

# Psychoanalysis and Culture

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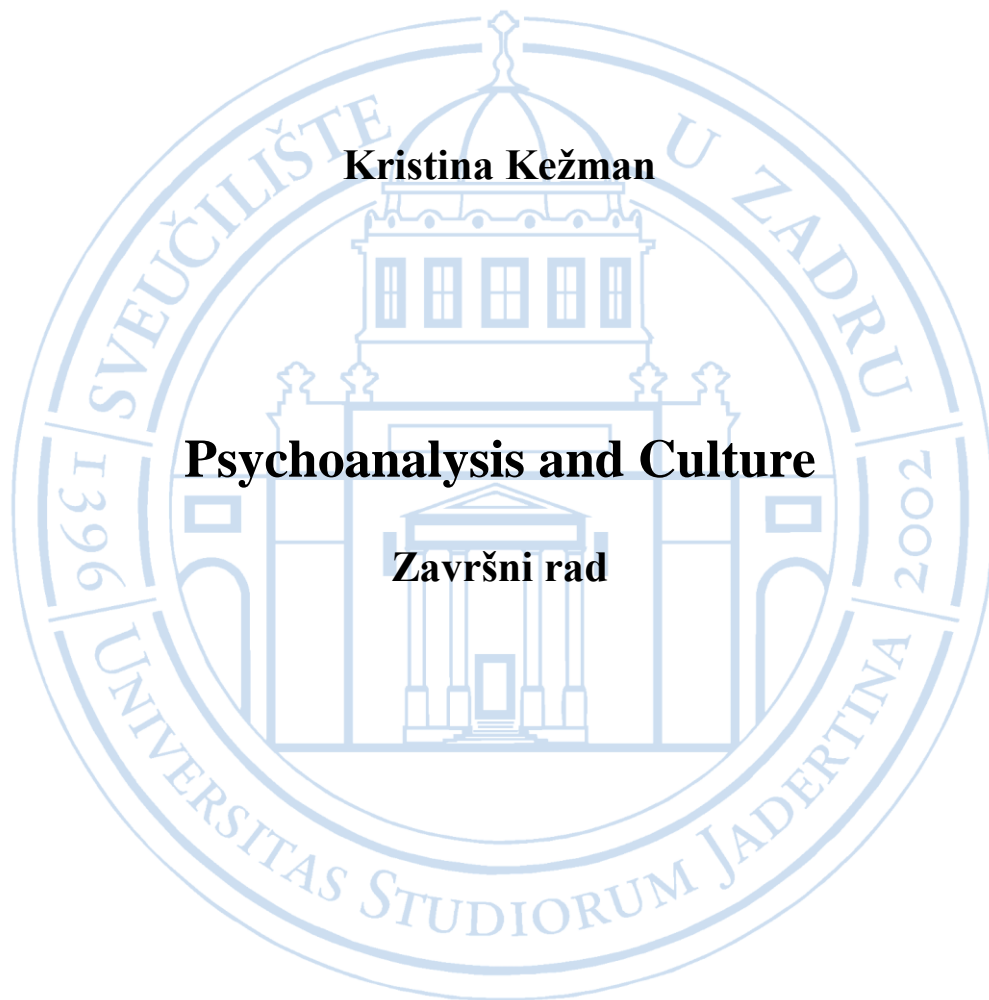


DIGITALNI AKADEMSKI ARHIVI I REPOZITORIJ

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku

Preddiplomski studij engleskoga jezika i književnosti (dvopredmetni)



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Psychoanalysis and Culture

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Zadar, 2016.



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## Abstract

Psychoanalysis was once only a medical term, a method used for treating mental illnesses. Nowadays, we find it in philosophical register, in various analysis of the content we find in the cultural domain such as film criticism, literature, art and many others. The aim of the thesis was to demonstrate the connection between psychoanalysis and culture by applying them to the theories of identity and identification, at the same time discussing the various aspects of identity and the requirement for the creation of new fluid identities with the emerging social movements such as feminism and elaborating them on Kathryn Woodward's and Judith Butler's theories on identities, difference and gender.

Also, the thesis offers the analysis of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* by describing the process of the development of his personality, that is, his ego and the complex nature of Victor in opposition to the monster. Furthermore, it discussed the problematic question of the woman in the novel.

Key words: Psychoanalysis, Culture, Identity, Identification, Social Movements, Difference, Gender, Ego, Frankenstein.

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## 1. Introduction

Freud and psychoanalysis marked the 20th century, but even today, their presence is undeniable. This thesis discusses theories proposed by Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Stuart Hall, Kathyn Woodward and Judith Butler and indicates different aspects of identities, their creation and correlation with psychoanalysis. Moreover, it investigates how we construct identities and how the occurrence of new social movements changed the perspective on the basis of certain identities.

We belong to certain identities and we create new ones. Still, it is very important to consider the concept of inclusion and exclusion and what are the components that welcome someone in certain identities and some not. Identities can be marked by nationality, history, race, biological traits that are usually taken as fixed in nature. However, it is important to consider the changing nature of identities and look at them as fluid, able to adapt to the needs of new societies. They greatly depend on our psyche and the symbolic values of the world.

Nevertheless, society and the symbolic nature of the world is not the only reason for the creation of identities and subject's positioning in it and creation of sexual identities. That is why we need to look into psychoanalytical theories as its main preoccupation is identification.

Finally, the thesis incorporates these theories and brief elaboration of terminology in the interpretation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* discussing the complicated nature of Victor and the creature as well as the imposing of the problematic question of the woman in the novel and development of Victor's character according to the latter.

## 2. Culture and Identity

In the framework of cultural studies, there are various definitions attributed to identity, some of them concern the biological, political, national aspect of it, but there is also the psychic and the symbolic element to it. 'Culture shapes identity through giving meaning to experience, making it possible to opt for one mode of subjectivity such as the cool, blond femininity or the fast-moving, attractive, sophisticated masculinity...' (Woodward 15) It follows that, identity is the intersection of our day-to-day interests with the institutions that regulate the circulation of power.

Identity can be seen as relational, in other words, marked out by difference. As it is explained by Woodward ("Identity and Difference" 9) in the difference between Croatian and Serbian people. Woodward explains how the creation of difference among them is a result of their denial of the similarity between them. Furthermore, in the reading of a dialog between a member of the Serbian militia and broadcaster Michael Ignatieff we observe how Croatian national identity prevails and that Serbs feel alienated in the cluster of the two identities. In addition, the difference between identities is marked through exclusion. Also, we can observe the creation of confusion for the Serbian militia man by the cohabitation of the two nations and previously shared experience with the difference that separates them, but at the same time he believes that Croatian people have no right to believe themselves to be better, when they are all the same 'European rubbish' in the end.

Moreover, there are certain symbols we notice in the dialogue which establish identities. In this case, those are cigarettes, although they are the same product, Serbian militia man stresses that they are in fact different precisely because they are smoked by the members of



different nationalities, hence they are, 'Croatian' and 'Serbian' cigarettes. Here, cigarettes signify difference. Another signifier that we may not recognize as such is the remark on the place of Serbian and Croatian people in comparison to other European countries as well as the position of the Serbs in comparison to the Croats. Also, Woodward points out the relation between identity and gender in which the women are positioned according to the position of men. Thus, women serve only as a connection between the two identities in the reference of the past, there is no other mention of them. 'The only reference to women here is to 'girls' who are 'dated' or rather who have been 'dated' in the past, before the current conflict erupted.' (Woodward 10). It follows that, in the great historical events such as war, men are the ones that establish national identities. In this specific context, national identities are 'historically specific' as they erupted during war time which made the difference between the two even more visible. However, this construction of identity is more due to the current crisis than to the fixed identities. The question is can we even look at them as fixed entities and assign some of the features to one identity and some to others? The essentialist view of the matter usually includes history, nature, race as indisputable markers of identity that do not change nor do they intertwine. According to this approach, an identity has a clear list of traits that do not change over time and the latter are the absolute truths of an identity. On the other hand, there is a non-essentialist approach that considers all of the changes that affected an identity as well as the assigned and shared characteristics of different identities. With the emerging of the 1960s, some of the social movements claimed the essentialist view such as the feminist movement arguing that they 'possess' certain qualities that men do not so that they would demonstrate the uniqueness of women; there were some of them that wanted to explain this uniqueness as a trait given by nature as the ones that claimed gay identity was biologically determined. On the other hand, some of the elements of the women's movement

have adopted the non-essentialist approach claiming that identities are fluid and are able to adapt to new social constructions.

According to Kathryn Woodward, culture is integrated in identities and its main function being the one of representation and the creation of meaning, it directly connects us with the concept of subjectivity and at last with psychoanalysis.

Subjectivity is a notion in psychoanalysis that describes the identification of a subject with others. This process can be the result of us creating difference between 'us' and the 'others', by separating, by creating some kind of 'hybrid' new identities that break out from conventional social movements. With our first identification with the outside world, meaning with our own image and us being the 'sexed objects' we position ourselves in certain relations with others. This is closely related to Freud's description of the phenomenon called the 'Oedipus complex', later interpreted in cultural studies as the explanation of some of the tendencies that may come out as a product of the activity of what is marked as the unconscious. One of the key concepts that Hall frequently mentions is representation. Representation is one of the most important tools that later acts in culture as the modifier of 'giving meaning to' the world. What needs to be kept in mind is that giving meaning to something always includes the power to do so hence at the same time deciding whether something belongs to a certain definition of an identity or not. Thus, culture creates certain 'models' according to the previously seen and experienced identities. This can include physical characteristics, occupation, religion, depending on what mold we are looking for. However, regarding identity as non-fluid, culture becomes too rigid to give space for new needed ones. 'Indeed, precisely because certain kinds of "gender identities" fail to conform to those norms of cultural intelligibility, they appear only as developmental failures or logical impossibilities from within that domain.' (Butler 17) There are limitations to identities and

social relations which, in the reality, change constantly and are involved in the circulation of power, but are denied by the society, various political agreements and economy. Subjects affirm their identity through their shared knowledge of the world and of their past. This common identity is later reproduced in culture's means through publicity, through news, films, literature, every kind of representation. What we represent is always some kind of heritage. Taking Stuart Hall as an example, we could say that his identity is the one of 'Caribbeanness' by heritage and of 'Englishness' by becoming. (Woodward 20)

Woodward explains how Hall includes this in the new categorization of identities where the identity is not just the matter of what has been given to us, but what we choose from our actions, our performing of certain acts which establish our identities. In other words, instead of belonging to an identity, we create them. 20.ct. has 'brought' a lot of these identities, a lot of which are still struggling to avoid the previous configuration of events. One of them being the LGBT community (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) beginning in the late 1980s as the issue of separating sexuality and gender. 'The "coherence" and "continuity" of "the person" are not logical or analytical features of personhood, but, rather, socially instituted and maintained norms of intelligibility.' (Butler 17)

The previously established definitions of identity such as the one of 'sex' failed to open to those that did not live up to the expectations of being 'female' which up to that point included the set that includes: heterosexuality, motherhood, femininity, fragileness, opposite of male, wife, caring, sustained. The same goes for 'maleness', for race, nationality, the definition of a mother, definition of the learned, a myriad of criteria. Jacques Derrida opposes de Saussure's definition of meaning as the product of binary opposition and defines it as 'never fixed in nature'. Meaning that we are able to 'reconstruct' the inherited identities. 'Every effort to

establish identity within the terms of this binary disjunction of "being" and "having" returns to the inevitable "lack" and "loss" that ground their phantasmic construction and mark the incomeasurability of the Symbolic and the real.' (Butler 44)

Space is also one of the defining aspects of identity. The reason why identity should not have been regarded as fixed in the first place is the obvious mobility of identities according to the positions we occupy in different spaces. Whether it is our home, work or something else, we are obliged to switch from one identity to another. This is the case with our emotional understanding of the situation, as well. We may create different identities whilst being with our friends and then change them again when we are with our parents, and then back again at work, it is the constant rotation of social roles although we may not feel it as such. Furthermore, we observe other identities the majority of the time and they become models for the desired behavior, they are the expectations and limitations of a society. We find them in the shape of publicity, advertisements, posters etc.

'The complexity of modern life requires us to assume different identities - but these different identities may conflict.' (Woodward 23)

Even if we do not feel this shift from one identity to another, we may experience some inconveniencies if some of our identities do not align with the demands of a society. I have previously mentioned the disruption between one being a female and not having, for example 'maternal instincts'. This kind of behavior is immediately regarded as 'deviant' and 'other'. This kind of 'prejudice' is the result of the more powerful systems of representation. The one that has been 'out there' much longer. Of course, this on no account means that some kind of relations did not exist, but they have not been represented as much as the other, today dominant relations, and are now seen as unacceptable.

These differences between genders described in their work are basically the product of anthropological definition of 'culture' and 'nature' according to which culture is higher in

hierarchy, it is based on dominance, on the more educated sex whilst the 'nature' is correlated with the more primitive sex, in this case, the female. Moreover, Woodward mentions Henrietta Moore's theory in anthropological discourse based on the position, men and women differ based on the privacy of the area, women are bound to their homes, and men to the public area, the working sphere. (Woodward 37)

'Subjectivity includes our sense of self. It involves the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions which constitute our sense of 'who we are' and the feelings which are brought to different positions within culture. Subjectivity involves our most personal feelings and thoughts. Yet we experience our subjectivity in a social context where language and culture give meaning to our experience of ourselves and where we adopt an identity.' (39)

As I have already mentioned, it is all oriented towards identification, and identification is the main concern of one method, psychoanalysis.

### **3. Psychoanalysis**

First and foremost, to fully understand this movement we need to investigate its beginnings, name its founders and the reasons for its founding. Psychoanalysis had its peaks and valleys and as the final outcome has little of the initial intent left in its core. What we nowadays consider as psychoanalytical work is only one part of the original thought and that is, applied psychoanalysis.

Clearly, today we can only speak of it as of philosophy of sorts, interpretations and speculations present in all human sciences. In the clinical context we can only mention it in terms of its history. A clear definition of psychoanalysis is needed to facilitate describing the path of the original thought to its contemporary form. Namely, the simplest definition would be this:

1. 'A method of analyzing psychic phenomena and treating emotional disorders that involves treatment sessions during which the patient is encouraged to talk freely about personal experiences and especially about early childhood and dreams.'

2. 'A body of empirical findings and a set of theories on human motivation, behavior, and personality development that developed especially with the aid of psychoanalysis.'

(Merriam-Webster)

Our first association with the word psychoanalysis is of course, Sigmund Freud. He was not the only one that carried out researches in that field nor was he the only one that contributed in ideas for its development but he is still considered to be the father of psychoanalysis and in popular culture, the most represented image of the field. Sigmund Freud was a neurologist, interested only in medical advantages of the upcoming field. We can observe from these definitions that psychoanalysis in its early beginnings was purely clinical in nature. Freud's work on psychoanalysis began in 1890s during his research on finding the treatment for diseases such as hysteria, neurosis, illnesses that had no traceable link to the malfunction of the organism of the patients.

His first major work was published in 1895 under the name 'Studies on Hysteria'. He wrote it alongside his mentor Josef Breuer. This book is considered to be the milestone of psychoanalysis. From 1900 on, Freud carried on publishing his books presenting his premises on dreams, human sexuality and the roots of human actions in the unconscious mind. Until the 1950s the field already took shape and Freud's work all from 'The Interpretation of Dreams', 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', 'The Id and the Ego' already assumed its influence on the popular culture. Today, however, we look at psychoanalysis applied in fields such as interpersonal psychoanalysis, cultural psychoanalysis, feminist psychoanalysis, and is purely

philosophical. Hardly anything to do with treating illnesses of mental nature. Main interest of this paper is applied psychoanalysis and no matter how different a path of one neuropathologist may have been, Freud himself put a lot of thought into this particular branch of modern psychoanalysis. Therefore, he dedicated some of his best known work discussing the importance of subjects such as mythology, religion and their congruence to the dreams, fears and desires he frequently found in cases of his patients. Essentially, he associates Da Vinci's dream of a vulture with Mut<sup>1</sup>, Ancient Egypt's deity of a mother in his essay *'Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood'* (1910). Freud used his earlier discoveries such as the interpretation of dreams as childhood trauma, the theory about neurosis and of the psychic apparatus on what seems to be a 'pseudoscience' in works such as *'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's Gradiva'* (1907), *'Totem and Taboo'* (1912-1913)', *'Freud and Moses'* (a collection that was later gathered, joined with some of his studies on art and artists, inside which we can find previously mentioned *'Leonardo da Vinci and the Memory of his Childhood'* (1910); the collection also covers a study of Michelangelo's Moses, the study of monotheism, Judaism and the influences of Egyptian deities, with which he creates an unbreakable link of psychoanalysis and art. Also, we can find his observations on theatre and poets in his essay *'Psychopathological characters on stage'* published in 1942 (written in the period from 1905 -1906) and *'The Relation of the Poet to Day-dreaming'* from 1908. (History and the Development of Psychoanalysis)

### 3.1. Psychoanalytic Dimension in Literature

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<sup>1</sup> Mut (Maut, Mwt) was the mother goddess of Thebes (Waset, in the 4th Nome of Upper Egypt). The ancient Egyptians considered the vulture to be a protecting and nurturing mother, and so their word for mother was also the word for a vulture, "Mwt". (Ancient Egypt Online)

Although he was a psychiatrist, his works are mostly read by literary critics, art critics and writers themselves rather than by psychology or psychiatry students. And, obviously, his work has been more than appreciated in the circuit of intellectuals.

Psychoanalysis in literature, however, does not aim to analyze or diagnose character's mental condition, but simply to track down the desires of the movement of the story and along with it, its readers and writers. Best psychoanalytic literary criticism comes out of latent and ambivalent literature. I will mention and point out some of the best known analysis in literature.

Leaving aside the criticism that followed his work, it is the single theory that connects literature to real life characters. Psychoanalytic criticism deploys methods of 'reading' into texts, paintings, films, human actions. They believe that every piece of writing reveals secrets and unconscious desires of the author or, on the other hand, his fears and preoccupations. The author's work is his media of transmitting his own neurosis.

In literature, we can analyze characters, one by one, nevertheless, they are all products of the author's mind.

However, these desires are found in a twisted mosaic of symbols, images, the setting of the story, also one of the great indicators of what is going on in the author's head. It can point to all sorts of issues which laymen fail to recognize. Interestingly, psychoanalysis gives a lot of credit to literature not only as a form of art but for the possibility to reconstruct whole psychological profiles of authors.

The most analyzed works are always those debating taboo themes, that attract reader's attention in a most curious manner. The critics, undoubtedly, never search for what is intended or easily recognized by the untrained eye. It is, after all, the unintended that says more than the author could. Psychological material is covertly expressed by means of symbolism, displacement and repression. (Psychoanalytic Criticism)



### 3.2. Lacanian Psychoanalysis and Literature

Ancillary to reading through symbols, descriptions and characters, the development of psychoanalytic criticism cleared the way to interpretation of the form of the text. Namely, Jacques Lacan was the one who switched the attention from the characters to the mere linguistic sphere of the text. However, his work puts aside the importance of literature and uses literature as a pure canvas for illustrating the psychoanalytic method. According to him, we would be able to guess the style and figuration of the text by examining Freud's theories.

When we talk about postmodern preoccupations with psychoanalysis, Lacan is the one that brought psychoanalysis about. He branched the whole theory and ended up affecting approaches such as feminism, film theory, post-structuralism and Marxism.

However, embracing the post-structuralist view of the world, detached Lacan who was a pure post-structuralist in ideology from a still very humanist, Freud. Freud was always avid for the idea that truth is accessible to the individual that wants to find it within its actions and dreams. Lacan, on the other hand, calls the truth and individuality into question and sheds light on how discourse is presented through ideological and linguistic structures later manifested on our conscious and unconscious doing.

Instead of searching for 'natural', biological causes of developments, such as sexual growth, he examined the ways in which a subject enters the social spheres. The stress is on the ideological. To be able to connect the others and the individuals we are indebted to entirely break off from all materialism and enter the codes that we use. Based on Lacan's theory, what we produce (verbally) creates a world based on ideologies. If we surpass the language that bounds us to this world, we would be able to read the reality. In other words, our own reality is affected by language up to that point in which we are able to act

destructively. The reality challenges the artificial linguistic constructions. The disruption between the two affects the individual's psychosexual development. (Jacques Lacan)

Lacan, as does Freud, sticks to some basic concepts regarding sexuality and names stages of sexual maturing. Here is the brief description of the latter. Every individual goes through three stages starting with 0-6 months of age and finishing with 18 months to 4 years of age. (Modules on Lacan)

### Stages of Sexual Development

At the youngest age, up to the time child is just 6 months old, it is susceptible to different kinds of feelings, movements of people around him, objects and faces his own first perceptions of it all. According to Lacan, this is the stage of 'the Real', the stage when we are closest to being separated from the fantasy world occupied by the linguistic realm.

When a child reaches the stage that begins at 6 months of age, it faces the so-called 'mirror stage'. Unlike the previous stage, this is the period when a child practices his first identification with its own image. However, this identification is still not the point of the subject's entrance into language and thus, is not able to correlate to others in social terms.

'Identity, in this sociological conception, bridges the gap between the "inside" and the "outside"- between the personal and the public worlds. The fact the we project 'ourselves' into these cultural identities, at the same time internalizing their meanings and values, making them 'part of us', helps to align our subjective feelings with the objective places we occupy in the social and cultural world.' (Hall, Held 597)

Lacan explains this stage by using Ferdinand de Saussure's notion of differentiation. Namely, the logic lays in a simple understanding of the difference by opposing something to something else entirely. Our mind is a logic data base in which we create relationships and

divide notions into groups. This way a 'son' cannot be a son without the existence of 'father' or 'mother', the same way someone cannot be a 'brother' without the existence of 'sister'. The lexemes father, mother, brother, son are signifiers and do not refer to any particular father, but is one among many notions that create a network of important information in our mind. This is when we enter the 'symbolic order' in Lacan's terms. From this point on we act accordingly to us 'doing gender' brought up by Candace West and Don Zimmerman in their seminal article published under the same name, in 1987. (Pavlidou 412-414) According to them and, of course, Lacan, we act upon how we feel, in the contrast of 'male' and 'female' in the terms of language.

'What is important here is the subversion of the unified self, the emphasis on the construction of the gendered self through cultural and representational systems, and the possibility of exploring unconscious as well as conscious desires in explaining processes of identification, which psychoanalytical theories have offered.' (Woodward 46)

Lacan deems the Oedipus complex important in the same measure as Freud did, but once again, he transfers it to the language system. This is the process of acquiring the restriction of not being able to 'have' our mother and when we do come to that realization and accept 'the situation', it will result in our respect towards the social structure. 'For Lacan, the Law which forbids the incestuous union between boy and mother initiates the structures of kinship, a series of highly regulated libidinal displacements that take place through language.' (Butler 43)

Applying this to the language system, it denotes our restraining when we associate such terms to our parents. Then we carry on describing the position of individual terms such as 'phallus' and 'penis', and once more we create a destructive language hierarchy. Thus, we call this phenomenon, 'the castration complex', in which boys recognize the female sex as 'faulty'

and unable of assessing the 'symbolic order' because females are, allegedly, more prone to listening their 'animal drives' than men.

### 3.3. Psychoanalytical Reading of Frankenstein

It might seem far-fetched but Freud and his followers wrote a lot of things that cannot be considered just a mere coincidence. One of the greatest novels written by Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* is one of the works frequently analyzed by literary critics. Why is this particular novel of such interest to psychoanalytic criticism as well?

The first version of the novel was published in 1818 as a result of Shelley's trip with Percy Shelley, her lover at the time, and some of their friends, one of which was Lord Byron. During their stay in Switzerland they organized a small story-telling competition to while away the time. The young Shelley was clearly influenced by the scenery as much of the space in the novel is dominated by the Alps and its vast forests and dark caves.

The story is based on a young man, Victor Frankenstein that leaves his home after the death of his mother who succumbed to the grip of the Scarlet fever, to pursue his studies in Ingolstadt. Namely, Victor was always prone to go on about his little discoveries about life in nature. 'It was the secrets of heaven and earth that I desired to learn; and whether it was the outward substance of things or the inner spirit of nature and the mysterious soul of man that occupied me, still my inquiries were directed to the metaphysical, or in its highest sense, the physical secrets of the world.' (Shelley 33) This turned out to be his life's passion which he soon regretted. He was the best of his generation, but soon he realized that he needed much more than the university could offer him. The death of his mother haunted him but he did not let it 'get to him' so he decided to bury himself in work, showing no sign of suffering. 'And why should I describe a sorrow that all have felt, and must feel? The time at length arrives

when grief is rather an indulgence than a necessity, and the smile that plays upon the lips, although it may be deemed a sacrilege, is not banished. My mother was dead, but we had still duties which we ought to perform; we must continue our course with the rest and learn to think ourselves fortunate whilst one remains whom the spoiler has not seized.' (Shelley 40)

During his studies in Ingolstadt, he realizes he needs something more challenging and decides to create life by combining flesh of the deceased from the graveyard. All this, of course, under excuse of finding 'the cure' to death, all for the greater good. However innocent his intentions seemed it was all just a projection of his ego at work. Also, from the beginning of his studies we can observe the development of his narcissistic nature. Nothing seems to be able to arouse his interest, there is no one that can understand his great passion for science. 'The ambition of the inquirer seemed to limit itself to the annihilation of those visions on which my interest in science was chiefly founded. I was required to exchange chimeras of boundless grandeur for realities of little worth.' (Shelley 44) His studies turned out to be very limiting which created great frustration that he needed to project on something useful. As we read further in the novel, this turned out to be his greatest mistake.

There are, however, various problematic layers of the story. One of the most interesting aspects of it is, of course, the creation of the monster in which Victor denies 'the woman' as the necessary component in creating life, in other words he takes the role of both man and woman which is probably affected by the loss of his mother and him taking her attributes as his own. 'The loss of the other whom one desires and loves is overcome through a specific act of identification that seeks to harbor that other within the very structure of the self: "So by taking flight into the ego, love escapes annihilation." This identification is not simply momentary or occasional, but becomes a new structure of identity; in effect, the other becomes the part of the ego through the permanent internalization of the other's attributes.'

(Butler 57-58) Not only does he deny the importance of women but he is secretly eager to claim the glory for his work which once again shows his ego at work. After two exhaustive years, he succeeds at his attempt. He created a creature he could not bear to face and that will haunt him for the rest of his life. 'Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room and continued a long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep.' (Shelley 59) The creature turned out to be the monster he so persistently denied himself to be. Henceforth, everything the creature was and everything it later did, Victor projected on it so that he would escape taking blame for his own acts. It follows that we are unable to define who is the monster of the story. The 'monster' created by Victor Frankenstein gradually turns into a 'real' monster by killing Victor's younger brother and his fiancée. Victor, on the other hand, starts off as one. To explain this more thoroughly we can include Freud and one of his best known theories on the structure of human personality.

### **Id, Ego, Superego**

He presented us with the model of a human mind in the form of an iceberg, the latter structured from what he calls 'Id, Ego and Superego'; he further explained it by drawing a line through all three of them and separating them to the conscious and unconscious mind. Each has an equally important role in constructing one's personality and judging the amount of action in each part we can determine the type of character.

Freud compares id with a spoiled child, this part of the mind belongs to the unconscious and all it knows is its own desires and how to reach them, it stands for no repression whatsoever.

Ego belongs to the conscious mind, it is at the tip of the iceberg. Ego is more realistic and acknowledges the world other than itself, it is the more reasonable part of the mind. It serves as a balance between the id and the super-ego. Unlike id which is exclusively related to 'the pleasure principle', ego operates according to 'the reality principle'. Ego is still selfish and wants to achieve pleasure, but is capable of waiting for the best opportunity to achieve it. Still, a great part of the ego can still remain unconscious if a certain effort has not been produced. Freud claims that 'the ego itself which is also unconscious, which behaves exactly like the repressed - that is, which produces powerful effects without itself being conscious and which requires special work before it can be made conscious.' (Freud 6)

This leads us to the observation that even with boundaries such as the conscious and the unconscious, we cannot find an absolutely clear boundary between them. The unconscious can easily at some point turn to the conscious. Freud explains this by introducing the term 'word presentations', stating that there is material in our minds that was once conscious but was either repressed or forgotten with time.

'These word-presentations are residues of memories; they were at one time perceptions, and like all mnemonic residues they can become conscious again' (Freud 7)

The last part, the super-ego is the judging part of the human mind, the part that serves for repression of the acts held inappropriate, dangerous and morally wrong. In a more simple, common terms, it is referred to as the conscience, the drive that controls our behavior even if it means not achieving pleasure.

'Whereas the ego is essentially the representative of the external world, of reality, the super-ego stands in contrast to it as the representative of the internal world, of the id. Conflicts between the ego and the ideal will, as we are now prepared to find, ultimately reflect the contrast between what is real and what is psychical, between the external world and the internal world.'

We can see how Victor acted according to his ego, leaving his bare minded 'child' to take care of himself. The monster is left with no knowledge of the world and we can see how he tries to enter the society by acquiring the linguistic knowledge of the humans so we can recognize Lacan's theory here as well. Eventually, the monster tries to assimilate and stumbles upon a family named De Lacey, near the woods he found wandering in search for Victor. He secretly observes their lives and admires the goodness of the family he so deeply desires, learns the language, reads the books, but in the attempt to approach them, he ends up being beaten and forsaken again. The only one that did not reject him, from the members of the De Lacey family, was the blind old father.

Our fantasy world, as Lacan refers to it, is not dominated only by language but by image as well. Once again, we can see how the clash of reality with the symbolic world has destructive effects. Also, we have the occurrence of the alienation. From the first phases of our development we are confused by the presence of our own image outside of our minds. We create some sort of standard and if we do not live up to it, we end up alienated from ourselves. Nevertheless, when we accept the existence of others beside ourselves, we create certain standards according to the first people and objects that we met, if others end up 'lacking' some of the features we have previously found, they will face alienation. In the creature we can also find a developed super-ego at work. In the beginning people beat him, refuse his company. Constant rejection the monster experiences eventually creates strong and destructive anxiety which alarms his ego. Instead of reacting according to his ego, the monster chooses to let it go and hide into the woods. This escape is connected with Freud's theory on 'the pleasure principle' as the creature longs for happiness and acceptance but when he sees that there is no way for him to gain it, he tries to avoid pain instead. Still, no matter how hard the creature resisted his anger, his unconscious digged out to the surface and he finally



realized he had no reason for repression of his feelings. 'I had saved a human being from destruction, and as a recompense I now writhed under the miserable pain of a wound which shattered the flesh and bone. The feelings of kindness and gentleness which I had entertained but a few moments ago gave place to hellish rage and gnashing of teeth.' (Shelley 169) The monster tried to find his creator. Being aware of the fact that it is his creator's duty to send him off to the society and that society would never accept him, he decides to ask Victor to make him a companion, equally hideous, equally refused by others. Victor, unwillingly accepts the monster's proposition only because he threatened to kill his own female companion. However, once again, Victor acted according to his narcissistic nature and decided not to keep his promise to the monster again failing in front of his super-ego. Namely, from the moment he created the monster he denied being responsible for every act that followed, closing it in. Even when the monster threatens to ruin his life the way he ruined his, he immediately thinks that the monster is aiming at killing him, he did not think of the way he ruined the monster which resulted in the monster killing his fiancée. After losing everything, Victor dedicated his life to the destruction of the monster. 'Scoffing devil! Again do I vow vengeance; again do I devote thee, miserable fiend, to torture and death. Never will I give up my search until he or I perish.' (Shelley 254)

### **3. 3.1. The Question of the Woman**

There is something else we can read from this novel and that is the question of 'the woman'. The author of the book is female, however, every female character in the book either dies or is killed, they are objectified and serve only for the exact function and that is the extension of man's identity. Hence, everything that happens to the women in the novel is supposed to be a lesson for the strayed men. It all begins with the death of Victor's mother.

Unable to grieve and accept this fact he identified with the woman that has died and absorbed her functions, one of which is the capability of giving birth as we can see later on when Victor seems to deny the women's part in the creation of life by 'taking it all upon himself' and giving life to the monster he later abandons. This is probably the result of not being able to reconcile with his own mother abandoning him thus throughout the novel we only see him 'in the run' from his family, friends and in the end from himself. Furthermore, in Justine, a young girl that Frankenstein family adopted, we have the perfect example of a submissive servant girl that was falsely accused of murdering Victor's youngest brother William and then confessing to it in order to delay revealing the real murderer in the novel. There are, of course, other woman characters in the novel that enhance this sense of redundancy. Victor's mother was already mentioned as the initiator of the following events, but there is also Elizabeth. Elizabeth was also adopted into the family, after Victor's mother saved her from a poverty of a peasant family Lavenza in Italy. Elizabeth was a lovely girl somewhat younger than Victor and they were always bound to marry each other, however, after Victor left to pursue his studies, she was the embodiment of a passive woman, inactive until the end of the novel when at the day of their marriage she gets killed by the monster. It follows that, Frankenstein could be read as a feminist novel precisely because the women in the novel are seemingly unimportant and almost do not exist in it, are marginalized and passive, still, they have the central role in the text. In the light of this statement, we could recognize that the mere creation of the female companion for the monster would lead to a whole different course of the story. If Victor had created a companion for the monster, it would be the solution to his problems, as the monster promised it to be: 'If you consent, neither you nor any other human being shall see us again; I will go to the vast wilds of South America. My food is not that of man; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment. My companion will be of the same nature as myself and will be content with the same fair. We

shall make our bed of dried leaves; the sun will shine on us as on men and will ripen our food.' (Shelley 176) We can see how the absence of the female monster and the destruction of other women directed the action of the novel thus being the most important part of it. Namely, nor feminism nor the identity of a woman needs to be read as in her role of a mother or of a strong woman that fights for her rights and is the protagonist of a novel, it can be seen in the mere importance of women in the creation of male identities as well.

Moreover, psychoanalysis gives us the opportunity to separately analyze the author and the characters. Henceforward, we can analyze individually the characters and the author. What are author's intentions? Why are female characters unnecessary in the novel? 'In the experience of losing another human being whom one has loved, Freud argues, the ego is said to incorporate that other into the very structure of the ego, taking on attributes of the other and "sustaining" the other through magical acts of imitation.' (Butler, 57) For the author, it can be a reflection of her autobiographical elements. Namely, Mary Shelley lost a child. Certainly, this led her to create a certain hostility towards motherhood and alienation from herself as a woman.

'In cases in which ambivalent relationship is served through loss, that ambivalence becomes internalized as a self-critical or self-debasing disposition in which the role of the other is now occupied and directed by the ego itself' (Butler 58)

#### 4. Conclusion

This thesis elaborated on the complexity of identification and aspects of identities and their creation taking into consideration psychoanalytical theories on subject's positioning in the world as well. The question of identity is one of the most problematic aspects of today's society with the constant need of creation of new identities and the impossibility of the old established identities to conform with these needs.

In order to provide the theoretical framework for these concepts, it was necessary to draw on the discussion on identities and difference from Kathryn Woodward and Judith Butler's observations on gender. They led to the consideration of the opposing views and restrictions of identities as well as the meaningful differences between them. Are identities fixed and can we claim them even if they are not? We constantly change identities as different spaces and situations require such changes. Of course, this is followed by their clashing and that is inevitable but we are able to opt for different modes of subjectivity because culture gives us numerous identities shaped from previous experience. Furthermore, it is important to note that identities are not unified, there are differences that occur between the collective and the individual identities, especially when there is a shared culture but nationalities claim different identities, as it is the case in Serbian and Croatian identity. Identities are constantly contested in the binary opposition such as the one between 'us' and 'them' which is implemented in culture, however, an identity cannot be marked in binary opposition only. That is why we need to explore the non-essentialist aspect of identity.

The thesis considers all of these aspects of identity and identification as well as the importance of the psychoanalytical approach to the exploring of the subject's entrance into

culture. Namely, psychoanalysis gives means for discussing the problematic aspects of culture and its products. Discussing the theories proposed by Freud and Lacan we were able to present the psychoanalytical reading of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and decompose the complex nature of Victor Frankenstein and his monster, as well as discuss the problem of women's identity in the novel.

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## Sažetak

Psihoanaliza se kao termin nekoć koristila samo u medicini, kao metoda u liječenju psihičkih bolesti. Međutim, danas ju srećemo u domeni filozofije, u raznim kulturološkim analizama vezanim uz filmsku kritiku, književnost, umjetnost i ostalo. Cilj rada bio je ukazati na povezanost psihoanalize i kulture pritom ih primjenjujući na pitanje identiteta i identifikacije, istovremeno raspravljajući različite aspekte identiteta i potrebu za stvaranjem novih identiteta s pojavom društvenih pokreta poput feminizma kroz prizmu teorija o identitetu, različitostima i spolu Kathryn Woodward i Judith Butler.

Usto, rad se bavi analizom *Frankensteina* Mary Shelley kroz opis razvoja Victorove osobnosti, odnosno njegovog ega te njegove kompleksne naravi u usporedbi sa čudovištem. Nadalje, raspravlja problematično pitanje žene u romanu.

Ključne riječi: Psihoanaliza, kultura, identitet, identifikacija, društveni pokreti, različitosti, spol, ego, Frankenstein.