Questioning Humanity in Gothic Literature and Film: Adaptations of Frankenstein

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Master's Thesis

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Abstract

Mary Shelley's most well-known novel, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818), is one of the literary classics of the Gothic genre. The novel focuses on two characters, Victor Frankenstein and his monster, and their complex relationship. The characters she created have become synonymous with the horror genre and have inspired different artists over two centuries to retell their story. Two of such artists are directors James Whale and Bernard Rose, who have adapted the story of Frankenstein and his monster for new generations to enjoy, while preserving the spirit of the source text. This paper will focus on exploring the two main points from the novel: humanity, which is explored by questioning the nature of man, and the Gothic elements. The topic of humanity is timeless and being human is defined as having empathy and compassion, which are uniquely human traits, that ultimately lead to acceptance of others. The paper will explore the characters of Victor Frankenstein and his monster over the period of three centuries, that is, in Shelley's 1818 novel, Whale's 1931 film *Frankenstein*, and Rose's 2015 film *Frankenstein*, while highlighting the differences and similarities in the approach to the topic of humanity in the three Gothic works in order to discuss what it means to be human.

Keywords: Frankenstein, film adaptations, the Gothic, humanity, Bernard Rose, Mary Shelley James Whale.

Introduction

Mary Shelley's classic novel *Frankenstein* (1818) is one of the most well-known Gothic novels. The novel depicts the life and misfortunes of Victor Frankenstein along with the monster he created in his insatiable ambition, which inevitably led him to his own demise. This paper will be focusing on two main points in the novel: humanity, which is explored by questioning the nature of man, and the Gothic elements. The topic of humanity is timeless and the reason why this story has been adapted many times over. The adaptations discussed in this paper are the 1931 film *Frankenstein* directed by James Whale and the 2015 film *Frankenstein* directed by Bernard Rose, in order to explore the themes of humanity as represented in Gothic fiction and film. By focusing on the depictions of Frankenstein and his monster during the period of three centuries, that is, in Shelley's 1818 novel, Whale's 1931 film, and Rose's 2015 film, the paper will take note of the differences and similarities in the approach to the topic of humanity in the three Gothic works with the goal of elaboration on what it means to be human.

The first chapter of this paper presents a short biography of Mary Shelley. The second chapter explains and exemplifies the main features and terms of the Gothic genre, which will be applied in the analysis of the novel and the two aforementioned films. The third chapter deals with film theory and adaptations, while defining the main terms relevant to the analysis part of the paper. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the analysis. The analysis consists of three parts: the novel *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* by Mary Shelley, film *Frankenstein* (1931), directed by James Whale, and film *Frankenstein* (2015), directed by Bernard Rose. The analysis focuses on the representation of Gothic elements throughout three centuries as well as on the characters of Victor Frankenstein and Frankenstein's monster, exploring how one character loses humanity and the other finds it.

1. Mary Shelley

Mary Shelley, born Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin in 1797, was the daughter of two prolific authors of the time – the early women's rights activist, Mary Wollstonecraft, and political philosopher, William Godwin. Mary Shelley's mother died giving birth to her, which marked her childhood and further relationship with her father. According to Badalamenti, Mary's strained relationship with her father was caused by his second marriage and a stepmother that showed little to no interest in Mary's life. Mary's stepmother provided a hostile and detached upbringing, which deeply affected her emotional state and development: "These stresses, with little suggestion that Mary's father loved his second wife as he did Mary's mother, deepened Mary's earlier longing for secure love" (Badalamenti 421). At the age of 16 Mary met her husband, Percy Shelley, who was 21 and married. Percy was an admirer of her father's work and soon they developed a sort of a father/son relationship. At the same time, his marriage to his first wife deteriorates: "I felt as if a dead and living body had been haled together in loathsome and horrible communion" (P. Shelley qtd. in Badalamenti 422). The description of his marriage sparks special interest, due to its striking resemblance to Mary's character of Frankenstein. Percy's unfulfilling marriage only quickened his and Mary's romantic relationship. Mary's father "condemned their relationship and forbade it to continue in separate messages to each of them. Mary and Percy were not to be divided by any force in this world. They felt destined to be each other's and were filled with the overwhelming sense common to youth of having found their soul mates" (Badalamenti 422).

Percy and Mary, along with her stepsister Clara Mary Jane Clairmont (known as Claire Clairmont), travelled and lived together as a trio. In 1816 her stepsister began a romantic relationship with Lord Byron, eventually even following him, along with Mary and Percy, to Geneva, Switzerland. Percy and Lord Byron quickly became friends and the group spent their evenings enjoying intellectual discourse. During those late evenings, Mary Shelley began writing her famous *Frankenstein*. It is interesting to mention that Mary was only 18 years old when she started the novel that is now considered one of literature's classics. The inspiration for her work came from being challenged to write a ghost story, during one of the evenings when they were sharing and reading German ghost stories. At first, Mary struggled to come up with a story because she wanted to write something that was truly horrifying. After waking up from a nightmare, the inspiration for her story came: "within her night terror was 'the pale student of unhallowed arts

kneeling beside the thing he had put together...' (4, p. 364)" (Badalamenti 423). Thanks to the encouragement by Percy and Lord Byron, Mary decided to extend her story into a novel.

Badalamenti explains that, at the beginning of her writing process, Mary gave birth to her first child, which she lost very soon due to sickness. Losing her first child was a difficult time in her life, especially because she did not receive the emotional support she needed from Percy. When finishing her novel, she fell pregnant again: "These facts are kin to the recurring themes of life, death and irresponsibility to whom one loves, throughout her novel" (425). But her pregnancies are not the only reason why *Frankenstein* is a prime example of the Gothic genre; this can also be attributed to the fact that Mary and Percy often dabbled in the Gothic themselves: "Mary and Percy were fond of trysting at her mother's gravesite in Old St. Pancras churchyard, London, where she would often read her mother's works" (Badalamenti 424). They were both fond admirers of horror and the supernatural aspects of life, making them so successful in their respective fields.

After Percy's wife committed suicide, Mary and Percy got legally married (Bloom 183). Unfortunately, as Bloom explains in Shelley's biography, Mary's life was filled by misfortunes, losing her daughter in 1818 and son in 1819. In November of 1819 she gives birth to her only surviving child, Percy Florence. But, tragedies only continue to follow her: she becomes a widow in 1822, after Percy's sailboat gets lost at sea. The following year she returns to London, where she continues to publish her works *The Last Man*, *Perkin Warbeck*, *Lodore*, *Falkner*, and *Rambles in Germany and Italy* (Bloom 184). On 1 February 1851, Mary Shelley passed away as the mother of horror, leaving behind a great legacy.

2. The Gothic Genre

According to Botting, the Gothic genre first appeared in the eighteenth century as a reaction to Enlightenment, which is characterized by realism, rationality, and morality, giving more emphasis on inducing feelings in the readers; it is a writing of "excess" (Botting 1-2). The initiator of the genre was Horace Walpole and his novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), which only inspired other authors to take part in the Gothic. Botting further explains that the "Gothic condenses the many perceived threats to these values, threats associated with supernatural and natural forces, imaginative excesses and delusions, religious and human evil, social transgression, mental disintegration and spiritual corruption" (1). The goal of the genre is to push the limits of human perception of normality through "objects and practices that are constructed as negative, irrational, immoral and fantastic" (Botting 1). The boundaries of human perception are being explored and showcased through the atmosphere, the landscape and setting, the sublime, the supernatural, the human nature and ambition that leads to destruction, along with the goal of evoking intense feelings in the readers. The atmosphere in Gothic works is usually described as dark, unwelcoming, and mysterious. Furthermore, Botting mentions that this kind of atmosphere has also "repeatedly signalled the disturbing return of pasts upon presents and evoked emotions of terror and laughter" (1). This kind of atmosphere is created not only by the setting, but also through the characters and their behaviour as well as feelings.

The landscape and setting are quite important features of the Gothic genre because they make the genre so recognizable and distinct. Botting describes the Gothic landscapes as: "desolate, alienating and full of menace" (2), further explaining that "[i]n the eighteenth century … wild and mountainous locations" (2) were particularly popular. Gothic settings are often also monasteries, abbeys, cemeteries, castles or houses, which are usually decaying and thought to be haunted. Botting explains that architecture is a notable factor, because it often indicates how the values from the present have become detached from the values of the past. Nevertheless, the setting is always connected to the past, but the narrative follows the issues of the present: "In later fiction, the castle gradually gave way to the old house: as both building and family line, it became the site where fears and anxieties returned in the present" (Botting 2). The anxieties and fears followed the current changes such as various social or political changes, a sexual and domestic change, or scientific breakthroughs (Botting 2).

The sublime is a literary concept much discussed during the eighteenth century by thinkers and critics such as Burke, Aikin, and Drake (Ellis 10-11), and closely related to Romanticism and the Gothic genre. This concept encompasses a feeling of both terror and admiration towards something or somebody. The sublime generates a contradictive feeling and depicts sharp contrasts, which "contributed to the sense of extension and infinity associated with the sublime. While beauty could be contained within the individual's gaze or comprehension, sublimity presented an excess that could not be processed by a rational mind" (Botting 26). This is important for the Gothic because, as Botting explains: "In the expansive domain opened up by the sublime all sorts of imaginative objects and fears situated in or beyond nature could proliferate in a marvelous profusion of the supernatural and the ridiculous, the magical and the nightmarish, the fantastic and the absurd" (3).

The supernatural is probably the most recognizable feature of the Gothic genre. This is the feature that adds the aspect of horror into the storyline, making the readers feel uneasy. The supernatural can be in the form of a character, for instance, a creature like a vampire, or in the form of an event such as an exorcism. Furthermore, a supernatural character is somebody with both human characteristics and those defying the natural order and laws. These characters are often connected to the underworld, providing an evil aura around them, such as vampires, ghosts, and monsters. A supernatural event is an unexplainable event, that crosses the lines of possibility while challenging the laws of nature. Such events include magic rituals, exorcisms, or bodily states like levitating or resurrection of the dead. The supernatural is introduced in Gothic fiction as a dark and deeply rooted part of human nature that this genre tries to bring to the surface level. Once this part is brought to light and conquered in the stories, the "readers manage to return with an elevated sense of identity to the solid realities of justice, morality and social order" (Botting 5).

In the eighteenth century, when the genre first appeared, people were very focused on leading a life of virtue and following social norms. One could argue that this was only a façade and that the real human nature is inherently evil. This façade is what the Gothic genre is trying to break; it tries to prove that all humans have this little bit of evil instilled in them. The evilness can be depicted through heinous crimes, harming the natural order of the world, or even ambition, which is usually seen as a positive human trait, but when it is a perpetual need and falls into an extreme, that can only lead to destruction. The genre depicts these evil human characteristics through fear-

inducing creatures and events that in reality cannot occur, in order to show the consequences of sinfulness and to provoke a "destabilisation of the illusion of ordered and governable life" (Matek 408).

The Gothic has the power to induce strong feelings in the readers. The atmosphere, setting, the sublime, and the supernatural features of the genre combined, bring forward the feelings of unease and fright in the readers. As Botting explains: "Exciting rather than informing, it chilled their blood, delighted their superstitious fancies and fed uncultivated appetites for marvelous and strange events, instead of instructing readers with moral lessons that inculcated decent and tasteful attitudes to literature and life" (3). The frightening emotions that the genre causes in the readers actually becomes "a powerful means to reassert the values of society, virtue and propriety: transgression, by crossing the social and aesthetic limits, serves to reinforce or underline their value and necessity, restoring or defining limits" (Botting 5). These negative emotions and fear-inducing consequences can be seen as an influence for the readers to follow the social norms: "The tortuous tales of vice, corruption and depravity are sensational examples of what happens when the rules of social behaviour are neglected" (Botting 5).

While discussing the feelings the genre instils in readers, it is important to mention and define some of the most prevalent emotions of the genre: terror, horror, and the uncanny, along with their relevance to the genre. Very often, the terms terror and horror are used interchangeably, but Ann Radcliffe makes a distinction between the two terms. Terror is defined as a type of fright that occurs before an event has even happened: "There is uncertainty and obscurity in terror, the abstractness of it, the fear of something that has not been seen or experienced" (qtd. in Ul Haq et al. 2067). Radcliffe explains that horror is described as a type of fright after an event has occurred, followed with feelings of repulsion: "Horror in its essence is terror materialized" (qtd. in Ul Haq et al. 2067). Botting further explains the distinction between the two terms: "Like the dilation of the pupil in moments of excitement and fear, terror marks the uplifting thrill where horror distinguishes a contraction at the imminence and unavoidability of the threat. Terror expels after horror glimpses invasion, reconstituting the boundaries that horror has seen dissolve" (6). It is also argued that horror is a much stronger emotion, because horror is the feeling one gets after witnessing a bone-chilling event, therefore making the fear justified (Radcliffe qtd. in Ul Haq et al. 2067). Consequently, "terror expands the soul and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life

whereas horror contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them" (Radcliffe qtd. in Ul Haq et al. 2067). Furthermore, one could argue that terror and horror have a social role in showing to the readers how to distinguish the good from the bad: "after escaping the monsters and penetrating the forest, subterranean or narrative labyrinths of the Gothic nightmare, heroines and readers manage to return with an elevated sense of identity to the solid realities of justice, morality and social order" (Botting 5).

Another important term for the genre is the uncanny. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary* this term means something that is "strange or mysterious, often in a way that is slightly frightening; difficult or impossible to explain." The term was popularized by Freud, according to whom the uncanny is something that is known to us, but when it is changed and put in an unfamiliar context, it provokes fear and unease (226). Morris elaborates that "[f]or Freud, the uncanny derives its terror not from something external, alien, or unknown but – on the contrary – from something strangely familiar which defeats our efforts to separate ourselves from it" (307). Botting explains the term by suggesting that it "disturbs the familiar, homely and secure sense of reality and normality" (7). Furthermore, Morris clarifies that the uncanny is not anything new, it is something fixed in the mind, but it has been deeply repressed (307). The importance of the uncanny is that it has a capability of making us face the repressed part of the mind, "which we have denied and disowned, but which we can never entirely expunge or escape. The terror of the uncanny is released as we encounter the disguised and distorted but inalienable images of our own repressed desire" (Morris 307).

3. Film and Adaptation Theory

Film, one of the most popular and most enjoyed contemporary art forms, draws its beginnings from the nineteenth century. This is a complex art form, because it has many different components to it, such as storytelling, sound, visuals, and special effects, and all these components have the power to influence our emotions. The emotions created by film are of wide and vast scales – films can make us sad, happy, mad, scared, intrigued, they can make us laugh, and they can also have an educational purpose. The uniqueness of the different range of emotions films can cause in people is its true power and what makes film such a widely consumed medium.

According to Cook, there were earlier attempts at making films, but the year 1895 was one of the most important years for the development of projection technology and cinema itself (10). One of the most influential families was the Lumiere family, that owned a factory for the manufacture of photographic equipment: "After a thorough study of the workings of the Edison machine, the Lumieres invented an apparatus that could serve as camera, projector, and film printer and that was finally patented as the Cinématographe, thus coining the term that attaches to the medium of film to this day" (10). The same year, the Lumiere brothers rented a basement room of a café in Paris for a projection of ten films to a first ever paying audience (Cook 10). The most famous film of that viewing was the *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Stat*, which left an immense impression on the audience, due to the fact that the "audiences are said to have dodged aside at the sight of the locomotive barreling toward them into the foreground on the screen" (Cook 10). The first ever films made by Edison and the Lumiere brothers were focused on capturing the reality. They were not centred around a story, but were films about human activities and exploring the reality of life. For instance, the film *Employees Leaving the Lumière Factory* is exactly what the name suggests – a minute-long film capturing workers going home from work. But the novelty of films such as those by the brothers Lumiere wore off quickly, precisely because they lacked actual stories.

So, the filmmakers turned to literature for inspiration, taking parts that would be appealing to the audiences, suggesting a connection between film and *adaptation*. An adaptation is "a pre-existing work, often literary or theatrical, that has been made into a film" (Kuhn and Westwell 5). Early adaptations frequently took only individual scenes from novels and adapted them into short films. As the film industry grew larger, they started relying on literature even more, this was

especially common in the silent era of film, but also in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, where literary and theatrical classics have been made into staples in the movie theatres (Kuhn and Westwell 5). Adaptations are not considered a new concept – they have a "genealogy leading back to eighteenth-century discourse on the differences between painting (image) and poetry (word), a debate that was reformulated in the nineteenth century in relation to film and the novel" (Kuhn and Westwell 6). Furthermore, adaptations are thought to be "useful markers of historical change, speaking to the specific cultural and historical context in which the adaptation is made, with case studies of regularly adapted texts focused on the way these are subject to revision and reinterpretation" (Kuhn and Westwell 6).

When it comes to adaptations from a theoretical point of view, there are some key terms and concepts that need to be defined for the purpose of this paper. The first and most mentioned term, when it comes to discourse about adaptations, is fidelity. The reason why this term is the most mentioned one is because very often films lack it. Fidelity, as a term in adaptation theory, is used to describe how faithful the film is to the source text. Audience is typically very interested in this aspect of adapting texts to film. If the source text is a beloved and popular product, the audience will have strong feelings and high expectations for the adaptation. Additionally, "a negative view of adaptation might simply be the product of thwarted expectations on the part of a fan desiring fidelity to a beloved adapted text or on the part of someone teaching literature and therefore needing proximity to the text and perhaps some entertainment value to do so" (Hutcheon 4). The negative emotions of the viewers stem from the skewed perception of what an adaptation is: "Adaptation is repetition, but repetition without replication" (Hutcheon 7). Furthermore, Hutcheon continues:

> And there are manifestly many different possible intentions behind the act of adaptation: the urge to consume and erase the memory of the adapted text or to call it into question is as likely as the desire to pay tribute by copying. Adaptations such as film remakes can even be seen as mixed in intent: 'contested homage' (Greenberg 1998: 115), Oedipally envious and worshipful at the same time (Horton and McDougal 1998b: 8). (7)

The viewers have a subconscious feeling that the source text is being erased with an adaptation, and if the adaptation is not faithful or is done poorly, the viewers seem to believe that this adaptation is the only version of the source text that will be remembered. On the other hand, viewers often

forget that complete faithfulness to the source text is impossible and that "[a]ccording to its dictionary meaning, 'to adapt' is to adjust, to alter, to make suitable" (Hutcheon 7). Additionally, the source text and film are two completely different art forms. In comparison to literature where only a few people are involved in writing a text, the film industry involves so many more aspects, like a producer, a screenwriter, a costume designer, actors, the studio, and so on. There are a lot of people involved and all of them have their own vision for the film, which only contributes to the issue of fidelity.

Adaptations are best approached through the concept of transtextuality. This concept is explained as "textual transcendence – namely, everything that brings it into relation (manifest or hidden) with other texts" (Genette 81). Transtextuality broadens the perception of adaptations, explaining that novels should not be considered as originals, but as a hypotext or source text, giving the adaptation the freedom to not be subordinated to the novel. Genette also mentions the term intertextuality, defining it as "the literal presence (more or less literal, whether integral or not) of one text within another" (81-82). This term is interesting to observe in adaptations, because it can show the fidelity to the source text, that is, the film can include direct quotes from the source text.

In addition to transtextuality, the complexity of film lies in the fact that it incorporates several different narrative elements into one medium: genre, setting, point of view, plot, characters, themes and motifs, and style. All of these elements can be manipulated in order to produce new and different adaptations, that is, new and different interpretations of a literary text. This paper will show how the two selected adaptations of Shelley's novel *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* provide different interpretations of what it means to be human based on their different representations of the two main protagonists, Victor Frankenstein and his "monster."

4. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus (1818)

Mary Shelley's most famous work, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, depicts the character of a scientist who, due to his ambition and lack of morals and empathy, fails both as a professional and as a person. To show this, the paper will discuss the setting, the representation of a scientist, and the development of the monster. The analysis focuses on exploring what it means to be human. Shelley's perspective on humanity is that man has to develop his intellect, but also to possess traits like empathy and morality. The setting is used to reflect the emotional states that the characters experience. Through the character of Victor Frankenstein, Shelley criticizes unchecked ambition, that leads to lack of compassion and ethical boundaries, while the monster and his development represent a reflection of Victor and a critique of his lack of responsibility and morality.

4.1. The Setting

In Gothic literature the setting is a significant illustrator of the emotional conditions of characters. In Shelley's novel there are many instances of such descriptions of the setting. As the setting changes, the mood remains consistently reflected in the character's emotional state. In the following passage, the setting as a Gothic element will be analysed using three best examples from the novel, namely the exposition scene at the North Pole, Victor's workshop, and the scene in Geneva.

The novel begins with the narrator, Robert Walton, writing a series of letters to his sister, describing his journey to the North Pole. The North Pole is established as a Gothic location: cold and unforgiving, which is contrasted by Walton's excitement for new knowledge and discoveries. In his first letter he sets the tone of the novel, foreshadowing some of the central emotions of the protagonists in the novel:

> I feel a cold northern breeze play upon my cheeks, which braces my nerves, and fills me with delight. Do you understand this feeling? This breeze, which has travelled from the regions towards which I am advancing, gives me a foretaste of those icy climes. Inspirited by this wind of promise, my daydreams become more fervent and vivid. (Shelley 3)

The iciness combined with a sense of "promise" that the narrator experiences foreshadows the iciness Victor Frankenstein shows to his creation that he envisaged as a promise of scientific success to defeat death. In his letter, Walton continues by expressing the location's sense of

sublime: “I try in vain to be persuaded that the pole is the seat of frost and desolation; it ever presents itself to my imagination as the region of beauty and delight” (Shelley 3). He feels admiration towards a place he never saw, even though the place is known for being isolated and cold, because he is drawn to it by his ambition, which makes it attractive. Being a scientist, Walton serves as a foil character to Victor Frankenstein; he is similar in his desires, but at the same time he contrasts Victor because he is able to see reason and abandon a dangerous project. In fact, it is Victor’s story that puts everything into perspective for Walton and helps him decide to turn around and save his crew from freezing.

The next important location in the novel is Victor’s workshop in Ingolstadt (Germany), a classic example of the Gothic house/apartment, which directly reflects the protagonist’s state of mind:

> In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase, I kept my workshop of filthy creation; my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; and often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation, whilst, still urged on by an eagerness which perpetually increased, I brought my work near to a conclusion. (Shelley 47)

Just like Victor, his workshop is also isolated from the world. It is described as filthy and as being a cell, meaning he could recognize the imprisonment of his mind and ambition, which will ultimately lead him to destruction. To further emphasize the grotesque of his workspace, and the problematic nature of his work, Shelley uses the terms “dissecting room” and “slaughter-house,” only adding to the feelings of horror. One of the most important Gothic elements is the description of Victor’s workshop on the night of the creation:

> It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment 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 being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished

> light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs. (Shelley 50)

The circumstances of a winter's night in cold rainy weather at one in the morning contribute to the eeriness of his endeavour. The only sound is the rain that is drizzling against the windows and the room is in dim light because the candle is running low. This kind of setting makes not only the reader feel uneasy but also Victor; his mind is already tired and he is filled with anxiety. These negative emotions foreshadow both his future abandonment of the creature he made and the consequences of such treatment. Namely, Victor's rejection causes the creature to become vengeful and start killing. Some of the murders take place in Geneva, where his family lives.

After the creature leaves the workshop, Victor becomes ill and does not inform anyone of the creature's existence or escape. During his sickness, the creature finds his family and Victor is informed that his younger brother was murdered, so he returns to his hometown of Geneva. During his journey to Geneva, his emotional state is reflected in nature:

> The road ran by the side of the lake, which became narrower as I approached my native town. I discovered more distinctly the black sides of Jura, and the bright summit of Mont Blanc. I wept like a child: "Dear mountains! My own beautiful lake! How do you welcome your wanderer? Your summits are clear; the sky and lake are blue and placid. Is this to prognosticate peace, or to mock at my unhappiness?" (Shelley 68)

The nature around him is serene, while he is faced with internal turmoil. The road next to the lake becoming narrower reflects the loss and narrowing of his moral compass after creating his monster. The juxtaposition of the black sides of Jura and the bright summit of Mont Blanc represents Victor's inner battles of good and evil, that is, of ambition and consequences. His biggest wish and childhood dream became a reality, but he could not handle it; he was not ready for responsibility and the role of becoming a "father." He is also at a crossroads, leaving the "bright" place, where he was away from his creation and entering the "dark" place, foreshadowing the unwanted meeting with his creation. Their encounter happens on a dark stormy night in the mountains: "A flash of lightning illuminated the object, and discovered its shape plainly to me; its gigantic stature, and the deformity of its aspect, more hideous than belongs to humanity, instantly informed me that it was the wretch, the filthy dæmon to whom I had given life" (Shelley 70). The real horror lies in the

fact, that the monster lured Victor to come back to Geneva, proving how he gained consciousness and intelligence. But Victor does not see this and he feels even more disgusted with his creation cursing it, while the monster heads back to the mountains: "He soon reached the summit and disappeared" (Shelley 70). Shelley reinforces the motif of the summit, that was described as bright, meaning that the roles of Victor and his monster reverse – Victor becomes the "dark"/narrow-minded and the monster becomes "bright"/enlightened. So, the paper will now look at the characters specifically.

4.2. Victor's Rise and Fall

In this chapter, the stages of the life of the main character will be analysed: Victor's early life, his mental demise, ethical dilemma, and his end. This analysis will illustrate his gradual mental demise and the loss of his humanity. Victor's own excessive ambition and the inability to accept both his failure and his responsibility fuelled his downfall, which resulted in the loss of basic human emotions. Namely, the paper defines its central term, humanity or being human, as possessing empathy and compassion because those are the human traits that transpire the acceptance of others. Furthermore, as Max Scheler proposes, empathy and compassion can be described as essential emotions because they allow people to feel the pain of others, which is a uniquely human trait. When others are in distress, people attempt to relieve them of these emotions by showing empathy and compassion, which ultimately leads to human connection and acceptance of others (qtd. in Deigh 472).

Victor Frankenstein was a curious child that was thirsty for knowledge that goes beyond the natural: "It was the secrets of heaven and earth that I desired to learn; and whether it was the outward substance of things or the inner spirit of nature and the mysterious soul of man that occupied me, still my enquiries were directed to the metaphysical, or in its highest sense, the physical secrets of the world" (Shelley 28). One could argue that Victor's insatiable ambition starts early on, because his first areas of interest were "the search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life" (Shelley 31), which are concepts found only in myths and legends. His desire and ambition went so far that he thought he could resurrect spirits: "The raising of ghosts or devils was a promise liberally accorded by my favourite authors, the fulfillment of which I most eagerly sought" (Shelley 31). Indeed, the passing of his mother shows both that he cannot deal with death – he deems it as something evil even though she did not pass in agony, "She died calmly, and her countenance

expressed affection even in death. I need not describe the feelings of those whose dearest ties are rent by that most irreparable evil, the void that presents itself to the soul, and the despair that is exhibited on the countenance" (Shelley 35), and that he wants to overcome it. Moreover, he never had the opportunity to process this trauma in its entirety because there was no time for grieving: "My mother was dead, but we had still duties which we ought to perform" (Shelley 35). His mother's passing could be the reason why his ambition grew rampantly and why he desperately wanted to find the elixir of life – so that he never has to experience such pain ever again. His grief causes his irrational behaviour, evidenced in the nature of his scientific experiments.

Victor's mental instability becomes evident with his torturing of animals and digging through graves in order to accomplish his scientific mission: "Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay?" (Shelley 47). His slow demise can be recognized in his bodily deterioration, while his obsession and ambition for creation only grow: "My limbs now tremble, and my eyes swim with remembrance; but then a resistless and almost frantic impulse urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. It was indeed but a passing trance …" (Shelley 47). He is all-consumed by his desire to create life, which takes a toll on him not only mentally but also physically.

Victor's mental collapse is best shown in the creation scene. Victor is already anxious and on edge, and the moment his creation comes to life is the culmination of his anxiety. Because of the Gothic atmosphere and the supernatural event, not only is Victor frightened in this scene but also the readers. With his creation's first breath, Victor feels admiration and beauty through fear and disgust, capturing the feeling of the sublime:

> 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? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!—Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips. (Shelley 50)

With his creation coming to life, Victor realizes that his excessive ambition created unnatural life, that is – a monster. Victor feels as if his workshop became a prison cell that is driving him to madness. The place that was once a symbol of his genius and brilliance became a place where he could no longer find peace: "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, and continued a long time traversing my bedchamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep" (Shelley 50-51). This quote encompasses Victor's true horror and feelings of repulsion towards his creation, the being he gave life to, which provoked his loss of sanity and humanity.

Victor's poor treatment of the monster is especially visible in their encounter in the Alps, where the monster hides from the world and where Victor goes to find tranquillity. Victor's coldness towards his creation could be connected with the trauma caused by the sudden loss of his mother in his youth. He states that he had a very happy and fulfilled childhood: "No human being could have passed a happier childhood than myself" (Shelley 28), and yet he exhibits selfishness and the inability to sympathize with the creature. Namely, it seems that not processing the loss of his mother resulted in him becoming detached from his feelings and not knowing how to take responsibility for his creation. It is also possible that Victor feels some form of resentment for being "abandoned" by his mother. In the Alps, the monster confronts Victor, begging his creator for sympathy: "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. Oh, Frankenstein, be not equitable to every other and trample upon me alone, to whom thy justice, and even thy clemency and affection, is most due" (Shelley 96). The monster is asking for fatherly love and compassion. He expresses his feelings of isolation and reminds him that he has an obligation, as his creator, to at least listen to him: "Remember that I am thy creature: I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous" (Shelley 96). Victor answers his pleads like a brute – with violence and hostility: "Begone! I will not hear you. There can be no community between you and me; we are enemies. Begone, or let us try our strength in a fight, in which one must fall" (Shelley 96). Victor's hatred of his creation only continues when the monster begs Victor to create him a companion, so he feels less isolated and unaccepted by the world. At first Victor agrees to fulfil his request, but upon making the companion he is met with an ethical dilemma: "Even if they were to leave Europe

and inhabit the deserts of the new world, yet one of the first results of those sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror" (Shelley 169-70). Victor just further proves his complete loss of morality and his self-centred way of thinking:

> Had I right, for my own benefit, to inflict this curse upon everlasting generations? I had before been moved by the sophisms of the being I had created; I had been struck senseless by his fiendish threats; but now, for the first time, the wickedness of my promise burst upon me; I shuddered to think that future ages might curse me as their pest, whose selfishness had not hesitated to buy its own peace at the price, perhaps, of the existence of the whole human race. (Shelley 170)

Even at this point, Victor does not feel sympathy for the monster, but he does not feel compassion for the human race either. He is not worried about the actual consequences a new monster could potentially bring to mankind, rather he is frightened that if he were to create it, the human race would blame him and despise him. Throughout all of this, Victor fails to notice the similarities between himself and the creature.

Because Victor did not show any sense of responsibility towards his "monster," the creature decides to have his revenge by murdering Victor's immediate family, meaning Victor was now isolated just like his creation, and vengeful like him too. Both the monster and Victor become dependent on each other: "This ambiguity as to who is subject to whom is continuous with Victor's life after the creation of his monster and is irresoluble as long as they both continue to live – there can be no reconciliation" (Cottom 63). They function as each other's double, which is also a Gothic element. In fact, the character of the double "connotes our modern anxieties about the existence of the self in the modern urban landscape and the relation of the self to the others who inhabit it" (Warwick 36). The creature serves as a reflection of Victor's behaviour and relation to others, which shows how inhumane Victor is. Furthermore, Victor's obsession with knowledge is now completely replaced with obsession to destroy his creation. The obsession borders madness because he follows him all around the world, eventually ending up at the North Pole. His obsession goes so far, that in his last moments of reflection on his life, he spends it cursing his creation and how it must be destroyed. Not only does he feel no remorse for what he caused the creature, but he also

feels no remorse for what his insatiable ambition brought to mankind. His life-creating project has turned into a murderous one, whereby Victor is constituted as a cold, inhuman and inhumane being.

4.3. The Monster/The Creature

The final chapter of the analysis of the novel's protagonists will focus on Victor's creation and it discusses the monster's creation, his mental development, moral dilemma, and his end. The monster is abandoned and shunned by all the humans it encounters yet it manages to show signs of basic human traits, like empathy and morality, which the others lacked. Unlike Victor who deteriorates emotionally, the monster shows emotional development and manages to gain all the human traits that Victor had lost.

First of all, the creature is deemed as a monster because of its uncanny features: he is humanlike, but not fully human. Moreover, to make it easier for him to manipulate individual parts and organs during construction, Victor made the creature into a "being of a gigantic stature; that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionably large" (Shelley 46). In addition to extreme height, it has dreadful unwelcoming eyes combined with a wrinkled complexion and black lips:

> His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips. (Shelley 50)

The features that humanize people are what makes the creation so gruesome and uncanny. Shelley embodied the supernatural element of the Gothic through the monster by making him terrifying in appearance, but she characterized him as a child that is seeking safety, which further awakes the uncanny feeling in readers. On the one hand, he is frightening, but on the other, he is completely innocent, literally like a baby. Upon gaining consciousness, the creature feels disoriented: "A strange multiplicity of sensations seized me, and I saw, felt, heard, and smelt at the same time; and it was, indeed, a long time before I learned to distinguish between the operations of my various senses" (Shelley 99). Just like a new-born, he experiences hunger and cold: "I was a poor, helpless, miserable wretch; I knew, and could distinguish, nothing; but, feeling pain invade me on all sides, I sat down and wept" (99-100). Because he was abandoned by his creator he had to learn about life all on his own, and in that moment the only thing he could do is cry, as a child would.

One of the key discoveries in his early life is discovering fire, which echoes the progress of human kind, since the discovery of fire contributed to major improvements in the life of people. His discovery can be thought of as transformative, because he gains human-like characteristics while being stuck in a body of a monster. The fire also lets him experience positive emotions, like warmth, but also negative emotions, like being hurt when it is mishandled. Like fire can be used for good and harm, that is, creation and destruction, the same is with knowledge, and both the monster's and Victor's insatiable need for it.

Shelley also uses fire as a motif to solidify the novel's subtitle, *The Modern Prometheus*, because just like Prometheus gave fire to humans and paid for it dearly, so did Victor give an incredible discovery to mankind, which ultimately led to his demise. He created a creature with incredible potential that he abandoned, and now he has to deal with the consequences of his actions: "Because Frankenstein created the monster for his own benefit – to increase his own knowledge – rather than for the benefit of the community – to contribute knowledge – the creature is inevitably viewed by society as foreign and unacceptable" (Rauch 253). Therefore, Victor is destined to be forever cursed, like Prometheus, along with his creation; both are punished with eternal suffering. The monster will never be accepted by society; therefore, Victor will forever be haunted by his creation. Fire is also crucial for the monster because it develops his intelligence:

> It was morning when I awoke, and my first care was to visit the fire. I uncovered it, and a gentle breeze quickly fanned it into a flame. I observed this also and contrived a fan of branches, which roused the embers when they were nearly extinguished. When night came again I found, with pleasure, that the fire gave light as well as heat and that the discovery of this element was useful to me. (Shelley 101)

He discovers that fire is useful for many things and how to care for it. Additionally, the fire signifies his enlightenment and further need to gain knowledge from the human world.

The monster's enlightenment happens primarily through his experiences with the De Lacey family, just like a child learns from theirs. He stumbles upon them and starts to observe them. In his early observations it is particularly striking how he learns of emotions and how he acts upon them. For example, he saw that gathering wood was hard for them, so he brought wood to them. By showing such compassion, he showed his humanity. Additionally, first he stole food from them, but then he saw how poor the family was, so he stopped doing it. He learned about love and putting

others' needs above your own. Not only did he learn about emotions, but also of written and spoken language. He desperately wanted to learn to communicate, so he listened and observed until he mastered it. His intellect, humanity, and sense of self grow in particular when he finds three books: *Paradise Lost*, a volume of *Plutarch's Lives*, and the *Sorrows of Werther*. He recognizes on his own how important these books were for his mental growth: "I can hardly describe to you the effect of these books. They produced in me an infinity of new images and feelings, that sometimes raised me to ecstasy, but more frequently sunk me into the lowest dejection" (Shelley 127). In his mental development, he becomes self-aware, especially of his appearance and that people will always be frightened of him, regardless of his kind personality. This is an ironic realization because it proves how shallow people are, being focused on appearance, although they seem to be highly rational and knowledgeable. The monster exhibits more depth than people, with whom he desperately wants to interact, which will lead to catastrophic consequences.

Still, he decides to reveal himself to the De Lacey family, so he chooses to come and talk to the blind man because he would not judge him. Soon after, the rest of the family comes home, and, as anticipated, they react with disgust, fright, and rejection. Once again, he was left alone and isolated, but this time rage and revenge filled his mind: "No; from that moment I declared everlasting war against the species, and more than all, against him who had formed me and sent me forth to this insupportable misery" (Shelley 136). All he wanted was to be accepted by humans, but he is rejected, and the sense of isolation is accompanied by feelings of anger, disappointment, and desire for vengeance on Victor, the man that made him experience longing for human connection and left him with nothing but sorrow. Even though he is intellectually developed, he craves the thing that all humans crave the most – love and companionship: "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 144-45).

In their encounter in the Alps, the monster begs Victor just to hear his story and what he had gone through because he abandoned him. Yet, Victor rejects him cruelly (Shelley 96). Instead of reacting in the same hostile tone, the monster remains calm and pleads that he listens to him: "Still thou canst listen to me and grant me thy compassion. By the virtues that I once possessed, I demand this from you. Hear my tale; it is long and strange, and the temperature of this place is not

fitting to your fine sensations; come to the hut upon the mountain" (Shelley 97-98). Furthermore, the monster shows his creator love and compassion by inviting him to a warmer place to talk because he knows Victor would freeze. In this crucial encounter it is visible how Victor lost his morality and humanity, while his monster simultaneously acquired it. The "monster" is considerate to the man who abandoned him, and treats him with nothing but kindness and human dignity. Inherently, the monster is a good being with empathy and morality. In fact, his behaviour changes because of the way his creator treats him, so the monster's kindness towards Victor is replaced by a desire for revenge. The monster is shunned by the world and rejected by every human being, all because of Victor. In his anger towards his creator, he kills his brother. By escaping blame for the murder, he realizes how he can manipulate humans, which is a complex trait to master, that only further proves his intellectual growth. When Victor breaks his promise and does not create the monster's companion, the monster is enraged and vows that he will visit Victor on his wedding night. Unlike Victor, who breaks promises, the monster keeps his, killing Elizabeth, which consequently kills Victor's father (he dies of distress). The monster tries to fit into the role of a human with good intentions and feels disappointment that he cannot accomplish that, or, rather, that he is prevented from it by being denied every chance to prove his humanity. Essentially, however, he is represented as experiencing the full range of emotions that make him human – from all the positive emotions and experiences to the negative ones.

Ultimately, the monster expresses sorrow for his crimes and all that he had caused. He feels true remorse and awareness of what consequences his actions brought: "My heart was fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy; and when wrenched by misery to vice and hatred, it did not endure the violence of the change without torture such as you cannot even imagine" (Shelley 227). Unlike Victor, who keeps blaming the monster for everything, the "monster" expresses guilt and rejects life, not wanting to burden the mankind with his existence anymore. In his last moments he expresses true emotions and consideration for others, which ultimately prove him both human and humane.

5. James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931)

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is considered a true masterpiece because it is an infinite source of ideas and inspiration for other artists, who have adapted the novel numerous times in various media. One of them was James Whale, who decided to give Shelley's masterpiece new life and make it into a film. The film premiered in 1931 and was immediately loved by the audience. In fact, Whale's adaptation, "which *The New York Times* selected as one of the best pictures of 1931, and which was shown the following year at the First Venice Film Festival, turned out to be the most prestigious horror film ever made" (Jensen 42). This film is still one of the most well-known *Frankenstein* adaptations and deemed as "one of the founding films of the modern monster-movie genre," serving as a prototype for future Frankenstein films (Booker 177). Whale used her novel as inspiration and brought it to the big screen, immortalizing Shelley's iconic character, but also providing a different view of him. Indeed, for the greater part, the film is not faithful to the source text, with Heffernan pointing out: "Shelley's monster leaves us with a poignant apologia pro vita sua delivered to Walton over the body of Victor; Whale's creature dies in a burning windmill, while Elizabeth and Victor (unaccountably named Henry)[1] both survive to beget what Victor's father (who also survives, in perfect health) expects will be a son" (136). Whale's perspective on humanity lies in the duality of human nature, which will be contrasted and compared to the way the hypotext represents human nature. Whereas human nature represents a combination of good traits, like love and compassion, and bad traits, like cruelty and violence. The chapter will prove that, similarly to Shelley's novel, Henry is the villain, who loses his sense of humanity in the film, while the monster simultaneously gains it, even though, unlike in the novel, Henry is depicted as a protagonist and the monster as an antagonist.

5.1. The Gothic Atmosphere

The first part of the chapter will analyse and compare the film's exposition to the novel, to highlight the differences and similarities to the hypotext by looking into the Gothic atmosphere, the character of Fritz, and Frankenstein's early demise. The film's exposition introduces the setting, and characters, and peeks the interest of the audience both by the introductory monologue and by the

[1] In the novel, Frankenstein's first name is Victor, whereas his friend is called Henry Clerval. Whale has reversed their first names for some reason, as in the film, Frankenstein is called Henry, and his friend is Victor Moritz.

first scene. Doctor Waldman (played by Edward Van Sloan) breaks the fourth wall and provides the audience with a metacommentary on the film:

> How do you do? Mr. Carl Laemmle feels it would be a little unkind to present this picture without just a word of friendly warning. We are about to unfold the story of Frankenstein, a man of science who sought to create a man after his own image without reckoning upon God. It is one of the strangest tales ever told. It deals with the two great mysteries of creation—life and death. I think it will thrill you. It may shock you. It might even horrify you. So, if any of you feel that you do not care to subject your nerves to such a strain, now is your chance to—well, we've warned you. (00:00:03-00:00:58)

This is significant because such a beginning captures the essence of the Gothic. The tone of voice used by the actor giving the monologue is calm and subdued, but it conveys a hidden threat to the audience. The manner in which it was presented can be described as evoking the feeling of sublime in the viewers. Whale cut the scene at the North Pole to simplify the storyline and to immediately engage the audience with the elements of horror and Gothic. Hutcheon explains that adaptations "actualize or concretize ideas; they make simplifying selections, but also amplify and extrapolate," (3) meaning that cuts have to be made in order for the action to "fit the screen in terms of time and space, because it usually takes longer to perform an action than to read" about it (37).

The film's opening scene is set at the cemetery during a funeral. The setting is dark and isolated, which is additionally reinforced by the soundtrack. In the background there is no music, just chilling silence, while the audience hears a woman crying and ominous church bells going off. Jensen adds that the story begins in medias res, where the viewers are introduced to the two main characters: *Henry* Frankenstein and his assistant Fritz (42). The two are about to dig up a fresh grave in order to gather body parts for an experiment designed to create a living being. They are seen walking between the statues of Death and Jesus Christ as if to symbolize that their intentions are sinful and morally wrong. Whale's attention to detail is incredible, because with this scene he alludes to the boundaries the characters are about to cross. The scene foreshadows their attempt to play with life and death, with creation and destruction. Throughout the entire grave digging scene, the statue of Death is visible in the background and it gets hit by dirt with the first move of the shovel. This further foreshadows both the path Frankenstein takes and the end of the film. The pair

continue their search for body parts and they end up at the gallows, where they are met with disappointment because the brain of the dead man is no longer viable.

5.2. Fritz

Apart from the omission of the novel's frame story, which takes place at the North Pole, the film immediately introduces another novelty. Unlike in the novel, Frankenstein has an assistant who helps him with his experiment. He is depicted as a deformed man and an outsider, a direct opposite to Victor, who is highly intelligent and a respected member of society. Through Fritz's grotesque character Whale shapes the monster's fate. Namely, at the Goldstadt Medical College, where a doctor is giving a lecture about the difference between normal brains and brains of criminals, Fritz tries to steal the exemplary normal brain, but gets startled and mixes up the two brains, taking the brain of a criminal. With his looks and behaviour, Fritz embodies and enacts the tragicomical part of the plot, enabling and emphasizing Frankenstein's dignity.

Namely, Fritz is the one that makes this mistake instead of Frankenstein, because this way Frankenstein can still remain a hero, unlike in the novel where Frankenstein is solely at fault for both the monster's creation and his subsequent treatment. In fact, Jensen criticizes this scene stating that it is a key change from the hypotext (43). Furthermore, he explains that "[t]he whole point of the novel was that the creature was normal, even superior, in every respect except for his ugly appearance; that he was not inherently evil, but instead driven to killing by the failure of others to understand that he was not just a brutal Monster" (Jensen 43). On the other hand, Jensen does excuse this change because the film cannot capture all of the complicated relationships and situations that happen in the novel (43), testifying that, in this case, the film is a simplification of the hypotext.

In the next scene, the viewers are introduced to Elizabeth Lavenza, Henry Frankenstein's fiancée, and Victor Moritz, his close friend. Elizabeth expresses her concern for Frankenstein and reads the letter he sent her. Just like in the novel, Whale captures Frankenstein's obsession, that is accompanied with anxiety, and his insatiable ambition that comes before anyone and anything: "You must have faith in me, Elizabeth. Wait, my work must come first, even before you. At night, the winds howl in the mountains. There is no one here. Prying eyes can't peer into my secret" (00:09:57-00:10:11). Whale also reinforces the Gothic motifs of isolation and the Gothic setting of his laboratory: "I am living in an abandoned, old watchtower, close to the town of Goldstadt. Only

my assistant is here to help me with my experiments" (00:10:17-00:10:24). Even the beginning of his demise and of his madness is shown through Elizabeth's worry about him: "He said he was on the verge of a discovery so terrific that he doubted his own sanity. There was a strange look in his eyes, some mystery" (00:10:33-00:10:41). In their worry, Moritz and Elizabeth visit Frankenstein's professor in medical school, Dr Waldman, where he explains to them that Frankenstein is a brilliant, but impulsive man: "Well, you know, his research in the field of chemical galvanism and electro-biology were far in advance of our theories here at the university. In fact, they had reached a most advanced stage. They were becoming dangerous" (00:12:23-00:12:35). As a man of science, Dr Waldman knows the dangers such brilliance and unchecked ambition can bring, and he recognizes it in Frankenstein. He explains to Elizabeth and Moritz that Frankenstein is playing with life and death and that his wish is: "[f]irst to destroy it, then recreate it. There you have his mad dream" (00:13:30-00:13:36). This represents the end of exposition, and the action begins to rise.

5.3. Creating the Monster

Once Frankenstein creates his monster, the central conflicts of the story begin to unfold. This part will analyse the tension building scenes of the film comparing them to the novel, to highlight the differences and similarities to the hypotext. They are the creation scene, the introduction of the monster, Frankenstein's treatment of the monster, and the attempt of destroying the monster. The analysis will show that the film does not follow the source text, rather it was used as inspiration for the film. In the words of Elliott, the director used the psychic concept of adaptation and captured "the spirit of the text" (136). The discrepancies caused by this type of adaptation will be discussed and how they influence Frankenstein and his monster.

Whale first presents the setting, which is Frankenstein's watchtower. The watchtower is up on a hill surrounded by desolate landscape. This scene is accompanied by the sounds of strong howling wind and a stormy night, which echoes the Gothic atmosphere Shelley created in the novel. At the top of the watchtower is Frankenstein's laboratory, filled with different machines and tools for dissecting. Frankenstein is already on edge, but when Elizabeth, Moritz, and Dr Waldman visit him, his agitation only rises. The actor, Colin Clive, embodies Frankenstein's emotions in this scene very persuasively, because the passion and obsession with the experiment is visible even in his eyes and the look he gives the trio visiting him. When he explains to them what his experiment is and where he got the bodies from, his eyes are filled with madness, but his demeanour is calm

and mixed with anxiety, which embodies the feeling of horror. His stance can even represent the sublime because the three people in front of him are watching a person they love and admire, turn into a madman that frightens and worries them.

In the height of the storm he lifts his creation to the top of the tower with the machine he invented. When the machine lowers the creation down, they discover it is moving its arm, which fills Frankenstein with a form of deranged happiness. He shouts over and over: "It's alive. It's alive. It's alive. It's moving. It's alive. Oh, it's alive! It's alive! It's alive! It's alive!" (00:24:54-00:25:07). This is one of the most iconic and memorable scenes, even though he repeats the same sentence over and over. The repeating of the sentence crescendos, which represents Frankenstein's emotions: first utter disbelief, then realization, followed by complete insanity that is especially highlighted in his next line: "In the name of God! Now I know how it feels to be God!" (00:25:09-00:25:13). Jensen adds how the scene ends before anything dramatic happens, but "the earlier dialogue and the visual build-up during the creation have so charged the film's atmosphere that such a small thing as a moving hand functions as an excellent climax" (44). Unlike in the novel, where the creation is a private act reserved only for Frankenstein himself, here there are three witnesses to his success.

After the frantic creation scene, Frankenstein is now completely calm and enjoying a cigar with a feeling of contentment because of his successful experiment. When Dr Waldman explains to him that the brain he used is of a criminal, he remains calm and the arrogance of his success overcomes him. The audience is then introduced to his creation. As Jensen explains, Whale chose to gradually reveal the monster to the viewers – first his footsteps are heard, the door opens and he enters from a dark hallway with his body slowly coming in the shot, then his whole body is shown, and finally there are close-ups of his face with the last shot being his eyes (44). This approach progressively builds up the suspense until the close up of his eyes, which are ostensibly the window to the soul, reveals that the monster's eyes are dead, with no human warmth in them.

Unlike in the novel, Whale's Frankenstein is not horrified of his creation at first, rather he tries to control it. However, he does not do it out of "fatherly love"; he does it to prove to Dr Waldman that his creation is not an abomination. The fear for his reputation and fear of the creature expressed in the novel is replaced here by excessive self-assurance. Frankenstein then opens the roof window exposing his creation to daylight. The monster's reaction is very calm and he stands

up raising his arms towards the light source. This illustrates how he wants to experience new things and learn more about the world; he shows his desire for enlightenment. Jensen believes that Whale's decision to make the monster mute is another major departure from the novel: "The whole point of the novel was that the creature was normal, even superior, in every respect except for his ugly appearance; that he was not inherently evil, but instead driven to killing by the failure of others to understand that he was not just a brutal Monster" (43). Although he communicates through gestures, grunts, and facial expressions, they only "tell a fraction of his story, which is mutilated as well as severely abridged" (Heffernan 135). On the one hand, this may be seen as an attempt to show that the creature is flawed and, therefore, subhuman, but on the other it may also suggest that the scientist's experiment was flawed or wrong, particularly in transplanting a criminal's brain.

Despite the monster's enthusiasm for light, Frankenstein closes the window, symbolizing that he wants the monster to stay ignorant. It is also his display of power and control he has over his creation, reinforcing his earlier statement of feeling like a god. Indeed, Robert makes an interesting proposition that Whale created an evil dystopian Frankenstein, who enslaved the monster and was willing to do anything to remain in control of it (22). Moreover, Frankenstein initially sees the monster's panic, but he does not defend him or help him, he just lets Fritz torment him with fire. In the film, fire is not transformative; it only symbolizes destruction. The monster never learns the benefits of fire, unlike in the novel, and it does not have the role of starting the monster's intellectual development. He stays afraid of fire, that is, of knowledge. Because of his lack of knowledge and fear of fire, he becomes aggressive, which results in him being locked in the basement. When the monster remains agitated and violent while cuffed in the basement, Frankenstein shows disappointment and embarrassment, even resignation: "Oh, come away, Fritz. Leave it alone. Leave it alone" (00:34:52-00:34:58). However, Fritz continues taunting him with fire, resulting in the monster falling and screaming in terror. He screamed in realization that his creator abandoned him and left him to be tortured. His pain and fear activate his inherent aggression, or possibly, his survival instinct, which makes him kill Fritz and attack Frankenstein and Dr Waldman, while Fritz's body hanging from the ceiling is shown in the background.

After the attack, Frankenstein turns his back on his creation and decides, with the help of Dr Waldman, to kill him. Frankenstein does not show empathy for the being he created; he is only proud of his achievement – that his experiment was successful. However, when the monster gets

out of control, all the content he had for his creation at the beginning fully disappears. Suddenly, Elizabeth, Moritz, and Frankenstein's father appear, which further shocks Frankenstein, putting him in a feverish frenzy. He decides to return home and Dr Waldman assures him that he will kill the monster. Frankenstein's frenzy could be the result of his moral dilemma. He created something he desired so much, yet he abandons his life's work. There is also the added factor of his cowardice, mixed with his lack of accountability, that displays him as a weak man whose identity and ego were destroyed by his own ambition.

Staying true to his promise, Dr Waldman strapped the monster in and covered him in white sheets just like in the creation scene, all in preparation to destroy him. The same hand that hanged from the table and showed first signs of life is once again seen hanging; however, this time it will be the hand of death. As Dr Waldman starts to dissect him, the monster grabs him by the neck and strangles him. The monster then runs downstairs to freedom: "Distinctive is his jerky, surprised reaction to such things as the fact that a door opens when he pulls on it: hesitating which way to go, he passes the room where Fritz had died and shies away from it, still fearful of what the dwarf represented" (Jensen 45). Even though he is depicted as an emotionless brute, it is noticeable that he has feelings and that he remembers the trauma he went through. His escape or liberation represents the film's highpoint.

5.4. The Monster at Large

The creature's freedom is not a happy circumstance. Whale contrasts the last shot of the wedding day, a large crowd of people celebrating, with the next scene in which the monster is all alone wandering the world. He meets a little girl named Maria, who is the first person to show him kindness. She is not afraid of him but sees him as a friend: "Who are you? I'm Maria. Will you play with me?" (00:48:57-00:49:03). This is similar to the novel's representation of a blind man who is equally accepting of the monster. Neither he nor the little girl see him as a monster: the blind man literally cannot see the monster's otherness, and the girl does not see it because she still has not learned about it. It is implied that socialization and public discourse create a sense of "otherness," that is, discrimination (Staszak).

As opposed to the hypotext, the monster is created with the brain of a criminal, making him inherently evil, yet he still possesses innocence and compassion. His duality is visible in the scene where he plays with Maria and accidentally drowns her, which is the event that causes a mob led

by Victor to destroy the monster. Similarly, in the hypotext, the monster is also attacked by humans, but because he saved a little girl from drowning. In the film, they play with flowers by throwing them in the water to make them float. This is the monster's first learning experience that gives him joy. Whale displays them both on the ground sitting, using this scene to show that the monster is, like Maria, only a child. As they play, the monster comes to understand the concept of floating and, in his child-like innocence which marks the process of learning, he makes the mistake of throwing Maria in the water. Moreover, because of his ignorance and, possibly also, of his brain being inherently programmed for evil, he drowns Maria. The film makes it clear that he did not know that this was an action that would kill her because, being a child, he cannot grasp the concept of consequence. He runs away from the lake in fear and deep sorrow for what he did to his only friend. Here, his humanity is made clear because he shows true regret, panic, and sadness for what he did. Once again, he is isolated and alone, and Whale abruptly cuts the scene back to the wedding party with people enjoying themselves. Elizabeth's anxiety about an imminent danger unsettles the viewers, but, unlike in the novel, she is not the one murdered at her wedding day.

Significantly, the film suggests that this is an example of the monster's mental progress. After accidentally killing Maria, the monster realizes his mistake and does not want to repeat it, even though one can assume he came to Frankenstein's wedding to seek revenge. Simultaneously, Maria's father comes to the wedding carrying his deceased child, asking for justice to be served, and Frankenstein wants to avenge the monster's attack on Elizabeth: "There can be no wedding while this horrible creation of mine is still alive. I made him with these hands, and with these hands, I'll destroy him" (00:57:52-00:57:59).

The last scene of the film, the monster being hunted by an angry mob and Frankenstein, does not exist in the source text, but it still captures the spirit of the hypotext. They chase the monster to a desolate top of a mountain hill, where Frankenstein finds himself face to face with his creation. He tries to scare him with fire, but the monster is no longer afraid. They start fighting, when Frankenstein falls over the fence onto the vane of the mill. The monster tries to look over the fence to see if his creator is okay. Even though he wants revenge, in that moment, there is a sense of distress visible on the monster's face. In a confusing way, he still feels compassion for and worry over his creator, who abandoned him. Unfortunately, the monster is not met with the same feelings

by the mob because they burn the windmill with him in it. The monster screams in utter terror, making the scene both tragic and terrifying, as a sense of injustice pervades it.

Whale uses fire to end the monster's life, in reference to the importance fire had in the hypotext. In the film, fire is used as a cleansing instrument – it destroys Frankenstein's madness along with his wish to play god. It also cleanses the world of the unnatural creation Frankenstein made. The monster dies suffering while being burnt alive, which represents the sum of his suffering while being alive. To show the monster's final moments, Whale uses a wide shot, where just the burning windmill is showed in the background, demonstrating the horrible consequences that insatiable needs can have: "Thus the film climaxes in an ultimate, extreme case of misjudgement, prejudice, mob violence, and what Whale called 'the pagan sport of a mountain man-hunt': at the finale, the film's sympathies are with the Monster rather than with the mob" (Jensen 46). Although Whale constructs a plot in which the scientist ends up a hero/protagonist, the connotation of the source text, which exposes his flaws and the monster's ultimate innocence, somehow seems to prevail.

6. Bernard Rose's *Frankenstein* (2015)

After Whale's 1931 adaptation of *Frankenstein* amassed great popularity, the story of Frankenstein and his monster sees multiple adaptations in different media (films, plays, comics, TV shows, video games) throughout the years and all of them seem to preserve the spirit of Shelley's original story. In relation to this, Peter Hutchings brings out an interesting point: "judging any Frankenstein film in terms of its adherence to the novel is a futile activity. The films exist instead in relation to a series of cultural transformations of various fragments of the Frankenstein story" (qtd. in Vidal 94). Bernard Rose's 2015 film *Frankenstein* is a case in point as it tells the story from a contemporary point of view, highlighting with the subplot the issues pertinent to modern society. But it can also be taken as an example that disproves Hutchings's claim. Namely, unlike the previous adaptation, where the audience receive an external view of the monster's story, Rose latches on to the novel in which Shelley provides the readers with the monster's perspective too. His film focuses on the monster and his experiences in society, highlighting the issues of modern society like the increasing number of homeless people, and marginalization. For Rose, human kind is marked by a lack of compassion and empathy in modern society where only appearances matter. Because the monster is shunned by society, he suffers greatly. This chapter will prove that the monster's antagonistic side was caused by society and his creators' lack of responsibility and compassion, which echoes Shelley's view of the monster's story.

Unlike the source text and previous adaptation, the film starts with the monster gaining consciousness, omitting all foreshadowing and the agony of scientific experimentation, since the experiment conducted by Dr Victor Frankenstein and his wife Elizabeth is successful. Moreover, Shelley's solitary scientist, who received an assistant in Whale's film, is here represented as a part of a team: the creation of the "monster" is a joint project of two scientists, who are also a married couple and serve as figurative (dysfunctional) parents to the monster. The monster dies by suicide as he kills himself and burns the dead body of Elizabeth, who, in turn, was accidentally killed by Victor.

6.1 The Birth of the Monster

Unlike the previous film, which is told from a third-person omniscient perspective, Rose's film begins with an opening monologue with the creature as the narrator, telling his first memories of being alive:

> It is with considerable difficulty that I remember the original era of my being. All the events of that period appear confused and indistinct. A strange multiplicity of sensations seized me. And I saw, felt, heard and smelled at the same time. And it was indeed a long time before I learned to distinguish between the operations of my various senses. I remember a stronger light pressed upon my nerves so that I was obliged to shut my eyes. Darkness then came over me and troubled me. But hardly had I felt this when by opening my eyes as I now supposed the light poured in upon me again. (00:00:59-00:01:45)

Rose begins the film with an element of intertextuality, directly quoting from Shelley's novel, suggesting that his adaptation is an "incarnation," in Elliott's terms (161), of the source text. This can be used as an indicator of wanting to pay homage to Shelley and her great work, but also as the notion that, as Elliott explains, the characters of the novel only come to life as they are incarnated in the film (161). With the creature's monologue, the viewers are introduced to the storyline that will be told through his point of view, therefore, the opening scene of the film is the creation scene.

The creature describes how, at first, he was hazy and hit with every human sensation all at once. With this kind of introduction, Rose makes it clear that the creature is already human-like, or rather, human; he is a being capable of experiencing different sensations and emotions, and one that develops self-reflection. His life starts in darkness that represents the tabula rasa that all humans are at their beginning. This feeling of intellectual blindness is something that bothers every human being because, inherently, humans are curious and thirsty for knowledge. Immediately after, he is blinded by the light, which foreshadows his future the enlightenment. Additionally, Rose chose to quote Shelley to purposely highlight the creature's intellect; his language skills, and tone of voice, are of a highly educated person.

The framing of the creature's coming to life is very similar to a hospital birth; the creature wakes up in a laboratory tied to a table, gasping for air. Rose portrays him as a newborn child gasping for oxygen for the first time. In this scene, the creature is embraced by a woman, Elizabeth, who made him with her husband Frankenstein. From the start she acts like a mother to him, caressing him in her arms while soothing his panic: "So beautiful. You're a miracle. You're so beautiful. It's okay. Don't be scared" (00:02:07-00:02:29). Rose films this scene in the form of a close-up, indicating the family-like closeness and fondness the creators feel for the being. Rose

reinforces the motif of the creation being a newborn by having him suck the finger of his "mother," being fed on a bottle, and by urinating himself. This scene awakens the uncanny feeling in the audience because a being seemingly artificially created behaves as a baby. He is very attached to Elizabeth, his "mother," just like a newborn would be – she was the first person he saw coming in to the world and she shows him love by taking care of him. Elizabeth's gentle and soothing reaction is radically different both from the horrified agony that Frankenstein exhibits in Shelley's novel and the maniacal exhilaration in Whale's film. With this, Rose both establishes a connection with previous works and provides a new interpretation of the situation. Only after the gentle welcoming directed to the creature itself does Elizabeth express professional satisfaction: she makes a reference to the hypotext by Frankenstein's initial reaction being calm and collected: "He's alive" (00:02:38-00:02:39), while she adds: "He's conscious. He's conscious" (00:02:40-00:02:42). Secondly, he pays homage to Whale's adaptation by having Frankenstein scream in happiness and excitement: "He's alive! He's alive!" (00:03:22-00:03:25).

Rose emphasizes that the creature's development and education resemble that of a child: from the beginning, creature learns about the human way of life and acquires various skills, but remains different nevertheless. He shows this with a baseball scene where the creature catches a baseball from Frankenstein, which makes Frankenstein very happy. However, as the creature throws the ball back, unaware of his own immense strength, he hits Frankenstein in the face making him bleed. The being is upset and feels sadness that he hurt his "father," suggesting that he is able to distinguish between right and wrong. Rose uses the trope of a father teaching his son how to catch a baseball to establish the ostensible father-son relationship between Frankenstein and the creature, but he also introduces the deconstruction of their relationship through this scene.

Namely, during the game, Frankenstein notices a strange bump on the creature's neck, and soon more bumps appear. The creature's condition worsens and his face becomes disfigured by bumps and deformities, indicating that something went wrong with the experiment. The two scientists discuss whether they should destroy their creation, but, bizarrely, the creature is present during the conversation and calls his creators: mom and dad. Elizabeth and Victor are represented as torn between their incompatible roles: they are scientists, and the creature is a result of an experiment, but they also function as parents to the child. Whereas Frankenstein brushes him off in an attempt to justify himself, his wife warns him that their creation is "a conscious entity"

(00:11:47-00:11:50), and that they cannot just put him down like an animal. Sharma suggests that "the fact that Elizabeth can sense the monster's consciousness while Frankenstein cannot, not only reinforces the popular discourse of maternal sensitivity, but also depletes Elizabeth's professional capacity as a research scientist by shifting the central focus to her maternal responsibility" (122). It can be argued that, in fact, her ethical stance is misinterpreted and almost criticized as feminine weakness and inability to be professional. On the other hand, Frankenstein has no ethical or emotional qualms whatsoever. He sees him only as a failed experiment, showing his lack of humanity and compassion towards a being he brought into the world. He refers to his creation in the following way: "He was never born. He does not exist" (00:12:13-00:12:16). In a metaphorical sense, he is disowning his "son," but literally he is preparing himself for murder: a monster is born, and it is not the creature.

After Frankenstein leaves the room, the creation starts crying and grabs his "mother's" hand, signalling to her that he understood everything. He is sad and in disbelief that his "parents" would abandon him like that. Although the relationship dynamics between Frankenstein, the creature and Elizabeth is quite different than in Shelley's novel, the crux of the story remains identical: the creature is abandoned by Frankenstein, who sees its murder as the only solution.

6.2. The Monster's Escape

In Rose's film, the traditional Gothic setting is rejected for a contemporary one, more similar to science fiction locations: the laboratory is not in an old house, but in an abandoned hospital or some kind of secret research facility. Rose does not put much emphasis on the classic horror elements, because the medical aspect of the setting brings out the eerie atmosphere. In this, the film brings to the forefront the complexity and hybridity of Shelley's novel, which can be said to be Gothic, horror, and philosophical novel, as well as a protoscience-fiction novel (Freedman 253). It also evokes an unnerving feeling in the audience because medical settings are places where people get healthy, while this is a place of something unnatural and uncanny coming to life, and it is also a place of death.

To highlight the qualities of horror immanent in the text, Rose focuses a lot on the goriness and special effects makeup for the creature. Just by looking at his skin condition, the audience feels unsettled and disgusted, which shows how he re-interpreted the idea of Shelley's hideous monster. Taking inspiration from Whale's adaptation, the monster is strapped to a table just like in the

creation scene. However, there is also a major difference because Rose's monster has a motherly figure that tries to soothe him on his deathbed: "It's okay. You're going to go home now" (00:13:57-00:14:01). She even caresses his deformed face, giving him true motherly love and a subconscious message that he is not ugly. Frankenstein, on the other hand, could not care less about his creation; his only worry is that it should be destroyed as fast as possible. Even when putting down animals, humans feel sorrow, but Frankenstein feels absolutely nothing but disgust for his creation. The hatred he has for the creature goes to such an extreme that he strangles him to death when the medication that is supposed to kill him does not work. Again, the role of the monster is here reversed, as in Shelley's novel.

After being presumed dead, the monster gets transported to the autopsy room, where two scientists try to dissect him. Like in Whale's adaptation, the monster goes completely mad and kills the men trying to harm him. Rose fills this scene with gore and blood as an element of graphic horror. He goes so far as to show a man talking covered in blood with his skull open. In the midst of killing, it is clear that the only thing the creature wants is to save his own life and get back to his mother, whose ID card he is carrying around. Finally, he escapes the facility, enjoying bright sunlight and, just like Whale's monster, makes a motion of trying to reach it, all in search of enlightenment.

6.3. The Monster and Society

After his escape from the confines of the laboratory and "parental" home, the monster has an opportunity for wider socialization. The monster's experience with society is negative – he experiences only rejection and abuse. He gets attacked by an angry mob, he experiences extreme abuse from the police, and outside of the laboratory his mother pretends not knowing him. Here, too, Rose makes certain changes in comparison to previous works.

For instance, the scene with the little girl represents a combination of those in Shelley's and Whale's works. The monster walks with a dog that he befriended after his escape to a nearby lake, where his first encounter with society begins by meeting a little girl: "Will you play sticks with me? Come on" (00:33:09-00:33:18). She takes him by the hand and shows him that, to play, he has to throw the sticks in the water. Like Whale's monster, he throws the girl in the water, but when she starts screaming for help, he jumps in to save her, which he did in the novel too. The scene represents a cumulative experience: this time he both throws the girl in the water and saves her,

illustrating the process of learning. When he saves her and brings her to the shore, he is met by the police who try to arrest him. His dog is also there, barking loudly at the officers. One of the officers shoots the dog because he would not calm down, and this is the moment the monster goes on a rampage, which, to the viewer, seems completely justified. He feels immense sadness for the loss of his best friend, so he beats the officer to death in a gory scene. But, he stops the moment the little girl shouts: "Stop it! You're hurting him!" (00:35:58-00:36:00). He then picks up his dog and carries him away to bury him. Finding a burial place for his best friend is the proof of how emotionally intelligent he became. He is now a being with feelings of compassion and empathy, something Frankenstein did not have in the destruction scene. Although the police officers try to kill him, the monster does not die because of his supernatural resilience, and he also does not run away to an isolated, remote location like in the novel. He stays in the city where he lives as a homeless man, but he cannot form close ties since he is rejected even by the homeless. Although the homeless usually have a strong community that accepts everyone (Waldron 404), because of the monster's terrifying appearance, not even they accept him.

The monster, severely bruised and dirty, wakes up in a tunnel by the sound of music. It is symbolic that he hears this in a tunnel because he starts walking towards the sound which leads him to light. He meets a blind man, who, like the blind man in the novel, does not (cannot) judge him based on his appearance and accepts him immediately. Like in the hypotext, the blind man shows care for the monster by offering friendship, providing him with warm clothes, and by taking him to the city to help him earn money. The man teaches him how to beg for money and to watch out for dumpsters because they mean food. Rose uses this scene to shine a light on the problem of homelessness in California specifically, and in the USA in general. He also teaches him about human vices like alcohol and cigarettes that he abuses to numb the pain. The monster quickly starts to understand how the world works:

> The strange system of human society was explained to me. I saw the division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty, of rank, descent, and noble blood. . . . A man might be respected with only one of these advantages. . . . But, without either, he was considered a vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste his powers for the profits of the chosen few. (00:56:53-00:57:22)

Rose criticizes the modern capitalist world through the monster in order to highlight how his intellect had progressed. By understanding these kinds of issues, the monster became discouraged because he possessed none of the traits needed to be accepted by society. His human characteristics expand daily, but he has no real hope for humanity.

This lack of hope is further emphasized in the creature's disappointing relationship with Wanda, who is a prostitute. It highlights modern issues where only appearances matter and how rejection again turns the monster into a vengeance-seeking being. Namely, the blind man offers Wanda a hundred dollars to sleep with the creature, so she accepts the offer, even though she is initially hesitant. This is Rose's way of criticizing both people who are willing to do anything for money, because most people are living on the poverty line, and capitalism as a system which created this situation. The man shows his altruistic side by paying for the monster without any hesitation because he wants him to experience every human emotion, including sexual pleasure.

Wanda first takes pity on him, but the she realizes that he is actually a sweet being. By googling images on her phone, she introduces him to new human concepts like sex, love, and dreams, but when he exposes all of the deformities on his body, she backs down on her offer to sleep with him. Once again, the monster is experiencing human rejection and abandonment, which angers him because he desperately wants love and affection. He grabs her in a violent hug and because of his unnatural strength he breaks her spine, killing her. Sharma highlights an interesting point:

> The fact that a prostitute, who is excluded from societal transactions on account of the symbolic interconnection between the sexualised body and dirt, refuses to engage in coital activity with the monster, who is epitomised as a symbol of human transgression of natural phenomenon, complicates the degrees of exclusion for those who have been shifted to the periphery after the process of otherisation. (125)

Because the monster was rejected by a person who is also socially marginalized, it only further marginalizes him, and solidifies his anxiety that he will never be accepted by the humankind. After hearing Wanda's screams, the blind man breaks into the room and finds out he killed Wanda. In his anger and grief, he starts to attack the monster, so the monster pushes him against a wall, accidentally killing him too. The monster is filled with regret and sadness because he murdered the only people that accepted him. Due to his unnatural strength, which he did not know how to control,

he hurt the people he loved, which leaves him, once again, alone in the world. It is then that he decides to seek revenge on his creators, who made him that way.

6.4. Revenge

The film's resolution is divided into two major scenes that depict the monster's vengeance: the highway scene and conflict with the Frankensteins. In the highway scene he has absolutely no compassion nor remorse for his actions. On the other hand, in the following scene he starts with pure vengeance and anger directed at his creators, but he feels too much love for them to harm them. Contrary to the compassionate and loving "monster," Victor shows a complete lack of humanity in his manipulation of the monster.

The creature's revenge starts by murdering the police officer who tortured him. This time around he has absolutely no remorse for his actions, even though he is aware of the consequences. He compares himself to the devil: "The fallen angel becomes a malignant devil. Yet even that enemy of God and man had friends and associates in his desolation. . . . I am alone" (01:11:31-01:11:43). In his deep state of sorrow and isolation, he thinks he is worse than the devil, because even the devil had friends. The monster proclaims not only revenge on his creators, but on all of humanity that cause him pain, again borrowing from Shelley's novel: "I will revenge my injuries. If I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear" (01:11:54-01:12:02).

Finally, he reaches the home of the Frankensteins. Rose sets the Gothic atmosphere by having the monster appear through shadows while he spies on his mother. It is very quiet and calm, which produces an uncanny atmosphere. The monster sees Frankenstein and his wife becoming intimate, and his rage is prompted by hearing Frankenstein say "I love you," which is something he never heard, especially not from his creators, so he wants to take that feeling away from them too. He breaks in and confronts them, especially his "mother," who caused him a lot of pain by abandoning him at the police station. She tries to calm him down and reveals to him that his name is Adam, which is symbolic of the biblical reference of the first man created by God. Frankenstein and his wife take Adam back to the lab and show him how they made him. Frankenstein reveals that they are making a better and improved version of him: "And this time you'll be beautiful" (01:16:39-01:16:41). Adam is in distress due to their phrasing, which implies they are making a new "version of him." Namely, he gained a sense of identity, so a new version of him cannot be made. Adam also asks his creator for answers as to why he made him ugly, and Victor replies in a

cold and harsh way: “It was a mistake. The cells didn’t replicate correctly, and God only knows what turned you into such a viscous beast” (01:17:12-01:17:20).

Understanding that Adam is agitated, Frankenstein tries to reason with him, but so that he may kill him: “My boy, I understand your unhappiness. I understand your pain. And I can make it go away. You will close your eyes and you will sleep. And when you wake up, you’ll be just fine” (01:17:57-01:18:18). In reality, he still feels disgusted by the being he created, and he just wants to put him down like an animal. Like in the previous adaptation, Frankenstein displays his god complex along with his borderline madness: “You see, that is the secret that God is so jealous of. The formula for life. And, I, me, Dr Frankenstein, discovered it, and I will do it again” (01:18:43-01:18:58). Frankenstein’s madness is not so all-consuming and obsessive, rather he has a degree of control over it. The calmness in his madness is what evokes the feelings of fright in the audience. Adam cries to his creator how he is alone and sad, seeking compassion and love, but he was met with a sedation needle and a saw to his neck. Elizabeth tries to stop Frankenstein by hitting him with a tray, but in a swift move, Frankenstein accidentally slits her neck. Realizing what he had done, Frankenstein runs away like a coward. Adam takes his “mother,” who in the end tried to protect him, to the forest, where he makes a large fire, in which he lays together with the dead Elizabeth, letting them both be symbolically cleansed of the earthly sins by fire. For the last monologue, Rose uses intertextuality once more to end the story of Adam and his creation, echoing the monster’s self-immolation in the novel.

Conclusion

Mary Shelley is undeniably a literary genius of the Romantic period, and her contribution to the Gothic and horror genres is immense. Her 1818 novel *Frankenstein* is arguably one of the best works of horror fiction, which earned it the title of a literary classic. She created two characters, Victor Frankenstein and his monster, that have become almost synonymous with the horror genre. *Frankenstein* is a work of fiction that has continued to inspire artists for over two hundred years. Two of such artists are directors James Whale and Bernard Rose, who brought Shelley's novel to the big screen in films created almost a century apart, with an attempt to adapt the Gothic genre and the complex characters of Victor Frankenstein and his monster for their respective audiences. Their visions of the Frankenstein story reveal how the notion of what it means to be human essentially does not change. The only aspect that changes is how the story is adapted for new generations.

Shelley's novel is the epitome of Gothic fiction with features that include the Gothic setting, Victor as an overachieving and immoral scientist, and his uncanny monster. The setting reflects Victor's mental instability and internal turmoil, while highlighting the monster's intelligence and enlightenment. Through Frankenstein and his monster, she mixes the natural and unnatural in an attempt to show what it truly means to be human. From Shelley's perspective, to be human is to be intelligent, but also not to lose feelings of empathy and compassion due to unchecked ambition. Victor crosses that line in his mad obsession of becoming a god that can create life. He remains stuck in that feeling, which rids him of any type of compassion and love. By the end, he is fuelled by all-consuming revenge and anger. While Victor gradually loses his humanity, his creation gains it through experiencing human life. The monster goes through a range of emotions that develop his sense of morality. Along with morality, both his general and emotional intelligence evolve. Victor's inhumane behaviour and abandonment of his creation, leave the monster feeling as an outcast and depressed. These intense emotions of fear drive him to make mistakes and commit crimes, but he still had a moral compass that eventually guided him to a decision to take his own life.

Whale is one of the first film makers to bring Shelley's work to life. Right from the start his film acquired a massive following, and Whale's depiction of the monster is still used as a template and inspiration for other creators. Whale uses the psychic concept of adaptation, meaning there are many changes in comparison to the hypotext, but he manages to capture the main motifs

and themes (Elliott 136). Even though he presents Frankenstein as the hero and his monster as the villain, he still incorporates the mistreatment of the monster that, in combination with his criminal brain, drove him to violence. Just like in the hypotext, Frankenstein is represented as a mad scientist, who crosses the lines of the laws of nature. He has an unhealthy obsession with creating life that eventually rids him of his humanity. Frankenstein's rejection of the creation, which he constructed with such passion, only drives the monster to desperately seek his creator's love. Although Whale makes the monster mute, he still manages to represent his feelings and emotional intelligence. The creature is so deprived of affection that it drives him to destruction in an attempt to gain his creator's compassion. In the end, the creature dies in a cathartic fire, representing the consequences of excessive ambition and the desire to be god.

Almost two hundred years after Shelley's novel was published, Rose adopts her approach and attempts to tell the story of *Frankenstein* through the monster's perspective, which is the most radical way to humanize the monster. His film is a contemporary retelling that also highlights some of the issues of the modern world, such as homelessness and prostitution, but he still captures the Gothic spirit of the source text. Intertextuality is used a great deal in the film, particularly to capture the notion that Shelley created the monster as an inherently good being driven to vengeance and crime because of abandonment and rejection from society. By showing the events through the monster's point of view, Rose accomplished an adaptation faithful to the source text. He uses the incarnational concept of adaptation, where the film "gives flesh" to the words of Shelley's novel (Elliott 161), but from a modern point of view.

Ultimately, all three works deal with the same issue of what it means to be human, but in a different context. Although the times have changed, the core essence of humanity remained the same. Both the novel and film adaptations emphasize that humanness lies in empathy and acceptance of others. The three works explore the range of humanness through the Gothic, because it provides the unique feeling of darkness and horror, and has the ability to challenge conventions.

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