this novel, there are several incidents of physical and psychological terror which illustrate crumbling castles, supernatural events as well as a scheming cruel man and an unfortunate female protagonist. Even though this novel includes supernatural events taking place in a castle, the theme of the story, I think, is mainly about a love story between Emily and Valancourt and her misfortune after the death of her father that causes Emily to end up being exposed to her aunt and her aunt's cruelty accordingly. This is why I think that the unfortunate events result from the relationship between people also have an effect on the audience by raising their interests and getting pleasure in them.

Movies like *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960), on the other hand, despite not consisting of horrific and disgusting monsters, still arouse curiosity in us by making us think of what will happen in the next scene and making us feel fear and distress that result from the wickedness of the human characters. For example, Norman Bates and his obsession with his mother leads him to do terrible things by killing women at his motel that terrifies the audience by raising their curiosity as well. Another example that can be given as an objection to Carroll's account of paradox is *Scream* movie series (Craven, Konrad & Woods, 1996). The plot of the movie is based on a serial killer who murders his victims viciously might create fear and disgust in the audience but still, the main evil character is not a monster but a person. When we look at the gothic novel *The Haunting of Hill House* (Jackson, 1959), it is not the case that we feel only scared and disgusted by the evil supernatural characters and incidents but also do we feel upset about the characters' unfortunate family issues they have to deal with. For example, in the novel, when we take a look at one of the female protagonist Eleanor Vance's real life, she spends most of her life painfully by taking care of her disabled mother until she decides to move to a haunted house with a couple of other people. Even though Eleanor and other characters have to go through series of supernatural experiences as well as encountering supernatural characters, yet, there are other instances describing characters' own lives which are the indication of their family problems.

In this sense, I think that Carroll's solution to the paradox of horror is not sufficient to solve the paradox because his point of view on horror art ignores other elements that can take place in horror narratives, such as evil characters who are people other than monsters or tragic events that are found in gothic literature despite including supernatural and horrific incidents, etc., and revolves around only monsters and the notion of disgust. Since my opinion on Carroll's solution is negative by claiming that his solution only focuses on disgusting and repulsive creatures or monsters and there are different elements we can find in horror genre, I will now move on to the criticism

of Berys Gaut to Carroll's solution to the paradox of horror. I will then present the discussion of Gaut on the paradox of horror which explains the absence of the paradox through the evaluative theory. I will then show how his solution does not work either in the last part where I will be addressing the outline of a solution.

## 2.2 Berys Gaut's Criticism of Carroll's Solution to The Paradox and His Solution to The Paradox of Horror

### 2.2.1 Berys Gaut's Criticism of Carroll's Solution to The Paradox

Before pointing out his own interpretation of why there is nothing paradoxical about getting pleasure in the horror genre, Gaut (1993), in his article "The Paradox of Horror", objects to Noël Carroll's solution to the paradox of horror by claiming it unsatisfactory. Gaut thinks that Carroll's understanding of the horror genre is restricted to presence in the story of monsters which are not believed to exist according to the view of contemporary science.

Gaut goes on explaining the reason why he thinks Carroll's solution to the paradox is unsatisfactory in a way that there are different type of horror movies which constitute popular sub-genre of horror movies, namely, *Slasher* type of horror movies which include psychopathic serial killers. Gaut argues that, as opposed to monsters, psychopaths are "instances of an all-too-real phenomenon" (Gaut, 1993: 334). Carroll's reply to this objection, however, indicates the idea that there are some psychopaths who are represented in the movies as monsters having supernatural powers. If those characters are similar to monsters as well, then fictions involving such features are considered "borderline cases of horror" but if the situation is otherwise then we should consider fictions as "tales of terror" (Gaut, 1993: 334). However, Gaut objects to Carroll's point of view by arguing that, if we take the latter consideration into account, then we are in a position to turn the paradox of horror into the paradox of tales of terror but in this case, Carroll's solution on monsters do not work. For the former explanation, Gaut argues in the following way:

On the other hand, to treat certain clearly human psychopaths as akin to monsters depends on a metaphorical extension of the term 'monster', and to talk of psychopaths as categorical violations extends the notion of a categorical violation of to the point where beings simply with unexpected or unusual traits will be counted as categorical violations: yet we clearly need not feel disgust at the unusual. (Gaut, 1993: 334)

Thus, Gaut concludes that Carroll's argument on monsters hides the point that it is possible for us to be both disgusted and terrified by the human characters because of their evil actions but there is no need to mention of monsters and their categorical violations to explain our reactions to them.

According to Gaut, the main problem with Carroll's solution is that monsters and plots are so stereotypical that it is not, in fact, possible for them to raise curiosity in spectators successfully which helps them handle with the disadvantages producing negative emotions in spectators. The reason why I think Gaut thinks in this way is that because movies involving monsters, in general, include innocent human characters who try to stay alive in the face of monsters' wicked actions, it is possible for audiences to predict what will happen in the next scene easily depending on their previous experiences with horror movies. This is, in fact, the case when we think about movies revolve around some innocent group of friends who start to die one by one until the main character in the group is left alone at the end of the movie.

The final point Gaut makes on Carroll's solution to the paradox of horror is about an example of an unsatisfied spectator called Norman who finds a particular horror movie not scary at all. Gaut notes that Carroll would interpret Norman's complaint about the movie as follows: Norman's curiosity for the movie was quite interesting but the problem is he was not frightened at all. Thus, he concludes that we are back to deal with the paradox again. That is, we like to experience negative emotions.

According to Gaut's criticism of Carroll's solution to the paradox of horror, he also thinks that his solution to the paradox restricts horror genre only to monsters despite the fact that there are other horror movies whose themes are other than monsters such as gothic literature or movies like *Psycho* and *Slasher*. In addition, plots of horror movies became so stereotypical that it is not easy for spectators to find anything different that will raise their curiosity. Even if a horror movie raises curiosity in spectators, they might not feel scared as in the example of Norman which shows the idea that we like to experience negative emotions. Thus, as Gaut notes earlier, we are back to deal with the paradox and in the next part I will show how he supports that there is, in fact, no paradox at all.

### 2.2.2 Berys Gaut's Solution to The Paradox of Horror

Having objected to Carroll's solution to the paradox and noting that we end up dealing with the paradox again, Gaut illustrates his own solution by appealing to the idea that negative emotions produced in us should be considered in respect of the evaluations they are embedded in. That is, when we fear something, it is because we evaluate that thing as threatening or when we are angry at someone about something, it is because we evaluate that person's actions as inappropriate. According to Gaut, apart from the notion of evaluations, what type of factors has to be included for an emotion to appear is disputable but the subject requires to be an abnormal psychological state resulted from evaluations.

Gaut then proposes that if we can individuate the emotions according to these evaluations, then it would be plausible to state that the difference between negative and positive emotions has to depend on the difference between the thoughts aroused by our evaluations. So, the difference between positive and negative emotions depends on the fact that our evaluations united with the former are positive and those in the latter are negative. Namely, Gaut claims that it is neither the painfulness of our emotional response nor the object make negative emotions negative. Here, what Gaut

means by the painfulness of the emotional response is the feeling or the experience of sorrow itself as Hume notes whereas the objects that are thought to make negative emotions negative are the things we feel sorrowful about such as loss of a friend as Walton supports (as cited in Gaut, 1993).

Instead, for Gaut, it is the negative evaluations or concepts: "the disgusting, the wrongful, the shameful, etc.", that occurred by directing these emotions to the object (Gaut, 1993: 341). Also, by appealing to the idea of the possibility of devaluing something without necessarily finding unpleasant, he acknowledges that it is possible for us to find negative emotions and their objects pleasant. Thus, Gaut claims that by following the evaluative theory of emotions, we can conclude that there is nothing paradoxical about enjoying negative emotions because the only requirement of this theory is to devalue the objects of those negative emotions without necessarily finding these objects unpleasant. So, according to Gaut's account, we can, in fact, solve the paradox of horror and the paradox of tragedy in this way. Since, as Gaut notes it is only the requirement that one can devalue the object of such negative emotions without necessarily finding them unpleasant, people can enjoy watching a horror movie even though the objects of horror movies have disturbing features that cause people to devalue those objects.

However, one might still object to the idea that it is possible for us not to value something without finding it unpleasant by claiming that "necessarily *typically*, if someone desires something, then the idea of achieving it gives her pleasure" (Gaut, 1993: 342). Gaut here talks about the "conceptual connection between evaluation and pleasure" (Gaut, 1993: 342). That is, necessarily typically if a person has full knowledge about a state of affairs and evaluates it positively, then she will be pleased by achieving it and she will find it pleasant.

On the contrary, necessarily typically if a person evaluates the circumstances negatively and has full knowledge about it too, then she will find it unpleasant. For example, if

someone evaluates something as threatening and has full knowledge about the circumstances then she would not want to be in that situation by finding that situation or the object of that situation unpleasant or if she evaluates the situation of traveling abroad positively then the idea of succeeding that object gives her pleasure so she finds it pleasant accordingly.

The idea here is that there is a conceptual constraint created by evaluation of emotions on whether we can enjoy situations which are in fact object of our emotions. In addition, Gaut notes that, since the notion of pleasant is dispositional, it follows that, if an object is unpleasant then the experiencing that object is unpleasant as well. So, when we apply this to negative emotions, according to the evaluative theory of emotions, informed subjects will typically experience the objects causing their emotions and these emotions are considered to be unpleasant consequently.

Yet Gaut asks the question "But have we not reproduced the paradox of horror, by showing that one cannot feel fear, and hence evaluate something as threatening, without experiencing the emotion as unpleasant?" (Gaut, 1993: 343). However, for Gaut, this is, in fact, not the case as it is significant for the conceptual connections that are the form of necessarily *typically*. Thus, it is simply the case that there are numerous atypical situations creating negative emotions which are enjoyed by atypical people. So, a person watching a horror movie is fully aware that what she is watching is an entire fiction and all the actors in the movie are not really in danger. However, in order for this situation to be possible, there should be a situation in which people do not, in general, enjoy negative emotions. Thus, there should be a background and understanding of the notion of typical unpleasant responses in order for these emotions to be considered as negative.

Both Carroll and Gaut have different solutions to the paradox of horror. Whereas Carroll explains the solution by focusing on the narrative structure in which monsters are depicted and focusing on monsters which are contrary to our conceptual schemes

including proving, discovering and disclosing by raising curiosity in us, Gaut explains the solution to the paradox by focusing on the cognitive aspects of enjoying negative emotions. That is, we fear something because we evaluate the object of our fear as threatening and since, for Gaut, there is a conceptual constraint that people do not typically enjoy negative emotions, this situation makes it possible for some people to enjoy them.

Also, while it is not necessarily true that if one fears, she does not enjoy her experience, it is, in fact, necessarily true that other people from her community will typically fear. Gaut concludes that since why some people enjoy horror movies while others don't or why some horror movies are found to be interesting while others aren't is a complex issue. However, he notes that this is the subject that both psychological and empirical investigation has to deal with instead of trying to explain why this is the case through armchair speculation as it would be unproductive. Since he argues that "there is no a priori conceptual problem about the enjoyment of negative emotions in real life or in fiction" (Gaut, 1993: 344), he concludes that there is actually no paradox of horror.

### 2.3 Outline of a Solution

My approach to solving the paradox differs from both Carroll's and Gaut's. As Gaut notes, Carroll's solution involves an understanding of the horror genre that is restricted to monsters defined as disgusting and repulsive. Carroll's limiting of the horror genre to monsters is inaccurate as there are many other elements we can find in the genre which are not monsters, as for instance in movies such as *Psycho*, *Scream* or gothic literature such as *The Haunting of Hill House* which involve misfortunes of the characters as well as involving supernatural incidents and creatures. Gaut's own solution, on the other hand, seems to be produced for the sake of reaching simplicity which I think is not sufficient to solve the paradox because he does not pay sufficient attention to the complexity of our emotional response to the horror genre. This is why it seems to me that a rich account of the aesthetic enjoyment of horror must take into account the development of human emotions. In the case of Gaut's explanation on

atypical people, he seems to think that those who enjoy horror are atypical. At this point, he may be right but in the case of tragedy the appeal of tragedy is more widespread as opposed to the horror genre. So how does he account for that? In order to explain the possible solutions, I propose to come back to the inconsistent triad and show what is actually implied by each statement.

(A) We do not enjoy being scared and disgusted.

(A') Although we do not enjoy being scared or disgusted, we enjoy feeling strong emotions and fear and disgust are strong emotions because they are exhilarating by engaging us at our very core. There are positive strong emotions as well as negative ones but it is hard to enjoy such emotions because the plots of movies involving peaceful events and ending up with the same happy endings would be found as boring by the audience. Sophie de Grouchy (2019), for example, explains that it is, in fact, harder to elicit strong positive emotions artificially than negative ones because people have the need to be moved by what excites and moves them even though the causes and effects of suffering are greater than the causes of pleasure. Thus, it is not, in fact, the case to expect and find as many pleasing sensations in pleasure as we do in painful ones.

(B) Horror movies scare or/and disgust us.

(B') It is indeed the case that we are scared and disgusted by horror movies. Despite this being the case, we enjoy experiencing such negative emotions because horror movies provide us with a safe environment. Even though we try to avoid situations that make us go through negative experiences in real life, having an unusual curiosity from our comfort zone, we can at least artificially experience what the reaction of characters will be or what type of incidents will occur to them.

(C) We enjoy horror movies.

(C') We enjoy horror movies because they enable us to experience strong negative emotions, that are found difficult to be experienced as well as avoided in real life, by providing us with a safe environment.

By considering the triad and the implication of its statements, we can argue that our enjoyment of the horror genre is in fact all about having a safe place to enjoy strong emotions. Since fear and disgust are in general avoided in real life and they are in fact not appealed by people, the horror genre provides a safe environment to experience such emotions. This situation actually plays a role in our emotional development as well. That is, the notion of sympathy, for instance, we have for other people by nature can be shaped and developed as we watch horror movies and tragedies as Sophie de Grouchy notes.

By following the notion of sympathy and its development by watching tragedies and horror movies, we can talk about 18<sup>th</sup>- century philosophers', such as Hume's (1982), Smith 's (2017), and Grouchy's (2019), accounts of sympathy and the paradox of tragedy. This is why I will turn to their account in the next chapter by focusing on how the horror genre has an effect on the notion of sympathy and its development. In order to apply this to the paradox of horror, I will show how these philosophers use an account of sympathy to explain the paradox of tragedy. After establishing whether sympathy can help us solve the paradox of tragedy, I will apply sympathy to solve the paradox of horror by drawing on Mary Shelley's (2013) *Frankenstein* as an example in the final chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### HOW CAN DAVID HUME, ADAM SMITH AND SOPHIE DE GROUCHY ILLUMINATE THE PARADOX OF TRAGEDY THROUGH THEIR ACCOUNT OF SYMPATHY?

In this chapter, in order to argue that there is nothing paradoxical about our enjoyment of tragedy, I will look at the notion of sympathy developed in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century.

Despite being a better fit for an account of why we enjoy tragedy, the same account of sympathy applies to horror as well, as I argued in chapter 2.

In the first chapter, I analysed the paradox of horror as a variation of the paradox of tragedy that was put forward by David Hume (1982). I showed that the paradox was best understood as an inconsistent triad. I then argued that solutions of Carroll (1990) and Gaut (1993) rely on an overly simplified account of why we enjoy horror.

After rejecting Carroll's and Gaut's solution to the paradox of horror, I proposed a different solution which is premised on the idea that a rich account of our aesthetic enjoyment of horror-art must take into account the development of human emotions. I suggest we explore this solution by looking at 18<sup>th</sup>-century philosophers' account of sympathy on the paradox of tragedy in order to find a better, more complex and more accurate account of why we enjoy horror art as well as showing why there is, in fact, no paradox there at all.

In this chapter, I will explain the reason why we should focus on 18<sup>th</sup>- century philosophers, David Hume's (1982), Adam Smith's (2017), and Sophie de Grouchy's (2019), arguments on the notion of sympathy and its development as well as its

relation to the arousal of strong feelings in relation to tragedies. Central to their position is the claim that tragedy is a cure for boredom which is a painful state leading us to inaction and to being stuck with our own thought. But they also argue that watching and reading tragedies can, in fact, help us develop our capacity for sympathy as well as there is nothing wrong with seeking for the enjoyment we can get from tragedies, I will show the arguments of David Hume in *Of Tragedy*, and Sophie de Grouchy *Letters on Sympathy*. In addition, in order to show and understand clearly that tragedy leads us to feel compassion and sympathy for others by arising strong feelings in us which result from being exposed to the sight of their moral and physical pains, I will use arguments of David Hume in *Of Tragedy*, Sophie de Grouchy in *Letters on Sympathy* and Adam Smith in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

Hume's account of the relation between sympathy and the paradox of tragedy centers on the idea that when people feel sad reading a poem, their tears show their sorrow and help them relieve it through sympathy and compassion. Smith, on the other hand, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he explains that our sympathy (fellow feeling) for others' misfortunes arises from changing our positions with the sufferer using our imagination so as to understand what he or she feels or even to feel what he or she really feels. So in a tragedy, we imagine ourselves in the place of the tragic hero or heroine. According to Smith, no matter how selfish they may be people are inclined to be interested in others' welfare and happiness by nature even though they do not get anything in return but the pleasure of seeing their happiness. This is the emotion we feel for the miseries for other people when we are made to think about it more vividly that is involved in pity and compassion.

Smith emphasizes that our sympathy towards others is not restricted to only pain and sorrow. That is, when one has any kind of passion about any object, having a thought of the same situation might occur to them creates an akin emotion in every attentive spectator. This is why, as well as our grief for the misfortunes of heroes in tragedies, our joy for their deliverance, is also sincere. He explains this in the following way:

“We enter into their gratitude towards the faithful friends who stayed with them in their difficulties; and we heartily go along with their resentment against the perfidious traitors who injured, abandoned, or deceived them” (Smith, 2017: 2). Smith also touches upon the sincerity of our sympathy with deep distress by noting that it is so strong that we even shed tears by being exposed to the representation of a tragedy on the stage.

Sympathy is defined by Sophie de Grouchy in *Letters on Sympathy*, as a disposition we have to feel similar feelings to others. She explains that sympathy is derived from physical first then moral pain. According to her account, in the case of moral suffering and our sympathy towards it, this process results from the ideas we have through our memories or the knowledge we have with the sight of another person’s suffering. Sympathy we have for physical pains results from a sensation we get by physical pain. This sensation we get because of physical pain is a composite one so that it can be renewed when we bring the idea of pain to our minds as well.

Accordingly, the impression we get by the sight of physical pain is renewed easily once we witness others’ sufferings we have experienced before because of the arousal of our memories and the object of their pain in us. Thus, the concept of pain and the distress that is accompanied by it have an impact on people by virtue of becoming compassionate and humane. In accordance with this idea, the point of tragedy mainly, for Grouchy, is to make our sympathy towards other people’s misfortunes pleasant by developing our sensibility.

In order to show that the paradox of tragedy is not, after all, paradoxical because sympathy and its relation to the paradox of tragedy help us understand the complexity of the phenomenon, or in other words our enjoyment of tragedy, I will examine Hume's, Smith's and Grouchy's account of sympathy and its relation to the paradox of tragedy by addressing them under three headings. These are tragedy as a remedy for boredom, the relationship between sympathy and the arousal of strong feelings and

tragedy as a tool to help develop sympathy. By doing so, as I stated earlier, my aim will be to demonstrate the idea that there is nothing paradoxical about getting pleasure in tragedy and these 18<sup>th</sup>-century philosophers' discussions on the account of sympathy can be applied to the contemporary version of the paradox of tragedy as well, that is, the paradox of horror.

### 3.1 Tragedy As a Remedy For Boredom

In this section, my aim is to show that watching or reading tragedies can, in fact, be thought as a remedy for boredom by engaging with Sophie de Grouchy and David Hume's analyses to the paradox of tragedy.

Having illustrated and analyzed the paradox of tragedy, David Hume remarks that the more a spectator of a tragedy is moved and affected, the more he gets pleasure from that tragedy. The art of the poet of a tragedy lies in arousing compassion, indignation, anxiety, and resentment in his or her audience. Also, the pleasure spectators get from a poem is proportional because when they feel sad, they are not very happy and when they cry, they demonstrate their sorrow by relieving their heart through compassion and sympathy.

Hume offers the following account why this is the case. He cites L'abbe Dubos's writings on painting and poetry which argue that when the mind is in a state of ennui and indolence, it will seek amusement and arousal of the passions, regardless of how disordered or disagreeable they may be. A disordered passion is better than a boring languishment which results from complete tranquility (as cited in Hume, 1981).

Sophie de Grouchy, in the second letter, addresses the concept of boredom so as to explain the reasons for the paradox clearly as well. Before getting to the point, she touches upon peculiarity of the situation, as Hume does, by asking the question why despite the painful impression we have by seeing or having the idea of pain on our

organs, we enjoy recalling the pains we have both experienced and witnessed and not to feel satisfied with the emotions we get from our real-life miseries, we are willing to chase new ones that are found in the most horrible misfortunes and the most heartbreaking situations which arise from imagination? Why, she continues to ask, people who have lively souls under the impression of pain are eager to listen to others' misfortunes very closely and read novels and tragedies as if they want to consume their sensibility completely for the sake of enjoyment?

Her reply to this question is to illuminate the idea that when we stop being concerned with our physical needs, our moral needs start to torture us so we will be susceptible to boredom. She describes boredom as the cruelest sickness among others which is so unbearable that it leads us not to avoid fear for the sake of seeking for the idea of suffering. The reason why is that we generally like to be moved by what stirs us especially if this thing includes other people's sufferings or pains even though the causes of pain and suffering are a lot more than the causes of pleasure and their effects are more intense than the effects of pleasure.

Grouchy puts emphasis on a situation that the need to be moved does not only belong to people who developed their sensibilities through thought, education, and experience of passion. Instead, it can be the case for masses as well despite being almost always insensitive. Accordingly, she argues for the sake of explaining the attraction to negative and painful emotions by noting the idea that it is the attraction to such negative emotions which leads people to gather around scaffolds to witness in all tortures and horrors by making them cry together.

Hence, she addresses that the human heart is inclined to what moves and excites it. That is, it understands that alien emotions will distract it from habitual impressions which are painful and dull by preserving it from boredom so that those alien emotions will increase their strength and intensity by making it able to get new impressions and leading to enjoyment accordingly.

We now see that one reply to the paradox of tragedy is that, as Hume and Grouchy address, watching or reading tragedies that arouses negative feelings in us, in fact, is not paradoxical at all if tragedy is thought to be a remedy for boredom which is the biggest torment to people's psychological state. Instead, this situation is helpful for people to find the enjoyment they seek for by enabling them to be moved and excited when they are in a state of boredom.

### 3.2 Tragedy As a Tool for Developing Sympathy and The Relation Between Sympathy and Arousal of Strong Feelings

It is now clear that watching or reading tragedies can help us find the enjoyment we seek for the sake of avoiding the state of boredom. However, avoidance of boredom which leads spectators to get pleasure in tragedies that in fact raise negative feelings is accompanied by another instance, that is, the notion of sympathy. It is not only that when we are exposed to boredom we want to get rid of this painful situation by getting pleasure in watching tragedies, but also do we get pleasure in them by means of the notion of sympathy which helps us to fill in the gaps that boredom creates in us.

Thus, we can note that tragedy is perhaps more than curing boredom. That is, it can have an effect on people by helping them to develop their capacity for sympathy as well. This account of sympathy is well explained by Sophie de Grouchy and Adam Smith. In this part, what I will be looking at is to understand how Smith and Grouchy approach the notion of sympathy through their own account of physical and moral pain and examine how this can relate to the idea of developing our capacity for sympathy by watching tragedies. In order to demonstrate that tragedy has a function of developing our capacity for sympathy, I will mention how Grouchy, Hume and Smith's arguments reflect the relation between sympathy and arousal of strong feelings.

Sophie de Grouchy, answering the question why we are willing to recall the pains we have witnessed before and seek for the new ones by reading and watching tragedies claims that we are willing to be concerned about others' troubles and misfortunes for the sake of relieving them. However, this desire we have works irrespective of having a thought of whether we will be successful at contributing others' relief and we will have time to see that it is possible to do so. She describes this desire with an example as follows: When we witness a person who is about to drown, spectators on the shore have an immediate feeling to help by trying to reach and save him. This desire is defined by her as a "sublime movement of nature" by demonstrating the instant power of humanity in our hearts (Bergés & Schliesser, 2019: 21).

Adam Smith also talks about this natural presence of humanity in our hearts with a desire to have sympathy for others by touching upon the sympathy with bodily pain (passions arise from the body) and sympathy with passions arising from imagination. Firstly, he talks about the kind of sympathy we have with bodily pain. According to Smith, when I see someone hitting another person's arm with a truncheon, I would be immediately shaken by the sight of it by drawing back my arm and feel that hit slightly. However, according to his point of view, since the level of intensity of my pain, in this case, is really slight that it would be really difficult for me to go along with his or her situation and I would be in a position to despise the sufferer when he or she cries violently. What Smith tries to propose is the idea that this specific instance is same for all the passions originated in the body because they arise either less or no sympathy in spectators as they are not proportionate to what the sufferer is really feeling and experiencing.

On the contrary, the situation is quite different when the passions arising from imagination at issue. That is, Smith argues that in the case of sympathy with bodily pain, the state of my body is not that affected in the same level by the changes that affect the sufferer's body. However, my imagination is more flexible and can easily take shape with respect to laying out of other people's imagination with whom I have

contact. Hence, when we feel disappointment in love and ambition, our sympathy, in this case, is stronger than our sympathy for the greatest bodily pain because such passions originate from a pure imagination. That is to say, Smith concludes that “because it’s easier for our imaginations to mould themselves on his imagination than for our bodies to mould themselves on his body” (Smith, 2017: 15).

It follows that, by considering his ideas about the distinction between our sympathy with bodily pain and our sympathy for moral pains through imagination, Smith relates this to Greek tragedies in order to understand how our notion of sympathy, in this case, is shaped and how it works. He gives examples from Ancient Greek tragedies that try to arise and develop our sympathy and compassion by representing the sufferings of bodily pain. For example, *Philoctetes* by Sophocles (2003), and *Hercules* by Euripides (1985), they were represented as heroes who suffered from extreme calamities such as Philoctetes’s crying out and fainting because of his sufferings or the death of Euripides’s *Hippolytus* (2002) and *Hercules* by the violent tortures they were exposed to.

However, for Smith, our sympathy for their misfortunes does not concern about their bodily pain but instead other instances of the situation. What really affects us not the bodily pain (his sore foot) Philoctetes suffers from but instead his solitude by shaping the ravishing tragedy into "romantic wildness" which makes it agreeable to our imagination (Smith, 2017: 16). The reason why we find the misfortunes of those heroes interesting is the idea of foreseeing their death will come from them. However, the attempts that are used to arise compassion and sympathy in us by representing the bodily pain "may be regarded as among the Greek theatre's greatest failures of good manners" (Smith, 2017: 16).

Thus, according to Smith, having sympathy for others’ misfortunes through imagination rather than sympathizing with their bodily pain arises more compassion in us by making negative feelings agreeable to us as passions originate from

imagination are more flexible in terms of being able to imagine others' miseries and have sympathy for them easily while we are not so much affected by others' bodily pains because of the difference between intensity of pain that spectator and sufferer have.

David Hume, after he argues that tragedy is helpful for avoiding boredom, ties the enjoyment we get from disagreeable emotions to his account of sympathy. When spectators imagine high passions stemming from both great loss and gain, they also experience sympathy, in that they feel the same passions they observe at the same time they are performed. This results in a momentary pleasure and entertainment which offers relief for spectators because it helps them pass the time and relieve them from the oppression of their own thoughts and worries.

In contrast to Smith's proposal, Sophie de Grouchy argues that we have sympathy towards both physical pains and pleasures depending on our understanding of their intensities and consequences related to the experiences we have gained. And in the same way, we generally have more sympathy towards moral pains and pleasures that we are likely to experience. However, she claims the idea that the sympathy we have for physical suffering is stronger and more painful compared to moral pains. Whereas Smith supports that sympathizing with other people's moral pains arises more compassion than sympathizing with bodily pains because it is easier to imagine moral pains of others, Grouchy, on the other hand, rejects it by arguing that the intensity of sympathy we have for others' physical pains is stronger.

The reason why is that, the sight of witnessing physical pains can be hurtful and distressing for even those whose education preserved them from seeing others suffering. She explains the reason why in such a way that it results from the nature of physical suffering which is extraordinary, which leads people to death and whose symptoms are explicit so that witnessing such pains can be more painful and our bodies are more likely to respond to them with sympathy.

Grouchy then reminds us Smith's contrary proposition which proposes the idea that when we imitate bodily pain, it is not called as pain that moves us but "an object of ridicule", while when we imitate moral pains, it arises more vivid impressions in us (Bergés & Schliesser, 2019: 45). In order to demonstrate the absurdity of his explanation about the distinction between sympathy we have for physical and moral pains through imagination, she asks a question in the following way: "Is it because we feel less sympathy for a man whose leg is amputated than for a man who loses his mistress that the latter but not the former is a proper object for a tragedy?" (Bergés & Schliesser, 2019: 45). She replies to her own question negatively by clarifying the idea that it would be really difficult for a necessary illusion to be created so as to stage an imitation of physical pain successfully because in order for us to be kept interested and for the sake of variety, we need an additional concept for our imagination to be accompanied by which is moral pain.

When we take a close look at Grouchy, Hume and Smith's arguments related to the paradox of tragedy- even though Smith does not address the paradox explicitly- we can see how the relation between sympathy and arousal of strong feelings works in tragedy. Negative feelings become agreeable to us by arousing sympathy for physical and moral pains through imagination, but also spectators experience negative feelings in the search for a momentary enjoyment and an escape from their own worries for a while.

However, watching or reading tragedies has a feature which is more than curing boredom but it has an effect on developing our capacity for sympathy as well. Smith supports the idea that our sympathy towards moral pain through imagination is stronger than having sympathy towards physical pain since it would be really difficult for us to imagine and feel the exact pain that the sufferer experiences, sympathy for moral pain is more likely to arise compassion in us. Sophie de Grouchy disagrees and argues that the reason tragedies privilege moral pains is that it is difficult to create a

successful imitation of physical pain on the stage so we need an additional factor- moral pain- to accompany it. Also, according to Grouchy, the main point of tragedy is, in fact, to make others' misfortunes agreeable and pleasant to us by developing our sense of sympathy.

Thus, we can see that there is nothing paradoxical about people who immerse themselves in watching which ends up arising negative feelings in them since as Smith argues, our sympathy for others' moral pain through our imagination can, in fact, make us compassionate by making negative feelings agreeable to our imagination and for Grouchy, representation of physical suffering arises sympathy which then becomes a passion to deal with by developing our sympathy and this is a situation to be in search for getting pleasure for the sake of taking a break in our own worries and relieving our hearts as Hume addresses.

In conclusion, getting pleasure from tragedies which arouse negative feelings- despite the fact that we avoid such feelings in real life- is not paradoxical. I argued that there is, in fact, nothing paradoxical about people's willingness to read and watch tragedies and getting pleasure in them even though the feelings they produce are negative. In order to defend my conclusion, I offered analyses of David Hume, Adam Smith and Sophie de Grouchy's accounts of sympathy and its application to the so-called paradox of tragedy. I showed how according to them tragedy is a remedy for boredom, a tool for developing sympathy and a method of arousal of strong feelings.

Getting pleasure in watching and reading tragedies is a cure for boredom because being in a state of boredom is so painful that we want to escape from this situation by reading and watching tragedies which are accompanied by the notion of sympathy that can help fill in the gaps resulting from boredom. This capacity of sympathy we have can be shaped and developed with the sight of others' moral and physical pains which arise high feelings in us through imagination. Thus, I claim that these 18<sup>th</sup>-

century philosophers' account of sympathy can be applied to the paradox of horror as well since the paradox of horror is a contemporary version of the paradox of tragedy.

## CHAPTER 4

### HOW DOES FRANKENSTEIN'S CREATURE HAVE A RELATION WITH THE PASSION OF SYMPATHY

In the last chapter, I will conclude by arguing that there is, in fact, nothing wrong with getting pleasure in the horror genre as it has an impact on human emotional development as well as providing us with a safe environment by helping us experience negative emotions artificially. What I mean by human emotional development is the nurturing of the sympathy we naturally have for each other. My first step towards this conclusion was a discussion, in chapter 1, of Noël Carroll and Berys Gaut's solutions to the paradox of horror. I argued that neither of them offers a satisfactory solution to the question of why we enjoy the horror genre. Carroll's solution is only restricted to disgusting and repulsive monsters that are contrary to our conceptual schemes which leaves out many forms of horror such as Slasher type of horror movies or gothic horror. Gaut's proposal to the paradox seemed too simple to explain the real reason why we enjoy the horror genre. His claim focuses on the idea that it is possible for atypical people to enjoy negative emotions in atypical emotions if and only if there is an understanding that gives rise to the idea of most people typically do not enjoy negative emotions. But there seems to be something more universal about the appeal of horror, and of tragedy.

In order to avoid this simplicity as well as thinking that the horror genre is not all about disgusting monsters or disclosure, I argued that if we need a rich account of our aesthetic enjoyment of the horror genre, we must take human emotional development into account. This is why I focused on 18<sup>th</sup>-century philosophers' account on sympathy with regards to the paradox of tragedy. As I stated earlier in the first

chapter, since the paradox of horror is a contemporary version of the paradox of tragedy and we can find various examples about the horror genre helping us develop and train our capacity for sympathy other than disgusting and repulsive monsters and the notion of curiosity, in this chapter, my aim will be to apply this to Mary Shelley's (2013) novel *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus*.

Like the examples I gave earlier from neo-gothic and American gothic literature, such as *The Haunting of Hill House*, other than supernatural and horrific incidents that in general elicit emotions by making the audience feel either horrified or disgusted, we can also witness the range of emotional reactions prompted by the complex relationship between characters and their psychological situations. This situation can, in fact, give rise to the occurrence of sympathy in the audience by leading them to feel sad or angry about the characters' problematic family situations. This is a valuable experience which allows us to become more familiar with the workings of our sympathy and to help develop our propensity to experience it for those who need it.

In the same vein, when we consider Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus*, apart from being horrified and disgusted, we feel sad for the incidents that the creature goes through. In particular, since the incidents that Frankenstein's creature goes through are overly upsetting that it is not so difficult to understand the definition of a monster does not need to be restricted to features of being only disgusting or repulsive unlike Carroll asserts. This is why, as terrifying and disgusting as the creature is defined by its creator Dr. Frankenstein, as the book continues to proceed, we can, in fact, feel and understand the miseries that the creature has to deal with.

In this chapter, I will show that there is nothing paradoxical and nothing wrong about enjoying the horror genre as it has an impact on the development of sympathy by using the gothic novel *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* written by Mary Shelley. By doing so, I will first talk about the content of the book. Then I will show

that although Dr. Frankenstein's creature is represented as scary and disgusting, I will support the idea that there are other aspects of the way he is represented such as his isolation from the society, his loneliness, being treated as an outcast, etc. I will use this part of my argument on Eileen Hunt Botting's book (2018) *Mary Shelley and the Rights of the Child: Political Philosophy in Frankenstein*. In the first part of this chapter, I will give an overview of the content of Mary Shelley's book *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus*. In the second part, I will turn to the discussion that will be focusing on the sympathy that the miseries of Dr. Victor Frankenstein's creature raises in the audience despite being represented as a horrific and disgusting monster.

#### 4.1 An Overview of Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus

In this section, I will distinguish the elements of horror and disgust from those of sympathy in the narrative. This will enable me to argue that the horror genre is at least capable of eliciting sympathy in a pedagogically useful way and in a manner that cannot necessarily be distinguished from the fear and disgust also aroused. In order to do that, I will present the summary of the book as the narrative reflects the philosophical argument I want to make as well as the structure of the book is instrumental in producing sympathy. My aim of doing so is to show the idea that even though having an interest in the horror genre either by watching movies or reading books is thought to be paradoxical, I will show the wrongness of this perspective by arguing that the horror genre might have a positive impact on human emotional development with regards to the notion of sympathy.

*Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* is a novel that has three narrative parts. These parts revolve around Captain Robert Walton, Dr. Victor Frankenstein, and Dr. Frankenstein's creature. Although my main argument on sympathy focuses on the narratives of Dr. Frankenstein and his creature, in order to give a clear understanding of why our sympathy shifts from Frankenstein to his creature, as his creation is not a normal human being but rather represented as scary and disgusting, I will briefly

present Captain Robert Walton's narrative as well. I will explain in detail the reason why our sympathy would shift from a normal human being to a monstrous creature in the second section of this chapter where I will also be talking about the difference between Frankenstein's monster and the general representation of monsters in the horror genre with regards to elicitation of sympathy in the audience.

#### 4.1.1 Robert Walton's Narrative

Walton's narrative is worth presenting because we need to understand first how the passion of sympathy the audience would feel for Dr. Frankenstein in the first place as he is found in a really bad condition near the ship on which Walton and his crew are traveling. When we take a close look at the novel, it starts with Robert Walton's letters to his sister Mrs. Margaret Saville. In the fourth letter, there is an accident results from ice surrounding of all the sides of their ship (Walton and his crew). Walton describes their situation really dangerous as they cannot see anything because of the thickness of the fog. After a couple of hours, he realizes that some people on the ship start groaning as they see something strange to their eyes because according to Walton's description what they see is a human-shaped giant sitting on the sledge and leading the dogs . After watching this strange giant creature's disappearance with their telescope, in the morning, Walton finds sailors on the ship talking to a stranger (Dr. Frankenstein) who is actually a human being, unlike the other stranger they saw before. Like the other stranger, he is traveling with a sledge and frozen to death so he is rescued by the sailors. In the meantime, Walton and other sailors give him a special cabin so he can rest and recover. After a period of time, when Dr. Frankenstein finally feels better he tells Walton that he is after that giant creature that they saw before and he starts to tell the reason why starting from his own story.

#### 4.1.2 Dr. Victor Frankenstein's Narrative

I will present Dr. Victor Frankenstein's narrative in order to understand the concepts that are worth exploring such as disgust and fear in terms of the way his creature is

represented as well as the passion of sympathy raised by unfair incidents happening to human characters (Justine Moritz and William).

When Dr. Frankenstein finally succeeds to create his inanimate creature, he realizes that he actually created something that has yellow eyes, shining black hair and black lips. He is really disappointed in what he has created because he does not expect such a creature which is really taller than any normal human being and by looking at the creature's extraordinary features Frankenstein is really disgusted by what he has brought in to the world. Consequently, Frankenstein decides to run away from the creature. This part where Frankenstein is disgusted and horrified by the creature that leads him to run away illustrates how it fits in the argument on monsters that Carroll supports. Later on, through his father's letter, Frankenstein learns that his brother William is murdered. Justine Moritz, on the other hand, who is adopted by Dr. Frankenstein's parents and then becomes William's nanny is held responsible for William's murder as they found his mother's picture in her pocket and she is condemned to death later on. Before the creature starts to tell his own story, the passion of sympathy we would feel is in fact for the human characters as they are exposed to unfair deaths and judgments because of what Frankenstein did to his creature and most importantly the reason why we would feel sympathy for them in the first place is that they are from our kind as opposed to the creature.

#### 4.1.3 The Creature's Narrative

I will present the creature's narrative in order to understand better how the sympathy we feel shifts from the human characters to the creature. I will explain the reason why this is the case in the second section.

After his owner's abandonment, he is left all alone and tries to survive on his own. Being frightened, he explores the environment by discovering new tools in order not to get cold and starve. However, as the villagers are frightened by his appearance,

while some of them flee from him, others attack him with stones and many other weapons. After the family he had been spying on shows the same violent behavior to him just like the other villagers, he asks a favor from his creator, Frankenstein, when they finally meet. That is, he asks Frankenstein to create a female company just like him but when Frankenstein does not keep his promise, the creature starts to kill Frankenstein's loved ones (his brother William, his best friend Henry Clerval and his fiancée Elizabeth Lavenza).

#### 4.2 The Relationship Between Sympathy and Frankenstein's Creature

In the first section, before understanding clearly how Frankenstein's creature raises sympathy in the audience apart from raising fear, terror, and disgust, I mentioned about the content of the book by addressing the characters' narratives and the incidents happening to them. What I will be doing next is to analyze the parts of the book where we can feel sympathy by feeling upset about the events that the creature has to go through-i.e. being outcasted and alienated, being treated badly by people, feeling alone and unhappy etc.- even though we may feel terrified by the murders and be curious about what the next move of the creature will be. In order to achieve this, my primary goal is first to show how Frankenstein's creature is different from the general understanding of a monster in the horror genre by using Eileen Hunt Botting's book (2018) *Mary Shelley and the Rights of the Child: Political Philosophy in Frankenstein*. I will also point out the reason why our sympathy for the creature outweighs the sympathy we have for the human characters, especially for Frankenstein, as well as pointing out the reason why our disgust turns from the monster's appearance to the monstrous treatment he receives from Frankenstein and the villagers.

##### 4.2.1 An Overview of the Difference Between Frankenstein's Monster and the General Understanding of Monsters in the Horror Genre

In this section, I will briefly talk about the difference in the general profile of monsters in horror movies and the monster in Frankenstein. As we have seen before, Noël Carroll connects the idea of enjoying horror movies to the notion of monsters that are disgusting and have unknowable features. It is indeed the case that when we look at the examples of a monster in movies, it is unavoidable not to reject his claim to some degree. For example, according to Botting, when she talks about the movies she watched in her childhood, she describes Dracula as the most horrifying monster- despite being a human before- as he was doing inhumane things to his victims who were in general women. On the contrary, in the case of werewolves, she notes that they are scary as well but not in the sense of Dracula example. The reason why is that, an innocent person can become one by chance after bitten by a werewolf at night and during full-moon, they are transformed into werewolves and become evil and bloody monsters that are acting with their instincts. Thus, she describes the difference with respect to being scary by stating that “ Dracula was scary for his intentions, but the Wolf Man was frightening for his lack of them” (Botting, 2018: 8).

While the representation of a monster in the horror genre is in general like this, when we think about Frankenstein’s monster or creature, both in the movie and in the book, we do not seem to feel the same terror and disgust as we do for such typical examples. What we do feel for the monster is rather sympathy and sorrow. Botting thinks in the same way because she argues that Frankenstein’s creature is like an orphan child who is abandoned by Frankenstein, who is considered by Botting to be his father, and tries to survive on his own even though the creature’s some of the parts are made of human parts whereas animal corpses constitute other parts of it. This feature of Frankenstein’s creature, despite being scary and represented as disgusting and repulsive, raises passions of sympathy and sadness in the audience. Monsters in the horror genre are in general represented as scary and repulsive. They are beyond our boundaries of knowledge that their features are unknowable so they are contrary to our conceptual schemes. Dracula, werewolves, Godzilla, etc., are some of the examples that can be given to Carroll's this solution to the paradox of horror.

When we consider Frankenstein's creature, it also suits Carroll's understanding of a monster as it is disgusting and scary that kills innocent people in the novel as well. However, we can find different elements in the novel that make us feel beyond scared and disgusted. The unfortunate events that the creature has to deal with make us upset and sympathized with the creature. One of the reasons might be that, as the horror genre is very diverse, there are some authors who attempt to rehabilitate monsters. That is, they write the story from their own perspective so that they can elicit sympathy in the audience.

As I mentioned earlier, however, our sympathy for the human characters, particularly Frankenstein, shifts towards the Frankenstein's creature as well as our disgust turns from the creature to monstrous treatment of the villagers. Thus, another reason might be to take a close look at Sophie de Grouchy's understanding of sympathy once more as I will develop my argument on the notion of sympathy we have for the monster by focusing on her description of sympathy we have for other people. In *Letters on Sympathy*, Sophie de Grouchy, in the first letter, describes the first causes of sympathy by illuminating the idea that they come from the sensations produced by both pain and pleasure and since the physical suffering is the common type of suffering among people, as sensible beings, we are inclined to show sympathy for physical suffering in the first place. According to Grouchy, this sympathy we have for others' physical sufferings constitutes the part of humanity and it extends to moral pain of other people with respect to our dependence on them such as our well-being and life comforts. Accordingly, visiting other people with her mother by witnessing their suffering constituted a significant part of her moral education. Grouchy explains her gratitude for her mother as follows:

I owe you my lifelong gratitude for every time I do good, and every time I feel the happy inspiration and sweet joy of doing so. Yes, seeing your hands relieve both misery and illness, and the suffering eyes of the unfortunate turning to you, softening as they blessed you, I felt my heart become whole,

and the true good of social life was made clear to me, and appeared to me in the happiness of loving and serving humanity. (Bergés & Schliesser, 2019: 5)

In addition to this, according to Grouchy, in the case of tragedy, the point of tragedy is mainly to make other people's miseries pleasant to us by stimulating our capacity for sympathy and sensibility and not by immediately confronting us with a tragic sight of physical pain. She describes this tragic sight in such a way that if it really affects us, we will not be able to stop thinking about it but if it does not, then it will be thought as ridiculous. Yet, Grouchy puts emphasis on the idea that as spectators, we all know that a real tragedy is, in fact, the representation of physical suffering and this tragedy is sought for with "a dumb curiosity" but still it arouses a sympathetic feeling which can then become a passion to contend with (Bergés & Schliesser, 2019: 45-6).

By considering Grouchy's arguments on sympathy, I will now move on to the last section and analyze some parts of the book where we can find incidents that make us feel sympathy and sorrow for the creature.

#### 4.2.2 How Does Frankenstein's Creature Raise Sympathy in the Audience?

Unlike the general representation of other monsters in horror movies, in this section, I will focus on how the monster in Frankenstein raises the passion of sympathy in the audience. Keeping the notion of sympathy proposed by Sophie de Grouchy in mind, I will develop my argument around how the audience's sympathy for the human characters, such as Dr. Frankenstein, shifts towards the creature as well as changing our disgust from Frankenstein's creature to monstrous treatment of the human characters.

When we first look at the first time Victor Frankenstein sees his creature waking up, it raises a great deal of disgust in his creator as in the case of other monsters. He describes the appearance of the creature that makes him feel disgusted and terrified in the following way:

His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips. (Shelley, 2013: 58)

By considering the way Frankenstein pictures the creature, we can, in fact, feel terrified and disgusted in the first place as we might be worried about what kind of terrifying incidents the creature might be capable of by Frankenstein's description. He even continues to explain his regret by emphasizing on how much he worked on his creation by depriving himself of his own health and rest. Here, as I stated earlier, we are in a position to feel sympathy and sadness for Frankenstein but we will see that this situation is going to become reversed later on. His narration continues to explain how scary and inhumane his creature is by describing that "He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks" (Shelley, 2013: 59).

At first, Frankenstein's first meeting with his creature gives a general understanding of a scary and disgusting profile of a monster to the audience. However, when the story goes on, it is understood that the situation is in fact quite different. This difference becomes apparent when Frankenstein runs away from the creature and leaves him all alone being frightened and repulsed by his own work. He wants to bring an inanimate being into the world by using both animal corpses and human parts and when the situation did not turn out what he expected to be, he finds the freedom to leave his own creation alone just like this as his nature and appearance are quite different from humans. Even though, we do not know anything about the creature's murders yet, this abandonment of Frankenstein's creature can make one feel that this situation is unfair to the creature as he did not have a chance to come into this life in the first place.

As the book goes on, yet, we witness terrible incidents that we can expect from a monster. There are a couple of murders that the creature is responsible for, namely, the murders of William, Henry, and Elizabeth. In this sense, it is possible for the audience to feel terrified and curious about what the creature's other move will be. However, when we bear miseries of the creatures in mind, we can, in fact, understand and feel him in terms of why he had to choose to murder his creator's loved ones. The passion of sympathy we feel for the creature raises more as we read its story in detail. By means of our faculty of imagination, we would put ourselves in the creature's shoes naturally as the sensation of his moral pain could preclude his murders despite not being a human.

When he is left alone by Frankenstein, he has to survive on his own being completely stranger to the outer world. Being frightened, since he is stranger to everything, he has to explore the environment on his own in order to stay alive such as discovering fire by collecting wood or collecting berries not to starve, etc. While trying to survive, however, because of his appearance and not being able to communicate with people, he is attacked and tortured by the villagers around with weapons, stones and many other different things. He is really in a desperate and miserable situation that when he finally finds a safe place to stay he says "Here then I retreated, and lay down happy to have found a shelter, however, miserable, from the inclemency of the season, and still move from the barbarity of man" (Shelley, 2013: 109). He is tortured to death and rejected by people to such an extent, even though he does not do anything to them, that he describes the way people treat him as barbaric. Because he is both lonely and rejected, we feel upset for him and angry with Frankenstein. This situation can also be understood clearly when we consider the movie version of it. In the movie (Whale, 1932), we also feel the same sorrow and sympathy towards the creature as he is attacked and tortured by his assistant Fritz and as he is set on fire by the villagers as well.

One of the most moving parts of the book is the one where he finds a family and watches them from outside of their home. When he starts to observe the family, one blind old man, and one young brother and sister, he really admires and sees the beauty in this family but from his experiences, he wants to wait till he learns how to communicate with them. When he finally has the courage to talk to them despite being tortured by other people, he is attacked and beaten up again by the young man. This scene is made more pathetic by the fact that the creature is hopeful that the family will accept him if he can only communicate with them. But the consequences are no different from his previous interactions.

His loneliness and isolation from society became hard to bear that he asks Frankenstein to create a female company for himself. If Frankenstein to do so, he promises to go far away with his friend and leave him alone forever. Even though he murders Frankenstein's brother as an act of revenge since he is really miserable and lonely that he gives up on hurting his loved ones as long as Frankenstein keeps his promise. The creature indicates his will as follows:

I am alone, and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me. My companion must be of the same species, and have the same defects. This being you must create. (Shelley, 2013: 146)

By looking at this quote from the book, it is actually really distressing that he accepts all the defects he has and he wants Frankenstein to create the same creature that he will have the same defects. This is normally not the case monsters think like this in most horror movies because instead of hurting people, Frankenstein's creature finally wants to be happy forever rather than feeling sorrow all the time. The main point here is that, even though Frankenstein's creature is represented as a monster, he has feelings that make him feel emotional and make us understand that he is not born evil but becomes one as he confesses that the real reason behind his evil actions is to be shunned by society.

The creature's abandonment by his creator and the rejection of his will, later on, result in two other murders, namely the murders of Henry and Elizabeth. However, before the murders, as Frankenstein breaks his promise by depriving him of having a mate, the creature's speech is so touching that no one seems to be terrified by the expected murders but feeling sympathy for what he really feels.

Shall each man, cried he, find a wife for his bosom, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone? I had feelings of affection, and they were requited by detestation and scorn. Man! you may hate, but beware! your hours will pass in dread and misery, and soon the bolt will fall which must ravish from you your happiness forever. Are you to be happy, while I grovel the intensity of my wretchedness? (Shelley, 2013: 172-3)

As terrifying as the creature's threat seems, his being in search for happiness and companion seems to be enough for melting one's heart and making him/her understand his situation heartily. Despite continuing to commit murders after Frankenstein breaks his promise, when Frankenstein dies on Walton's ship, the creature's farewell and compassion for his creator is really touching and upsetting that it makes one understand once again that the creature is not in fact born evil but made one by society. Even though his physical appearance and murders he commits are quite enough to consider him as a monster, having no choice to come into this world and being abandoned by his own creator as well as being outcasted and tortured by society can, in fact, lead one to feel sympathy and sorrow for the creature rather than being only terrified and disgusted.

In this chapter, in order to argue that there is, in fact, nothing paradoxical about enjoying horror movies, I proposed the idea that horror movies can be helpful for our emotional development as in the case of making us feel sympathy for the incidents or even for the evil characters. In order to support this claim, I used Mary Shelly's novel *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* as an example. I argued that as opposed to

Noëll Carroll's understanding of monster, Frankenstein's creature is not like a typical monster but rather a poor abandoned creature that is forced to do evil things to take revenge from his own creator. Before developing this argument, I used Eileen Hunt Botting's argument that makes us understand the difference between Frankenstein's creature and other monsters from different horror movies such as Dracula, werewolves, Godzilla, etc. Accordingly, I developed my argument on sympathy we have for Frankenstein's creature by using Sophie de Grouchy's point of view on the notion of sympathy in order to understand clearly the reason why our sympathy turns from Frankenstein and other human characters and our disgust turns from the creature to human characters because of their monstrous and violent behavior towards the creature under the definition of sympathy for other people as a part of our moral education. As well as the sympathy we have for others' physical sufferings which is defined by Grouchy as the sympathy we are naturally inclined to show because the physical suffering is the common type of suffering among people, this notion of sympathy we have for others' moral pains and pleasures is quite helpful as well in order to understand the reason why we enjoy horror genre specifically in terms of the example of Frankenstein's monster.

In this novel, the only thing the creature seeks for is to be loved and be happy but as the circumstances become the opposite of what he wants, he starts to do horrifying things that hurt Frankenstein. However, since the circumstances force him to act in this way, being shunned by people and by Frankenstein and being lonely, we can feel more sympathized with the creature instead of only being horrified by the events or having sympathy for only the human characters. Trying to feel what the creature or different characters from different movies and novels feel by relieving our hearts and being compassionate can, in fact, be the reason why we enjoy horror art. Because of this reason, I concluded that we do not need to restrict our enjoyment of horror art to only disgusting and scary monsters through their function of disclosing as well as having no need to claim that it is possible for some people to enjoy horror art experiences as long as we have a background understanding that such negative

emotions aroused by the horror genre are not appealed by the majority of people in society. This is why I thought that it would be best to use Gothic literature or specifically Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* as an example with regards to explaining our enjoyment of horror art through the notion of sympathy.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

In this Master's Thesis, I examined the paradox of horror and tried to answer the question why people take pleasure from watching horror movies which involve negative emotions, such as fear and disgust, and usually avert such emotions in real life. This question can be resolved by observing that people like to experience such negative emotions fictionally as opposed to experiencing in real life. I argued that there is nothing wrong with enjoying the horror genre as it provides people a sense of safety when they are in their comfort zone because normally it would be really dangerous and disturbing for us to experience such emotions in real life.

Accordingly, my reply to the paradox reflected the view that a rich account of our aesthetic enjoyment of the horror genre must take human emotional development into account. The reason why I chose this solution to the paradox is to emphasize the idea that the horror genre is not always about terrifying and disgusting creatures that have a role in arousing our curiosity as they are way beyond our conceptual categories nor is it enough to explain in a way that it is okay to enjoy such emotions as long as there is an understanding that people do not, in general, enjoy negative emotions. Instead, I noted that despite the fact that the horror genre includes horrific and supernatural elements, there are different elements other than being horrified and disgusted which show the characters' problematic relationships with each other or their personal miseries by making us feel upset and arousing sympathy for them.

In order to give a clear and better understanding of why there is not a paradox at all, I used 18<sup>th</sup>-century philosophers' accounts of sympathy in relation to the paradox of tragedy- as the paradox of horror is a contemporary version of the paradox of tragedy-

by arguing that watching and reading tragedies have an impact on the development of human emotions with regards to developing and shaping our capacity for sympathy. Before going into detail about the notion of sympathy and its relation with the paradox of tragedy, I showed Hume's and Grouchy's arguments on the concept of boredom. They argue that being in a state of boredom is so painful that it is possible for people to seek for miseries of others in tragedies at the cost of being exposed to negative and painful emotions. This situation enables people to get rid of their own thoughts, concerns, and worries for a while as Hume argues.

However, the concept of boredom is not enough to explain itself why people enjoy tragedies. That is, the capacity for sympathy helps people fill in the gaps that boredom creates in them. This is why, I touched upon Adam Smith's, David Hume's, and Sophie de Grouchy's arguments on sympathy in order to explain the idea that there is, in fact, nothing paradoxical with enjoying tragedies as they play an important role in shaping and developing the capacity for sympathy people have. Their account of the capacity for the sympathy is helpful to understand both the paradox of tragedy and the paradox of horror because according to their account, through our faculty of imagination, the notion of sympathy can be both shaped and developed when people are exposed to others' moral pains and physical pains by arousing strong feelings in them.

I tried to apply their accounts of sympathy to the paradox of horror by using Mary Shelley's gothic novel *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus*. In order to understand how sympathy will work in this case, I first presented Botting's comparison of Frankenstein's monster with others such as Dracula. Having established the difference between Frankenstein's monster and other monsters in terms of Frankenstein's creature's being represented as an abandoned child, I analyzed the parts of the book where we can feel sorrow and sympathy for the creature.

However, my aim was to argue that as opposed to what Carroll notes, even though the creature is contrary to our conceptual schemes and represented by Frankenstein as disgusting and horrifying, our sympathy for him precludes the sympathy we have for the human characters towards the end of the book. Also, I put emphasis on the idea that the notion of disgust we have for the creature at the beginning of the book shifts towards the monstrous treatment of villagers and Frankenstein. In addition, as a victim of Frankenstein, since the creature is treated badly and isolated from society for the sake of Frankenstein's dream of bringing something inanimate into the world, we try to understand and feel the creature even though he kills Frankenstein's loved ones one by one.

By considering the example I used to explain why we, in fact, enjoy the horror genre, I conclude that the horror genre is not restricted to monsters that in general make the audience feel horrified and disgusted. People can enjoy the horror genre because when they want to escape from their own thoughts and worries for a while, they want to immerse themselves in fiction. The experience the horror genre provides us is not something we could easily find or want to experience in real life. Also, since it can include different elements such as characters' problematic relationships with each other or their own personal sorrows as in the case of *The Haunting of Hill House* or *Mysteries of Udolpho*, the need to understand their situation or the notion of sympathy can be developed and gives more pleasure accordingly. In this sense, I believe that there is nothing paradoxical about having an interest in the horror genre.

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