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**Fruits of passion and heirs of chance: challenging illegitimacy in Angela
Carter's *Wise Children* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein or The Modern
Prometheus***

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Dissertação apresentada, como requisito parcial para obtenção do título de Mestre, ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras, da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. Área de concentração: Literaturas de Língua Inglesa.

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Ao meu filho, Caio Augusto Vieira Gomes, a melhor parte de mim, meu Norte, meu começo e meu fim. Amor além da vida. *In memoriam.*

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There.

We who make stories know that we tell lies for a living. But they are good lies that say true things, and we owe it to our readers to build them as best as we can. Because somewhere out there is someone who needs that story. Someone who will grow up with a different landscape, who without that story will be a different person. And who *with* that story may have hope, or wisdom, or kindness, or comfort.

And that is why we write.

Neil Gaiman

RESUMO

SANT'ANNA, Fernanda Vieira de. *Fruits of passion and heirs of chance: challenging illegitimacy in Angela Carter's Wise Children and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus*. 2017. 95 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Literaturas de Língua Inglesa) - Instituto de Letras, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2017.

A ilegitimidade na representação literária pode ser vista como uma reação a uma situação contemporânea, ressaltando problemas que são condicionados, mas não resolvidos pelas normas coetâneas (ISER, 1994, p.30). Além de apontar uma ruptura na normalidade, em diversas obras, a figura do bastardo é associada ao desamparo e sua figura transgrede, ao passo que reafirma, a sacralidade da instituição familiar tradicional ocidental, pai-mãe-filhos. Esta pesquisa, de método qualitativo e abordagem bibliográfica, lida com a ilegitimidade em perspectiva comparada entre *Wise Children* (1991) de Angela Carter e *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* (1994 [1818]) de Mary Shelley. Lidando com seus contextos históricos, com aproximações de teoria literária, antropologia, filosofia e sociologia, bem como o campo da psicanálise, este estudo problematiza e questiona os limites do parentesco, relacionamento filial e ilegitimidade na literatura e como se reflete na sociedade e como é refletido por ela, levando em consideração o conceito ocidental de família. Finalmente, problematizar a questão da ilegitimidade é alargar tal conceito, levando a uma reavaliação das instituições familiares Ocidentais, que mudaram do modelo hegemônico de mãe-pai-filhos para uma multiplicidade de modelos.

Palavras-chave: Bastardia. Ilegitimidade. Parentesco. Ruptura.

ABSTRACT

SANT'ANNA, Fernanda Vieira de. *Fruits of passion and heirs of chance: challenging illegitimacy in Angela Carter's Wise children and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein or The modern Prometheus*. 2017. 95 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Literaturas de Língua Inglesa) - Instituto de Letras, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2017.

Literary representation of illegitimacy bring attention to a subject matter not yet solved by contemporary norms, even considering the new family models accepted in a post-modern society that disagree with the hegemonic model mother-father-children. Still, illegitimacy and bastardy are figured as a taboo, and a strong one. A sensible and controversial subject, although really a popular theme in literature. This qualitative research with bibliographic approach deals with illegitimacy by comparing and analyzing the main works *Wise Children* by Angela Carter and *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, dealing with their historical context, with approximations to literary theory, philosophy, anthropological and sociological texts, as well as the field of psychoanalysis. Therefore, this study problematizes and questions the limits of kinship, filial relationship and illegitimacy in literature and how it is reflected upon and is a reflection of society, taking into consideration the Western concept of family. Thus, to problematize the issue of illegitimacy is to broaden its concept, leading to a revaluation of Western family institutions that have changed from the hegemonic view of mother-father-children to a multitude of models.

Keywords: Bastardy. Illegitimacy. Kinship. Rupture.

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INTRODUCTION

Illegitimacy in fiction and literary texts is a rather delicate matter and it can be seen as “a reaction to contemporary situations, bringing attention to problems that are conditioned though not resolved by contemporary norms” (ISER, 1994, p.3). In literature, the bastard figure can be an excuse for bad deeds or a rich theme for plots. Although fiction does not mirror reality or reproduce it as a simplistic mimesis, it may be said that fiction offers another way of discourse by which other versions of reality can be constructed (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 40). Thus, even when the bastard character is not the main one, its presence is substantial. For example, in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, the character Edmund is the bastard son of the Earl of Gloucester, and he plots against his father and older brother to get to the position he thinks he deserves. His judgment is based on nature as he disregards society’s conventions; he desires to be as much an heir as his brother: “Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law / My services are bound.” (I.2. 334-335). The bastard Edmund is the “legitimate illegitimate” son of the Earl of Gloucester and has his rights as true son acknowledged by nature, but denied by social laws. So, bastards stay in a position as if stuck in a threshold, born but denied, and their existence persists as a representation of an irregularity, always in between nature and social regulation.

Nevertheless, the distinction between state of nature and state of society is one of the principles proposed by the precursors of sociology that was more firmly rejected later, as related by Claude Lévi-Strauss in *As Estruturas Elementares do Parentesco* (1982, p.41). The sole idea of a dichotomy between a natural being and a social one cannot hold when faced with human nature, which is social, as defined by Aristotle in *Politics*: “man is by nature a political animal.” In addition, the concept of “family” must be considered not as a natural or universal datum, but as a social product, a concept which is plural and varied (SCHUCH, 2005). As so, a marital relationship binds two distinct social groups, but extra-marital relationships break the relatedness between two social groups without forming a new bond (BATALHA, 1995). This “group” break may embody one of the reasons why illegitimacy is such a strong topic, no matter how it manifests itself.

Nonetheless, there's no single understanding of consanguinity outside ethnocentric culture. So, the diverse forms of family relations vary according to each culture, from matriarchal or patriarchal to equivalence between both parents. Thus, taking into consideration that parental relations are not exclusively formed based on biological bonds and

that offspring and progeny imply the preservation of cultural and biological aspects to future generations in a symbolic form of immortality, it can be said that bastards may jeopardize the continuity of the family by breaking the stability of traditional familial bonds. The many differences in kinship designations and parental relations are related to a range of differences in rights and duties imposed on the people that constitute the domestic core. Human sciences escape the universalizing generalization and each day are guided by local models or mixed systems, in a way, breaking scientificism by employing mechanisms that if on the one hand are not considered scientific, on the other hand can be understood as Romantic (ALVES & ALVES, 2007, p. 85).

Therefore, to problematize the issue of illegitimacy is to broaden its concept, leading to a revaluation of Western family institutions that have changed from the absolute view of monogamous and hetero-oriented to plenty of different models, such as unmarried couples, single parents and same-sex parents. Still, parentage remains a question of a logical and moral imperative (STRATHERN, 2012). It can be said that some anthropologists concluded that there are two universally mental principles underlying the social organization of any domestic group: *affinity* and *filiation*. The first translates the parental relationship established between two distinct social groups through marriage between two people, being each one from a different group. The second would represent 'consanguinity' that can or cannot have a genetic basis (BATALHA, 1995, author's emphasis). Thus, considering these new family models, a child could no longer be regarded as a bastard if he/she were born of an unmarried woman, or adopted by a same-sex couple. In this sense, illegitimacy is an outdated concept or, at least, a concept that needs revaluation. Two major literary works stand out in this area and are the ones on which this study focuses: *Wise Children*, by Angela Carter, and *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley.

In *Wise Children*, published in 1991 and Carter's last novel, the theme of bastardy goes beyond the extramarital birth, exploring illegitimacy not only in the characters' origins but also how it can be extended to gender, art, culture and social status. The plot may be complex to summarize, but in short it tells the story of the twin sisters, Dora and Nora Chance, and the Hazard's family story. The twin sisters are the illegitimate children of a famous Shakespearean actor Melchior Hazard, who did not recognize them until his 100th birthday and 75th birthday of Dora and Nora. The narrative is told in the first person point of view by Dora and utilizes flashbacks to several important moments in the sisters' lives. The Chance sisters are artists but not like their biological father, as they are vaudeville artists, almost dancing for supper. Their inadequacy goes up and down their genealogical tree and Carter

makes use of many features of Postmodernism to point out that the orders created by mankind “are just that: human constructs, not natural or given entities” (HUTCHEON, 1995, p.41-42).

Another important example of ultimate bastardy is the creature in Mary Shelley’s masterpiece. *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* was published in London in 1818 and tells the story of how the scientist Victor Frankenstein created a humanlike creature, disregarding any ethics or moral principles, abandoning his creation right after the experiment, and how their lives were affected by his acts. This emblematic creature was not even born, but created through science. He can be considered not only an unrecognized child but also an unrecognized human being. “You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow creatures, who owe me nothing? They spurn and hate me” (1994, p.96). Shelley, in her work, is pushing the limits of illegitimacy towards a questioning of the limits of parentage and even questions if sharing a blood relation is the defining point of kinship or if there is more to it.

The pressure exerted on the individual by society’s regulations is difficult to part with. According to Emile Durkheim (1982, p.52), social facts consist of “manners of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual, which are invested with a coercive power by virtue of which they exercise control over him.” Then, illegitimacy would act as a force upon the bastards and their parents, and they have no choice in the matter. Bastardy as a social fact blends with Sigmund Freud’s concepts in *Totem and Taboo* where he assumes that the taboo – illegitimacy – represents powerful desires that must be repressed. Because of this urge to repress the impulse of transgression, people tend to develop a strong aversion to the desires that lead towards the taboo – non-marital relationships (FREUD, 2012b p. 30). The concept of illegitimacy poses as a social fact as much as that of family does. To inquire into the issue of bastardy it is not to question family as a functional social institution, but to search for a broadening of its concept. In contemporary society, not only a child can be considered illegitimate, but also an entire family, if it escapes the instituted and hegemonic model. One important aspect to take into consideration is to whom this hegemonic model serves. If some people have their rights as family members interrupted by the circumstances of their birth, it can be assumed that the concepts or functions of family as a social institution can only be affirmed by duality of denial. In order for a legitimate family to exist there must be an illegitimate one to confirm the first model.

Furthermore, illegitimacy corrupts the primary institution of society, the nuclear family, by going against its established and sacralized notions, father-mother-children, which are not exclusively based on blood, but rely upon a marital relationship and represent one of the most

important modern paradigms of Western society. Inside a marital relationship, consanguinity kinship acts as a confirmation of the family legitimacy, but when consanguinity kinship is found outside marriage, it may act as a threat or as a direct attack on this institution, seen as holy and cherished. In this sense, a child begot outside marriage seems to be itself a threat to the basis of society and becomes spurious, something of questionable origin, irregular and even inferior. The pretense inferiority of a natural child is not related to its being recognized by its father or not, but instead it is upheld in the core of a marriage supported by civil or religious laws. Even the recognized children may still carry the status of the illegitimate one, a representation of an irregularity, just like different family models. They too pose as irregularities and struggle to be truly recognized and not just tolerated by a totalizing society.

In this regard, scientific discourse has contributed, for the last decades, to trying to solve paternity doubts through DNA tests, although they themselves have raised new questions and, somehow, also contributed to complicate the legitimacy issue (FONSECA, 2004). With the popularization of DNA tests, parentage became a subject even more fragile and complex. If a man is believed to be someone's father and it is unveiled through a genetic test that he does not share a biological bond with the child in question, this may or may not mean a bond breaker. Or, if an unrecognized child's parentage is discovered through a test, this does not mean the rising of a familial tie either. In this case, it is uncertain where the concept of family stands, if on the grounds of consanguinity or exclusively on the fields of social relations.

Thus, problematizing the definition of bastardy it is not a movement toward delimitation, but an inquiry of its meaning through fictional representations in order to question social status, family connections and relationships. Hereupon, based on the literature available and taking Western culture as the area of work, one may say that the word "bastard" is treated like an offense and that the bastard figure is frequently seen as a mean person, jealous of fraternal legitimacy, a seeker of approval of the father figure, someone resentful of his/her parent's relationship, who see themselves as a mistake, a broken person. Therefore, leaping beyond the boundaries of the totalizing concept of nuclear family, the works of Carter and Shelley give voice to the ex-centric, to the marginalized child, as they drive ruthlessly into the questioning of family relations, on an exploration of human nature and social status that transcends the circumstances of birth. To broaden the concept of family is not to criticize it as a social institution in decay, but rather a movement to search for the recognition of models other than the traditional one.

On the one hand, the creature in *Frankenstein* is a product of Victor Frankenstein's scientific lust, not lasciviousness. Being produced only by Victor, the creature is monstrous

and later on becomes foul and vile. Like the Greek myth of Typhaon, a creature born to the goddess Hera alone, in revenge for the birth of Athena from Zeus' head. Although Zeus bore Athena, she was conceived with the goddess Metis. Hera decided to have a child alone to avenge herself without bringing more shame on her, as the lines attributed to Homer highlight: "without casting shame on the holy bond of wedlock between you and me" (HESIOD, 1914, ll. 311-330). But the product of her enterprise is monstrous and vile, like Frankenstein's creature. They defy not only the family institution, but also the natural conception and birth of a human being. Their illegitimacy goes beyond the wedlock, surpassing nature.

Thus, as Victor Frankenstein states through the words of Shelley's work, he desired "to give life to an animal as complex and wonderful as a man" (SHELLEY, 1994, p.51) but on the realization of his intentions, the weight of the complexity and responsibility of giving life to another being takes its toll on him and he flees, ignoring the destiny of the creature he has just brought to life. In a way, it's to abandon his creation as a mother and as a father, leaving his progeny all by himself without considering if he would be able to survive alone or what would be the consequences of this sudden break of a bond that was scientifically created. Once abandoned, the nameless creature is cruelly left to his own fate as, differently from a human child, the creature would not be sheltered for he has no fellow creatures. It must not be forgotten that "the bastard is permanently in-between culture and nature, he is with and without origin, and he is associated with both the elusive and the solid" (SCHMIDGEN, 2002). In this sense, he is twice stranded between culture and nature, for not only his origins cannot be recognized but his biology cannot be acknowledged as fully human. The creature is a biological and cultural dilemma that takes the concept of illegitimacy to the boundaries of the question of what is it that makes humans human. If a bastard may be seen as a natural child, his unnatural birth leaves him forever in-between as an extended analogy of the position of every single bastard ever born.

In a way, one may assume that Mary Shelley defends the idea that creation does not end at the moment of conception, but is a continuous responsibility. Victor Frankenstein abandoned the monster almost as soon as he had created it. The creature's social identity is formed by estrangement and the contact with people who mistreated and despised him. The creature becomes foul but was not created like that. However, it can be assumed that Victor Frankenstein was selfish and inconsiderate when assembling his enterprise, and that his only thought was about scientific success. He did succeed, but the ramifications of this success led Frankenstein to his total failure. Moreover, the recognition of the creature as his enterprise

and responsibility comes only when he has no one else to disappoint or to lose. When the single thing he has left to give is the only thing that has lost sense and value to him, his own life.

On the other hand, *Wise Children* poses the Chance sisters as living symbols of irregularity, not wanted nor acknowledged; they escape or go against their cultural heritage. The sisters are twice illegitimate, as Dora says: "our father was a pillar of the legit theatre and we girls are illegitimate in every way – not only born out of wedlock, but we went on the halls" (CARTER, 1992, p.11). Dora and Nora were performers on burlesque halls, a considerable distance from the high culture they came from. In this sense, a parallel between high and low culture with what can be considered legitimate and illegitimate can be drawn within the Hazard family. Consequently, Angela Carter seems to state that illegitimacy is a matter of perception, being a social construct and thus questions the institutions from within, a characteristic of Postmodernism (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 11).

As the novel is anti-canonical by essence, for it goes against all literary norms and conventions, it can be considered as the best literary form to convey the questioning of legitimate and illegitimate culture. Likewise, Angela Carter exploits the notions of high and low art as parallel to legitimate and illegitimate culture. *Wise Children* discusses life as a "theatrical illusion where well-established concepts such as history, religion, fatherhood, cultural heritage and patriarchal authority as mere constructs for stage use" (BOTESCU-SIRETEANU, 2010, p. 100). It can be said that Carter criticizes authority and authenticity as mere fictions as much as the notions of high and low culture. It is a critique of fiction within fiction and a social critique using the very stereotypes she intends to dismantle. Again, Carter uses one of the most characteristic features of postmodern movement, which is the critique of institutions that departs from within themselves.

In addition, Carter makes use of Dora as the narrator and she is responsible for telling not only her own story but also the story of the Hazard family: "I, Dora Chance, in the course of assembling my own autobiography, have inadvertently become the chronicler of all Hazards, [...]" (CARTER, 1992, p. 11). Of course, the character's point of view is unreliable, even more biased when the character herself emphasizes that memory is sometimes unreliable; as it can be seen in "I have a memory, though I know it cannot be a true one..." (p. 72). And it is interesting to consider that the bastard character is the one responsible to speak the legit story of the family. This intertwined illegitimacy poses as a duality of the criticism made by Carter, a statement that nothing is truly legitimate because there is no legitimacy, only viewpoints and blurred positions. Concepts such as family, art and culture are all social

and human constructs; therefore, they are all inventions, fictions in many senses. When Carter uses Dora as the narrator, she demolishes the notions of truth/myth, legitimacy/illegitimacy, low/high art and patriarchy at the same time. Especially because Dora is Nora's twin sister and as people often mistake one for the other, so the truth and all totalizing notions could be interpreted as the mistaken side of one subject matter. The narrator in *Wise Children* exhibits a shifting perspective, never omniscient, always doubled and even dubious. As said by Friedrich Nietzsche on his work *On the Genealogy of Morality*, "[...] the *more* eyes, various eyes we are able to use for the same thing, the *more* complete will be our 'concept' of the thing, our 'objectivity'" (essay III, §12, p.87, author's emphasis).

Nevertheless, female bastards are twice as marginalized as men considering that Western society is, in the matter of fact, patriarchal. This said, women's experience as illegitimate is deeply excluding, turning the female fruits of passion into something vicious or dangerous, seen as a constant reminder of the irregularity of their parents' relations. If the bastard threatens the patrilineal transmission of status, female bastards threaten this transmission in two fronts at the same time: by means of their illegitimacy and also by being women, who oppose a threat to patriarchy *per se*. In a way, one may say that women defy patriarchy as potential menace, so, when they represent a crash in the traditional Western nuclear family ties as bastard offspring, they expose the fragility of patriarchy, and thus, the frailty of social constructions. As for the Chance sisters, their status as natural but illegitimate daughters depicts the uniqueness of female position within Western social familial structures:

We are his *natural* daughters, as they say, as if only unmarried couples do it the way that nature intended. His never-by-him recognized daughters, with whom, by a bizarre coincidence, he shares a birthday (CARTER, 1992, p. 5).

Hence, the Chance sisters in Carter's novel are a doubled reminder of patriarchy and social status fragility, as they are twins they represent the double threat posed by female bastards. In addition, they carry a name that can make transparent the hidden social transgressions of kinship. Considering that "a name is both the encapsulation of a past and the potential for a future" (MACLEAN, 1994, p. 96), the fact that they were named Chance by Angela Carter may indicate a carefully considered feature to disclose the fragility of social constructions and the notions withheld by society of what can be considered legitimate and/or illegitimate: "Chance by name, Chance by nature. We were not planned." (CARTER, 1992, p. 24). In addition, the Chance name came to the sisters through their adoptive grandmother whose past is not accounted for, whose role in the twins' lives may not be fully disclosed, and whose name may not be the real one: "But I don't think that 'Chance' was her own name,

either” (CARTER, 1992, p. 26). In this sense, a name is a label given or assumed that may embody different meanings, possibilities and origins. The importance of the name is observed not only in *Wise Children*, but also in *Frankenstein*. The issue of the name is profoundly explored and deeply remarkable in Shelley’s work, as the offspring of Victor Frankenstein’s scientific enterprise is nameless, reinforcing his illegitimacy.

Likewise, the creature’s namelessness in *Frankenstein*, along with his physical ugliness and malformation, poses his position as a major representative of illegitimacy in literature. Therefore created, the creature’s birth is described by Frankenstein as a catastrophe, and also one may say that the lexical choices by Shelley may reflect the pains of giving birth to a natural child as can be observed in: “How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form?” (SHELLEY, 1994, p.55). Thus, giving life/birth to the creature and walking out from it without even giving it a name is to deny the creature every single aspect of maternity and paternity at the same time. As a father renegades a child by not giving it his last name, Victor denied the creature his existence by not naming it in any way, either by the proper or by the last name. In a world where identity is formed within representation, within discourse (HALL, 2003, p. 4), and language may shape and be shaped by reality and where every rational thought is made within language, to deny a name is to deny existence. It is as if the creature had been denied his right to exist in written culture, because he does not have a name to be called for. The creature is a literary character and it does not bear a name. It is important to consider that Mr. Frankenstein’s decisions of not naming the creature and turning his back on him may be seen as providing evidence for his wish to unmake what he called a catastrophe.

What is more, regarding the periods that the main works are related to, Romanticism with *Frankenstein* and Postmodernism with *Wise Children*, a bridge between these two chronologically apart but closely related movements can be built based upon subjectivity and individuality. Romanticism represents a profound shift in the attitudes towards art and human sciences that dominated Western culture initially on the first half of the 19th century. Romanticism cherishes freedom of individual self-expression, turning the focus to personal experience over impersonal and artificial rationality. In this sense, Postmodernism represents a shift in the balance from individuality to an over individuality by approaching the ex-centric subjects that are in the margins of the totalizing culture, as a new rethinking of Western culture and models (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 9).

Romanticism brought light to subjectivity in an impulse to look for truth inwardly; thus, *Frankenstein* may shine a light not just on the limits of science and moral, but on parentage

and the building of one's character too, leading the reader towards a closer look on consanguinity, kinship and character formation. Moreover, Shelley's work exhibits concepts of the Enlightenment, regarding the formation of a person's character, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau's idea that the person is corrupted by society or John Locke's ideas that humanity is a *tabula rasa*, being neither good nor bad, but a result of experiences¹. So, it can be considered that every single bad deed perpetrated by the creature is a direct reflex of the misdeeds he suffered. The creature's disregard for people's lives and desire of revenge can be the immediate result of society's and Frankenstein's disregard and indifference. Mr. Frankenstein selfishly created, out of his scientific lust, a living creature disregarding the consequences of his acts. Before the consummation of his intentions to give life through science, it can be understood that his concepts of beauty and morals were guided by his impulses, not by his rationality. Even considering a scientific action as utmost rational, the volition to do it may not be considered as such, and one may not forget that the consequences of scientific discoveries may not be or cannot be accounted for in advance. So, the limits of science are not the same as the limits of ethics. In *Frankenstein*, it is clear that the perception of the world is shaped by point of view, by an internal and personal configuration that allows people to perceive and apprehend the world in a particular way. So, there is no single and fundamental truth, only points of view and particular understandings of things. Every action is perceived differently by the observer, as Victor Frankenstein and the creature share the same world, but not the same point of view. Mary Shelley's questioning of the limits of science will always be contemporaneous. For instance, nowadays science can help uncover parental relations and can help people to conceive children, but the implications and ramifications are not accounted for only in the scientific field, but mostly in social relations. Surrogate mothers, conception *in vitro*, DNA tests, for example, they all have serious social implications. And, in a way, all of them defy the traditional concepts of family in Western society, "at and obvious level, this is because "genetic" and "biological" aspects of reproduction are also social categories, and all social categories are ultimately embodied processes, deeply implicated in power and history" (GOSLINGA-ROY, 2000, p. 113).

Postmodernism takes the questioning of family a step further, as it can be said that Postmodernism carries an impulse to bring peripheral subjects to light as well as to relocate issues and groups that are usually left aside history, in a movement that shifts the balance and position between margin and center. In *Wise Children*, the questioning of patriarchy and the

¹ JANSSON, SIV. Introduction. In: *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus*. Shelley, Mary. Great Britain: Wordsworth Classics, 1999.

limits of what it is considered to be high and low art comes from within institutions as said above. The sisters' genealogical tree is permeated with the concepts of bastardy and irony that infiltrate the whole book, for example, Dora says that her father "was a pillar of the legit" (p.11) although he fathered unacknowledged bastard daughters and raised his brother's daughters thinking of them as his legit offspring. The Chance sisters' art form, vaudeville, is understood as bastard art, while Shakespearean theatre may be considered as legitimate high art. Yet, social notions are not natural entities and this distinction is socially built. Carter shakes the illegitimacy tree to challenge every notion that is socially constructed, especially parentage and family connections. The questioning is brilliantly produced when Carter challenges the concepts with their double, with a game between yes and no, shadow and light, legit and illegitimate inside the same text. She plays with the silences between affirmations with which is not said but is implied, like the "no" left aside when someone says "yes". Postmodernism seems to reject "any neat binary opposition that might conceal a secret hierarchy of values" (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 43). This way, when she exposes the unsaid by showing the dualities together, she manages to exhibit the inconsistencies of which discourses are made of, especially hegemonic discourses. In a "society in which social reality is structured by discourses" (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 7) to depict the inconsistencies within them it is to question the composition of society itself and the ideas of social constructs as something natural.

To summarize, the bastard figure is emblematic in and out of fiction. One may affirm that the very concept of illegitimacy is outdated when the paradigm of the Western concept of nuclear family is going through a complete rethinking. Even so, familial relations are social constructs where consanguinity may be a factor as strong as affinity. Angela Carter, as much as Mary Shelley, defies the concepts of bastardy and legitimacy by scrutinizing social roles and rules. However, illegitimacy is a broad term that may include cultural relations and gender roles, not only the simplistic notion of children begot outside wedlock, as if the bastard was a mythological figure within a society that poses a threat to the sacralized notions of nuclear family and legitimate culture. By portraying the multiple illegitimacies as irregularities, both authors highlight the asymmetrical relations upheld inside the Western culture and its hegemonic tendencies to categorize relations, cultures and social interactions. *Frankenstein* and *Wise Children* go against the power of the canon by eroding its totalizing force from inside. Even if one and a half century apart from each other, the works' dialogical relation can be considered evident. On top of that, the questions raised in both books will not lose their contemporaneity for human beings will never cease to be social beings moving

between social constructs. Illegitimacy is a threat to every single homogenizing notion and may represent a possibility for further inquiry on every institution built by mankind. As for the reason the bastard is an emblematic figure, one may affirm that its existence can be considered as a living and breathing representation of how fragile social constructs are. As if the bastard could be the breeze that blows society's house of cards.

1 LET ME TELL YOU A (HI)STORY

You may write me down in history
 With your bitter, twisted lies,
 You may trod me in the very dirt
 But still, like dust, I'll rise
Maya Angelou

Every literary work is a piece of its time. A cutout from a specific period and literary movement, although not restrained by those. On the one hand, *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* (1994 [1818]), from Mary Shelley, is a monstrous child from Romanticism, dealing with anguishes and issues from the 19th century that have crossed time and are still up to date. On the other hand, Angela Carter's *Wise Children* (1992) is a child from the 20th century, a century that has seen two world wars, and huge changes in the world. Despite the fact that the novels are chronologically apart for a hundred and seventy-three years, give or take, and two different literary movements, they are interrelated as regards the exploitation of subjectivity and questioning of illegitimacy, among other strong themes. In the past 19th century, history and literature were considered branches of the same tree of learning, then came the separation that is now being challenged by postmodern art and theory (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 105). History and fiction are historical terms themselves and both their definitions and interrelations are historically determined, but they are still porous terms and their boundaries are elastic (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 105-6).

History and literature together produce intertextuality within a system of culture, but history is a limited mode of writing that presents narratives as objective truth. But one assumption that has to be demolished, and literature takes its part in it, is the very concept of truth. For "there are only *truths* in the plural, and never one Truth; and there is rarely falseness *per se*, just others' truths. Fiction and history are narratives distinguished by their frames" (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 109, author's emphasis). This said, the historical background here presented must be read as the survival narrative, not undeniable truth that should go on unchallenged and unopposed. Fictional representations may allow an imaginative approach to future, contemporary or past issues that cannot be broadened by historical discourse. Thus, the historical background and brief account of Romanticism and Postmodernism presented here

may help the unfolding and understanding of the challenges and broadening of questions of illegitimacy analyzed in *Frankenstein* and *Wise Children*.

1.1 Spontaneous overflow of powerful history

By the end of the 18th century, England was experiencing a period of political and economic turbulence, moving from an agricultural society to an industrial potency. All this happening amidst the process that led to the American Independence in 1776; after a series of altercations between the American Colonies and the United Kingdom (1773-75), the American Independence War starts in 1775 and ends in 1783 with America's victory and the United Kingdom recognizing America's Independence (1776). And then came the French Revolution, that echoed in the streets of France in 1789 with its motto: "*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*" (meaning "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"). The French Revolution (1789-99) marks the end of the *Ancien Régime*, overthrowing monarchy and establishing a republic. The revolution was inspired by liberal and radical ideas that changed deeply the course of modern history, leading to the decline of absolute monarchies. Through 1760 to 1820, Great Britain was ruled by George III, who was a Hanoverian in appearance but unlike his predecessors, hated Hanover and referred to England as his native country. George III, who had a recurrent mental condition, relapsed into madness after 1810 and died in 1820. In the period from 1811 to 1820, the kingdom was under the Regency of George, Prince of Wales, the king's son, who was crowned George IV in 1820 after his father's death. George III tried to reverse the politics of Robert Walpole, first British prime minister, to seize more power. It was under his ruling that the kingdom lost the American Colonies among other territories around the world. Also, for fear of French ideals, public meetings were prohibited and the English government would arrest every and each radical leader lest they spread such "dangerous" ideas; the aristocracy, in order to distance themselves from the vices of an *ancient régime*, sought to become examples of virtue to be mirrored by the common citizens and not despised by them (STRONG, 1996; ABRAMS, 1979; SANDERS, 1994).

Parliament feared a revolt from the countryside, for the enclosures had turned lands that had once been open-field and communally worked into private owned farms, expelling hundreds of families from their lands. This landless class either migrated to the industrial cities or stayed as agricultural labors earning starvation wages. On top of that, the Industrial

Revolution – an expression coined in the 20th century to explain what happened on that period with the shift in methods of manufacturing caused by the invention of power-driven machinery – changed everything. The use of steam and water power, along with railroads, turnpike roads and water channels, was accompanied by the employment of new machinery in agriculture and the growth of factories that changed society and the landscape. The cities became overpopulated. English landscape changed into chess like fields and grey cities filled with smokes from the factories. The population was polarized into landowners and traders or wagers. Another key aspect of the Industrial Revolution was the exploitation of the working class. English factory workers lived in horrendous conditions, earning miserable salaries and working for outrageous hours. No child was spared if it was big enough to work. Heavily pregnant women would work underground in the mines, as they desperately needed the money. Little by little, villages became cities and countrymen were forced to look for work in the factories and in the coal mines, the basis of the steam power. The bourgeoisie acquired new status then, with self-made men who started small businesses and prospered, and whose children were properly educated for their new status in society (STRONG, 1996; ABRAMS, 1979; SANDERS, 1994).

Thus, this was the perfect stage for the birth of a movement that would represent a deep, not to say complete, shift in perspectives and attitudes towards the arts and human sciences in Western culture, Romanticism.

1.1.1 Romanticism

It is commonly affirmed that English Romanticism began in 1798 with the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* from William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. And the second edition, from 1800, brought a preface that explained the new way of writing and composing, exposing key concepts such as “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” and “emotion recollected in tranquility”. Romanticism has been associated to the values of the French Revolution, which evoked enthusiasm among English liberals and radicals. But the results of the Napoleonic wars left the same enthusiasts questioning the revolution and themselves (ABRAMS, 1979, p.1-20).

To understand Romanticism as just an opposition to Neoclassicism would be an oversimplification of the movement that represented a complete shift in human sciences and

arts. Romanticism values emotion over pure logic, rejecting the precepts of order and balance. Romanticism also emphasizes individualism and self-expression. Not a complete disregard of intellect, but the valorization of the senses and emotion. A Poet writes her/his own mind. Also, Romantic thinking values tradition and sees in nature a possibility of redemption for Man, polluted by cities and urban life. A feeling of nostalgia is also frequently present in Romantic works (ABRAMS, 1979, p.1-20).

Poetry written in the first person was not considered as minor anymore, and the lyric “I” is not, frequently, only a dramatic persona. In addition, Romantic poetry often imbued the landscape with passion and human life. For example, the verses from “The Solitary Reaper”, from William Wordsworth:

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.
[...]

The language of Romanticism is simpler, for the writer is a “man speaking to men” (WORDSWORTH apud ABRAMS, 1979, p. 168) about ordinary things that would be colored by imagination and presented in an unusual way (WORDSWORTH apud ABRAMS, 1979, p. 162). Also, supernatural elements and strangeness are frequently present in a diametric opposition to reason. And, as Neoclassicism dealt with men as members of organized societies, Romantics would cherish individualism and subjectivity.

The novel of purpose was a common genre at the turn of the century, and was frequently written to spread political and social theories current in the period of the French Revolution. For example, *Caleb William* (1794), from William Godwin, combines elements of Gothic with didactic intentions to illustrate the helplessness of the lower classes in relation to the upper classes. Another expression was the “Gothic novel”. A genre inaugurated by Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto, A Gothic Story* (1764), Gothic fiction marked the second half of 17th century. With plots that explored the possibilities of terror, fear and mystery, with settings in castles or exotic places, these works were full of devious characters that were punished, in the end, by their hideous deeds. The supernatural was a constant presence, with ghosts or aberrations, dealing intensely with the macabre. The best gothic works offered the irrational side of humankind, with perverted impulses, nightmarish stories that lie beneath mankind's conscience (ABRAMS, 1979, p.1-20). Mary Shelley's

Frankenstein represents a change in the gothic genre, approaching not the supernatural, but the psychological side. The horror is not provided by a ghost or ruined castles, but by science and the achievements of Man, accessing the psyche to explore the moral distortions possible in humankind. The monstrosity comes from inside.

The Romantic period produced many formidable writers, such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, and Mary Shelley, among others.

1.2 “Of glorious parents, thou aspiring Child”

A graveyard, the countryside, books and reminiscences. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley *née* Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (1797-1851) was the only child of the *avant-garde* Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) with William Godwin (1756–1836). Mary Wollstonecraft was an English writer, philosopher, and advocate of women's rights. A notorious woman who lived an unconventional life and was ahead of her time (DRABBLE, 2000, p. 924-925). Mary Wollstonecraft is best known for *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), where she attacks educational restrictions endured by women and states that women are not naturally inferior to men (DRABBLE, 2000, p. 1110). Nowadays, she is considered one of the founding feminist philosophers. Mary Wollstonecraft married William Godwin, English writer, journalist and philosopher, considered the founder of philosophical anarchism. His *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) is an attack on government and political institutions (DRABBLE, 2000, p. 413). Mary Shelley's mother died eleven days after giving birth to her, due to childbirth complications, leaving behind three year old Fanny Imlay – her daughter from a previous relationship – baby girl Mary, and several unfinished manuscripts (ABRAMS, 1979, p. 108-109).

Four years after her birth, William Godwin married a widow, Mary Jane Clairmont, who had two children of her own, Charles and Claire. Mary Jane and William had a son, William Jr. So, the family was composed by five children of diverse parentage and two remarried widows. Mary Shelley adored her father but resented her stepmother and to ease the situation, fourteen year old Mary Shelley was sent to live in Scotland with the family of William Baxter, admirer of William Godwin. She spent two years in the countryside, daydreaming and writing stories – which have been lost. On 1814, she returned to her father's

house, in London. Then, at the age of sixteen, she met Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), twenty-one year old English poet, who was married to Harriet Westbrook. P. B. Shelley was a great admirer of William Godwin and was almost a daily visitor in his house. Percy was, then, estranged from his wife, and soon enough fell in love with Mary. The young couple met secretly and within a few months, Mary was pregnant. On July 28, Shelley and Mary ran off to Europe, taking Jane Clairmont², Mary's stepsister who, later, changed her name to Claire. Mary describes their wanderings throughout Europe in her first book, *History of a Six Week's Tour*, published anonymously in 1817 (DRABBLE, 2000, p. 924-925).

Back in London, in 1815, Mary Shelley gave premature birth to a daughter who lived only a few weeks. A year later, 1817, Mary Shelley have birth to a son, William. The young couple was usually in financial difficulties, and Shelley often had to hide from his creditors to avoid arrest. Godwin, a supporter of free love, did not approve of his daughter's relationship. In the spring of 1816, Shelley and Mary, with their baby and Claire Clairmont, went abroad to Switzerland to meet Lord Byron³, who was accompanied by his physician Polidori⁴, at Lake Geneva, where they became neighbors. On October of 1816, Mary Shelley's half sister, Fanny Imlay, commits suicide by an overdose of laudanum. Two months later, Harriet, wife to P. B. Shelley and pregnant from another man, drowned herself. P. B. Shelley married Mary after that. (ABRAMS, 1979, p. 897-881).

It was there, at Villa Diodati in Lake Geneva, during the unusual summer of 1816, that *Frankenstein* came to life. On her preface to the 1831 edition, Mary Shelley wrote an account of that summer and the creation of her masterpiece. She describes how the "ungenial summer, and incessant rain often confined us for days to the house" (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 6) and how they were involved with some volumes of ghost stories, translated from German into French. Then Byron came up with a proposition, "'We will each write a ghost story'", said Lord Byron; and his proposition was acceded to" (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 7). Nonetheless, Mary Shelley could not think of a story immediately, as she tells:

I busied myself to think of a story, – a story to rival those which had excited us to this task. One which would speak to the mysterious fears of our nature, and awaken

² Clara Mary Jane Clairmont (1798-1879), had a brief liaison with Byron with whom she had a daughter, Allegra (1817-22). Few traces of her literary projects survived. (SAGE, Lorna. *The Cambridge Guide To Women's writing In English*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 134)

³ George Gordon Byron (1788-1824), Lord Byron. Renowned and polemic English writer (DRABBLE, Margaret (Ed). *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (6th ed). Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 157)

⁴ John William Polidori (1795-1821), English writer and physician. (DRABBLE, Margaret (Ed). *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (6th ed). Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 801)

thrilling horror – one to make the reader dread to look round, to curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart. If I did not accomplish these things, my ghost story would be unworthy of its name. I thought and pondered – vainly. I felt that blank incapability of invention which is the greatest misery of authorship, when dull Nothing replies to our anxious invocations. Have you thought of a story? I was asked each morning, and each morning I was forced to reply with a mortifying negative (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 7-8).

Thus, after a night of conversation about science, “the nature of the principle of life” (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 8), reanimation of corpses and galvanism, Mary Shelley could not sleep, for her imagination kept wondering about the plot of her future work. And then, as a waking nightmare, she gave birth to *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* (1994[1818]). Frankenstein is not only a wake-up nightmare, but a reflection of her own anguish, her family problems, her losses and guilt and feeling of bastardy. The projection of Mary Shelley’s fear of suffering and her own sufferings imprinted in the creature and its creator.

On September 1818, Shelley lost her third baby, Clara, followed less than nine months by the death of her son, William. So, at the age of twenty-two, Mary Shelley had been three times a mother and had lost three children. A young woman, whose maternal presence was filled by the books she had written, by the reviews of her mother’s works, and the visits to her tomb. Mary, whose love life had started as a secret at Mary Wollstonecraft’s grave in St. Pancras’ Churchyard. In November of 1819, Mary gave birth to another son, Percy Florence, and had a miscarriage on the next spring. Her niece, Allegra, Claire and Byron’s child, died in an Italian Convent. In July of 1822, Percy Bysshe Shelley drowned on the Gulf of Spezia. Mary, a grieving and impoverished widow of 24, with one son, went back to England to disseminate her husband’s work and to support herself and her son by her writings. Mary Shelley was financially assisted with a small allowance by Sir Timothy Shelley, who threatened to cut off this aid if she dared to write a biography of his scandalous son. Between 1824 to 1844, Mary Shelley published a great variety of works, including journal articles, tales for literary annuals, volumes of literary biographies (1835-9), editions of Percy B. Shelley’s works (1824 and 1839) and four novels: *The Last Man* (1826), *Perkin Warbeck* (1830), *Lodore* (1835) and *Falkner* (1837). When her father-in-law died, in 1844, leaving the estate and title to Mary’s son, Percy Florence, she finally found herself in more comfortable circumstances. Her son married in 1848 with Jane St. John, an admirer of Shelley’s poetry and her close friend. Mary Shelley died at the age of 53, in 1851, at Chester Square, London. She was buried in Bournemouth churchyard (ABRAMS, 1979, p. 897-881; SAGE, 1999, p. 572-573).

Mary Shelley's life is an embroidered Gothic psychodrama filled with family issues and losses. The birth of the popular myth, *Frankenstein* and its creature, is also embedded in its creation. Mary Shelley's "ghost story" is a "Romantic novel about – among other things – Romanticism, as well as a book about and perhaps, too, about the writers of books" (GILBERT, 1978, p. 49). A waking dream, or nightmare, from a young woman with a complicated life, notorious parents, complex husband, a young woman who knew loss up close. A woman amongst chaos. On Mary Shelley's own words, "invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in creating out of void, but out of chaos" (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 8).

1.3 On the edge of history

The century where Angela Carter was born, was a century of wars and profound changes. The 20th century was complex, tense, bloody and controversial. The perfect scenery to a literary and artistic movement that is almost impossible to define. On March, 1938, Hitler marched into Vienna and Austria became part of the fast-growing German Empire. Britain was silent. On March, 15th, 1939, Hitler marched into Prague, breaking the Munich agreement, and taking what was Czechoslovakia. On September, 1st, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and two days later, Britain declared war. On May, 10th, 1940, Winston Churchill became Prime Minister. On the same day, the German army swept into Belgium and the Low Countries. On June, 14th, Paris surrendered and France fell a week after. The Battle of Britain began and the German Luftwaffe met the Royal Air Force, which was aided by radars and ultrasound that enabled the Royal Air Force to be warned of the enemies' approach and to read the German's strategy. The island was harshly attacked, but it was not conquered. When Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, the British formed an alliance. American president Roosevelt offered unlimited credit, which meant that the war was funded but that ever-growing loan would have to be dealt with later. The war continued to escalate through the following years, when on April, 1945, Russia reached Berlin, and, on May, 4th, 1945, the Germans surrendered to Montgomery. The war in Europe was officially ended on May, 8th. But the war was not finished abroad until August, 14th. It is important to highlight the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings, that killed thousands and represented a clear statement of power from the United States of America (STRONG, 1996).

As for Britain, the Emergence Power Act of May 1940 had given the government unlimited authority over people and property. British people were affected as never before. Children were evacuated to the country, labor was directed, work was classified into essential and non-essential, identity cards were mandatory, food rationing was introduced – which would last until 1954 – and clothes were also rationed (STRONG, 1996; SANDERS, 1994). After the end of the war, victory did not feel like victory. Britain was economically compromised. And the world was forever changed. The polarization of power between the United States of America and Soviet Union with the Cold War was another example of major change. Britain experienced nationalizations of basic services and goods, such as gas and electricity, iron and steel. After World War II, large-scale immigration changed the composition of the British population, with peoples from the West Indies and South Asia. The British population became more ethnically diverse, resulting in important cultural consequences. The British Empire, the largest one in the world in 1945, was dismantled, beginning with Indian and Pakistan independence in 1947. The changing of the scale of power from the European countries to the Soviet Union and The United States of America gave strength to the independence movements on the remaining colonies. From 1941 to 1970s the policies of welfare became more complicated and did not prevent many citizens from becoming poor. By 1970s, the political parties were in search of new solutions to old problems (STRONG, 1996; SANDERS, 1994).

The baby boomers, generation born between 1946 and 1964, started to challenge social rules and regulations, defying sexual behavior, politics, marriage, and arts in 1960s. With the petroleum crises in 1973, and its high rates in unemployment and inflation, Britain was in distress. This situation began to change when Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013) became the first female Prime Minister, in 1979. Leader of the conservative party, she became known as the “Iron Lady”, and was a controversial figure with harsh attitudes. The war to retain the Falkland Islands, in 1982, consolidated her power and granted her a second round as Prime Minister. Despite the strong criticism that targeted her, Thatcher was the Prime Minister from 1979 until 1990, when she resigned. The kingdom recovered and rebuilt its economy, returning to its prominent position in the global scale of power. From 1990 to 1991, England got involved in the Gulf War, aligned with the United States to free Kuwait from Iraq’s occupation (STRONG, 1996; SANDERS, 1994).

In brief, regarding the roles and presence of women, the 20th century saw major changes and advances in women’s rights. From the suffragettes, women fighting for their rights to the women’s liberation movement – late 1960s and early 1970s –, the women’s

movements achieved real advances in rights and policies. And, in the 21st century, the fight for equality continues and equity is still something to be achieved (STRONG, 1996; ABRAMS, 1979; SANDERS, 1994).

1.3.1 Postmodernism

The problematization with Postmodernism starts with its prefix “post”, for “there is always a paradox at the heart of that ‘post’: irony does indeed mark the difference from the past, but the intertextuality echoing simultaneously works to affirm [...] the connection with the past” (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 125). So, the prefix may be understood as a continuation of Modernism, in a chronological relation, or a rupture with it. As stated by Jean-François Lyotard, “the ‘post-’ of ‘postmodern’ does not simply mean a movement of comeback, flashback or feedback – that is, not a movement of repetition but a procedure in ‘ana-’: a procedure of analysis, anamnesis, anagogy, and anamorphosis that elaborates an ‘initial forgetting’” (LYOTARD, 1993 p. 50, author’s emphasis). So, any attempt to define Postmodernism by using comparative tables and schemes that would put this particular movement in direct comparison with Modernism or any other movement that came before, is not able to grasp the very meaning and standards of the Postmodern movement. Because the “contradictions that characterizes postmodernism reject any neat binary opposition that might conceal a secret hierarchy of values” (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 42-3).

If Romanticism represents a profound change in the course of arts and Human sciences, Postmodernism represents an implosion from within institutions (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 11). Not as a simplistic overrelativization of subjects, but as a profound questioning of hegemonic discourse and institutions. Thus, literature may be the means where all orders and systems and issues may be approached and questioned and postmodern literature “questions centralized, totalized, hierarchized, closed systems: questions, but does not destroy (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 41). Postmodern literature is full of metafiction, intertextuality, pastiche and parody, among others. An example of this breaking with closed systems, is the poem from Philip Larkin, which uses colloquial language, swearing, in his verses, in his broadening of parenting, and also is characterized by intertextuality, for the title of the poem is an allusion to another poem, Robert Louis Stevenson’s “Requiem”.

This Be The Verse

They fuck you up, your mum and dad.
 They may not mean to, but they do.
 They fill you with the faults they had
 And add some extra, just for you.
 [...]

Another feature of Postmodernism is what Linda Hutcheon calls “historiographic metafiction”, when metafiction and historical fiction are conjoined “confronting the discourse of art with the discourse of history” (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 20). Therefore, postmodernism is a “writing-as-experience-of-limits” (KRISTEVA apud HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 8), challenging and pushing the limits of language, sexual identity, universalization and subjectivity. This challenging of subjectivity makes possible the expansion and connection with Romanticism, for its valuing of individuality allows the questioning of the same individuality and subjectivity. To sum up, Postmodernism is “fundamentally contradictory, resolutely historical and inescapably political” (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 4).

1.4 “**Dream awhile, scheme awhile**”

Angela Carter, née Angela Olive Stalker, was born in Eastbourne, Sussex, on May 7th, 1940 and died on February 16th, 1992. Daughter of Sophia Oliver (1905-69), née Farthing; and Hugh Alexander Stalker (1896-1988). Her mother, grammar school educated, gave up work in a department store, after marriage to become a stay at home mom. Her father was a Scottish journalist who worked at Press Association. Her father used to take her to movies excursions, especially to Granada Cinema at Tooting, what left an indelible mark in Carter with her love for films and cinema, reflected upon her work. Carter and her brother spent most of their childhood years with their maternal grandmother in Yorkshire. Her mother’s overprotection triggered in Carter a strong need for solitude and an anorexia. Carter’s father and grandmother were two major influences in her life. Carter wanted to attend Egyptology in college, but the prospect of her parents moving to Oxford with her made her change her mind. Thus, her father got her an internship at Croydon Advertiser. But Carter would not be a good reporter for her imaginative mind was not attached to the facts, so she went on writing reviews and critiques about books and records (RAPUCCI, 2011).

In the late 50s, one of the only ways out of overprotective parents, was through marriage. So, in 1960, Carter married Paul Carter, Chemist professor at Bristol Technical College, moving from south London to Cifton, Bristol. A far more bohemian scenery. On the following year, she started to study English at Bristol University, focusing on Medieval Literature. At the same time, she developed an interest in folklore, getting to know folk music and the jazz of the 60s. In 1966, Carter published her first novel, *Shadow Dance*, written during her summer vacation. In 1967, she published *The Magic Toyshop*. Her third novel, *Several Perceptions*, was published in 1968 and granted her the Somerset Maugham award in 1969. The £500 she earned, according to the award, should be spent on a trip. Then, Carter divorced her husband and went to find her freedom in Japan. Carter went to Japan in 1971 and lived there for two years. Her Japan years are considered to be crucial for her writings and may have allowed her to have a new look upon Western culture. From 1976 to 1978, Angela was a fellow in creative writing at Sheffield University. Visiting professor at Brown University, Rhode Island (1980-81) and at Adelaide University, Australia (1984) (RAPUCCI, 2011; SAGE, 1999).

Angela Carter remarried to Mark Pearce and, in 1983, they had a son, Alexander. Carter was a really productive writer and published nine novels – *Shadow Dance* (1966), *The Magic Toyshop* (1967), *Several Perceptions* (1968), *Heroes and Villains* (1969), *Love* (1971), *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* (1972), *The Passion of New Eve* (1977), *Nights at the Circus* (1984), *Wise Children* (1991) –, some short fiction and poetry collection, radio plays, television shows, children's books, along with non-fiction. Carter edited four books and was also a translator of two works. She died at the age of 51, in 1992, of lung cancer (RAPUCCI, 2011).

One of Carter's most famous works, a retelling of fairy tales, *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) may be described as a subversive rewriting of traditional tales, such as Bluebeard's castle and Red Riding Hood. The British author, Neil Gaiman, writes about *The Bloody Chamber*, saying that "Carter was the first writer I encountered who took fairy tales seriously, in the sense of not trying to explain them or to make them less or to pin them dead on paper, but to revigorate them" (GAIMAN, 2016, p. 425).

Angela Carter's "picaresque speculative fictions and elegantly rude versions of fairy tales were a startling new achievement in fiction by British women" (SAGE, 1999, p. 115). Carter's Postmodern fiction is constantly associated with magical realism. Nonetheless, both are definitions that the author herself did not believe in, as she says: "I thought I was a social realist" (SAGE apud RAPUCCI, 2011, p. 28). When interviewed by Anna Kastavos and

questioned about her affirmation that she was not in the remythologizing business but in the “demythologizing business”, as was stated by, Carter in “Notes From the Front Line”, she states: “Well, I’m basically trying to find out what certain configurations of imagery in our society, in our culture, really stand for, what they mean, underneath the kind of semireligious coating that makes people not particularly want to interfere with them” (CARTER apud KASTAVOS, 1994). Carter’s works are filled with intertextuality, parody, questioning of femininity and female roles, allegories and a defiance towards sacralized notions and hegemonic discourse.

2 THEN THEY WERE TWO AND ONE AND BOTH

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and caldron bubble.

William Shakespeare

Much has been discussed in Literature about the roles of the double. From the myths and ancient storytelling to post-modern works, the double is a remarkable and reappearing issue within literature, and, we would venture to say, within Western culture as a whole. Otto Rank in his *The Double* (1971), gave a psychoanalytical approach to the motif of the double, proposing that the double is a dimension where the relation of the self with the self is possible (RANK, 1971, p. 7). Clément Rosset, in *O real e seu duplo* (1988), says that the notion of the double implies a paradox within itself, because it is, at the same time, the one and the other (ROSSET, 1988, p. 19). The double, in *Wise Children* (1991) and *Frankenstein* (1994), does not work as a mere projection of the ego, or a shadow to one's existence. Carter uses the doubles as a means of questioning otherness and self-alienation, and the building of identity, of uniqueness. In *Frankenstein*, Shelley exposes the narcissistic side of the double (RANK, 1971, p. 69-86), with Victor Frankenstein's efforts to create another human being, or a humanlike creature, and how he is unable to deal with the unfolding of his enterprise, which would set the plot in motion and approach the (non)relation between him and his creature. Also, both works expose the binaries that have influenced Western concepts of culture, gender, nature, science and art.

In Carter, the use of Shakespearean's plays is employed in order to criticize the pair "low and high culture", Carter's double-faced parody, *Wise Children* (1991) is built upon doubles as in Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* (1594) The three main sets of twins: Melchior and Peregrine, Dora and Nora, Imogen and Saskia, turn the story in blurred identities and confusing relationships. On the one hand, Melchior is Dora and Nora's biological father, but it is the uncle who acted as their father. As Dora explains "Note how I call them both 'our fathers', as if we had the two and, in a sense, so we did. Melchior it was who did the biologically necessary, it's true, but Peregrine *passed* as out father – that is, he was the one who publicly acknowledge us when Melchior would not." (CARTER, 1992, p. 16-17, author's emphasis). On the other hand, Imogen and Saskia are raised as legitimate

daughters of Melchior, only to be revealed, by the very end of the novel, that they are the illegitimate daughters of Peregrine. Even the paternity of Melchior and Peregrine is questionable, since it is implied that they are the offspring of an affair of their mother, Estella, with a former stage partner, Cassius Booth. In a Shakespearean parody of *Othello* – not a coincidence that this was their last play together as well –, Ranulph Hazard, Estella's husband, killed his wife and Cassius, committing suicide right after, leaving the boys orphans.

Thus, in *Wise Children* (1991), the issue of doubles works as a room of mirrors to a shifting perspective narrative. Defying the Manichaeian binarism that permeates the hegemonic discourse, illegitimate/legitimate, women/men, low culture/high culture, Carter questions all concepts as human constructed and not natural given entities as posed by Hutcheon (1988, p.41-42). Questioning the fact that the concept of duplication implies an original and a copy (ROSSET, 1988, p. 34-35), the unfolding of *Wise Children's* plot shakes the idea of what or who is the model and what or who is the duplication. With a story intertwined with doubles and shifting perspectives, the theme of bastardy echoes from generation to generation, and the issue of self-alienation and otherness is deepened in Carter's work, the multidimensional expressions of the double clarify the sense of self-mirroring and self-questioning. Twin fathers, twin children. As the double could stand for a representation of the relation of the self to the self (TUCKER, 1971, p. xiv), in Carter, this relation "self-to-self" is blurred and the limits of where one begins and another ends are confusing and exchangeable.

For example, Dora asks to spend a night with Nora's boyfriend by their seventeenth birthday. Dora wishes to lose her maidenhood to him and only him, as she says: "He's the only one I want, Nora" (CARTER, 1992, p. 83), as her sister agrees and the plan begins, Dora pretending to be Nora, projects how she sees her sister and starts to behave as she thinks she would, feeling voluptuous and able to be her opposite, her double:

I smelled the unfamiliar perfume on my skin and felt voluptuous. As soon as they started to call me Nora, I [Dora] found that I could kiss the boys and hug the principals with abandonment because all that came quite naturally to her[Nora]. To me, no. I was ever the introspective one (CARTER, 1992, p. 84).

In a way, this scene unfolds how sedimentary Dora and Nora's relationship is, as Dora, by asking to sleep with Nora's boyfriend and also pretending to be her sister, may reveal that she wishes not only Nora's boyfriend but also to be Nora herself. Observing her sister's behavior and love life, made her jealous and envious sometimes: "[...] I'd listened while the one she[Nora] loved made her shout out loud, when I[Dora] was full of envy and desire" (CARTER, 1992, p. 84). And after having sex with Nora's boyfriend, the character

describes how she laid on the sofa and “breathed in the smells of him and me [Dora] that were really the smells of him and Nora [...]” (CARTER, 1992, p. 86), adding another layer to this, already, complicated double, as this “smelling of Nora” could unfold the urge of an incestuous relation from Dora’s part in relation to Nora. Or, even so, Dora’s version of the relation of the self to the self, as no one could represent Dora’s self better than her twin sister, her mirrored image and her flesh and blood, her double. At the same time, Carter states that as much as the sisters are identical, they are not symmetrical, thus there is no unity even in one own’s body, “for the body isn’t itself symmetrical” (CARTER, 1992, p. 5).

Nevertheless, in *Wise Children*, the tension is not exclusively built between the subject and her/his double, but between doubles as well. Much like an infinite reflection in a room of mirrors, with the reflections started by their fathers, Melchior and Peregrine, and perpetuated throughout the generations with Dora and Nora, Imogen and Saskia, Gareth and Tristram and by the “end” of the story, with Gareth’s twin babies, nameless boy and a girl – “a new thing in our family” (CARTER, 1992, p. 227), with twins of different gender. To unfold the “room of mirrors”, it is important to keep in mind that Dora and Nora were Melchior’s children but Peregrine passed as their father; Imogen and Saskia were Peregrine’s daughters but believed to be Melchior’s, and Tristram and Gareth were Melchior’s sons and Tristram was having an affair with his believed to be half-sister, but in fact was his cousin, Saskia.

In *Frankenstein* (1994), the creature and Victor work as a symbiotic duo, as the creature being the outside of what Frankenstein would look like from the inside of his scientific lust. At the same time, they represent the permanence within oneself and the conflict with the other. Frankenstein and the creature pose as Narcissus and Echo, at the same time. The creature as a means of Frankenstein achieving immortality and, at the same time, representing a threat to Frankenstein’s well-being, a living proof of his desire to avoid the sources of human suffering (FREUD, 2013a, p. 30). As the withdrawal of the self from the self ends up as a confirmation of the own self (ROSSET, 1988, p. 69), Victor and the creature can and cannot be seen as two distinct beings. Self-alienation works in both ways in Shelley’s masterpiece and the otherness of the creature can only be complete with the otherness of Victor. This relation provokes a kind of anxiety, as the pursuer and the pursued cannot be truly separated and identified. Frankenstein created the creature that stripped him from his beloved family, the same Frankenstein abandoned the creature to his own fate, depriving him from any family or even human connection. The never-ending mirror image between creature and creator representing the perpetrator and victim, imploding the balance between both.

The conscience of the double between creature and creator appears to be more clear to the creature, than to Victor, at first. When they meet for the first time after the creation night, the creature clarifies this unbreakable bond by stating that “yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us” (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 95). The creature also points that he is willing to be mild if Victor fulfills his part of their pair: “But I will not be tempted to set myself in opposition to thee. I am thy creature, and I will be even mild and docile to my natural lord and king if thou wilt also perform thy part, the which thou owest me” (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 95). Victor Frankenstein listens to the creature’s pleas to create a mate for him, but changes his mind afterward, incurring in the creature’s rage once more. The creature cannot stand the solitude and isolation of being despised by his own double. Also, by asking for a mate, a double, the creature would be avoiding the idea of his obliteration, the same idea that may have driven Frankenstein into his enterprise, for “the idea of death, therefore, is denied by a duplication of the self incorporated in the shadow or in the reflected image” (RANK, 1971, p. 83). Thus, he asks Victor to create another being of the same species to keep him company. Another despised creature who would have no choice but to join the creature in his abnormality and distance from humankind. The creature states:

‘We [Victor and the creature] may not part until you have promised to comply with my requisition. 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, 1994, p. 138-39).

Notwithstanding, before the enterprise that brought the creature to life, Victor mirrored himself in Clerval, “[...] in Clerval I saw the image of my former self” (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 153), but after his accomplishment in giving life to the creature, he changes into someone else. His shadow shifts from Clerval to the creature, as he becomes the reflex of the creature itself. As Frankenstein says “his former self”, one may assume that he is already another, his former self left behind. Being the creator of his double changed him forever, it became a mark to his new self and his materialized monstrosity. For the creature, there is no before, his creation is his ground zero: as he receives the sparkle of life, he becomes Victor's double. In this sense, the twin sisters Dora and Nora, in *Wise Children*, inherited the same fate: to become living mirrors to their fathers, Melchior and Peregrine. This complex relation intertwined between twins in *Wise Children* can be related to *Frankenstein*’s symbiotic relation between the creature and Victor. As Melchior is the father who refuses to acknowledge his children, so is Frankenstein in relation to his "Adam". And as Peregrine

must keep his real daughters, Imogen and Saskia, a secret from the world and specially his twin brother, so does Frankenstein with his creation.

As for Melchior and Peregrine Hazard, they were as different and alike as two twin brothers can be, yet, their relationship was as complex as their family ties up and down the genealogical tree. Melchior's biological daughter, Dora, observing the tension between her "fathers" states how they hated each other, how different they were, but how similar they could be, at the same time. Melchior was fascinated by his allegedly father's adoration for Shakespeare and made his mission to continue his work, while Peregrine was the adventurous type, travelling, writing, exploring possibilities. Dora states, while observing a disagreement between her "fathers" how they hated each other, "When I saw how, since babyhood, they'd hated one another's guts, it gave me a goose-walking-on-my-grave feeling" (CARTER, 1992, p. 108). Nonetheless, earlier in the novel, the same Dora observes how Melchior and Peregrine are alike. As the narration of the novel is built by Dora's memory, this coming and going from past to present reveals a complex picture of this fractal family:

I used to think he [Melchior] and Perry [Peregrine] were chalk and cheese – never take them for brothers, let alone twins. But nowadays I'm not so sure. Ambition, the curse and glory of the Hazards, who'll risk everything they've got and a little bit more on a throw of the dice.

For, if Melchior Hazard starred as the eponymous William Shakespeare, then who had written it, conceived it, planned it, put it all together?

Why, Peregrine Hazard.

So they were a team at last (CARTER, 1992, p. 89).

Hence, putting *Frankenstein* and *Wise Children* side by side, they would double themselves and walk hand in hand, as in a glasshouse. The monstrosity of the twin sisters is different from the creature, although they are not recognized by their biological father and seek his approval, they are not capable of hideous deeds as the creature is. On the contrary, they embrace their bastardy as opportunity. Their defiance of social roles is different, they are *vaudeville* dancers, which is diametrically opposite to the precious prestigious Shakespearean theatre of their biological father. The creature seeks familiar bonds by forcing Victor to act, reflecting the way Victor himself forced nature under his will. Dora and Nora seized the opportunities given to them, embracing life as a gift, not as a burden. One may say that bastardy had a lighter hand upon these women than upon the nameless creature, who had no one other than his creator's abhorrence.

Another double that must be considered when discussing bastardy, is the "blood" and the "name" (ROUDINESCO, 2003, p. 22), for a bastard carries the blood without the name, while the legitimate carries both. In *Wise Children*, this idea of the blood is challenged when

Dora rises the suspicion that Melchior and Peregrine are not the biological sons of Ranulph (CARTER, 1992, p. 17), but still, Melchior carries Ranulph's passion towards Shakespeare and his theatre in his blood, "It was in his blood, wasn't it?" (CARTER, 1992, p. 22). Also, when describing Imogen and Saskia, Dora highlights her bastardy by saying that the girls inherited her grandmother's red hair because they are the legitimate children of their Melchior, what is not true, for they are Peregrine's bastard offsprings. "Our uncle Peregrine inherited her scarlet hair. So did our half-sisters, Saskia and Imogen. Tristram, too. Not us, worse luck. The red hair only went to the legit, side" (CARTER, 1992, p. 17). This passage depicts a complete deconstruction of blood and name, for Dora and Nora and Saskia and Imogen are all illegitimate children. As Melchior and Peregrine apparently are too.

Notwithstanding, Dora and Nora do not have their father's name, Hazard, but they carry their grandmother's, Chance. A name that could have been invented by a woman making a new start, according to Dora's observations,

But I don't think that 'Chance' was her own name, either. All that I know about her is: she'd arrive at 49 Board Road on New Year's Day, 1900, with a banker's draft for the first year's rent and the air of a woman making a new start in a place, a new century and, or so the evidence points, a new name (CARTER, 1992, p. 26).

In this sense, if the blood imprints a similarity and the name implies an identity (ROUDINESCO, 2003, p. 22), carrying the name of the mother is breaking with the patriarchal notion of symbolic naming that assures fatherhood through name and blood. Thus, "the bearer of a matronym in a patriarchal society has taken the first step toward seeing that a name is something which can be conferred, can be chosen or can, indeed, be created" (MACLEAN, 1994, p. 97). This may lead to a process of delegitimization and self-exclusion, where the bastard can explore the gaps and can move in-between high and low. A real ambivalent identity that is maximized by the alterity of the female illegitimacy in a patriarchal society.

The "blood" and "name" in *Frankenstein* are manifested in the complete distancing of the creature from both: Frankenstein's offspring is nameless and it is not biologically related to anyone. The creature is an experiment, assembled not born, invented not bred. Nevertheless, rejected. No affinity built between maker and creation. Thus, the creature is motherless, fatherless and nameless. Blood and name are obliterated within the creature. This silence of blood and refusal of a name are part of the creature's bastardy in relation to family, for he has none; society, for he has no name in a society built within discourse; and humanity, for he is unique and conscious of his uniqueness, a pariah. As Marie Maclean (1994) stated,

“the lack or the refusal of a father’s name is a form of social exclusion which can paradoxically be a form of social liberation, conferring a real or imagined freedom from the law of the Father” (MACLEAN, 1994, p. 97). But for the creature, this freedom from “the law of the Father” worked more as a complete isolation of society, for he had no one else to turn to. Despised by his creator and abhorred by his creator’s fellow creatures, the nameless creature could not find any form of social or familial bond.

Hence, one may understand that the creature in *Frankenstein* is, in fact, a projection of Victor’s internal monstrosity. The creature’s disdain for human life may reflect Victor’s own disregard. As Frankenstein was inconsequent for having bestowed life, unthoughtfully, to a humanlike creature without further consideration of the consequences and more so, without any regard toward the life he had in fact produced. Much like a capricious god bestowing life without considering the meaning of his actions. And fleeing the responsibility of his creation. But more than denying acknowledgement, more than denying a name, Victor tried to deny the creature’s own life. When a male progenitor turns his back on his children, these same children would usually have a mother to turn to, or another relative, or, at least, a society of the same species that would receive them. In the case of the motherless creature, he did not have a single person to turn to. No one to seek for shelter or help or love or acceptance.

Nonetheless, the bastard’s delegitimization is doubled, it has two sides: “self-exclusion from a world one rejects and by which one is rejected, and self-inclusion in a world of the marginalized, which may be seen as potentially a social or creative utopia” (MACLEAN, 1994, p. 99). While the Chance sisters embrace their illegitimacy, opening the world of the margins, thus bringing the margins to the center, a characteristic of the Postmodern movement (HUCTHEON, 1995), the creature buries himself in self-exclusion and self-rejection. The creature represents Romantic concerns with isolation and alienation, with human creativity detached from moral standards or social concerns. The Chance sisters use delegitimization as opportunity to exercise their marginality, as free women, dancers, and bastards. The creature is embedded within his desire to avoid rejection and his need for connection.

Another dimension of the double in the novels is the low and high culture. Popular culture and erudition. Victor Frankenstein was a man of knowledge and erudition, although his creature became a huge popular myth, even stealing his creator’s name for himself, transcending the literary plot into society. The creature, more than his creator, surpassed the Romantic masterpiece into popular culture, being embraced by it. In pop culture, the creature is named Frankenstein and his creator became nameless. This appropriation of the name reinforces the idea that a nameless being cannot survive within our society, built within

discourse. In *Wise Children*, an icon of English culture, Shakespeare, is used to state that cultural standards change over time. Shakespeare, a classic nowadays, was a popular playwright in his time. His theatre was attended not only by royalty but by the common people, the illiterate and poor. If today Shakespeare is a pillar to a so called “legit” culture, this distinction was not so clear in the past. From the masses to the upper classes, Shakespeare’s works have travelled throughout time.

Shelley’s Romanticism has much to do with Shakespeare’s popularity nowadays. The Romantic interest in Shakespeare’s works along with the spreading of the movement through Europe was, at the same time, cause and a result of the translation of the plays into other European languages. It was during Romanticism that Shakespeare was installed at the center of Anglophone literary history (DOBSON; WELLS, 2001, p. 396). This said, Carter questions what constitutes low and high culture, because “you can’t trust things to stay the same” (CARTER, 1992, p. 1). The Chance sisters were performers on burlesque halls, vaudeville artists, that “entertained the troops” (CARTER, 1992, p. 78) during World War II, while their father was a Shakespearean actor a true “pillar of the legit theatre” (CARTER, 1992, p. 11), which has been proven to be a construct of Romantic period. Thus, their father’s “legit theatre” is so legit as any burlesque hall. *Wise Children* cherishes mass culture, and even Melchior surrenders himself to it, ““strange how potent cheap music is”” (CARTER, 1992, p. 87).

Both in *Frankenstein* as much as in *Wise Children*, there is no naïve singularity that cannot be questioned by its reflex. Although, the parts of the doubles cannot be replaced, imprinting a frailty to both constituents, the “inconvenience of being irreplaceable” (ROSSET, 1988, p. 60) even being a part of a duo, each part becomes indispensable. The unfolding of this multitude of reflexes that cannot be replaced but do not constitute a unity in themselves, makes the novels as complexes as human relations themselves. And, by approaching the issue of gender, one may assume that it is clear within both novels the complexities of gender, that surpass hegemonic binaries. Gender cannot be separated from political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained (BUTLER, 2002, p. 6). The binary feminine/masculine constitutes the arena where this same specificity can be recognized, because outside that construct, femininity is not a universal datum. Rather, another human construct as much as other pillars of power relations such as race, ethnicity, culture and place, that constitute identity and the heterogeneity of the margins (BUTLER, 2002; HUTCHEON, 1995).

In *Frankenstein*, as the creature is a scientific enterprise, its gender is, to say the least, complicated to define if one considers that his material body escapes human simulacra, and his cultural element did not involve the cultural constituents of social relations. The creature is unique, so there is no one to build the hegemonic binary of gender, allowing a multiple interpretation of sex. As said above, the materiality of the creature's body and also the lack of social regulations presents a double obstacle to the defining of the creature's gender. The creature is a gender enigma besides a human conundrum. Nonetheless, the female characters within Shelley's novel are almost invisible and victims of a male dominated world. Justine, who was wrongly accused and condemned by a murder she did not commit. Elizabeth, the young bride killed on her wedding night. While in Carter, the binary female/male works as contrast to strong female roles, who challenge the social roles imposed by society. Women who take control of their lives, changing names, exploring their sexuality and openly questioning the role of the father: "You've not got what it takes to be a father. There is much more to fathering than fucking, you know" (CARTER, 1992, p. 211). These women escape the stereotypical representations of femininity, for example Dora never wanted children, an attitude still expected from a woman in Western society.

Nevertheless, despite all the doubles in the surface of the both novels, there is another dimension of this kaleidoscopic relation of doubles: the conflicts between legitimate versus illegitimate, nature versus culture, and high and low culture, for example, are intertwined in confirmation and denial of one another. This complex binomial relation is not as opposite as it seems, but almost indivisible. The existence of the illegitimate, confirms the legitimate. The relation of the bastard and the legitimate is one where one can only exist in contrast with the other. Not as a simplistic echo, but as an intricate and sedimentary relation. To debunk these hegemonic binaries, it is necessary the construction of new epistemologies that may form new relations in a postmodern scenery. To deconstruct the notion of bastardy, in relation to parentage, it is indispensable to admit the new family models that unfold more possibilities than the binary opposition of children under marriage and children out of a wedlock. Another path to consider is the transference of the concept of bastardy to the offspring of a non-marital relation to something else, since Western society of 21st century admits more than one concept of family and conception. Apart from the conservative parties that are still bound to narrow concepts of parentage and familial relation, new family models are an undeniable reality. Single moms, same sex parents, surrogates, shared custody, children living with other relatives are a reality. Although the family is still the most solid institution of society, its constituents and roles have changed. As Nora says when they are charged with the new

members of the family, twin babies, “‘we’re both of us mothers and both of us fathers’” (CARTER, 1992, p. 230). Families are human constructs, not natural given entities, and are different from culture to culture, from time to time. As Dora and Nora come to conclude about their biological father being a fruit of their expectations:

‘D’you know, I, sometimes wonder if we haven’t been making him up all along’, she said. ‘If he isn’t just a collection of our hopes and dreams and wishful thinking in the afternoons. Something to set our lives by, like the old clock in the hall, which is real enough, in itself, but which we’ve got wind up to make it go’ (CARTER, 1992, p. 230).

Thus, the unfolding of the mirrored relations of the many doubles within *Frankenstein* and *Wise Children* proposes a kaleidoscopic viewpoint of the world, where literature may be the place where all contemporary issues may be questioned and presented and deconstructed. Reality and illusion walk together, for literature is not a mimetic representation of reality but deals, often, with real issues and questions. Literature is the place where everything can be challenged and questioned, in order to produce new epistemologies and proliferate multiplicities. The duplicity within the novels is cleverly used to question the notions they present and also to state that by opposition, they validate each other. Not a narcissistic relation to avoid death, but an intricate relation of denial and affirmation that would feed new possibilities that escape hegemonic binaries, exposing and exploring the heterogeneity of Western society.

3 THE UNAVOIDABLE CATASTROPHE OF BEING HUMAN

Every hour wounds. The last one kills.

Old saying

Life, as it is possible to humankind, is hard and brings a ton of pains, sufferings, disappointments and impossible tasks. And to support it, to be able to endure it, humankind needs palliative solutions that may come as powerful amusements, substitute gratifications or intoxicating substances (FREUD, 2013a, p. 18). Powerful amusements, allow mankind to minimize the misery; substitute gratifications, diminish the pains; and intoxicating substances make humankind insensible to the sufferings (FREUD, 2013a, p. 18). The program of being happy, which is imposed by the pleasure principle, is unachievable, but, humankind cannot abandon the efforts to get closer and closer to its achievement (FREUD, 2013a, p. 28). Thus, an aesthetic attitude towards life does not protect from the threats of suffering, but compensates things (FREUD, 2013a, p. 27). According to Freud (2013a), there are three sources from where human suffering may surface: “the prepotency of nature, the fragility of our body and the insufficiency of the norms that regulate the human relations in the family, in the State and in society⁵” (FREUD, 2013a, p. 30, our translation). In relation to Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1994) and Angela Carter’s *Wise Children* (1992), the illegitimate aspect of the characters clashes, directly, with the sources of suffering and the weight of life.

Regarding *Frankenstein* (1994), it is important to go back to the story of the birth of the novel, because it is deeply related to the psychoanalytic approach to the plot. According to the own author, in a story recited by her in the 1831’s preface to the new edition to the novel, that, in the summer of 1816, after the challenge to think of a ghost story and discussions about science, reanimation of corpses and galvanism, Shelley had a waking nightmare, with the plot that would be still entering human imagination almost two centuries after its first publication (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 5-10). The novel is the expression of the author’s anguish intertwined with her biography, full of loss, family issues, betrayal, guilt and bastardy. The projection of the fear of suffering and of the own author’s suffering are imprinted in the creature and its creator. So, if the human condition reclaims the pain, the creature of/in *Frankenstein* reclaims

⁵ “a prepotência da natureza, a fragilidade de nosso corpo e a insuficiência das normas que regulam os vínculos humanos na família, no Estado e na sociedade” (FREUD, 2013a, p. 30).

a singular pain composed by interrelated layers of physical and psychological pains. Such as the pain of being an experiment, being rejected, forlorn, unique and lonely, physically and emotionally forsaken by his creator and by society, despised in every single human interaction he had (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 96). In *Frankenstein*, the pain and illegitimacy sediment in the complexity of the human relations and in the relations of the self and conflicts of being human. In relation to the sources of suffering, abovementioned, the creature in *Frankenstein* is a violation of the prepotency of nature, because his “birth” goes against the natural cycle of human reproduction and puts death in check, since the creature is composed by dead organic materials. Still in relation to the prepotency of nature, the very “birth” of the creature defies nature and makes him the only member of his species, a pariah, forsaken, increasing his sufferings for the lack of social rules that regulate human interactions. The creature is a bastard, illegitimate humanoid, ostracized by his detachment from humankind, which is aesthetically evident in the physiognomy of difference.

In a second level, Frankenstein’s creature does not suffer from the frailty of the body in the sense of weak constitution, since his complexion, despite being humanoid, is more robust than a regular human, as it can be seen in “[...]to make the being of gigantic stature; that is to say, about eight feet in high and proportionably large” (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 51) and “[...], you have made more powerful than thyself; my height is superior to thine, my joints more supple” (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 95). The sufferings from the frailty of the body comes from the difference of this same body, that cannot find any resemblance and is not socially accepted. The creature is a monstrosity, unique, monstrously human and its genesis is a catastrophe (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 55). In a dimension where “beauty, cleanliness and order clearly occupy a special place among cultural demands⁶” (FREUD, 2013a, 38, our translation), the creature is the dissonant point that must be expunged from civilization, because he is not beautiful, he is constituted by pieces of dead organic materials and goes against the preconceptions of what is “natural”, therefore not finding space in the social. At his birth, the creature was condemned to extinction, for he is the only member of his species, and condemned to physical and social isolation.

While the Chance sisters from *Wise Children* are the physiognomy of similarity, for they are identical twins. Thus, their singularity is denied by the double body. They are identical human beings in a society that cherished the individuality: “identical, well and good; Siamese, no” (CARTER, 1992, p. 2). Also, the human body does not respond as one wishes it

⁶ “beleza, limpeza e ordem ocupam claramente um lugar especial entre as exigências culturais” (FREUD, 2013a, p. 38)

to, for example Nora wanted to have children, but was unable to do so “She wept the loss of the baby. Oh, my poor Nora! She was a martyr to fertility” (CARTER, 1992, p. 81). On the other hand, in *Wise Children*, the frailty of the body is defied by Carter when she uses elderly characters that are still active and full of life. It is the 75th birthday of Dora and Nora; also, the 100th birthday of Melchior and Peregrine. And, because of Gareth’s twin babies that Peregrine puts under Dora and Nora’s care, the sisters comment that they will have to live more to raise the children: “Here, Nora... if we’ve got those twins to look out for, we can’t afford to die for at least another twenty years” (CARTER, 1992, p. 230). But this statement is a wish and not a certainty, because life is unpredictable and the body is a frail vessel with an unknown expiration date. Another example of the frailty of the body is Lady Atalanta Hazard, who became paralytic because of an incident with her daughters, which left her broken hearted and stuck to a wheelchair: “*Née* Lady Atalanta Lynde, ‘the most beautiful woman of her time’, born with a silver spoon, etc. etc. etc. but now an antique divorcee in reduced circumstances, to wit, the basement front of 49 Bard Road” (CARTER, 1992, p. 7). On top of the frailty of the body, in the case of “wheelchair”, there is also the social isolation for she went to live with Dora and Nora, “suffice to say that nobody else would have her. Least of all her own two daughters” (CARTER, 1992, p. 7).

In relation to the creature regarding the third of the Freudian sources of suffering, may prove the most complex of the three because it entwines the two first sources previously mentioned. The insufficiency of the norms that regulate the human bonds is not a sufficient description because, to the creature, these norms are not only insufficient, but impossible. The creature does not fit the social rules because he is not a recognized human being, thus, these regulations are insufficient and incapable of involving the creature in all his complexity. Also, the existent norms, created by mankind, do not bring the creature comfort or protection, which is the fundamental function of this regulation of human relations. Even so, abandoning the civilization that does not support him would not ease his sufferings, because “everything with which we protect ourselves from the threat of the sources of suffering is part of civilization⁷” (FREUD, 2013a, p. 31, our translation). The isolation of the creature is not the primary source of its suffering by the insufficiency of social norms, but the lack of its integration to these same norms, to society and civilization. The creature does not exist in society, henceforth he finds no protection in it, and cannot isolate himself from what he does not belong to. The creature wants to belong, but he does not fit into existing institutions. He

⁷ “tudo aquilo com que nos protegemos da ameaça das fontes do sofrer é parte da civilização” (FREUD, 2013a, p. 31)

wants to isolate himself, but he cannot isolate himself from what he does not belong to. In addition, the creature reaffirms the need for human bonds in the pursuit of well-being. The creature walks on the edge of social fact which, consisting of representations and actions, should not be confused with organic or physical phenomena (DURKHEIM, 1982, p. 52), so that the context in which he is inserted exerts upon him a powerful coercive power, extending the distance to civilization and increasing the margin of his sufferings; While Victor pushes the limits of the social fact. Thus, the creature is permeated with multiple layers of suffering that will unfold in his conscience and consciousness of guilt (FREUD, 2013b, p. 66), the latter shared with Victor, but not for the same reasons.

If the creature suffers in all instances of the sources of suffering, Victor Frankenstein seeks to shun suffering in his attempt to eliminate the sources of suffering and shift his libido to his work in this endeavor (FREUD, 2013a, p. 23), but ends up suffering from the same sources that he so intensely seeks to subdue. By understanding the forces that move the world, "The world was to me a secret which I desired to divine" (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 35), Victor approaches the prepotency of nature, in his quest to unveil the secrets of life and death. The puerile enchantment of observing a lightning strike a tree becomes an obsession with the understanding / domination of the forces of nature. Understanding the prepotency of nature becomes a form of submission of nature itself by science, the available tool for humanity. In his search, Victor reproduces asexually and sterilely, generating his double that will not be his equal, but will turn out to be a form of mirror. Like an Adam, a faulty one, in the perfect creation of an omnipotent god.

In another instance, for fabricating a humanoid creature, Victor departs from the fragility of the body, for he ignores the natural components that compose human physiology and molds himself a creature, almost like in an inorganic mitosis. To de/reconstruct the body and breathe life into it is to bend the fragility of the body over his own will through the use of science. The conception, the death and the body under the scientific knowledge, the fragility unveiled, the reproduced genesis. Despite mastering the spark that gives life, Victor is not unburdened from the source of suffering, on the contrary. By breaking the taboo of creation and conception, he develops an awareness of guilt over taboo (FREUD, 2013b, p. 66) which is expressed by the abandonment of his creation shortly after the catastrophe of his genesis. Victor does not overcome the frailty of his own body, and he is uncappable to prevent his friends and family from suffering with the fragility of their own bodies, as they perish in the face of the violence of his own creature and his omission as creator. Like Clerval, his friend, who is murdered by the creature after Frankenstein's refusal to create a companion for him

(SHELLEY, 1994, p. 171). Or his younger brother, William, who is killed by the creature in a moment of anger (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 69).

And finally, within Freudian sources of suffering (FREUD, 2013a, p. 20), by not assuming his creation, denying the first social bond - the family -, Victor tried to avert the third source of suffering. He flees from his offspring, perhaps in an attempt to avoid the many ruptures of the norms that regulate human relations, since the creature is a scientific enigma and not necessarily human. Victor flees, ignores his creature, it can be said that in an attempt to stay aloof from the consequences of his scientific lust and in an attempt not to have to deal with social rules regarding the creature and his own acts as a researcher. If his attitudes go beyond the ethical limits of scientific inquiry, ignoring his creation, he does not have to deal with the consequences that would result from his experiment. Nor would he have to deal with the total absence of social rules regarding his creature / offspring and himself as creator. Still, Victor's ruptures with the sources do not make him immune to suffering, but bring him closer to it. The exclusive use of his libido, expectation, and energy for his work with such unsatisfactory result for him, makes his abandonment in suffering even greater. By breaking the cycle of nature, by producing a humanoid and denying it any social bonds, Victor unleashes a series of events that make him lose his family, his loved one, his friends, and his life. He ends up being hit by the same sources that he tried to subdue, being haunted by the pain and guilt of losing his loved ones by the hand of the catastrophe he himself generated, with infinite pains and care (SHELLEY, 1994, p.55).

Humankind will never fully dominate nature, and the human body is also part of that same nature, this way, humankind is impotent regarding these two. But the third source of suffering, the social, produces a different understanding. It is difficult to understand why the institutions created by humankind to protect are the same that cause pain (FREUD, 2013a, p. 30). In this case, family as a social institution is supposed to protect and provide refuge but when society rejects the bastard, the social institution turns against the ones supposed to protect. It is, in a way, an inconsistency. Mankind creates the social norms that hurt instead of providing shelter. In addition, the Chance sisters were "accidents" undesired by their father. The bastard daughters, Dora and Nora, suffered most with the third source of suffering, the insufficiency of rules to human relations. As illegitimate children, they spent their lives feeling rejected by their biological father. Not despised by society, but despised by the father. And the protection of the father figure is a childish need, according to Freud (2013a, p. 16). Also, as women, their roles in a patriarchal society are difficult and oppressive. The civilization that is supposed to protect from the sources of suffering is the same causing them.

The father, who was supposed to protect his daughters, was the same that abandoned them. “‘Sometimes’, she [Nora] said, ‘I feel a little lonely in the world. Don’t you ever feel a little lonely, too, Dora? No father, no mother, no chick nor darling child’” (CARTER, 1992, p. 189). And the resentment of the abandonment stained them, and when they finally get the recognition they always wanted, they understand that their father was a fraud: “‘What an old fraud he is!’” (CARTER, 1992, p. 231). And complete with “I [Nora] used to want him dead” (CARTER, 1992, p. 231). As Carter’s novel is full of theatrical aspects, as if life is a stage, the characters seek to ease the pain of living by any means they can, such as producing art or intoxicating themselves. But the unrestricted satisfaction is not the safest way to diminish the pain, as it can cause even more. All sufferings are just sensations, they exist while they can be felt (FREUD, 2013a, p. 21). The amount of parties and intoxication in *Wise Children*, and this necessity to ease the pains are expressed more than once through the sentence “what a joy it is to dance and sing!” (CARTER, 1992, p. 34). For example, to ease the sufferings and horrors of war, the girls entertained the troops by the time of the Second World War, “[...] silly charity matinée, drumming-up cash to replace lost lovers, lost sons, boys dead on the Burma Road, the irreplaceable” (CARTER, 1992, p. 78). Grandma Chance died during the war for disobeying the siren for bombing just to buy another bottle of stout, as Dora states: “the siren blared but she wasn’t going to let Hitler inconvenience her drinking habits, was she?” (CARTER, 1992, p. 79). Also, every human, at one point, corrects an unacceptable trace of the world according to one’s wishes, inscribing this delirium in reality (FREUD, 2013a, p. 26). And Ranulph was a volatile person as Dora puts that “you’d diagnose a manic depressive” (CARTER, 1992, p. 14). Ranulph “corrected” the world by inscribing his fantasies in it, as he idolized Shakespeare, Dora remarks: “as Shakespeare was a kind of god for him. It was as good as idolatry. He thought the whole human life was there” (CARTER, 1992, p. 14). As the human existence has no clear meaning, some give meaning to it by assuming a life mission, such as the case of Ranulph, to spread the words of Shakespeare, like an evangelist preaching the bard. Ranulph experienced the oceanic feeling of belonging through a religion (FREUD, 2013a, p. 16).

Besides, Victor Frankenstein, one might say, suffers from an "obsessive recrimination" (FREUD, 2013b, 58, our translation) for the deaths of friends and family brought about by the creature. In the case of Justine and his younger brother, William, where the creature kills the infant and incriminates Justine, Frankenstein does not expose the nature of the murder under the fear of being judged crazy. Victor claims to rely on justice to acquit Justine whom he knows to be innocent, he recriminates himself for all misfortune, but does not publicly assume

that the murderer is the fruit of “his” hands (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 76-84). Victor's silence acquiesces with Justine's condemnation, fueling an "obsessive recrimination" that was just beginning. The death of his friend Clerval, as quoted, and finally of his - then-wife, Elisabeth - culminate in feeding such recrimination and guilty conscience in such a way that Victor makes his life mission to eliminate his own creation in a motion to purge his guilt.

The creature, in another attempt to eliminate the sources of suffering, asks Victor to create a companion, just like him. Thus, in seeking a partner, the creature tries to create a social institution that would bring him well-being and protection. The creature is seeking the social and civilizing ties that embrace humanity to lessen the influence of the sources of suffering. The creature tries to inscribe, into reality, the delirium of a social institution that would welcome him, a love that would diminish his suffering, and would bring the satisfaction of loving and being loved, and the end of his own uniqueness as a species, correcting an unacceptable trait in the world according to his desire (FREUD, 2013a, 26). Seeing his dream of companionship destroyed by Victor's refusal to repeat his experiment – Victor, who in turn is in his own quest to avoid incurring again in the ruptures that caused him to suffer –, the creature suffers new helplessness and gives vent to his “death instinct” (FREUD, 1961, p. 38-43), since there are no more impediments that would prevent him from following his impulses. The creature does not fear rejection, it is already rejected. He does not fear the loss of love, he does not possess it. He does not fear the fragility of the body; his monstrosity is a source of suffering. He does not fear the prepotency of nature, it can put an end to his sufferings.

Victor Frankenstein and his double – the creature – represent, as a taboo, a severe break in regular family structures. Marital ties were completely ignored, the human conception irremediably swept, and parental relationships suppressed. The plot announces catastrophe and that it is possible to break the taboo, but nothing good can come of it. This game of breaking and reaffirming the *status quo* leads to the tension of kinship relations that are no longer exclusively by consanguinity, but are reaffirmed by the proposition of rupture itself. In addition, it is important to note that, just as the bastard is permanently trapped between culture and nature (SCHMIDGEN, 2002), the creature is doubly imprisoned because his origins cannot be traced back, just as his biology cannot be recognized as completely human. The creature is a cultural and biological dilemma that takes the concept of illegitimacy to the limits of the question of what constitutes humanity. The creature and his creator figure as representations of moral and ethical transgressions in science, nature, and in the sacralized family structures in Western culture. In this sense, illegitimacy as a social fact –

ways of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual that are invested with a coercive power exercising power over him (DURKHEIM, 1982: 52) – merges with Freud's concept of taboo, that affirms that the taboo represents powerful desires that must be repressed, and because of this urgency in repressing the impulses of transgression, people tend to develop a strong aversion against the desires that lead to taboo (FREUD, 2013b, p. 30). In *Frankenstein*, there is the breaking of the taboo of death, of conception and motherhood, as well as of kinship. And by violating the taboo, the individual becomes the taboo himself, for he can tempt others to follow his example (FREUD, 2013b, p. 27). In Mary Shelley's work, two taboo characters are (de)constructed: the creature and its creator. Both are examples of the rupture with the taboo which, at the same time, reaffirms the *status quo*.

In *Carter*, the taboo of incest is broken without the conscience of guilt, by Peregrine and Dora, as they have sex, even being uncle and niece, and having had a relationship almost as of father and daughter: “It slipped out before I thought twice. I’m not proud of it, I’m not ashamed of it although I thought, there’ll be hell to pay with Nora tomorrow morning; even though he *was* my uncle on my father’s side;” (CARTER, 1992, p. 218, author’s emphasis). As “the individual who breaks the taboo becomes a taboo oneself, because carries the dangerous attribute to tempt others to follow one’s example⁸” (FREUD, 2013b, p. 27, our translation), Dora becomes twice a taboo herself, for being an illegitimate child and for committing incest. Dora has the “conscience of the taboo”, but not the “conscience of guilt of the taboo” (FREUD, 2013b, p. 66), for she understands the taboo and the fact she broke it, but she does not regret her deeds, not incurring in the guilt. This illegitimate relation between niece and uncle reinforces the social aspect of family, by denying the biological connection they know they share. While *Frankenstein*’s creature carries the guilt of the taboo, even not having acted on purpose for being born a taboo, Dora dismisses it. In relation to the prohibition imposed by the taboo, “where exists a prohibition, there must exist a hidden desire⁹” (FREUD, 2013b, p. 69, our translation). Carter disrupts patriarchal values by double breaking the taboo of incest and the taboo of sex in old age: “first, by depicting a culturally tabooed incestuous relationship; and second by de-tabooing the incest taboo and recoding it as a utopian concept challenging patriarchal notions” (BUTTER & EITELMAN, 2010, p. 151).

In summary, the representation of *Frankenstein* and the creature, and the sisters *Chance*, may be to generate a reaction of repulsion and attraction by the breaking of the

⁸ “O indivíduo que violou um tabu torna-se ele mesmo tabu, porque tem o perigoso atributo de tentar outros a seguir seu exemplo” (FREUD, 2013b, p. 27)

⁹ “[...] de que onde existe uma proibição deve esconder-se um desejo” (FREUD, 2013b, p. 69)

matrimonial and parental relations, placing an interrogation in the hegemonic familiar relations. Although it is the exception that reaffirms the rule, Angela Carter and Mary Shelley's works promulgate illegitimacy as a rupture and questioning of the limits of human relations. The search for the elimination of the sources of suffering of Victor Frankenstein and the creature unfolds in rupture and in more suffering. The abandonment of the creature, the traumas and bad actions throughout the work are presented as a reaction to contemporary relationships experienced by Shelley, which are still current, unresolved and fall into the insufficiency of social norms, and are also a source of suffering. Such as it is in Carter. The transgression of the bastard, as well as the transgression of science, reaffirms the sacredness of family institutions and the sacredness of life. This break, a questioner of boundaries, implodes the boundaries of kinship and promotes the opening of socially constituted barriers, revolving / provoking / questioning the suffering and in full awareness of paradigm breaks so firmly settled, as the nuclear family. Mary Shelley, a young woman, terrified at her creative inspiration, exposed in her literary representation an affliction and a conflict that, more than a century later, have not yet been solved and still need to be questioned. Shelley states that creation does not come out of void but out of chaos (Shelley 1994, p. 8) and in Frankenstein creations and ruptures are born from chaos to chaos. Living is chaos, all rules and all constructions to escape the chaos of existence are human constructs and not given natural entities. In this sense, being born out of wedlock does make a lesser person, because the constituents of family are socially constituted and human invented. Science can, for example, solve the question of biological parenting with the advent of DNA testing, but in answering one question, it creates innumerable others, just as inbreeding creates or dissolves affective kinship ties. Thus, the creature and its creator in *Frankenstein* – from 1818 (first publication of the novel) until today –, and the bastards in *Wise Children*, appear as representations of social transgressions in Western family structures, breaking and reaffirming the helplessness of human relations and the pain of existence, where the human will always seek to eliminate the sources of suffering.

4 WHERE I LAY MY HEAD IS HOME

L'avenir appartient aux bâtards.

André Gide

The family is the most solid institution in Western society (ROUDINESCO, 2003, p. 20). Usually seen as the communion between nature and culture, kinship still is problematic and highly debatable. Thus, bastardy lies amidst family issues that have been around for a very long period but are not yet solved by contemporaneity. Hence, illegitimacy may have changed its face, but is still a conundrum within family relations. In fiction, illegitimacy still remains a strong issue, that may have had its representation changed, but is never far from the spotlights (MACLEAN, 2003, p. 9). Science-fiction or Postmodern literature, for example, that often deal with the advances of reproductive medicine and/or biological experiments in the questioning of parentage, present the issue of illegitimacy in different plots that may deal with illegitimacy in many levels, such as surrogates, cyborgs, sentient machines or demigods. One example is Neil Gaiman's novel *American Gods* (2001), whose main character, Shadow, is the bastard son of Odin, an old Norse God:

“– Tell me about my father.
– He's dead. Don't ask about him.
– But who was he? [...]”
(GAIMAN, 2001, p. 474, author's emphasis)

Thus, kinship is not a frozen concept that does not admit changes and transformations. Family, as a social product allows adaptations and modifications over time. In this context, the bastard figure has changed and her/his status may no longer be that of a pariah. Not that illegitimacy is a solved issue in contemporaneity, but new models of families allowed a change in paradigms of filiation and parentage. Bastardy is an outdated concept which refuses to abandon postmodernity. But what to do with this bastard status, now, is an issue that belongs to the bastard herself/himself. Conservative forces, nowadays, may try to impose the conventional hegemonic model of nuclear family, consisting of father-mother-children, but the other possible models will not be erased within society. Social regulations and interactions constitute a family, for a family is not a natural entity apart from culture. In literature, often, the presence of the bastard is not positive. Bad deeds, literature of revenge, revenge plays, sad

plots, villains or unfortunate children, the bastards hit the spotlights but negatively. The break of social regulations embodied by the bastard is constantly represented as a bad singularity, probably associated with the break with the taboo of marriage. When portrayed and not resolved, illegitimacy represents the rejection and the fear of the taboo. But when depicted positively, the break may represent possibilities. “Illegitimacy, especially when not socially reintegrated, offers a genuine discontinuity” (MACLEAN, 1994, p. 106).

Furthermore, illegitimacy is a concept that can be extended to other instances of human life, other than family, such as culture, ethnicity, gender and class. People and cultures in the margins of hegemonic culture can be seen as bastards. The strength of a poetry slam on a peripheral area clashes against pompous theatres and their expensive musicals, like popular music played by street musicians versus fancy concert halls, women earning almost a quarter less than men in the same position¹⁰, black citizens experiencing prejudice and violence on a daily basis¹¹, and native populations made foreigners in their own territory¹². All bastards in a society that does treasure the hegemonic roles, such as middle-class-white-Christian-males. The illegitimate citizens of the world fight every single day to keep their (our) heads above water, breathing hard in a world of intolerance and a growing number – all over again – of radical reactionaries. The ones who had the defiance to be born on the “wrong side of the blanket” (CARTER, 1992, p. 8), struggle throughout life to change perspectives. Living examples of the “irregularity” of the world, that should be just called “multiplicity”.

That multiplicity is what the twenty-first century bastard is made of, the singularity that even confirming the norms, may demolish them. Postmodernity brought the possibility, built throughout much questioning, of the bastard to assume her/his illegitimacy as a means of change and not as a burden. The bastard is not a static irregularity, but can be a vibrating tool to new openings. Family has always been problematic and the dream of a complete domestic bliss is a dream that no real family could ever achieve. The human element that constitutes the family is troublesome. From the Bible to Oedipus to a TV show, the family has faced many problems and has taken many forms. And, in order to keep broadening familial relations, it is

¹⁰ DAVIDSON, Lauren. “Women earn almost a quarter less than male colleagues”. *The Telegraph*, online, 25 Aug 2015. Jobs. Retrieved in: <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/jobs/11820785/Women-earn-almost-a-quarter-less-than-male-colleagues.html>> Accessed on Nov. 30, 2016.

¹¹ CERQUEIRA, Daniel R.C.; MOURA, Rodrigo Leandro. *Vidas Perdidas e Racismo no Brasil*. Nota Técnica Nº10. IPEA. Brasília, nov. 2013. Retrived in: <http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/images/stories/PDFs/nota_tecnica/131119_notatecnicadiest10.pdf> Accessed on Out. 28, 2016.

¹² TAULI-CORPUZ, Victoria. “End of Mission Statement”. In: UNITED NATIONS. *United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples*. Mar, 17, 2016. Retrieved in <<http://unsr.vtaulicorpuz.org/site/index.php/en/statements/123-end-mission-brazil>> Accessed on Mar, 17, 2016.

necessary a constant revaluation of models. One of the ways in which this may be achieved, is through fiction. Fiction, as previously said, is not just a mimesis of reality, but one way to question and deal with situations of contemporaneity. In the land of make-believe, stretching such a delicate and emblematic issue is not only possible, but necessary. Family may live forever, but may keep changing its forms and elements. The most solid institution may keep the role of pillar of society, but the shape of this very pillar may show different forms and colors.

4.1 Beyond impossible oppositions: Nature and Culture

Culture is one of the most complex words to define, for the meanings are so varied and intricate that it ends up implying a matter of perception more than a definition itself. And this perception is not a simple relativization of the topic, but a deep problematization that may comprise possible understandings. In relation to the origins of culture, it suffices to say that culture has begun as soon as the human brain was able to process it. But when was that remains a mystery. The precise understanding of the concept of culture would be the complete understanding of human nature. Thus, the discussion still remains. As to the concept of culture, in the end of eighteenth century and in the beginning of nineteenth century the Germanic term "kultur" was used to symbolize all spiritual aspects of a community and, while the French word "civilization" mainly referred to the material accomplishments of a people, both terms were synthesized by Edward Tylor (1832-1917) in "culture", to include all the possibilities of human accomplishments and also to highlight the understanding of culture as acquired and not natural, passed through consanguinity (LARAIA, 2001, p. 25). However, it is important to consider the historical context in which Tylor's work was written. His intellectual background was deeply embedded by *On the Origin of Species* (1859), by Charles Darwin (1809-1882). And the concept that culture is not natural is debatable.

Darwin's theory led to an overall generalization through a biological determinism, thus, in 1917, Kroeber finishes breaking the links between cultural and biological aspects, posing the supremacy of the first in relation to the second, with his "superorganic", separating the natural from the cultural. Humanity was not outside nature anymore, but started to be considered above its organic limitations. Nevertheless, it is not possible to ignore that mankind depends on its biological equipment. To survive, humankind has vital functions to

perform that do not depend on cultural systems, such as eating, sleeping or breathing. But the way these same functions are performed depends on culture and will vary from one culture to another (LARAIA, 2001). Men are domesticated animals and they are the only ones who have domesticated themselves (LÉVI-STRAUSS, 1969, p. 5). Just like the creature in *Frankenstein* did. The creature, abandoned by his creator and expunged from society, taught himself human culture, domesticating himself, since mankind "has no natural behavior to which an isolated individual might retrogress" (STRAUSS, 1969, p.6). Also, "[...] the idea of nature contains, though often unnoticed, an extraordinary amount of human history. Like some other fundamental ideas which express mankind's vision of itself and its place in the world, 'nature' has a nominal continuity, over many centuries, but can be seen, in analysis, to be both complicated and changing, as other ideas and experiences change" (WILLIAMS, 2007, p. 284).

One's cultural heritage, that is developed and accumulated throughout generations, may condition one's reaction in relation to someone whose behavior does not fit the standards accepted by the majority, leading to prejudice toward the deviant behavior (LARAIA, 2001). According to Freud, the "taboo" embodies two opposite directions. On the one hand, it is something "sacred" or "holy"; on the other hand, it means something "forbidden" or "dangerous" (FREUD, 2013b, p. 12). The idea of taboo is linked to something "reserved", and it is essentially expressed in prohibitions and restrictions, understood as "holy dread" (FREUD, 2013b, p. 12). Thus, interfering with a marriage may pose as taboo to certain cultures. Hence, the offspring of the break with the marriage taboo, becomes taboo herself/himself. After all, he or she may be seen as the physical embodiment of a prohibition, that may serve as stimulus for others to break the taboo too. Illegitimacy may have posed as a taboo, but nowadays the postmodern family is changing that. The issue of bastardy has suffered a change from a permanent taboo to a temporary one.

Culture changes, because human beings have the capacity to question their own habits and to change them. The rhythm of this change, however, is not the same for every culture. Bastardy is and is not an issue in postmodern society. Its questioning has provided perspectives and new possibilities. The cultural change may have two sources, one that is the result of the internal dynamics of the cultural system itself; and the other that is the result of the contact between one cultural system with another (LARAIA, 2001). It is believed that the second is stronger in changing one's cultural system, for it is impossible to believe in a cultural system that is affected only by internal changes. The dynamic aspect of culture can be easily perceived by the clothes used throughout time. To consider a culture, it is important

to consider the time of this culture. And every change in customs represents the unfolding of several conflicts, that may be small or not, depending on the occurring change. Cultural systems are in constant change and the understanding of this dynamics is important to one's acceptance by society, self-acceptance, and to overcome possible or existent prejudices (LARAIA, 2001). This transitory aspect of culture can be easily seen in Carter when Dora talks about the way they dress and wear make-up “Underneath, camiknickers with French lace trim, lilac satin for me, crushed rose crepe for her. Tasty, eh? Course, we were wearing camiknickers before they *came back*” (CARTER, 1992, p. 6, author's emphasis).

The fact that the understanding of nature, biology, involves social concepts does not mean that it discards the idea of nature, but rather, that it absorbs its cultural dimension. It would be a reductionism to ignore that filiation through consanguinity is socially/culturally processed. Nature exists, despite human judgement of it, but the understanding of nature by mankind is cultural. Nature contains and it is contained by culture. It is not the case of postmodern thinking to disregard, completely, the biological part. It is not to consider that “[...] since the 'biological' is always presented to us as mediated by the 'social', the 'biological' is nothing and the 'social' is everything” (TIMPANARO, 1975 apud EAGLETON, 2002, p. 92). It is that the human understanding is what gives sense to the biological part. Humankind will experience hunger, thirst and other physiological needs, but the way mankind satisfies these needs is sculpted by culture: foods allowed or forbidden, using the bathroom, wearing designer clothes and so on.

Nature changes, and it is flexible, as much – or even more so – as culture. Human beings are made of both culture and nature, and it is not possible to separate them as two isolated phenomena. The postmodern critique of binaries does not imply a forcible choice of sides, that would be a contradiction for it would reinforce the binaries themselves. Postmodern questioning goes beyond labels, surpassing nature versus culture for the limits of both are equally blurred. Whereas, humankind is made of both at the same time. Culture is not a simplistic incarceration of nature. Nature and culture are intertwined like *Uroboros*¹³, the mythical serpent that eats its own tail. Humankind molds and is molded by nature and culture.

One may be too submerged into one's own culture to be able to see it clearly. For example, a person is so immersed in her/his own culture of origin that she/he fails to see it, her/his culture becomes invisible. In order to see it, to make culture “visible” (WAGNER, 1981, p. 4), it may be necessary to provoke strangeness. The glimpse of new possibilities can

¹³ “[...] snake biting its own tail” (LURKER, Manfred. *The Routledge Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons* Manfred. 3rd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. p. 4.)

lead to changes in attitude. Therefore, as literature is a creative environment that accepts the possible, the impossible, the verisimilar and the incredible, literature may be the perfect tool by which this “othering” or “strangeness” may be achieved. “Cultural shock” (WAGNER, 1981, p. 6) may make one aware of one’s own culture. It is easier to “see” the “other” when one is conscious of what, in the other, is capable of disturbing her/him. And also when one is able to distance oneself from the self, detaching from one’s own culture (EAGLETON, 2002, p. 126). When faced by “inner-strangeness” besides the “othering”, one may be able to make the culture “visible” and make oneself “visible” as well.

As cultures change internally and in contact with others, the strangeness provoked, that made one own’s culture “visible”, may work as a trigger to change, as if one culture had got in touch with another, thus facilitating the change. The bastard may be the point of cultural shock in relation to the traditional concept of nuclear family. The necessary clash toward a new understanding of family and kinship. To be conscious of the other is one thing, but to be conscious of oneself is another thing completely different. When Frankenstein saw the creature alive, the cultural shock of his endeavor and the strangeness of himself took place, and he was able to contemplate not only his accomplishment, but the extent of his scientific in consequence, this strangeness made possible to Frankenstein see himself and where his scientific lust had got him. Gazing into the hideous eye of the creature was gazing into himself. Victor was so submerged in his own scientific universe, a universe made hermetic by the lack of contact with his family and his secrecy about his scientific endeavors, that he could not see the multitude of outcomes possible. He could see only success or failure. The vision of the creature embeds, at the same time, what makes humans human and what makes them monsters: “and the same feelings which made me neglect the scenes around me caused me also to forget those friends who were so many miles absent, and whom I had not seem for so long a time” (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 52-53); “[...] I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open” (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 55).

The term “culture” also acquires the meaning of encompassing the practices and products of intellectual work and arts (WILLIAMS, 1974). And “high culture”, as much as “low culture”, has no specific social structure, as it changes according to the historical period and can only be understood abstractly. The process of classification is greatly questioned, for it involves a mix of influences, politics, power and economic interests not shared by everyone. The selection of “high culture” in any particular society involves a selection that is related, explicitly or implicitly, to broaden elements of society, and not only to a selection from universal high culture (WILLIAMS, 1974). This said, there cannot be a simple opposition

between high and low culture. The criteria and methods and the degrees of access play important role in this abstract separation. In relation to *Wise Children*, the constant contrast, highlighted by Dora, between *vaudeville* and Shakespearean theater, makes one questions the validity of the concept of “low” and “high” culture and how transitory these classifications are. One “low” form today may be “high” art tomorrow. It is important to highlight that the Shakespearean audience ranged from the pit to the gallery, made up of a gathering of people from different social classes and education. The Globe, primary playing space of Shakespeare's company, was in the Bankside district of south London, famous for its animal-baiting rings and brothels. And the minimum price of admission at open-air playhouses, like the Globe, was traditionally a penny - about 10% of an artisan's daily pay. Pickpockets and prostitutes were easily found in open-air playhouses at the pit, and members of higher social status could be found in balconies and galleries¹⁴. Thus, Shakespeare became canonical but it did not begin that way. Dora highlights the changing in culture and how it is perceived by society over time, with the adventure of television, discredited at first, but that ended up by changing entertainment completely:

She [Melchior's third wife] was a forward-looking woman. She looked ahead and she saw – television! In those days all everybody saw was a little grey rectangle the size of a cornflake packet, with vague forms flickering across it, like Trafalgar Square in a peasouper. Who would have thought that little box of shadows would put us all out of business, singers, dancers, acrobats, Shakespeareans, the lot? But Melchior's third wife planned for the late twentieth century. She put the entire family on camera. They prospered (CARTER, 1992, p. 37).

Also, Dora demonstrates that the legit son of Melchior to his third marriage, Tristram Hazard, is a TV presenter, something considered far away from the high arts of theater:

Tristram Hazard, weak but charming, game-show presenter and television personality, last gasp of the imperial Hazard dynasty that bestrode the British theatre like a colossus for a century and a half. Tristram, youngest son of the great Melchior Hazard, ‘prince of players’; grandson of those giants of the Victorian stage, Ranulph and Estella ‘A star danced’ Hazard. Lo, how the mighty have fallen (CARTER, 1992, p. 10).

Of course, sciences change over time, with new discoveries and advances. It is part of human culture to seek for knowledge, to try to understand the world or to dominate it. In relation to *Frankenstein*, this transitory aspect of knowledge and culture is clearly expressed by Victor Frankenstein's father dismissing his subject of study as a waste of time.

My father looked carelessly at the title page of my book and said, ‘Ah! Cornelius Agrippa” My dear Victor, do not waste your time upon this; it is a sad trash’. If, instead of this remark, my father had taken the pains to me that the principles of

¹⁴ AUDIENCES. In: DOBSON, Michael; WELLS, Stanley (Eds). *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*. 1st Ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. p. 29.

Agrippa had entirely exploded and that a modern system of science had been introduced [...] (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 37).

Thus, the shattered mirrors between twins, fathers/alleged fathers and their offspring, lead to a questioning of truths and of what, in fact, constitutes kinship. Especially considering that the whole bunch of Hazards and Chance were connected in some way, even if these connections were confused and intertwined, and sometimes misplaced. What becomes clear is that the way these biological bonds are interpreted, temporary and conditioned by circumstances.

Notwithstanding, the body can go beyond materiality by extending itself to culture, society and technology. The understanding of the world comes through the senses, but it is modulated and filtered by culture. The senses are not a "prison-house" from where language may release humankind, as stated by Terry Eagleton in his *The Idea of Culture* (2002). As "nature is not the Other of culture" (EAGLETON, 2002, p. 110) as much as culture is not the other of nature. Humankind is not "born as cultural beings, nor as self-sufficient natural ones, but as creatures whose helpless physical nature is such that culture is a necessity" (EAGLETON, 2002, p. 99) to survival. Culture is not just a "supplement" for nature, because that would imply a dichotomy between both, and nature and culture are a blurred combination. Through culture, mankind can exceed the body limits, extending the materiality through culture, society and technology (EAGLETON, 2002, p. 110). Mankind is crossed by culture and nature at an indisputable intersection, in a way that neither of them can be reduced. As Edmund, Shakespearean bastard in *King Lear* (2007[1605]), questions society by exalting nature, he is questioning the human understanding of nature that makes him a recognized son and brother, but a bastard nonetheless:

"[...] Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?"
(SHAKESPEARE, *King Lear*, I.2.335-339)

In the arena "culture versus nature", dialectics replaces the game of contradiction and totalization by questioning the being and the limit, in a way that may be understood as a *disputatio*, from which one awakens by transgressing, going beyond binarism. A person is not dimidiated between nature and society or nature and culture, but a limitrophe being stranded

between both. But this tension is not mild. Mankind's disposition to conquer nature is rooted in the challenge of the body facing a world out of human control. The domestication of nature and the body drives the continuous search for scientific accomplishments. Victor Frankenstein kills God in his attempt to provide life, conquering nature. But his toils led him to the utmost failure, because of his fear of the other, who is also a projection of himself. The creature's awakening to humanity – in the sense of inner *reconnaissance* – is painful, producing a broken subject, haunted by the loathing of the world.

In Carter, there is the constant reminder of the transitory character of culture and nature, defying the "binary layer" that is set upon the understanding of the world, which works as a limiting factor. The othering in Carter is a provocation towards crystalized understandings of culture and nature, stating that everything is an interpretation conditioned by the context of utterance. The reader, as Dora's interlocuter – henceforth Carter's interlocuter – is led throughout the novel questioning every discovery and every story within the story, for the facts are laid down and deconstructed all the time: Peregrine is dead, Peregrine is alive; the red hair went to the legit side of the family, the red-haired girls were illegitimate, and so on. Life is a stage in Carter's *Wise Children*, for nothing can be accounted as indelible truth, celebrating Shakespeare, life is a play within a play:

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts, [...]"
(SHAKESPEARE, *As You Like It*, II.7.1037-1040)

And, in terms of heredity, intangible cultural legacy, that are the "practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills [...] that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage" (UNESCO, 2016), that will not be automatically inherited from blood relatives without any contact or interaction or coexistence. Of course, being part of a community and living inside it implies absorbing the cultural traces; therefore, the nuances of familial peculiarities will not be inherited by the children who do not interact with their biological family. The concept of intergenerational transmission embeds the transmission from one generation to another, of legacies, rituals and traditions, and they can be conscious or unconscious (LISBOA, FÉRES-CARNEIRO, JABLONSKI, 2007, p. 52). To absorb cultural traces and peculiarities from a family, whether being taught or learning unconsciously, it is necessary to coexist with one's family. It is not possible to learn family traditions from outside, not even knowing they exist. The Chance twins learned their genealogy and their family's stories. They were told about their "real"

grandmother, Estella and their “presumed” grandfather, Ranulph and his mission to spread the works of Shakespeare across the world. They knew their father was a stage actor, who carried away his father’s legacy. The Chance sisters decided not to follow their father’s footsteps in the theater, but became artist on their own terms. In a way, one may consider that they did follow their family business, which was art, but not their “Shakespearean heritage”.

Henceforth, the relation between low and high culture only highlights the broken relation between the Chance twins and Melchior, their father. And their father’s obsession with his own father’s legacy, may be understood as an effort to keep his own father’s dream alive. Ranulph Hazard killed his wife and lover and killed himself, but remained loved and cherished by Melchior, for he insisted in following his “alleged” father’s legacy. The “alleged” springs from a doubt that hangs in the air in relation to Peregrine’s and Melchior’s biological paternity. Melchior was only a child when he and his brother became orphans, thus, the fact that Melchior dives into his father’s “mission” may pose as a means to establish a connection between them. There is the parental relationship established through Shakespeare’s plays. In addition, Melchior’s “Britishness” is fake, for he was born in the United States. Thus, he is an illegitimate British, but a knighted Shakespearean actor:

So twin brothers, our fathers, were born in the USA. Melchior and Peregrine. What names, eh? If you shorten them to ‘Mel’ and ‘Perry’, they’ve got a democratically twentieth-century and transatlantic ring to them but Old Ranulph, rattling old nineteenth-century romantic that he was, never did that, although Estella, with a wink, often (CARTER, 1992, p. 16).

Hence, Dora and Nora, on the other hand, are legitimate British, but born “on the wrong side on the blanket” (CARTER, 1992, p. 8). Illegitimate British children from an American-born British actor, Dora and Nora’s cultural heritage includes Shakespeare and all Western canon. But the Chance twins did not live in their father’s shadow, they made a career of their own. The Chance sisters did not carry their father/grandfather’s Shakespearean legacy, but neither did their other relatives. Also, Carter parodies and challenges the key discourses of patriarchy, such as religion, history and literature, “underlining the limitations and abuses of a normative and patterned vision of the world” (BOTESCU-SIRETEANU, 2010, p. 128). Sir Melchior Hazard is a representation of these discourses and he is “exposed as a fraud, a womanizer and a failed actor and director” (BOTESCU-SIRETEANU, 2010, p. 128).

Frankenstein’s creature, on the other hand, inherited complete absence. He survived this complete isolation from nurture and culture because he was created as an adult, otherwise he would have died of starvation or frozen to death, for example. This is also intertwined with

Freud's conception of the fear of the loss of love, which prevents human beings from going against society's rules for fear of abandonment and solitude (FREUD, 2013a, p. 70). In this sense, culture does not go in the blood without human coexistence. Innumerable cases of "feral"¹⁵ or abused children may be useful to understand this idea, such as Genie, the girl whose deranged father had strapped into a handmade straitjacket and tied to a chair in a silent room of a suburban house since she was twelve-months old¹⁶. Although, Genie was raised by her father, she was not nurtured, but raised as, almost, a monster. Tied to a chair, beaten into silence, she did not receive the same moral codes other children do. Rather, she was molded into something else, a feral human. She could speak only a few words, remained silent most of the time, she urinated and defecated herself when stressed. Not the usual characteristics of a regular thirteen-year old child. Although most claims of "feral" child are revealed as hoaxes¹⁷, some of them are accounted as true. Such is the case of Oxana Malaya, discovered in 1991, at the age of eight, having lived most of her life with the dogs in a kennel of a Soviet orphanage. It is believed that Oxana found in the dogs what she could not get from others, such as physical comfort and emotional connection. These cases highlight the importance of nurture over nature, for these children did not grow up to become regular adults and the ones who did were reintegrated to society and had emotional and physical support in early age to become grown-ups.

As previously said, culture and nature cannot be separated, although culture comes through coexistence, nurturing. A person cannot be expected to learn English without any contact with the language, but the capacity to speak and learn is biological. Nature and nurture are key concepts that go intertwined. Cultural inheritance makes a difference in someone's life. As stated by Émile Durkheim (1982), a person is made up of an individual and a social part that cannot be separated, for the first consists of the subjective response to the events of one's personal life, and the other is formed by the ideas and habits that are not originally born with the individual, but internalized as the being coexists in a group or groups. Thus, there is

¹⁵ "Infants abandoned or neglected by mankind but surviving under the care of wild creatures" (DUTTA, Kunal. "Raised in the wild: tales of survival". *The Independent*. Online, Sep., 22, 2012. Culture, Films, News. Retrieved in: <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/raised-in-the-wild-8165967.html>> Accessed on Dec. 10, 2016.)

¹⁶ CARROL, Rory. "Starved, tortured, forgotten: Genie, the feral child who left a mark on researchers". *The Guardian*. Online, July, 14, 2016. Home, UK, Society. Retrieved in: <<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/jul/14/genie-feral-child-los-angeles-researchers>> Accessed on Nov. 30, 2016.

¹⁷ DUTTA, Kunal. "Raised in the wild: tales of survival". *The Independent*. Online, Sep., 22, 2012. Culture, Films, News. Retrieved in: <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/raised-in-the-wild-8165967.html>> Accessed on Dec. 10, 2016.

an interdependency between society and individuality. Structures and collective representations are imposed upon subjects when they represent the product of common life. Therefore, society is a dynamic organism, that may expose discrepancies between social norms and personal needs. In this context, kinship becomes as mutable and conditioned as religion, economics or politics (BARNARD, 2003, p. 785). Human kinship is “fundamentally different from that of other species in that it is characterized by culturally articulated sets of rules which may operate to a great extent independently of observable behavior” (BARNARD, 2003, p. 786).

In relation to Frankenstein’s creature it may be said that his violent acts are embedded in his subjectivity, as much as related to his surroundings. It may be a “natural” response to the cultural strangeness that provokes people into despising him. The creature is a "floating subject" who cannot manage to become a player, a full member of society, and resorts to violence (WIEVIORKA, 2011, p. 50). The creature's subjectivity leads to violence, due to the "excess of meaning through which violence may develop" (WIEVIORKA, 2011, p. 51). Michel Wieviorka (2011), French sociologist, proposes three attitudes to end violence:

The first of these involves shutting oneself up in the past, either in the barbarity experienced or in the time that preceded it, which will ultimately then be recalled as a golden age—before the disaster. In Sigmund Freud’s terminology, this attitude is one of “melancholy.” It may lead to demands for reparations, but is much less likely to evolve toward acknowledgment and forgiveness. The second attitude, on the contrary, tries to forget the past, to distance oneself as much as possible from past history, either the period of extreme violence or before that, in an attempt to merge completely into the society or nation in which one lives. In this case, there can be no debate about the past. Finally, the third attitude is to go through a period of “mourning,” again a Freudian concept, and to show that one is able to move forward and live fully in the society and in the nation, while still keeping alive the memory of the earlier experience and its destruction (WIEVIORKA, 2011, p. 58).

Wieviorka’s proposals, however, are not fit for the creature, due his status of being outside history. The proposals are contradicted as follows: in order to surpass the impulse of violence, the creature could not seek refuge in the past, because he has never had a "golden age" to turn to, therefore, the Freudian concept of "melancholy" is not useful to the creature, on the contrary it turns into more pain. The creature could not endure "mourning", another Freudian concept, for there would be nothing waiting for him after overcoming his tragic birth and disastrous learning. According to Freud, “mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty and ideal, and so on” (FREUD, 1966, p. 243). Also, the same loss can cause melancholia in a person, instead of mourning. Thus, melancholia, is a “pathological disposition caused by the same as mourning. [...] [Although] mourning is not a pathological

condition” (FREUD, 1966, p. 243). Finally, the creature could forget his past and move on, but not in complete isolation and solitude, for mankind needs civilization to live, humans are not solitary animals (WIEVIORKA, 2011, p. 58; FREUD, 2013a, p. 31).

In relation to the Chance sisters, they have their role as players, as members of the Hazard family, denied by their biological father, for the refusal of recognition. But instead of recurring to violence, the sisters mourn their lack of legitimacy and move on. They did not have a “golden past” to turn to, a perfect past when everything was absolutely perfect. They lived their lives coping with their illegitimacy, but hoping for recognition. The whole novel leads to the very point where they finally overcome the sufferings of not being recognized by their father. When, finally, the recognition came, it was like completing a puzzle that belonged to the past:

Yet Nora and I were well content. We’d finally wormed our way into the heart of the family we’d always wanted to be part of. They’d asked us [Dora and Nora] on the stage and let us join in, legit, at last. There was a house we all had in common and it was called, the past, even though we’d lived in different rooms (CARTER, 1992, p. 226).

At the same time that they have their place as players, legitimate members of the family, given by their father, they realize that this father figure was romanticized by them, as if it was a projection of their “hopes and dreams” (CARTER, 1992, p. 224). Dora and Nora spent all their lives dealing with their illegitimate status and the sudden reconnaissance could not change that overnight. As said by Freud, “mourning is overcome after a certain lapse of time and any interference with it may be either useless or harmful” (FREUD, p. 244). Dora and Nora were always part of the Hazard family, even without the name of formal recognition. The Chance sisters, at the end of the novel, come to the understanding that their father was an imaginative and unnecessary projection of childish aspirations molded by the hegemonic model of nuclear family deeply embedded in Western society, of which they are a part. They had a family, not in the “perfect” models of hegemonic Western culture of post-World War II, father-mother-children (FONSECA, 2014, p. 22), but they had a family nonetheless. Alternatively, Frankenstein and his creature could not build or repair a familial bond. They drowned themselves in hatred and resentment, driving their lives into obliteration. The two parts of a double that could not be separated or mended.

To sum up, nature and culture cannot be separated in human relations and reactions, for they are embedded in one another, and “the idea of nature contains, though often unnoticed, an extraordinary amount of human history” (WILLIAMS, 2007, p. 284). The biological/natural aspect of mankind cannot be thought apart from culture, first because all

thinking would involve culture itself. “‘Anthropology’s relation’ also encompasses more general features of conceptual relations, ones not tied to the foundational ideas of culture and nature or to the epistemology they generate, that come from conditions of sociality at large” (STRATHERN, 2005, p. 62). The debate of nature over culture is of great importance when dealing with familial relations. Either through affinity or consanguinity, family ties are all socially based. Culture does not go in the blood from one generation to another, but coexistence and interaction are the ones spreading it through relative to relative. All human constructs are not natural given identities and life is like a “a theatrical illusion where well-established concepts such as history, religion, fatherhood, cultural heritage and patriarchal authority are mere constructs for stage use (BOTESCU-SIRETEANU, 2010, p. 100). In this sense, the bastard as a cultural irregularity is also a cultural construct and it is up to the bastard to unfold the multiplicity of meanings this label may convey. Such as defiance instead of conformance. Resistance instead of seclusion. The illegitimate is a representation in fiction of the building of new possible worlds, free of prejudice and moral restraints that would keep a family apart out of pride or fear of rejection.

4.2 Arbitrarily connected, absolutely related

The concept of family is not monolithic and universal, for it is a social product and not a natural entity (SHUCH, 2005). Thus, family can be seen as a micro-community within a larger community, which is society. One must be careful when conceptualizing “family”, because it is a social product, and not a universal datum (SHUCH, 2005). The study of kinship, as other anthropological studies, was pervaded, in the beginning, by ethnocentric bias from European theorists, as nineteenth century scholars believed that kinship was determined by instincts and innate propensities (BATALHA, 2003, p. 97). Kinship systems give people a structural and somewhat regular reference as a social organism, thus contributing to the general balance of a bigger social structure, “socializing children and thereby establishing social groupings, kinship simultaneously marks a boundary and a bridge between non-human and human social orders” (BARNARD, 2003, p. 784). Kinship may be based on “consanguinity”, which involves biological material, or “affinity”, which involves affection without blood, but apart from how these familial bonds are built, they are fundamentally

social (AUGÉ, 1975, p. 13-15). According to Luís Batalha, in *Decodificando Parentesco* (2003), Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) was the first anthropologist to draw attention to the social role of kinship and to make the distinction between *pater* (social father) and *genitor* (biological father). Therefore, this distinction can also be drawn in relation to the mother, dividing the “culturally defined genetic mother and the bearing or carrying mother” as the *genitrix* and the “social mother” as *mater* (BARNARD, 2003, p. 790). This division brings an apparent dichotomy between nature and culture, as previously explored but

the apparent cross-cultural ‘reality’ of kinship stems from an erroneous equation of ‘kinship’ with ‘biology’. Kinship, for virtually all human societies, is built upon a putative biological foundation. Nevertheless, this is a cultural phenomenon and not per se a biological one. The incest taboo, the family, and the genealogical grid are substantive universals of human culture; but they are not indicators of identical ideological notions in all cultures, or of any specific ‘facts’ of procreation (BARNARD, 2003, p. 785).

The transmission of group membership or other rights and characteristics, from one generation to the next, can be understood in "six logical possibilities" (BARNARD, 2003, p. 794), that "correspond to the traditional notions of patrilineal, matrilineal, double (or duolineal), bilateral, parallel, and cross-descent" (BARNARD, 2003, p. 794). In the Patrilineal notion, the lineage derives from the father, while in the Matrilineal one, it is derived from the mother. Double and bilateral descent are more complicated to understand. On the one hand, “Double (or duolineal) descent comprises simultaneous patrilineal and matrilineal descent: a child belongs to the patrilineal group of its father and the matrilineal group of its mother, and patrilineal and matrilineal groups belong to different sets” (BARNARD, 2003, p. 794). On the other hand “Bilateral (or cognatic) descent, by contrast, comprises a recognition of descent from both sides of the family in the absence of any specified lines of descent” (BARNARD, 2003, p. 795). Ultimately,

Parallel and cross-descent are very rare forms. Parallel descent involves the transmission of sex-specific group or category membership from father to son and from mother to daughter. Cross (or alternating) descent involves transmission from father to daughter and mother to son (or mother’s father to daughter’s son and father’s mother to son’s daughter). These are typically found as secondary modes in conjunction with simultaneous patrilineal or matrilineal descent (BARNARD, 2003, p. 795).

The scholar Marilyn Strathern, in her work *Kinship, Law and the Unexpected* (2005), states that across Europe, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the families were being associated with the household, containing both related and unrelated people. Thus, she states:

What today the English would call relatives were frequently referred to as connections. This was also the time when a crucial distinction emerged between connections and family (Handler and Segal 1990: 32). Handler and Segal argue that

the distinction captured that between the man-made or constructed and the natural. Connections, on the one hand, were mutable, created, invented in that sense, made socially knowable through strategies of acknowledgement. The natural, on the other hand, was found in the certainty of the blood tie, and was open to discovery, where much drama might be made of welcome or unwelcome facts, it being close relations between people already linked who came to be known as 'family'. Yet divergence in the apprehension of relations reappears here too. For seen from the outside, it was the concept of family, a term Johnson's dictionary used for class, tribe or species (Handler and Segal 1990: 32), that also gave evidence for the paradigmatic distinction between naturally individuated units and the connections that can be made between them (STRATHERN, 2005, p. 44-45).

Hence, in the wake of biotechnological advances, the new discoveries pose as much answers as new questions. If knowing one's biological father answers a question, it may also pose more questions, such as if this person fills the role of the father, if it is enough to build a bond or to break one, among others. To consider the biological discoveries as having no moral agenda is a rhetoric artifice to blur the social consequences of those same advances. In the wake of biological r(e)volutions, social sciences, such as philosophy, law, anthropology and literature, among others, act as modulators between the genetic technologies and human relations (STRATHERN, 2005, p 31). Advances in the reproductive field lead to the same ethical questions that can be asked in *Frankenstein* (1994) to be revived over and over again: what should be, if any, the limits of science, what are the implications of biotechnologies in human relations, if mankind should be able to create human life, among others. One example, even quoted by Marilyn Strathern (2005), is the case of the deaf couple who had a deaf baby intentionally by asking a deaf friend, with five generations of deafness in his family, to donate the sperm that would allow the couple to have a deaf baby¹⁸. What would be a deficiency to others, to this couple was a valued cultural difference. Both parents wanted to share their deaf world with a deaf baby, to be able to include their baby in their deaf community. One may question the consequences of designed disability, or designed babies, if parents should be able to design their children, like Frankenstein designed his creature. To this couple deafness was just a characteristic that would open the doors of an entire community, including the parents' world. To others could be the other way around, deficiency by caprice.

Genetics also highlights the uniqueness of the body and the notion of family heightens the relations between these bodies. In an era of individualism, DNA becomes the material proof of uniqueness, but it also brings the issues of heredity, as it allows to know what heirs receive from their predecessors, in a new search for origins that is not directly related to

¹⁸ TEATHER, David. "Lesbian couple have deaf baby by choice". *The Guardian*, New York, Apr. 8, 2002. World news. Retrieved in <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/apr/08/davidteather>>. Accessed on Aug. 15, 2016.

personality traits of life story, but rather related to biological heritage, such as diseases, physical features, world region or ethnicity. One person's genome is a unique biological signature composed by a multitude of relatives. This creates a "genetic family" (DOLGIN, 2000 apud STRATHERN, 2005, p. 20) that does not imply a social connection. One physical body connected to another and another and another, but with no social or affective connection. The genome is combined in a unique way, but it is the sum of innumerable previously existent genes. The uniqueness comes in the combination, which implies, at the same time, a multitude of previous relatives connected, in their turn, to another multitude of relatives, and so on.

In *Wise Children*, the uniqueness of the body is challenged and reaffirmed by Carter through the number of twins in the novel: Melchior and Peregrine, Dora and Nora, Imogen and Saskia, Tristram and Gareth, and Gareth's baby girl and boy. Even though there are five pairs of twins, the asymmetry of the body that makes individuals unique is highlighted by Carter through Dora's words, even when one has an identical sibling, "for the body itself isn't symmetrical" (CARTER, 1992, p. 5). Also, Melchior and Peregrine are not identical, neither physically nor psychologically, "Now, although these two were twins, they were not alike as two peas. Melchior, at ten, was dark and brooding, registering already the beginnings of the profile who would dominate Shafterbury Avenue" (CARTER, 1992, p. 21); Peregrine was red haired, like his mother: "Our Uncle Peregrine inherited her scarlet hair" (CARTER, 1992, p. 17). Peregrine was adventurous, while Melchior carried his father's theater legacy ahead (CARTER, 1992, p. 18-22).

Humankind shares a bunch of genetic material that is common to every single human being, making humankind a major family. In this sense, the creature from *Frankenstein* does and does not belong to the human race, for his genetic material is a mixture of different species united into a sentient being with humanoid's features and humanlike behavior, but an experiment nonetheless. Frankenstein's creature is as close to a human being as he is to a cyborg or another interspecies specimen, for Frankenstein collected his materials partly from deceased human bodies as he states that the "slaughter-house furnished many of my materials" (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 52). This way, the creature, being a child from his intellect, was composed by materials that make him unique but enlarge his distance from humanity. Much like a chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) or a bonobo (*Pan paniscus* or pygmy chimpanzee)

that are mankind's closest living evolutionary relatives¹⁹, sharing approximately 98,5% percent of human DNA, the creature shares human biology, although it is not to be considered human and does not share the same rights as human beings. On a molecular basis, the creature may be close to humankind, but on a social standard, the creature still is a pariah, apart from society.

In the case of *Wise Children* (1992), the Chance sisters are completely human in a molecular level, something not to be questioned, although their bastard status puts them in the margins of society. In comparison to Imogen and Saskia, whose bastard status is revealed only by the end of the novel, they don't enjoy the same standards. Carter deconstructs this natural and social status, for the Hazard girls are revealed to be bastards, just like Dora and Nora, exposing that the different treatment both twins received are only based on social constructs and not on a biological notion of family. Carter, in a way, mixes irony and genetics, when she has her character suggest that the understanding of biology is permeated by social constructs, as Dora declares that her "half-sisters" inherited the red hair, for it was a characteristic of the legit, "The red hair only went to the legit side" (CARTER, 1992, p. 17). It is proven, by the end of the novel, that the red-haired sisters are not legit daughters, as it was believed, thus they just inherited their father's hair with no relation to their "believed to be" legitimate status. As Strathern affirms:

Kinship, though, is where Westerners think about connections between bodies themselves. Indeed, if they use the body to think about the uniqueness of the individual, they also use it to talk about the way persons are connected to one another, not through what they share in a general way, as we might speak of all humankind as kin, but through what has been transmitted in particular ways. So they trace specific connections (genealogies) and the network tells them how closely they are related (degrees of relatedness). Modern knowledge of genetics endorses this way of thinking: genes make each individual unique and connects it to many immediate – as well as countless more distant – others (STRATHERN, 2005, p. 26).

The search for truth in biological connections is not enough to erase the regulations of social rules. Because, "the notion that kinship has a biological foundation is really dependent on the cultural definition of 'biology'. Even in Western societies, 'biological' kinship is often as much a metaphor for social relations as a statement of relevant biological fact" (BARNARD, 2003, p. 786). For instance, Melchior, from *Wise Children* knew that the twins Chance were his daughters, but still refused to acknowledge them publicly. And when he did, no DNA test was needed to affirm the truth he never doubted. Like Victor, Melchior knew he

¹⁹ GOODMAN, Morris. "The Genomic Record of Humankind's Evolutionary Roots". *The American Journal of Human Genetics*, v. 64, n. 1, p. 31-39, Jan. 1999. Retrieved in <<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0002929707616541>> Accessed on Jul. 10, 2016.

was the creator, but refused to recognize his creatures. Frankenstein's creature was made with his own hands, but still, he refused him and turned his back on his own enterprise. The biological bond is not a guarantee of social bond, neither is the certainty of parentage a builder of social bonds. While legitimacy versus illegitimacy was a dichotomy within a pre-contemporary era, classifying people in spouses versus concubines, legitimate children versus bastards, the present classificatory system has emphasized the dichotomy between "electives" (in Portuguese: *eletivos*) and consanguineous (FONSECA, 2014, p. 22). This having been said, the difference between affinity and consanguinity is the most emphasized in contemporary family definitions, and both terms of the equation are deeply valued (FONSECA, 2014, p. 22).

Notwithstanding, generally, "marriage is the mechanism which provides for the legitimation of children and defines their status in relation to the conjugal family and the wider kin group" (BARNARD, 2003, p. 798). And, families in the 21st century may recombine their elements, with divorces and remarriages. Recombinant families are considerably common, showing how interchangeable the family components are. In this scenery, the bastard may as well be recombined with other family elements, such as a step-father, half-siblings and so on. And one may consider bastardy a thing from the past, since formal marriage is not as fundamental as it was in the past. The possibilities of single parenting, for example, forced a relativization of bastardy. Others may affirm that, being born outside a wedlock doesn't change when the bastard becomes an element inside another recombinant family. As if the recombination of the elements would happen between individuals who would carry, to the next engagement, the same role or status as they had before. Therefore, it can be understood that "family dissolves but kinship remains" (STRATHERN, 2005, p. 26). The general anthropological understanding of kinship refers to relatives connected to one another without any supposition of the kind of social group of family they compose (STRATHERN, 2005, p. 167). In this sense, marriage, divorce and recombination, as much as adoption cannot dissolve kinship.

In the case of *Wise Children*, Melchior Hazard married three times and "had" twin girls on his first marriage to Lady Atalanta Hazard, *née* Lynde; and twin boys with his third wife, the girl who played Cordelia to Melchior's Lear, nicknamed Lady Margarine by Dora because of a TV commercial. If the girls from the first marriage had not been found to be biological daughters of his brother's, they would continue to be legitimate, even though Melchior remarried. Their status of legal daughters was granted to them for they were born inside a marriage and the dissolution of this marriage did not solve that. Tristram and Gareth,

offspring of the third marriage, were also legitimate children, born inside a marriage. The Chance girls, born outside the wedlock were illegitimate no matter how many times their father married to other women, other than their mother, who died single (CARTER, 1992, p. 5; 37-38).

Additionally, the physical body, the DNA, as said before, represents the materiality of uniqueness, and may also represent the way one is connected to one another. Connected to humankind, as kin, and as heir to particularities from others. Although genealogy and relatedness are not the same, specific connections may rate the degree of relatedness. Biology does not constitute, by itself, kinship. One may choose to ignore bio connections or potential connections. This way, by valuing or ignoring relationships, relatives can become strangers or family. Recombinant families make the familial bond clearer in this sense, for a member may choose not to keep in touch with members from one's former family or may do the opposite. People are isolated parts that are members of collectivities. And the issue of bastardy may have never been an issue in another context, but in Western society, considering Euro-American models, it has been problematic for centuries. If "it is always a system of exchange" that lies at the origin of rules of marriage (LÉVI-STRAUSS, 1969, p. 478), the bastard embodies the break in this exchange, for nothing is traded and the bond between lovers is temporary and embodies the break of a previous exchange. And no relationship, such as between lovers, can be arbitrarily isolated from all other relationships, such as marriage. "Marriage is thus a dramatic encounter between nature and culture, between alliance and kinship" (LÉVI-STRAUSS, 1969, p. 489).

In *Wise Children*, the break in the marriage exchange is clear right at the beginning, when Dora explains that she and her sister were born outside wedlock, and that their father had already had three marriages. By emphasizing that their father was in his third marriage, one may understand that the marriage is not a sacred institution and that illegitimacy is not an issue:

[...] Sir Melchior Hazard's daughters, though not, ahem, by any of his wives. We are his natural daughters, as they say, as if only unmarried couples do it the way that nature intended. His never-by-him officially recognized daughters, with whom, by a bizarre coincidence, he shares a birthday (CARTER, 1992, p. 5).

In *Frankenstein*, the illegitimacy of the creature demolishes all presuppositions of the birth of a legitimate human being: there is no marriage involved, no sex, no natural conception, no mother and no father. The exchange of marriage is obliterated, for Victor

Frankenstein gives birth alone, molding his creature humanlike in form, but denying him any kinship. Shelley builds the scene of the creature's birth in a way that resembles a natural birth:

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishments of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of life into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. [...] How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 55).

Hence, the motherless monster, made of loathsome parts of dead matter, continues his cycle of bringing further death into the world (GILBERT, 1978, p. 67). Maybe, the creature wants to bring more death to the world because he has failed, like the Miltonian Eve and Sin, "to win the compassion of that blind and curiously Miltonic old man" (GILBERT, 1978, p. 68). Thus, the creature's search for a female principle in a harsh society from which he is an undesired product is not hard to understand (GILBERT, 1978, p. 68). The freak feminine in both Carter and Shelley, is "targeted against patriarchal normative ideology" (BOTESCU-SIRETEANU, 2010, p. 106), subverting master narratives and attacking exclusionary discourses. The freak, illegitimate, is the representation of the instability of the patriarchal narrative. The illegitimate, the freak, has been a cause of admiration and fear, at the same time put on a display to public admiration and put away from the public eye (BOTESCU-SIRETEANU, 2010, p. 102). The monster, the freak, the bastard, is the incarnation of an irregularity that is the "admired and feared for their capacity of transgressing the norm" (BOTESCU-SIRETEANU, 2010, p. 102).

In both works, the presence of the mother is omitted or obliterated. Dora and Nora (*Wise Children*) lost their mother in childbirth, and the creature (*Frankenstein*) never had a mother. So, if during the first years of life, "maternal care is a natural condition in the individual's development" (LÉVI-STRAUSS, 1969, p. 4), the creature was completely deprived of this or any kind of care. The conception of Frankenstein's creature did not involve a mother, and the motherless creature was abandoned right after its birth, being shut down from humanity completely as he was despised in every human encounter he had: "[...] and perceiving me [the creature], shrieked loudly, and quitting the hut, ran across the fields [...]" (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 101); "the whole village was roused; some fled, some attacked me [the creature], until, grievously bruised by stones and many other kinds of missile weapons, I escaped to the open country [...]" (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 101-102). The conception without a mother represents a taboo, for it breaks the sacred notion of conception, natural or aided by science. Despite the gender of the parents, modern technologies of conception involve a male

and a female, even if it is just to harvest genetic material. The creature is Adam and Eve to a godlike Victor Frankenstein, that tried to overcome nature and succeeding, could not stand his own enterprise. The creature is a child of Frankenstein's intellect, orphaned by the weakness of his creator in not facing his achievement.

The Chance sisters, on the other hand, had a motherlike figure, their grandmother. They were raised in a "dysfunctional" family, but a family nonetheless. "Dysfunctional" in comparison to the sacralized nuclear Western model of father-mother-children. The supposed death of their mother in childbirth or the open rejection of the father did not represent impediments to having a family. Supposed death because, in the novel, it is raised the question if Grandma Chance would be Dora and Nora's biological mother (CARTER, 1992, p. 222-223). Dora and Nora were loved and nourished by Grandma Chance. The absent father figure became a ghost and a projection of expectations, but they received the maternal care, fulfilling the basic conditions of development. The mother figure was not present, but the mother role was occupied by Grandma Chance, "so Mrs. Chance adopted us but never let us call her 'mother', out of respect for the dead. We always called her 'Grandma', and 'Chance' became our handle" (CARTER, 1992, p. 26). A deceased mother is something completely different than no mother whatsoever, such as the case of Frankenstein's creature. The Chance girls were part of the human family, turning them acceptable, adoptable. While the creature is trapped in-between human and non-human, therefore he is not part of the universal family of humankind. On top of that, he was created as an adult, making him an impossible candidate for adoption. A grown-up being, supposedly, had care as a child. Even if orphan, he would have had someone to feed him, clean him up and protect him. The creature had none. He had to fend for himself, breaking with another cycle in his maturation. It is fundamental to highlight that the mother role is not restricted by gender and can be occupied by a male parent or relative thus, the "mother role" could be understood as the nurturing figure who is responsible for caring for a child.

Mary Shelley and Angela Carter challenge and demythologize the canonized notion of mother and motherhood, defying the patriarchal stereotypes of nurturing, feminine and protective females (BOTESCU-SIRETEANU, 2010, p. 104). Victor Frankenstein, the mother-father, is the opposite of this supposed role, and the mother figures in *Wise Children* are also not stereotypical, but they drink, cheat, and do not fit the consecrated role of the "angel in the house"²⁰. The femaleness in both novels does not act in a direct opposition to

²⁰ Expression originated from the title of the sequence of poems largely popular by Coventry Patmore, "The Angel in the House", originally published in 1854. (ANGEL IN THE HOUSE, THE. In: DREABBLE,

men, but to the traditional hierarchization of gender roles and the traditional binary logic embedded in patriarchal institutions. Femaleness appears to disrupt the stereotypical representations of women, which women are “taught to learn and assume as such and then to pass on to their daughters” (BOTESCU-SIRETEANU, 2010, p. 106). By the depiction of the illegitimate female, Shelley and Carter act toward a decolonization of women and femaleness. The monstrosity of femaleness can be traced back to Aristotle, to whom a woman was a failure in the reproductive process (GILBERT, 1978, p. 73, note 22; BOTESCU-SIRETEANU, 2010, p. 107). Thereupon, the monstrosity of Frankenstein’s creature and its birth, along with the mysterious and, in a way, fictionalized birth of Dora and Nora work as anti-mythical aspects of the mother. And “the marginalization of women in a patriarchal society devalued their essential multiplicity, which was contrasted with male unity and stability” (MACLEAN, 1994, p. 100).

Regardless if biological or not, when a father passes on his name to his children, he is passing a patrimony through his patronym (ROUDINESCO, 2003, p.22). In a way, “signing is the mark of both a contact and a contract” (MACLEAN, 1994, p. 97). The absence of any biological link is substituted by the social acknowledgment, and the existence of a biological consanguinity is confirmed by the name:

Transmits to the child a double patrimony: the blood, which imprints a similarity, and the name – prename and patronym –, which confers an identity in the absence of any biological proof and of any knowledge of the roles of ovaries and sperm in the process of conception (ROUDINESCO, 2003, p.22, our translation)²¹.

In relation to illegitimacy, the child who does not receive her/his father’s name may be culturally marked as “unnatural”, a bastard. The lack of the father’s name poses a form of social exclusion. However, using the mother’s name carries a contradiction in Western society, for the name of the mother is usually the name of her father or husband. Thus, a bastard under the name of the mother acquires “the freedom of the mask”, and its double aspect of the mask allows one to live a “truth” or to hide another story (MACLEAN, 1994, p. 96-97). When a person decides to use the name of the mother, despite receiving the name of the father or not, it can be understood that the social exclusion may be a form of social liberation. “If one’s personal narrative is perceived as fiction, then other fictions may take its

Margareth (Ed). *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. 6th Ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. p. 28.

²¹ “Transmite portanto ao filho um duplo patrimônio: o do sangue, que imprime uma semelhança, e o do nome — prenome e patronímico —, que confere uma identidade, na ausência de qualquer prova biológica e de qualquer conhecimento do papel respectivo dos ovários e dos espermatozoides no processo da concepção” (ROUDINESCO, 2003, p.22).

place” (MACLEAN, 1994, p. 97), creating the possibility of new perspectives by assuming the matronym possible. To carry the matronym in a patriarchal society is to defy the conventions, and to be a step forward to the understanding that a name can be chosen, changed or even created (MACLEAN, 1994, p. 97). A name can be a mask where one may change or choose her/his own story. Such as the case of Grandma Chance in *Wise Children*, who decided to build a new story and a new life: “as if Grandma had done it up to suit a role she’d chosen on purpose. She was a mystery, was Mrs. Chance” (CARTER, 1992, p. 25). Grandma Chance opts for a “reconception”, which would be “a dangerous birth or rebirth into the way of the mother, always tainted by its ex-centricity” (MACLEAN, 1994, p. 96).

In relation to the creature in *Frankenstein*, having no name would be having no story and as he is denied a name, he is denied existence in a society of discourses, where names carry stories and heritages. Not naming the creature expresses the wishes of Frankenstein of erasing the creature from existence and, therefore, erasing his deed in bestowing life to the creature in the first place. As Frankenstein lets clear his horror, disgust and regret, with no concern for the life he had just given: “I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room [...]” (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 55). In *Wise Children*, the Chance girls received their names from their adoptive grandmother, who did not even share a biological connection with them, for their mother died in childbirth, so they are told – and the reader led to believe. And if the Chance twins were Mrs. Chance daughters, it would not change the refusal of the father, it would only add a layer of refusal of motherhood label, not the role, from Mrs. Chance’s part. “There is always a symbolic value in refusing the story already written for one” (MACLEAN, 1994, p. 98). Mrs. Chance refused her past and created her future. The creature, from *Frankenstein*, embraced his past and asked his creator for a future, in the form of a companion. The creature gave up being accepted by humankind and, specially, by his creator.

The faith laid in scientific achievements is also a cultural aspect, for science by itself has no moral grounds, the motivations involved and the unfolding of results do. DNA tests became the utmost proof of something decided by cultural and moral standards. Choice. Kinship is a choice. Whether to be or become or cease to be family through a DNA test result is something decided by the parts involved. Consanguinity alone does not make family, kinship perhaps, but not family. For instance, the Chance twins in Carter were not in doubt of their father’s identity, neither was their biological father, Melchior, in doubt of their

parentage. It was a choice not to recognize them. As it was a choice from Mrs. Chance to adopt them, despite the question raised by Peregrine of Grandma Chane being their biological mother. As it was a choice the sisters made to consider Peregrine, their uncle, as father figure, despite the fact that he was not always around. Also as the Chance twins “adopted” Tiffany’s family as theirs as well. Tiffany is the “first Black in the family” (CARTER, 1992, p. 35), daughter of Brenda, who is the daughter of Mavis, who is the eldest daughter of Cyn, who is the woman that appeared at Mrs. Chance’s house looking for a job, recommended by Peregrine. Cyn became family and her descendants were part of the Chance family as well. A huge family gathered by affinity, as Dora explains: “‘Family’, I say. Grandma invented this family. She put it together out of whatever came to hand – a spray pair of orphaned babes, a ragamuffin in a flat cap. She created it by sheer force of personality” (CARTER, 1992, p. 35).

As for *Frankenstein’s* Victor and the creature, the only bond possible between them would have to be by affinity. But Victor, mirroring Genesis, bestowed life upon a creature who was his image and likeness, but oppositely from God, Victor did not only rest on the seventh day, he fled his creation. Victor’s creature should have been his Adam, but was his downfall. But contrary to Milton’s Adam in *Paradise Lost* (1667), Victor did not fall for his willingness not to let his Eve fall alone. This Victor-Adam did not eat the “forbidden fruit” out of heroism, but out of cowardice. Victor-god-Adam abandoned his creature, his Adam-eve-creature to mankind’s damnation. The creature, as Victor’s “forbidden fruit”, became the corporification of Victor’s fall. The creature, abandoned by his creator, had no mother or father to honor, no fellow beings, therefore, alone in a hostile world, with nothing to lose but his life, the creature had no moral impediments to commit hideous deeds. The physical ugliness of *Frankenstein’s* creature, “represents his illegitimacy, his bastardy, his namelessness” (GILBERT, 1978, p. 66). The creature’s illegitimacy shut him from humankind completely and his creator would not want or accept him: “I [Victor] had been the author of unalterable evils, and I lived in daily fear lest the monster whom I had created should perpetrate some new wickedness” (SHELLEY, 1994, p. 87).

Victor *Frankenstein*, pursuing his scientific discovery and unraveling the mystery of life, took no further consideration with the consequences of his scientific enterprise. He reduced his creation to a body without a subject (DERRIDA & ROUDINESCO, 2004, p. 73), but his creation was not a senseless object, but a sentient being, with an intricate subjectivity, that unfolded in a perverted and tormented soul. As “[...] scientists can perfectly conceive, in

the name of science, delirious projects”²² (ROUDINESCO, 2004 apud DERRIDA & ROUDINESCO, 2004, p. 72, our translation), Victor conceived his delirious project in a matter of science for the science. Apparently, his scientific lust did not consider the possible applications of his achievements. He could give the spark of life, but if he should do so was not discussed. He Victor turns the birth of a being into a task exclusively male, violating the female nature (ROCQUE & TEIXEIRA, 2001, p. 18). His lonely achievement brought consequences to the collectivity. “In essence, good science would be a form of knowledge demarcated by ethical values that would ensure the security of society against the possible dangers arising from this activity²³” (ROCQUE & TEIXEIRA, 2001, p. 6, our translation). In the novel, Victor lost relatives, friends and his bride, unleashing the sufferings of the creature and his own. The verisimilitude built within the novel leads to a questioning of the limits of scientific enterprises and also to a questioning of female roles in a male dominated world:

For all this, we believe that the work in question can be seen through two distinct but related axes. One is the critique of a science without ethical limitations. The other turns against the separation of the world of work, particularly of science, from the sentimental sphere, and also condemns the assignment of roles of different genres in this process. In the author's formulation, both would come from a masculine conception of scientific work, which does not take into account the domestic, particular and affectionate aspects, traditionally linked to the feminine world²⁴ (ROCQUE & TEIXEIRA, 2001, p. 20, our translation).

To convey the “history of a creature born outside history” (GILBERT, 1978, p. 51) with all the scientific questioning, Shelley used an “unusually *evidentiary* technique for conveying the stories of her monster and his maker” (GILBERT, 1978, p. 51, author’s emphasis). The juxtaposition of documents and letters leads the reader to unveil the plot. Frankenstein gathers “three ‘concentric circles’ of narration” (GILBERT, 1978, p. 52, author’s emphasis): Walton’s letters to his sister, Victor Frankenstein’s account to Walton, and the creature’s speech to Victor. Within these circles, there are other short digressions embedded, like the stories of Elizabeth Lavenza, Frankenstein’s mother, Justine, Felix and

²² “[...]cientistas podem perfeitamente conceber, em nome da ciência, projetos delirantes” (ROUDINESCO, 2004 apud DERRIDA & ROUDINESCO, 2004, p. 72).

²³ “Na sua essência, seria a boa ciência uma forma de conhecimento demarcada por valores éticos que garantiriam a segurança da sociedade frente a possíveis perigos advindos dessa atividade” (ROCQUE & TEIXEIRA, 2001, p. 6).

²⁴ “Por tudo isso, julgamos que a obra em questão pode ser vista através de dois eixos distintos, porém relacionados. Um deles é o da crítica a uma ciência sem limitações éticas. O outro se volta contra a separação do mundo do trabalho, em particular da ciência, da esfera sentimental e também condena a atribuição de papéis de gêneros diferenciados nesse processo. Na formulação da autora, ambos procederiam de uma concepção masculina do trabalho científico, que não leva em conta os aspectos domésticos, particulares e de afeição, tradicionalmente ligados ao mundo feminino” (ROCQUE & TEIXEIRA, 2001, p. 20).

Agatha and Safie. In *Wise Children*, there are circles and circles intertwined, but the stories are recited in first person, which brings a biased narrator to the them. It is a viewpoint that leads the reader throughout the circles. The circles are so intertwined that is difficult to separate them, the big frame is the Hazard family's story, then, the personal lives of Dora and Nora, that are pervaded by Grandma Chance, Tiffany and Tristram, Imogen and Saskia and Wheelchair (Lady Atalanta). A huge jigsaw puzzle, much like *Frankenstein*, but not with the same evidentiary characteristic. *Wise Children* flirts with the magic of acting, and theater and a movielike unfolding of the stories, even dealing with more plausible plots, without any scientific enterprise, *Wise Children*, carries the reader to the atmosphere of make-believe. Hence, these two different approaches to the plot, in a way, make *Frankenstein* a legitimate tale and *Wise Children* an illegitimate one, for the first relies on facts while the other relies on an unreliable memory, "I have a memory, although I know it cannot be a true one [...]" (CARTER, 1992, p. 72).

It is important to highlight that Melchior and Peregrine, the Hazard man twins, had their own family issues as well. Their father killed their mother and their infancy was cut short with this tragedy. And Dora realizes this when she sees her father dressed like his own father in his hundredth birthday party (Dora and Nora seventy-fifth birthday):

[...] Melchior had donned the costume of his father. The slandered, the abused, the cuckolded Ranulph. Ranulph, wife-murderer, friend-murderer, self-murderer, 'a little more than kin and less than kind'. You can say that again. The son put on the lost father's clothes and when I [Dora] saw what he had done I could have cried because I'd ever taken into consideration that he'd got problems of his own where family was concerned. His childhood, which stopped short at ten years old, never to go again, like grandfather's clock (only not like our grandfather's clock, which is still in very fair fettle, thank you very much). No love, no nothing. And, tonight of all nights, he'd chosen to become his own father, hadn't he, as if the child had not been the father of the man, in his case, but during his whole long life, the man had waited to become the father of himself (CARTER, 1992, p. 224).

Wise Children is a novel full of intertextuality, especially with Shakespeare's plays. In this sense, Melchior could be compared to King Lear, character to the homonymous play (2007[1605]), who trusted his state to his two daughters Goneril and Regan, to be betrayed by them. Regan and Goneril could be compared to Imogen and Saskia. While Cordelia, the younger daughter he disowned by not flattering him as his other daughters did, who was the one loyal to him from the beginning until her tragic end, would be the Chance twins. In this sense, Melchior would have his redemption by acknowledging his worthy Cordelias, Dora and Nora, without the tragic end of deaths and insanity. The audience/readers, in Carter, would see the family reunited through love and forgiveness, something denied in

Shakespeare's play. Moreover, Melchior could be seen as Hamlet, from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, mourning his father and unreconciled with his mother's quick marriage to his uncle. Carter suggests that by quoting the line "a little more than kin, and less than kind" (SHAKESPEARE, *Hamlet*, I.2.65) in the fragment above. Melchior took his father's dreams to spread Shakespeare's word across the world and made it happen. His life as a tribute and an overcoming of the father. Melchior, the child, became the father of himself.

In postmodern families, the notion of choice is fundamental, for the social conventions of yore are being continuously challenged by the values of self and emotional fulfillment, what makes the familial elements interchangeable and the family roles, fluid (FONSECA, 2014, p. 22). Broken marriages are no longer held responsible for unhappy children, and the nuclear notion of family is now being reduced to a dated concept, restricted to a certain historical period. The family is still the strongest institution of Western society, but its definition goes with the changes in society. This building of family based on affinity legitimizes kinship bonds that were not accepted before. With the perspective of affinity family being valued, adoptive children lost the status of illegitimate. (FONSECA, 2014, P. 23). And the very bastard may not be considered a bastard anymore, for his kinship may be built by affinity bonds. Thus, the illegitimate may legitimize her/his own affiliation or may choose not to do so. Postmodern families do not represent an evolution of the previous models, an improved modern concept of family by way of equivalence of models or by the imposition of a new model.

In summary, the postmodern family represents a break in this logic of progress of concepts, questioning the need of models at all (FONSECA, 2014, p.23). The postmodern family is going through changes, for the post-Darwinian thought that poses the binary opposition of "natural" or "affinity" relatives is being revaluated. The new reproductive technologies are constantly shaking the understanding of "natural" in biological reproduction, leading the West to an era "after-nature" (STRATHERN, 1992, 2005; FONSECA, 2014). Of course, it is not be expected that these disruptions with the models would pose as a universal concepts, but it is important to remember that changes in culture spread across others. And because cultural heritage may condition one's reaction toward changes, for cultural heritage is built and passed on through generations, some people tend to resist these changes. The myth of a linear progress obscures the complexity of the changes (FONSECA, 2014, p. 113). In a postmodern world, it is up to the bastard to assume her/his identity as illegitimate. And to question the institutions from within, in order to produce new possibilities. Since illegitimacy is a matter of perception, self-understanding and self-identification are the key to deconstruct

illegitimacy stereotyping. Also, reproductive biotechnologies and DNA tests put under a microscope the social aspect of familial relations, by reinforcing the fact that family is not exclusively formed biologically. Family may be built upon consanguinity or affinity, but it is always a choice to do so. Illegitimacy is not a monolithic concept that labels only children born outside the marriage institution, but represents a multiplicity of ex-centric individuals treated as irregularities in the Western patriarchal society.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

‘Stereotypes. You have to learn to think outside the box’.
Said the bearded man. ‘There’s a lot more to Ireland than Guinness’
Neil Gaiman

Kinship is a principle of social organization and classification (AUGÉ, 1975, p. 15). Thus, the bastard has the power to subvert her/his status into resistance. In a world of recombinant families and highly developed reproductive technologies and DNA mapping, affinity kinship seems stronger than never. And the issue of being born out of a wedlock seems no longer an issue in a postmodern society. As abovementioned, the family is still the strongest institution in Western society (ROUDINESCO, 2003, p. 20). But not a monolithic institution that does not welcome changes. And, as it was demonstrated, illegitimacy may have changed its face, but is still a conundrum. Literature, specially fantasy, science-fiction and postmodern literature, often deal with biological advances or experimentations to broaden the limits of family, approaching, for example, cyborgs, surrogates or demigods. The theme of bastardy is still strong in popular culture, for example the series of fantasy novels from George R.R. Martin, *A Game of Thrones*, first published in 1996, was adapted to a TV series and became one of the most watched TV shows on cable TV, with an average audience over 23 million per episode²⁵. One of the main characters is the bastard, Jon Snow: “There were times – not many, but few – when Jon Snow was glad he was a bastard. As he filled his wine cup once more from a passing flagon, it struck him that this might be one of them” (MARTIN, 2011, p. 49).

Postmodernity opened the world to a legitimate questioning of the illegitimate. The bastard, as an irregularity that confirming the norm, may implode it, is a key figure in the building of new possible family models. The bastard may assume her/his illegitimacy proudly as a means of producing chance and not as a stigma of an ostracized subject. Multiplicity is the key to unlock the new postmodern family, which can be welcoming and fluid. The dream of a family in perfect domestic bliss, threatened by the bastard is a projection and an unreality,

²⁵ “Adding streaming, DVR recordings and repeat showings, the show averaged over 23 million viewers per episode, [...]” (DOCKTERMAN, Eliana. “Game of Thrones Finale Ratings Record Proves It’s the Last Consensus Show on TV”. *Time*, online, June 28, 2016. Entertainment, Television. Retrieved in: <<http://time.com/4385886/game-of-thrones-final-record-ratings/>> Accessed on Nov., 28, 2016.)

since no family scape the complexities of human relations. Freud exposed the insufficiency of social norms in the regulations of human relations as one of the sources of human sufferings (FREUD, 2013a, p. 20). To approach, freely, these subjects of intense human interest, fiction poses as a key tool for broadening contemporary issues not solved by contemporaneity. Fiction accepts all questioning, not as a simplistic mimesis of reality (HUTCHEON, 1988, p. 40), but as way to deal with the questionings, a way to build new epistemes. Family may be an everlasting social institution, but its constituents and models may embrace the present and the future.

Both Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1994[1818]) and Angela Carter's *Wise Children* (1992), approach illegitimacy with courage and defiance. Shelley, from a waking nightmare of a young woman surrounded by the death of her mother, the rejection of her father, her pregnancies and loss of her own offspring, exposed her anguishes and questioning of science in a male dominated world. Her emblematic double, a nameless creature and his creator (Victor Frankenstein), almost two hundred years from its first publication (1818) live among the myths in popular culture. But the creature consumed his creator and became known by his creator's handle Frankenstein, while Victor became the nameless one. The supremacy of the illegitimate, monstrous in his deformity, questioning science without ethical limitations and challenging "the separation of the world from work, particularly from science, from the sentimental sphere", thus condemning the assignment of roles of different (ROCQUE & TEIXEIRA, 2001, p. 20, our translation). Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* brings the birth of science-fiction and, in the gothic genre, comes as a transmutation from the supernatural plot to a psychological approach. No ruined castle or ghost is necessary to evoke the moral distortions that are embedded in humankind. The creature's physical monstrosity is a reflex from his unethical creator, mirroring the interior monstrosity of mankind.

In relation to the literary periods that *Frankenstein* and *Wise Children* are related to, Romanticism and Postmodernism respectively, the features cherished by Romanticism – a movement initiated in the first half of the 19th century – such as freedom of individual self-expression, the valorization of the senses that turned the focus to personal experience over impersonal and artificial rationality, but without a complete disregard of intellect resembles the Postmodern approach to the ex-centric, shifting the balance from individuality to an over individuality, that includes the subjects in the margins of the totalizing culture (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 9). Romanticism represents a profound changing in Human sciences and arts, and Postmodernism may represent an implosion from within hegemonic discourses and

institutions (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 11), deconstructing the binarisms that are cherished by hegemonic discourse.

In addition, broadening the mirrored relations in both Shelley and Carter is to propose a multifaceted view of the world, where the duplicity presented in the novels is questioning the issues of family, gender roles, culture and social status. Unfolding the possibilities of a heterogenic society that encompasses the ex-centric and the hegemonic. *Wise Children*, with its doubles that go from twin brothers and sisters, to questioning the concepts of “low and high” culture, social status and gender roles, stretches the institutions from within (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 11). Carter problematizes the representation of femininity and its illegitimacy in patriarchy. As “Postmodern novels problematize narrative representation, even as they invoke it” (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 40), Carter invokes the Western canon and stereotypes of bastardy to question the classification of arts and familial relations. As culture has no specific social structure and encompasses the practices and products of intellectual works and arts (WILLIAMS, 1974), concepts such as “low and high” culture become a transitory product of a historical period that can only be understood abstractly. The many influences that act in the formation of a canon are not widely shared by society as a whole. Thus, a simplistic binary opposition is not enough to encapsulate the intellectual production of a time. Carter demonstrates this in *Wise Children* by putting the renowned Shakespearean theatre in contrast with the popularity of TV shows (CARTER, 1992, p. 37). Also, by problematizing the female roles as bastards, twice marginalized in a patriarchal Western society. A female bastard threatens twice the patrilineal transmission of status, by means of illegitimacy and gender.

Besides that, by assuming the name of the mother and rejecting the name of the father, whether the bastard received the name of the father or not, the bastard breaks with the social exclusion into social liberation. Assuming the matronym in a patriarchal society is to oppose the conventions in an understanding that a name can be chosen, changed or created (MACLEAN, 1994, p. 97). The “unnatural” cultural mark of a bastard that does not carry the name of the father may be turned into the freedom of a new story. In the case of *Wise Children*, the Chance sisters received their name “Chance” from their adoptive grandmother, who chose this name for herself, reinventing her identity (CARTER, 1992, p. 25). And in relation to Frankenstein’s creature, having no name could be understood as denying existence in a “society in which social reality is structured by discourses” (HUTCHEON, 1995, p. 7). As Victor denies the creature a name, he denies its existence, in an attempt to erase his scientific enterprise. A nameless creature cannot be integrated to society. The ugly and

malformed creature, motherless and fatherless, cannot survive nameless. The creature represents the utmost bastard, not a recognized human being, without any relatives and denied not just the name of the father, but a first name.

The idea of a dichotomy between nature and culture is not possible to achieve, for they cannot be separated in human relations and reactions. The idea of nature is embedded in human history (WILLIAMS, 2007, p. 284). Every human thinking involves culture; thus, it is not possible to think of a biological and natural aspect of mankind that does not include culture. All familial relations, either biological or by affinity are socially based. And culture spreads not in the blood but by coexistence and interaction between people. The bastard is an irregularity not because of his natural biology, but because of her/his cultural implications to the family institution. But the very concept of bastardy is socially and culturally build. Hence, the West is experiencing an era “after-nature” with the rethinking of the understanding of “natural” in an era of advanced reproductive technologies (STRATHERN, 1992, 2005; FONSECA, 2014). Of course, the disruptions with the hegemonic models are not universal concepts, but cultural changes spread. The idea of biology is also a social category (GOSLINGA-ROY, 2000, p. 113).

Thus, the representation of the Chance sisters, and of Frankenstein and the creature, may generate a reaction of repulsion and attraction by breaking the taboo of matrimony and parental relations. Life, as it is possible to mankind, is hard and full of sufferings. Mary Shelley and Angela Carter’s works unfold the sources of suffering (FREUD, 2013a, p. 20) and question the limits of taboo and conscience (FREUD, 2013b, p. 27). This break with the taboos of conception, bastardy and “high and low” culture may represent the transgressions that implode social institutions while reaffirming them. The insufficiency of social regulations for human relations pose the bastard on the verge of exposing the frailty of human constructs. The bastard as an instrument of chaos, as he/she reaffirms the sacredness of family and life at the same time that proposes new models. The nuclear family as hegemonically presented, father-mother-children, cannot hold in a world of recombinant families (STRATHERN, 2005, p. 26). Life is wonderfully unpredictable, nature cannot be fully conquered and the human body will have its limitations, thus, to escape the inevitability of chaos, civilization comes to protect humankind from these sources of sufferings (FREUD, 2013a, p. 31), but becomes also a source of sufferings, for the rules created are insufficient to regulate human relations (FREUD, 2013a, p. 31). Thus, Frankenstein’s creature and the Chance bastards appear as fictionalized representations of transgressions in social regulations, in a reaffirmation of the unavoidable pain of existence and the frailty of the rules made by society to hold civilization.

Furthermore, the physical body represents the materiality of uniqueness, the way one is connected to humankind, as kin. Biology alone, however, does not constitute kinship. The connections and bonds between relatives are socially built. This is clear in cases of recombinant families, where the elements change, but the bonds may remain or be broken according to the ones involved. Genealogy and relatedness are not the same thing and degree of relatedness may be rated by specific connections. A DNA test may prove a biological connection between progenitor and offspring, but this does not constitute an automatic bond or kinship. It is always a choice to be someone's family. As said before, people are isolated parts that are members of collectivities. Considering the hegemonic models of Euro-American culture, a bastard is a loose end, which could not be an issue in another context.

The problematization of the definition of bastardy and its limits intends to broaden the inquiry of social roles and status, where the bastard is no longer the figure frequently seen as a mean person, jealous of fraternal legitimacy, one who seeks the paternal approval, a broken person. The exploration of human nature and social status allows the overcoming of such limited stereotyping, resounding the voice of the ex-centric, repositioning the marginalized child to the center of the social atmosphere. Broadening the concept of family is also a celebration of the institution that is open to new possible models other than the hegemonic one. The bastard transcends the circumstances of birth. As a freak, the bastard is cause of admiration and fear, on display to public admiration and hidden from the public eye (BOTESCU-SIRETANU, 2010, p. 102). The monster, the illegitimate is the embodiment of an irregularity, of a transgression, and she/he is admired and feared for this capacity of transgressing the norm (BOTESCU-SIRETEANU, 2010, p. 102; FREUD, 2013b, p. 27). Directly connected to the embodiment of the taboo of illegitimacy, she/he has the capacity to inspire others to break the taboo, becoming, also, the taboo herself/himself (FREUD, 2013b, p. 27-30).

To conclude, the bastard is a cultural construct and a cultural irregularity. Illusorily trapped between nature and culture, since they are interconnected and are socially built, the bastard represents the rupture with single models of family. In this sense, the illegitimate may shake the conventions and unfold the multiplicity of family models possible, such as single parents, same-sex parents, surrogacy, recombinant families. The illegitimate opens the Western eye to new possible worlds, free from prejudice and moral restraints that divide rather than unify. An encapsulation of change herself/himself, the bastard may have the power to choose to submit to the margins or to implode the hegemonic models from within. Just a bunch of genetic materials does not constitute a family. There is more to it. Illegitimacy is a

matter of perception and the postmodern family embodies the break with his logic of progress, challenging the very need of models (FONSECA, 2014, p.23). The binary opposition of “natural” and “affinity” are being reevaluated by contemporaneity. The cultural heritage of what is the traditional and sacralized notion of family poses an obstacle because it limits the way people tend to resist to changes, but culture spreads. Illegitimacy as perception is also a matter of self-understanding and self-identification, that are pillars to deconstruct the stereotype of the bastard. Family is always a choice and the illegitimate offspring, the children born on the outskirts of the Western nuclear family, father-mother-children, embody the multiplicity of new family models and of this new bastard. The bastard who chooses to be illegitimate and takes control of her/his own narrative is deconstructing patriarchy towards a society more inclusive, non-binary and free.

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APÊNDICE A – Eu escolho ser margem

Eu uso o sobrenome da minha mãe. Não gosto, confesso, quando vejo o sobrenome do meu pai associado diretamente a mim. Eu não quero esse sobrenome, que me impõe a marca do segredo, do abandono e da bastardia. Tomei rédeas da minha narrativa e escolhi o nome de minha mãe, que é o nome de meu avô, eu sei, mas é o mais próximo que consigo chegar de uma linhagem matriarcal. Você, que me lê, deve imaginar a quantidade de ressentimento eu carrego comigo e talvez você esteja certa mesmo. Mas eu também carrego orgulho da mulher que me quis e me compõe na mulher que eu sou. Quando eu tinha uns quatro anos, mais ou menos, eu fui expulsa do apartamento do vizinho por ser bastarda. Má companhia para uma menina de família. Pleno século XX. Eu me lembro de ficar olhando pelo vidro envidraçado da porta para o chão do apartamento, marrom, e olhando para minha boneca, que estava com a roupa errada! Era a roupa da boneca da vizinha! Eu fiquei uns minutos assim, sem saber o que fazer, até ir pro meu próprio apartamento chorar no colo da minha mãe. Quando minha mãe entendeu o que houve, bateu na porta do vizinho feito fera e disse muita coisa que eu nem me lembro. Mas eu me lembro da vergonha e da tristeza, também da força de uma mulher independente que tinha sangue nas veias. Anos e anos depois, minha mãe me contou que o vizinho-pai, homem de bons costumes, dava em cima dela e tinha amantes pelas ruas, e que ele tinha sofrido um acidente horrível e se queimado todo e que ela achava que era justiça divina. Minha mãe era branca e ruiva, eu sou parte indígena com os cabelos pretos como as penas do anu-preto (*Crotophaga ani*) e meu padrinho me chamava de cambaxirra (*Troglodytes aedon brunneicollis*), que é um passarinho pequenino e marronzinho. Eu odiava não me parecer tanto com ela. Mais velha eu percebi que sou a cara da minha mãe, só que pintadinha desse pai. Eu tomei a liberdade de assinar o nome da minha mãe em todos os lugares. O sobrenome do progenitor só quando sou obrigada. Eu nunca soube se meu pai me amou. Minha mãe dizia que sim. Me lembro das raras visitas, de ouvir as histórias que minha mãe contava da "família do seu pai", que claramente não era minha pois eu só os conhecia por histórias. Eu sabia que tinha meio-irmãos e uma meia-irmã, tios e uma avó, mas eram parte da lenda "família do seu pai" que me era proibida. Eu era o ponto fora de tudo. A irregularidade. A singularidade. Me lembro das cobranças em relação à escola e meu desempenho, me lembro da descrença em relação ao meu potencial que vinham do meu pai. Me lembro das histórias que ficaram engasgadas na garganta da minha mãe por tantos anos, até ela ir me contando aos poucos. Minha mãe nunca falou mal do meu pai pra mim. Nunca. Nem uma vez.

Eu me lembro, com arrependimento, dos meus rompantes adolescentes em que a culpava pelo pai que eu (não)tive. Ela só podia se responsabilizar pela mãe que foi, não pelo que meu progenitor nunca foi. As reuniões de família – sempre maternal, que fique claro, visto que não tive qualquer contato com o lado paterno até o falecimento do meu pai – eram um momento de provação: diminuída, olhada de cima, olhada de lado, olhada com desdém, pena, até afeto! "Até que ela é inteligente". Eu era o exótico em todos os sentidos. Menina, bastarda, não-branca. Por isso eu resolvi me apossar de toda essa trajetória e toda minha bastardia, eu sou minha. É minha escolha ser ou não ilegítima. Eu escolho a margem, eu escolho o ex-cêntrico, eu escolho o desvio. Eu escolho ser a criatura de Frankenstein, escolho ser as irmãs Chance, escolho ser Grandma Chance. Eu escolho o nome de minha mãe, eu escolho escolher minha família. Escolho me deslegitimar. Escolho, orgulhosa, rejeitar o mundo que me rejeitou e reescrevê-lo. Eu escolho ser livre. Essa dissertação é, em parte, autobiográfica e, espero eu, possa contribuir para alimentar a problematização sobre as armadilhas de um patriarcado que nos oprime e limita. Como dito por Simone de Beauvoir: "Que nada nos defina. Que nada nos sujeite. Que a liberdade seja a nossa própria substância". O mundo é das bastardas.