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## Trabajo Fin de Grado

“The Monster behind the Monster”: An Alternative  
Reading of the Family in *Mary Shelley’s*  
*Frankenstein* (Branagh, 1994)

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# **The Monster behind the Monster: An Alternative Reading of the Family in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Branagh, 1994)**

## **1. Introduction**

Since its publication in 1818, Mary Shelley's most popular novel *Frankenstein* has been employed in many ways. An exhaustive scrutiny of the novel over the years has given rise to a variety of papers, audiovisual material and analyses which cover almost every aspect of the novel. The present paper is aimed at exploring an issue that hides behind the iconic plot of this novel in the 1994 film version, dysfunctionality in familiar contexts. The thesis of this paper is that the dysfunctionality on Frankenstein's "family" is a breeding ground for the creation of the monster in psychological terms. The analysis will be conducted considering the most relevant patterns and mechanisms that Victor Frankenstein carries out that lead into the creation of the creature, but not in physical terms, which is obvious, but as a living being that commits atrocities. For example, when the monster kills a kid around minute 75 because he is Victor's relative, or when he rips Elisabeth's heart out of her chest in minute 100. All these patterns are gathered in a theory, the General Strain Theory, with which I will relate with the aspects I considered more suitable from the narrative of the family.

The version of the film I chose to carry out this analysis is *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* which is the 1994 film adaptation of the book. It was directed by Kenneth Branagh and has a star-studded cast, including himself, as Victor Frankenstein, Robert Deniro as the monster and Helena Bonham Carter playing Elisabeth. What drove me to choose this specific version is the way in which it resembles on a very reliable manner the original ideas from Shelley's book, but setting them alive and wrapping them up with a very engaging and striking cinematic experience. Even though when

people read a book they are reproducing the images in their own imagination, I think that the visual support that a movie offers the viewer specific details that the book lacks. For instances, close-ups of the characters' faces in a scene which gives the viewer meaningful information in terms of body language. I think that these details could help me better understand the characters and carry out a better analysis. Despite my favorable judgement of the film, critics were not that pleasant with their reviews concerning the development of the plot. Roger Ebert, for example, wrote that "The Creature is on target, but the rest of the film is so frantic, so manic, it doesn't pause to be sure its effects are registered" (1994). Ebert and others argue that the film's chain of events happen one after the other without any filling scenes which could give some time to the audience to breathe and get ready for the next turning point. This is a true fact, the film barely has pauses, but I personally think that is part of the magic itself, the viewer finishes the film feeling as if he had run a marathon, exhausted but full of endorphins.

However, what concerns us in this analysis is the contextual frame in which the monster was originated in the film and the dangerous patterns Victor follows after "giving birth".

For the better understanding of the following analysis, I would like to give a brief explanation on the differences between the two conceptions of the word monster that are going to be mentioned throughout this text. To begin with, according to Yasmine Musharbash and Geir Henning Presterudstuen monsters are "[...]spooky, menacing, terrifying beings—who lurk in the shadows and the dark, under beds, in caves and lakes, beyond the line of sight, and in the imagination"(2014, 13). This kind of monster is more related to an abnormal appearance and most of the time they are used in literature and film to create a reaction, to daunt. However, that is not the sense of the word I will be focusing on. The monster I will be dealing with in this paper is the "human monster" (Sharpe 2007, 388) that, according to Foucault, is an individual that commits

atrocities, acts driven by selfishness or greed and that is able to kill. This kind of monster can actually be impersonated by any human or living being. In this film, there are two monsters: Victor Frankenstein and his creation. My analysis is going to revolve around the creation's path towards monstrosity.

## **2. Theoretical Framework: General Strain Theory and the Family System Theory**

As mentioned in the introduction, there are certain patterns in the production of the monster in the film *Frankenstein (1994)*. Broadly speaking, the course of these patterns is first the rejection of his father; then when he tries to find a place in the system, he is also violently refused such place; and when he thought he found someone who could give him some kind of comfort, this is also taken from him (the three of them are clear instances of removal of positive impulses). These instances will be further developed throughout this dissertation. The patterns are gathered and reflected in a theory named the General Strain Theory (GST) The theory, developed by Robert Agnew in 1992 is placed within the criminology field, and it is one of the most renowned theories of crime in modern criminology. Its main principle is rather simple: subjects who are subject to strains or stressors may become disturbed and sometimes cope with crime, given that, individuals may engage in criminal conduct in order to scape or get rid of their strains (Agnew 1992, 145). A clear instance of this principle could be the case of a homeless person who is desperate for food and has to rely on theft. This individual's cause of stress is the lack of food and has to carry out a crime as a coping mechanism for that stress.

The GST is defined by a series of notions which are the failure to achieve a goal, the existence of harmful impulses, and the removal of positive impulses. Even though I am going to go through all of them briefly, the focus will be only on one of them, which is the one that most relates with the patterns in the film: the removal of positive impulses. To begin with, a definition of strain is necessary. According to Agnew, "Strains refer to events or conditions that are disliked by individuals" (Agnew 1992, 145). Given this definition, it is possible to identify three types of strains: the failure to achieve a goal, the existence of harmful impulses, and the removal of positive impulses.

As Agnew notes, in addition to these three categories, there are also three ways of coping with stressors: cognitive, behavioral and emotional (Agnew 1992, 146).

Briefly explained, the failure to achieve a goal (failing to get something you want) can occur whenever someone cannot reach a certain mark at an exam, when someone cannot score a certain number at a basketball match or even as simply as not finding whatever product you were looking for in the supermarket. All these are examples of potential stressors, that can affect each individual differently. The existence of harmful impulses occurs when an individual is treated by another on an aversive/detrimental/harmful way. This individual suffers a situation in which some type of stressor exists, for instance a child that has an abusive father and has to run from home to try to escape from that stress (Agnew 1992, 146). Finally, the removal of positive impulses occurs when an individual loses something they value; for example, if someone steals their car, or when someone close to them dies (Agnew, 146). In addition to this, Agnew makes a distinction between subjective and objective strains. The former one corresponds to “events and conditions that are disliked by the particular person or persons being examined” (Agnew 146) and the latter to “events and conditions that are disliked by most people in a given group” (Agnew 146). These two categories are relevant to break down and evaluate the criteria of an individual, because people can differ on the same issue and may have different perspectives.

The focus of this paper is on how these patterns coexist within the frame of the creature’s growing-up process and result in criminal behavior like, for instance, killing a kid or ripping Elisabeth’s heart out of her chest. Parental negligence and rejection, together with an aggressive or disproportionate strict method of education is among the strongest causes of crime (Agnew 1992,



147). Delinquency is most likely to occur when 1) the individual, mainly/chiefly in his teenage years, does not feel attached to his family, school or other institutions; 2) family or mentors fail to educate and sanction the individual's diversion on an effective way; 3) the individual's investment in society is minimal; 4) the individual has not internalized conventions. (Agnew 1992, 147.) These negative strains and affects may lead an individual to 1) make use of illegal or illegitimate ways to achieve a goal; 2) attack or scape from their source of affliction; 3) handle their negative relations through the use of drugs. So, according to Agnew, the GST "is distinguished by its focus on negative relationships with others and its insistence that such relationships lead to delinquency through the negative affect, specially anger they sometimes engender" (Agnew 1992, 147). As mentioned above, this paper will put the focus specially on one specific source of strain and the way it is handled by Frankenstein's "son", and that specific source has its origin in the harmful familiar and social interactions he experiences and his relief by attacking (and in this case) escaping from his source of affliction. This will be explained in detail in the next section of this BA thesis with direct examples from the film.

Generally speaking, the three main premises that conform the GST (a)failure to achieve a goal, b) harmful impulses c) removal of positive impulses) work regardless the social class the individuals fall in. Nonetheless, studies carried out by the prior strain theorist Robert Merton have confirmed that they are most likely to happen in lower social strata, in which individuals are under worst conditions and usually suffer from more strains (Jang 2015, 495). Lower social class individuals usually lack money, a stable job or access to proper education which are very recurrent sources of anxiety and stress (Gullion 2006, 13).

While the GST was elaborated to justify the different stressors an individual (specially in their early life) may suffer and the mechanisms to cope with them, Murray Bowen developed a theory in which he interprets the family as an emotional unit, and explains how a malfunction within the patterns of a healthy family contribute to the development of clinical problems. According to this theory named the Family System Theory (FST) or Family Emotional System theory (FEST), families are systems of interconnected and interdependent individuals, none of whom can be understood in isolation from the system (Noone and Papero 2015, 15). This theory will also be helpful to understand the main origin of the behavioral patterns of Frankenstein's "son" which is actually Victor's inefficient work as a parental figure.

The family system theory emphasizes the interdependent nature of subsystems within families (Cox and Paley 1997; Minuchin, 1985). It formulates an approach to understand how humans function according to the interactions between people within such family. Unlike the GST, this theory belongs to the field of psychoanalysis and addresses emotional, behavioral, or relational symptoms in individual, couples, and families. According to the perspective that the theory proposes, the way in which an individual functions is determined by his or her place in the system, subject to its pushes and pulls including "competing emotional demands, role definitions and expectations, boundary and hierarchy issues, coalitions and collusions, loyalty conflicts, family and institutional culture and belief systems, double binds, projective identifications, and systemic anxiety" (W.H. Watson 2012, 185). The theory also includes an explanation of how patterns of self-correcting and self-reinforcing feedback in the system can either obstruct or assist "health, breakdown or resilience" (W.H. Watson 2012, 185). This theory will be further elaborated in the analysis to examine in depth the psychology of the father-son relations in Frankenstein due to its

usefulness on explaining interactions and the nature of their reciprocity. This applied to the Frankenstein-creature relation will clarify why the creature responds to his father by using violence and anger.

### **3. *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1994): A Critical Analysis of the Family and its Tribulations**

Victor Frankenstein moves from his hometown in Geneva to study in a medical school, where he learns about human anatomy and becomes obsessed with death, which eventually develops into the turning point of his besetting objective of creating life. His psychological profile is quite troubling. In the film he is projected as an arrogant, self-centered man who wants to play God by creating life from death. He becomes obsessed with his project and puts it before anything else, including his own health and his marriage with Elisabeth, who fails trying to help him out of his misguided stubbornness. This dialogue (41:20-43:12) shows clearly what I have explained above:

“We have to leave. It isn't safe”- “No, I have to stay.” - “even if it isn't safe” - “No, I have to stay”. - “Even if it means you'll die?”- “Yes” “Well, let me help you” - “No, that's impossible” - “We made a promise” ”Victor, I beg you” - “Look, I know that this is difficult for you to understand, but I cannot abandon this work now”. It is too important. Not just for me, but, believe me, for everyone. And it must come first” - “Before us?” “Elizabath, I love you so much, but...”

However, it is difficult to infer what his precise expectations were when he created the monster as the film does not tell us. In spite of his regret, Victor Frankenstein is a father. He gives birth to a creature made up of pieces of people that from the first time he opens his eyes, it is noticeable how he behaves like a newborn due to his clumsy movements; he does not know how to walk properly or stand up without falling again. Neither can he communicate, he just tries to embrace his father with the little he knows about how to move his body. From that point on, everything starts to get out of hands. The scene of the gestation (45:21- 50:01) is erratic, conformed by a rapid succession of different types of camera shots like overhead and tilt shots, but the ones that predominate are handheld camera shots and close-ups. A large number of shots during this fragment of the movie

are filmed with a handheld camera, which is translated into less stability and more proximity to the environment according to the film-related blog *Studiobinger*. It is a tool used to “heighten intensity” and “create intimacy” (DeGuzman 2020), it makes it look more natural and realistic, as if it were an extension of Frankenstein’s thoughts. A noteworthy image in the scene is how the monster is gestated in water, resembling the amniotic liquid on a mother’s womb.

Victor feels terrified the minute he realizes what he has created. He does not treat the creature as a baby, but as what his appearance dictates: a monster. “What have I done”, he says (48:55). The work to which he devoted his life and sacrificed so much for, was not what he expected it to be. He describes it as “defective”. His first reaction is to run for his life, in contrast to the monster, who just tries to embrace his father like any baby would do, but Victor’s intentions turn more obscure and tries to get rid of the creature by killing it. In this essay I am not going deal with the premise that the creature does not cease to be a monster and, given that, the natural reaction of any human being would be similar to Victor’s. Nobody would act unbothered if they had to face a huge being made up of pieces of other dead bodies. Instead, I am putting aside that fact and addressing the consequences of the rejection of a human child, which is being impersonated by the monster. Here, the General Strain Theory (GST) comes into action: the first step towards criminal behavior in this context is being rejected by your family and/or society (Agnew, 1992, 147), as I mentioned in the first section.

### **3.1 Family Rejection**

The family plays a significant role in any community and determines everyone's psychic and social formation according to changing historical, political, and ideological dimensions (Bowen 2015, 15).

Babies learn from their parents; they acquire knowledge from them as soon as they are born. According to studies carried out by the *Journal Perinatal Education*, the results of parent-infant miscommunication have long-lasting effects on the development of a peaceful and healthy child (Hotelling 2004, 43). The view we get from the movie is that of the creature's life being threatened by his own father who tries to get rid of him. After Victor's unsuccessful attempt, the creature is left alone. Victor Frankenstein exerts parental neglect over his "son", which is one of the main strains that are most likely to cause criminal behavior as pointed out in section 2 of this thesis (Agnew 1992, 147). The monster's first steps into the world are stained with carelessness and negative emotions start to deepen inside the baby creature, among which anger is one of the main. He yearns for his father's affection, but he only finds disgust. The power a parental figure exerts on his child is highly meaningful, and a dysfunctional family has the potential to cause severe problems on a child. According to the Family System Theory or Family Emotional System Theory, there is a process called the family emotional process (FEP) which evaluates the flow of "emotionally fueled reciprocal interactions in the family" (Noone and Papero 2015, 15). This process functions incessantly within the family, reflecting the principle of reciprocity in action affecting the individual's response, specific relationships and the way a family reacts to the fluctuation of different events in life (Noone and Papero 2015, 15). The FEP is particularly relevant in the development process of a child, as it establishes and maintains the characteristics of the context in which the child develops (Noone and Papero 2015, 15-16). We can easily see the application of this notion within the context of Victor Frankenstein and his creature, as it is indeed the story of a child growing-up in a toxic context in which he lacks a parental figure who could guide him.. The disruption of this family is built up due to the lack of communication, the creature cannot express his needs because his father refuses to listen and constantly keeps a distance with him. This is

translated into the development of internal negative emotions which are at the same time returned reciprocally to his father. If the only thing Frankenstein shows to his son and the only thing the creature sees is refusal and neglect, he will absorb the negative emotions that this carelessness lead into and give them back in return. This pattern parallels reality more frequently than not, a very usual instance of this could be when an alcoholic father has a son and the son witnesses him drink heavily every night. According to the American Addiction Centers, “exposure to alcohol on a regular basis seems to increase a child’s risk for future alcohol abuse” this basically means that the resulting expectations will be that when the child grows older the probabilities of him becoming alcoholic with the time will be rather high.

### **3.2 Societal Rejection**

The second step towards the usage of crime as a coping mechanism is social rejection. As it was already pointed out before, General Strain Theory highlights that another example of a negative strain is social rejection (Agnew 1994, 146). In the film, we clearly see how the creature is constantly being ridiculed by the people in town and its clumsy physical movements parallel those of a child right after being inducted into society's rigid behavioral and educational patterns. This makes the child change abruptly in order to adapt to this society. He notices how people treats him differently even though he does not understand the reason. He has to use his own means and the little he knows from when since when he opened his eyes for the first time to escape from and overcome all the obstacles a society that repudiates him puts on his way, like in the scene of the carriage in which he hides among the dead bodies (54:30). The monster is ridiculed and threatened by the people in town and has to use his own means to learn how to read and write by his own means. He mimics the family that lives in the woods to learn the different human emotions and letters of the alphabet, but

he learns all of that from the shadow, already knowing from experience that if anyone discovers him, they will be terrified and will attack him because he has internalized that everyone finds him ugly. No matter how hard he tries to find his place he is always rejected.

In view of all of the above-mentioned we now understand how and why the monster is driven into such anger, he cannot reach peace anywhere as long as there is someone around him, he only finds disruption. According to the GST, anger is especially likely to produce delinquency because “it disrupts cognitive processes in ways that impede noncriminal coping”, “it reduces the actual and perceived costs of crime”, and “creates a sense of power and control, and creates a desire for revenge or retribution” (Agnew 2001, 327). Throughout the movie we witness some actions of revenge by means of murders. First William’s (Victor’s brother): “That poor, innocent child died in my grip ... because all I could see was your face ... and all I could feel was my rage. And when I let him go, he fluttered to the grass like a sparrow...” (84:46). After him, Justine, who is lynched by the people in town. They accused her of Williams’ death because the monster made it look as if she killed the kid (80:40). The last victim was Elisabeth, whose heart was ripped out of her body (100:00) as a consequence of a broken promise, the promise that Victor would make a monster companion for the creature, so he did not have to be alone. He decided to dismiss the promise and, as a result, the monster finally kills the one thing he loves the most to inflict on him the most amount of pain possible.



Figure 1: Blind man



The main motive for these three acts of crime is revenge responding to strain or stress, but there is a turning point which makes him cross the border between good and evil. In the cottage of the woods, the monster meets the only man who tolerates him and is not afraid of him, but this is only due to the fact that he has a disability: he is blind. As he cannot see the appearance of the monster, he only perceives his sorrow: a poor thing that seeks someone's love, attention and guidance. The monster clings to him and tries to explain his situation "I'm ... very, very ugly. People are afraid. Except you" (70) but once more, his only means of possible support is snatched from him when the old man's family kicks him out of the cottage. According to the GST theory, this proceeding suits into the category of "removal of positive impulses" (Agnew 1992, 146) which finally triggers into the monster's leap into criminal action, more specifically his first murder. The creature was desperately searching for a figure who could shape him, teach him how to be a human, yet is rejected by everyone because he is not accepted by the system.

### **3.3. Deconstructing the Monster: Victor Frankenstein**

So far, I have explored the reasons that drove the creature to evolve towards his monstrosity and justified how these patterns work. Now the focus should be changed and a reconsideration of who the real monster is should be conducted: is it a father that left his son in despair? , or a creature whose ultimate coping mechanism to withstand the pain of his neglect and abandonment was inflicting pain on him and his family?. At this point, a monster is not only a creature with bad appearance but the victim of their creator's irresponsibility. This section is intended to deconstruct the image of the monster in the film in order to reveal where the real monstrosity resides. The term "deconstruction" was coined by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida and it refers to a process that involves dismantling texts (written or oral) or parts of them to disclose inner inconsistencies,

where a text might appear to imply one thing can be shown to imply its opposite (Setyaningrum 2017, 10). In order to deconstruct this movie, it is necessary to do a close reading of it, or in this case, take a closer look at it and what it intends to transmit (Setyaningrum 2017, 11).

To better understand the conflict around monstrosity in the film, I will now proceed to analyze a clip. Firstly, we have to take into account that this is an example of gothic film. We can infer that due to the way it fits perfectly with all the specifications of a proper gothic film both in terms of framing and plot development. Horace Walpole, the creator of the gothic novel, gathered in his work *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), the most essential elements that constitute the genre. Some of which are an atmosphere of mystery or suspense, supernatural or otherwise inexplicable events, high or overgrown emotion and castle setting (Harris). The most significant characteristics of this specific movie comprise obscure, exaggerated environments which surround a melodramatic and cursed story. This is relevant because it helps to understand the choices Kenneth Branagh makes in terms of background and mise-en-scène to better engage the audience into the story. The scene in question goes from minute between 83:45 and minute 89:10. This clip is very meaningful in terms of information, since it is the first real and peaceful conversation between Victor Frankenstein and his creation. At this point of the film, the creature is able to have a conversation with sense and consciousness and lay out his feelings with clarity. Victor seems surprised because he did not teach the monster to do anything: “You can talk” he asks, and the creature answers: “Yes, I can talk, and read, and think”, but during this scene the creature proves that he in fact can talk, and read, and think because he learnt it by himself, without Victor’s help. There is a space the viewer can feel between them, while Victor seems scared and moves cautiously, afraid to make sudden moves for fear of the monster becoming violent, the creature is calmly sitting on a rock. So far, we have been used to the

exuberant settings that suit the period the film is set in, and the one displayed in this clip follows the same conventions. It cannot be forgotten that this is a gothic film and the norm dictates that to fit in such category, there has to be an atmosphere of mystery and suspense. We see what looks like a boundless snowy cave, nothing else added so we can focus all our attention on the conversation being carried out. The film uses the scenery to induce a void both visually and emotionally and such void parallels the pity and compassion the viewer feels for the creature that was left in complete despair.

This scene almost resembles something that could easily happen nowadays; a father that has left home because he did not want to take care of his son and returns later on. This is not so fictional. “You gave me these emotions, but you didn't tell me how to use them. Now two people are dead. Because of us” (84:00). This statement made by the monster himself reveals how he feels towards his father. He makes him accountable for his own actions because he was not there for him when he needed someone to teach him what it was right and wrong. The film was made so that audiences empathize with the monster, to feel pity and to almost justify his criminal actions because all the pain Victor caused him when he left him in misery. He failed at protecting him from the world’s aggressiveness, neither did he even teach him how to protect himself and that is why he has to find his own mechanisms to cope with it. The clip is mainly produced by close-ups of their faces so the viewer can have a better access to their feelings through their expressions. Victor looks vulnerable, listens to what his creature has to say but hardly keeping eye contact, probably because of the disgusting appearance of his companion. In contrast, the creature seems peaceful, from the beginning, the only thing he ever wanted was some company and guidance, as well as the love of his father. He seems interested in knowing the reason why Victor gave him life. After all the incidents he had with every human that he encountered, he is aware of his differences, he knows he

is ugly and is accepting his marginal individuality. This is the first bit of real communication between them. So far, the creature has been trying to find its place and at this point he is just exhausted.



Figure 2: The creature looking at his father



Figure 3: Victor's defeated gaze

Victor Frankenstein was obsessed with creating life. Yet, once he achieved his goal, he despised it instead of facing the consequences and taking care of it. Going back to the idea of deconstruction, the first step to deconstruct a text is to carry out a close reading with the intention of additional interpretations (Setyaningrum, 2017, 11). In the case of this movie, the first reaction towards it is just fearing the monster because he's appearance is by no means pleasant and he kills people, but the film has more meaning than the one the viewer first perceives. The film can be also used to explore what makes the monster a monster. The answer to that question is clear at this point, Victor Frankenstein is the monster behind his creature. For Victor, all the incidents caused after he created life become the creature's fault, he believes that the creature was not properly made, that he is just a failed experiment. This study has revealed so far that behind the accountability of the monstrosity in this film resides in Victor and not his creature, just as people would normally find a father accountable of his son's actions when they are kids. In this line, another detail worth mentioning is the way in which Victor does not seem to care at all about having to manipulate pieces of dead human bodies in order to create a whole new corpse. He even manipulates his fiancée's dead body

with no shame. This is totally immoral as stated by his friend Dr. Henry Clerval. He is warned but he does not really pay attention and does it anyways. This in fact seems more of a monster's behavior than that of the creature, who is driven by revenge and the pain inflicted by his father when he abandoned him.

#### 4. Conclusion

This essay was aimed at exploring the patterns a dysfunctional family normally follows that can derive in criminal attempts or harmful coping mechanisms. As it has been already pointed out, these patterns are reflected in the story of Frankenstein and his creature and gathered in the General Strain Theory (GST) written by Robert Agnew in 1992. This essay has laid bare how the film fits perfectly into the categories the GST proposes. The theory's main principle is the following: individuals who are subject to strains or stressors may become disturbed and sometimes cope with crime, given that, individuals may engage in criminal conduct in order to scape or get rid of their strains (Agnew 1992, 145). Having this in mind, and as it has been already stated throughout the analysis of the film, Frankenstein's son instinctively chooses use crime as a coping mechanism due to the strains caused by his father. There are three types of strains that are most likely to cause crime: failure to achieve a goal, the existence of harmful impulses and the one that has been chosen to carry out the analysis of the film, removal of positive impulses. This last instance of strain is what justifies the eventual coping mechanisms the creature uses. As has been argued, Frankenstein suffers constantly from this, he is first rejected by his own creator and father, later on society refuses to give him a place in the system by attacking him and, finally, when he thought he found someone that could give him some relief he is also taken away from him. In addition, the Family System Theory (FST) has also been introduced and used to explain some instances of the process of the creation of the monster. The FST sees the family as a unit and works according to the family emotional process (FEP) that, as mentioned in the sections above evaluates the "emotional fueled reciprocal interactions in the family" (Noone and Papero 2015, 15). We have seen that this reciprocity is by no means positive, due to the fact that Victor wants to be as far from the monster as possible. He only offers him disgust

and violence, so the creature damaged by his actions, gives him anger and revenge in return. We cannot forget that the creature was born being a baby and at the end of the film, he has grown fed up by a succession of harmful experiences: he is the son of a man and a society that neglects him so the final result is a monster, the monster of a monster.

After the elaboration of the analysis of the film, it is possible to identify several statements that can be highlighted: that the creature only learns what he is taught, so if all the stimuli he is surrounded with is hate, he will hate. In addition, the constant rejection by both his family and society (removal of positive impulses) causes him to react with anger and revenge, which leads into the murder of Elisabeth and William. Finally, the real source of monstrosity and horror is not the creature but his creator. As my analysis of the movie shows, the film is in fact an excellent example of what a dysfunctional family looks like even in modern times. This essay ignores the fact that the creature is indeed a horrible-looking human that has been made from other human pieces. This has to be put aside in order to work with the process of his growth as if he was an average kid. For the purpose of the analysis' development it is better to dismiss the appearance of the monster to conduct the attention to the psychological process that makes him a monster on the inside.

*Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1994)* offers a very engaging visual experience that follows very well the dynamics of the plot. The film brings together the gothic conventions (obscure, exaggerated landscapes like Victor's mansion or the cave, exaggerated weather conditions and excessive and obscure shots like the huge fire at Victor's house) and a melodramatic storyline that fits perfectly with them. Without all these conditions, the film would not be the same, it offers a complex mechanism to make the viewer empathize with Frankenstein's madness. This movie has shown an example of the background and process of development that a kid raised by a dysfunctional family would experience. It has been revealed, thanks to the General Strain Theory and the Family System

Theory, that this dysfunctionality is a breeding ground for the creation of a monster in psychological terms, someone who uses any kind of criminal action, in this case murdering as a coping mechanism.



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