A FORMALIST APPROACH TO IDENTITY IN SELECTED CONTEMPORARY FILM ADAPTATIONS OF MARY SHELLEY'S "FRANKENSTEIN"

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FACULTY OF CREATIVE ARTS
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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on modern adaptations of *Frankenstein* in regard to the themes of sympathy, isolation, love and identity. The adaptations that form the basis of the research are Kenneth Branagh's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1994), Chris Carter's *"The Postmodern Prometheus",* Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie* (2012) and Stuart Beattie's *I, Frankenstein* (2014). Analysis is conducted into how faithful each adaptation is to Mary Shelley's original in terms of character, genre and plot, delving into the relationship between creator and creature with particular regard to sympathy. The first film subjected to analysis is Kenneth Branagh's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, which, for the most part, faithfully reflects the original novel. Other adaptations take a more inventive approach. In Chris Carter's *The Postmodern Prometheus,* an episode of his television series *The X-Files,* a more inventive approach is taken in terms of adaptation. In this episode, the story of a creature ending up poles apart from the initial vision of its creator is transported to a small American town, and although the plot is familiar, the telling of the story and the characters involved are different. Tim Burton's film *Frankenweenie* takes an even more unusual approach, using character names and traits from the original *Frankenstein,* as well as other gothic horror stories, to tell a story about a boy using electricity to bring his dead dog back to life. The film *I, Frankenstein* attempts to continue the story of the original novel, acting as a latter-day sequel. Critical reception of the film was mixed, veering towards the negative, but on a creative level it is commendable for attempting something different with the familiar character of Frankenstein's creature. Each of these four adaptations takes a very different approach to either telling or continuing the story of a scientist accidentally creating a monster. By analysing four adaptations each of which come at the story from a different angle, this research not only scrutinises the films themselves but

also seeks to find similarities and differences in the approaches of the directors and other people involved in the creative process. The modern legacy of *Frankenstein* is examined, as well as how the concepts of identity and sympathy tie the various adaptations together. Adaptation theory, including theories of cinema and adaptation, media theories in cinema, and theories of inventive adaptation, are used in this study. Aside from adaptation, formalist theory is applied in this research. The cinematic techniques used by the filmmakers to convey these concepts are analysed, including how each director puts his own stamp on the story, and the importance of cinematography in creating an intellectual and emotional response in the viewer. The study concentrates on the base elements which make up a film, such as light, sound, design and editing. Each technical decision made by a production team is considered, as each one has a consequence in terms of the effect eventually produced by the film. The composition of shots, the editing process, the initial stylistic considerations, sound, music and lighting are all looked at it in order to determine both the effect the director was hoping to achieve, as well as the actual final products.

ABSTRAK

Peneyelidiakan ini bertumpu kepada adaptatsi-adaptasi baru bagi cerita *Frankenstein* bedasarkan tema-tema simpati, kesunyian, cinta serta identiti. Adaptasi-adaptasi tersebut, serta kajian seterusnya, adalah bergantung keatas certia Mary Shelley yang dihasilkan sebai filem-filem *Frankenstein* (1994) oleh Kenneth Branagh, *"The Postmodern Prometheus"* oleh Chris Carter*, Frankenweenie* (2012) oleh Tim Burton, dan *I, Frankenstein* (2014) oleh Stuart Beattie.

Analisa dilakukan untuk menyentukan sejauh makankah adpatsasi-adaptasi tersebut "setia" kepada cerita asal dari segi aspek watak dan perwatakan, genre, serta pola cerita, dengan penelitian ke atas perhubungan antara tokoh yang menghasilkan serta watak asal (creature) yang diciptakan, khusunya berdasar kewujudan unsur-unsur simpati.

Filem pertama yang dikaji, iaitu *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* oleh Kenneth Branagh's merupakan produksi yang, pada seluruhan, menceritakan novel asal yang menjadi sumbernya. Adaptasi-adaptasi seterusnya mengambil pendekatan yang lebih inovatif. *The Postmodern Prometheus,* hasil Chris Carter, yang merupakan satu episode dalam siri talivisyen *The X-Files*, menunjukkan pendekatan lebih inovatif dari segi adaptasi. Episod ini merangkumi cerita makhkuk tersebut yang dipindah jauh dari visi menciptnya ke sebuah bandar kecil di Amerika Syarikat. Dengan itu, walaupun ceritanya tidak begitu luarbiasa, cara penyampaiannya serta watak-wataknya adalah baru dan jauh beza daripada dalam cerita asal. Film *Frankenweenie* oleh Tim Burton, mengambil pedekatan yang semakin luarbiasa, dengan nama-nama serta sifat-sifat watak dari cerita asal dicampur adukkan dengan unsur-unsur dari cerita bercorak "gothic" yang seram, untuk menyampaikan kisah seorang budak lelaki yang menggunakan kuasa letrik untuk memulih saekor anjing

yang telahpun mati. Filem *I, Frankenstein* cuba meneruskan ataupun menyambung cerita asal dari novel, dengan adegan zaman moden. Sambutan terhadap filem tersebut tidak begiti hebat, dengan adanya pandang negatif, walaupun dari segi sudut perspektif seni ia cuba melahirkan sesuatu yang baru berdasarkan watak Frankenstein. Setiap dari empat adaptasi tersebut diatas mengambil pendekatan yang jauh beza samada dalam usaha meneruskan cerita seorang ahli-sains yang berjaya kebetulan menciptakan makhluk ganjil Frankensein itu, ataupun untuk menghasilkan sesuatu yang baru. Melalui analisis ke-empat-empat adaptasi tersebut diatas yang membawakan pandangan baru terhadap cerita Frankenstein, kajian ini bukan sahaja melakuan penelitian filem-filem tersebut, ia juga cuba mencari persamaan dan berbezaan yang terdapat pada pedekatan para director dan juga para artis lain yang terlibat dalam proses kreativiti. Warisan dan legasi *Frankenstein* dikaji beserta kensep-konsep identity and sympathy, yang merupakan tali yang menghubungkan filem-filem tersebut. Ini dilakukan melalui teori Adaptasi termasuk adaptasi seni filem dan media. Selain itu teori Fomalism juga digunakan untuk meneliti dan menyampai konsep-konsep para pembikin filem-filem tersebut, agar para penonton dapat dialami pengalaman intellectual dan emotional dari tontonan filem-filem tersebu.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of Mary Shelley's ground-breaking novel, *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus* in 1818, it has been adapted for the screen on a great many occasions, including adaptations for both television and film. The depth and profundity of the original story is reflected in the scope and range of these adaptations. This thesis will be explicated and analyzed four different adaptations through a Formalist approach in selected contemporary film adaptation of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. More traditional adaptations include Kenneth Branagh's film version, *Frankenstein*, which, for the most part, faithfully reflects the original novel. Other adaptations take a more inventive approach, including *The X-Files* episode '*The Postmodern Prometheus*', whose title puns on that of the source novel. In this episode, the story of a Monster ending up poles apart from the initial vision of its creator is transported to a small American town, and although the plot is familiar, the telling of the story and the characters involved are different. Tim Burton's film *Frankenweenie* takes an even more leftfield approach, using character names and traits from the original *Frankenstein,* as well as other gothic horror stories, to tell a story about a boy using electricity to bring his dead dog back to life. The film *I, Frankenstein* attempts to continue the story of the original novel, acting as a latter-day sequel. Critical reception of the film was mixed, veering to towards the negative, but on a creative level it is commendable for attempting something different with the familiar character of Frankenstein's creature. Each of these four adaptations takes a very different approach to either telling or continuing the story of a scientist accidentally creating a monster.

Adaptations such as these have helped to keep the story of Frankenstein in the collective consciousness for more than two centuries after it was written. Written during a time of great social change and upheaval, themes of society, culture and politics are

entrenched in the novel. The 'fear of the new' runs throughout Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and dabbling in the unknown is at the heart of the tension created in the narrative. The creator fears that his monstrous creation will be unstoppable, a fear which reflects that which people felt about the changes taking place in society at the time. While embraced by some, others felt that these changes would be detrimental and irreversible. These fears live beyond the time of the novel, continuing into the present day. The fear of the new will always endures in the human consciousness and thus, the novel and its story are timeless.

1.1   Background of Novel

The novel was first published anonymously in 1818, when Shelley was still only 20. Despite her young age, she almost instantly developed a literary voice 'singularly alert to the significant political, economic and social changes that inaugurated the world as we know it today' (Bennett & Curran, 2000). Between 1811 and 1817, the Luddite uprisings had broken out in response to the so-called industrial revolution, which had started around 1760 and was still continuing. The Luddite uprisings saw bands of workers destroying machinery which they felt was threatening their livelihoods, and eventually led to violent clashes. It is thought that they took their name from a mythical worker called Ned Ludd, an apprentice who destroyed the machine he was working on in protest against ill-treatment by his master (P. Thompson, 2017). It is possible to draw parallels between the fates of Luddites and the novel's Monster; the Monster was born good, virtuous and benevolent, and the Luddites shared many of these virtues. When they implored that they should be treated better they were ignored by their masters (Gardner, 1994).

The term 'industrial revolution' is somewhat controversial, as the use of 'industrial' excludes other changes which took place during that time, such as those in

the field of agriculture and commerce, and the use of 'revolution' suggests change more rapid than that which actually occurred (Wrigley, 1990). It does, however, broadly and familiarly describe the period which led to a great deal of economic and social change. These changes led to the creation of a 'new working class' in England, which faced untold hardships due to numerous factors, among them the high price of corn, rising immigration from Ireland and the knock-on effects of various wars, including the Peninsular War (1808-14) and the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. New machinery meant many workers were no longer needed to do the jobs they had always done, and the wages of those who were still in employment suffered because of the low price of manufacturing using the new technology (Gardner, 1994). Modern echoes can be seen in all of these changes. Economies around the world still suffer shocks from largescale immigration, the high economic costs of war, rising prices of essential supplies and traditional jobs being threatened by increasing digitalization. Even though Shelley wrote the novel Frankenstein against such a grim backdrop two hundred years ago, its themes remain relevant.

One of the long-lasting impacts of the Industrial Revolution was the increased role and importance of science. Science and the technological advances of the revolution were irrevocably linked. The steam engine, for example, was a key technological invention made possible by science (Mantoux, Ashton, & Martin, 1962). Scientists like Newton, incorporating the works of the likes of Copernicus and Galileo, were making discoveries which changed people's understanding the world. Scientific work which concentrated on provable physical phenomena, rather than unprovable supernatural ones, meant that the very essence of everything was no longer linked with God, and people began to explore new meanings and new laws of social nature (Bennett, 1998). Of course, this was not a universal shift; Hirsch (1958, p. 46) noted this as hubristic scientists 'blasphemously attempting to attack natural or divine law'. New

science did open up new possibilities, though, including the danger of scientific discovery going too far, unleashing unintended consequences on the world. These fears were reflected in literature, most famously in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and those concerns have never fully disappeared as evidenced by the 'endless and unabating proliferation of variations on the Frankenstein story [which pervaded] culture in the twentieth century', and which continues into the twenty-first (Rollin, 2006). Other examples of the fear of science in nineteenth century literature include the short stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne, an American writer, whose story *The Great Carbuncle* tells of a scientist whose quest for scientific knowledge leads him to destroy a religious relic, placing him on a destructive path which eventually leads to self-destruction. In *The Birth-mark,* a different scientist causes the death of his own wife by using science to strive for unreachable perfection. A 'mad' scientist called Rappaccini appears in a story called *Rappaccini's Daughter,* in which the scientist is shown to value scientific discovery over human life. While not specifically focusing on science, the hubris of a chemistry professor is at the heart of Charles Dickens' *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain,* in which a bargain is made between the protagonist and the ghost in which bad memories are forgotten, with disastrous consequences (Schummer, 2006).

In her creation of the character of scientist Victor Frankenstein, Mary Shelley ensures that his story is replete with tales of his scientific ambition. As a thirteen-year old he is enthused by the writings of alchemists from the thirteenth through to the sixteenth century; he is more inclined towards the physical world than the moral; and he shows great interest in the philosophers' stone and the elixir of life. Working as a scientist leads him to a spell of scepticism in keeping with the era, when he becomes frustrated at the slow pace of discovery, followed by a period of renewed enthusiasm once new knowledge is unearthed (Schummer, 2006). Shelley makes clear the distinction between alchemy and chemistry, and Frankenstein finds further frustration in

the casting out of earlier scientific ideals in favour of modern ones. The hubris of the character leads him to continue to believe in alchemy, and to move towards the creation which will be his eventual downfall. This hubris is something which is reflected in virtually all adaptations of *Frankenstein*, and is a key component in causing the reader to believe in the motivation which compels him to persist with his work. This characteristic of the "mad scientist" is one which invokes fear in people; the idea that the scientist, with all the knowledge and expertise at his disposal, will get carried away and create an unstoppable catastrophe.

Mary Shelley claimed, in a preface she wrote for a version of the book published in 1831, that her inspiration for the novel came from a dream she had in Geneva. There she, along with her husband and friends, would entertain each other by relating scary stories at night. On one such night, the terrifying tales led to her suffering a nightmare, in which a student was bringing a horrific vision of a man to life. From these visions, she began to put together the story of Frankenstein. Among her literary influences was John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which can be evidenced by the fact that she chose this as a book to be read by the monster itself. The monster empathised with Milton's portrayal of the devil in that story, especially in contrast to Adam for whom life seemed much easier and happier. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a narrative poem which begins by telling the story of the creation of the world and was an influence on *Paradise* Lost, is also referenced by Shelley. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* was also an important influence. Parallels can be drawn between the structures, with both *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Frankenstein* operating a frame narrative and told in flashback. In Coleridge's poem, the Mariner survives but suffers while others die around him, which is directly analogous to the character of Frankenstein, at least until he finally meets his end.

1.2   Brief Plot Summary of *Frankenstein: or, the Modern Prometheus*

A young scientist, Victor Frankenstein, has a thirst for knowledge. In keeping with many young people at the time the novel was written, his quest for understanding centres on science, the advancements in which in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century had been swift and incredible. Using body parts from corpses, Frankenstein builds a monster. One turbulent night, he brings the creation to life, using an unexplained alchemical process. It soon becomes apparent that he has made a terrible mistake, as the life he has created is beyond his control. He escapes from the creature and tries to pretend that the experiment never happened. The monster wanders off into the wilderness, searching for company. He hides in the outbuilding of a peasant's cottage, and by listening to their conversation he learns about their lives and develops his language skills. Eventually, he decides to reveal himself to the family. The father, a blind man, accepts him and is sympathetic towards him. However, the rest of the family are horrified by his strange, ugly features, and he flees, distraught and angry.

Scarred by his terrifying appearance and stung by his loneliness, the monster becomes evil. His hatred grows, and he swears revenge against his creator for bringing him into this cruel world. He uses some papers found in the pockets of Frankenstein's clothes to try to track him down. When he does eventually find the place, he learns the truth about himself and the experiment that brought him into being. The monster pleads with Frankenstein to create a female companion for him, a request to which the scientist initially agrees. However, after further thought he declines, in fear of creating an entire race of monsters. In response, the creature threatens to kill whoever Frankenstein loves, declaring 'I will be with you on your wedding night!'

Staying true to his threat, the monster kills Elizabeth Lavenza, Frankenstein's bride, and Henry Clerval, his best friend. The shock caused by all the disasters kills his

father, Alphonse, and Frankenstein now feels that he has no reason left to live and dedicates his remaining time to tracking down the monster and killing him. In this pursuit he is unsuccessful, as he loses control of his dogsled in the Arctic Circle and contracts pneumonia after plunging into the icy water. A ship rescues him, and he tells his story to its captain, Robert Walton, before he dies. The creature boards the ship, still intent on seeking further revenge, but discovers his creator's dead body and is overcome by grief. He pledges to burn his body so that nobody will ever recreate the mistake of his creation, then jumps from the boat.

1.3 Identity in *Frankenstein*

Victor Frankenstein's creation remains nameless in the novel, although he is named as Adam in *I, Frankenstein,* in reference to the first man in the Bible. The namelessness serves as a starting point for the search for an identity; having no name automatically removes the creature from society, and from this comes the initial great loneliness of the character. To describe the creature, Victor used the terms "monster" and "creature" interchangeably, and this has led other students and critics do the same. The monster is also often, erroneously, referred to simply as 'Frankenstein', as people conflate the title with the character. As long ago as 1908, it was noted that "it is strange to note how well-nigh generally the term "Frankenstein" is misused, even by educated people, as describing some ugly monster" (Glut, 2002, p.167). With no single form of identity to conform to, the monster is set apart from others.

Apart from this, there is also the fact that the character is described in singularly unflattering terms. "Never did I behold a vision so horrible as his face, of such loathsome yet appalling hideousness" (p.43) proclaims Robert Walton, while Frankenstein describes the creature as possessing "yellow skin [which] scarcely covered the work of arteries and muscles beneath" (p. 45), as well as variously talking of him as

a 'fiend', a 'devil', an 'ogre' and a 'wretch'. Beginning its existence with these terms hanging over him, and as the result of an experiment which has gone awry in the most disturbing of fashions, leads to problems of identity for the creature. Firstly, he is aware of his origins, and struggles to reconcile them with his attempt at living as normal a life as possible. And secondly, his appearance, and the fact of his existence, strikes fear in the heart of those who encounter him, leading to further conflict in his desire to be normal set against his rage against the way he has been treated by nature and by people. He takes on human characteristics, taking on knowledge through books and piecing together fragments of his own identity, but perhaps the most human part of all is the conflict; he is both compassionate, as evidenced in his encounters with the family for whom he grows to feel great warmth before the eventual, inevitable rejection, but also filled with desire for murderous revenge. It is an extreme of human nature, but nevertheless a recognizable and oft-witnessed human trait.

In the novel, Shelley portrays the character with human feelings, depicting him as sensitive and emotional, and with a longing to find a companion with whom to share his life. The fact that the creature is capable of human warmth, emotion and longing is part of its great tragedy, for it means he is also capable of feeling loneliness, despair, rejection and abject misery, and through this being driven to commit the worst of human acts such as murder. As well as his human emotions, the creature is also depicted as intelligent, polite and eloquent. This differs in several adaptations, although some stay true to this portrayal. James Whale's 1931 adaptation shows him to be mute, as opposed to the articulate, easily understandable character in the book. It is not until the fourth film in the series that the creature learns to speak. Even then, it is after receiving a brain transplant; by the fifth film he is once again mute. Some later adaptations stayed more faithful to the original version, while others chose, for creative reasons, to make the monster less eloquent, and therefore more monstrous. In the original, his ability to learn

languages, becoming fluent in German and French in under a year and later learning English, is a clear indication of the character's intellect, as is his ability to quote Milton. However, despite this his existence is a vicious circle; the hideous appearance leads people to fear him, which causes him to act like the monster they wish to characterize him as, which causes further fear, more rejection and an ever-greater desperation and desire for revenge. People do not give him the chance to show his human qualities, seeing only the perceived ugliness on the surface and recoiling in horror from what they expect will be a dangerous monster. Being pushed away from society leads him to fantasize about friendship, the thought of encountering somebody to speak to who wishes to speak to him being like a mirage. The fact that he is pushed away even by the person who created him is the worst thing of all; even the man who had wanted to bring him to life, and had expended so much time and energy on bringing his creation into the world, was not able to accept him for what he was, pushing him closer to the edge of desolation. Eventually, the monster even rejects himself, unable to face seeing his own reflection. Against such a back-drop of enforced self-pity, the creature is doomed by the unstoppable forces of nature. Some adaptations, such as *The X-Files,* choose to give the creature a happier ending, whereby the sympathy outweighs the lack of identity and in the end it is the hubristic scientists who pays the price while the creature has a chance to redeem himself in society's eyes; although the implication of what the creature has been involved in means that the eventual, post-episode ending will be far less happy, meaning that nature once again cannot be overridden.

1.4 Problem Statements and Justification of Research Project

Existing theories of cinema make various assumptions. For example, there tends to be a perception that a written work will be better than the film adaptation. Remeselnik calls this the "the most frequently repeated cliché about filmic adaptation" (p. 101). The assumption behind this remark is that within the scope of a novel, the author can explore

the plot further, with more intricacy and from different angles. Also, by its nature a novel usually employs richer language, more wordplay and deeper descriptive writing. Connected to this is the idea that authors do not, overall, make good scriptwriters, as the author's instinct is for words rather than visuals. Another assumption is that a film adaptation will be better if it stays more faithful to the original work, an assumption which must be challenged by those directors who strive to create an inventive adaptation which strays significantly from the source material. And finally, the shifting nature of film criticism has seen intertextuality replace fidelity as the primary source of analysis.

For filmmakers, one problem of adapting *Frankenstein* is that there have been so many adaptations over the years that it is different to find a fresh angle, and without taking an original approach it is hard to justify creating yet another version of the same story. In order to assess the success or otherwise of adaptations, it is necessary to analyse the emotional effect and response that the characters have on the audience in terms of identity and sympathy. There currently exists no study which tackles this issue from a literary and cinematic standpoint, focusing on some of the latest entries to the Frankenstein canon. In particular, the role of the director, the technical and aesthetic decisions made by the director, and the impact of these on the finished product, will be subjects of analysis in this research. The adaptations chosen have all arguably been successful in one or more ways, either creatively or commercially. This research will look at which aspects of the cinematic adaptations worked, and which did not, and will consider the reasons for this. In this sense, viewing them as adaptations of the original story is important, as the fact that they are all drawn from the same source is the many aspect which draws all four works together. If the assumptions mentioned above, which claim that 'the film is usually weaker than the book', are considered, then people would just read the novel and would not bother watching any of the many adaptations.

However, as shown by the continuing popularity of Frankenstein-related movies and television programs, this is clearly not the case.

1.5   Scope and limitation

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* has been adapted for screen on so many occasions that it would be simply impractical to focus on every single adaptation in any great depth. In light of this, this research will take a narrower approach and limit itself to four specific versions of the story, each chosen because they offer a different method of bringing the narrative to life. Previous researchers have looked at Kenneth Branagh and Tim Burton's films from aesthetic viewpoints, although no research has focused on the areas with which the present study is concerned. Research has also been carried out on *The X-Files* from various perspectives, though none of it has paid a great deal of specific attention to *The Postmodern Prometheus*. Stuart Beattie's *I, Frankenstein* remains virtually untouched, as it is a relatively recent film.

1.6   Objectives

This research intends to focus on modern adaptations of *Frankenstein*, namely *The X-Files "The Postmodern Prometheus"* (1997), *Frankenstein* (1994), *Frankenweenie* (2012) and *I, Frankenstein* (2014), analysing how faithful each is to the original in terms of character, genre and plot, delving into the relationship between creator and creature with particular regard to sympathy. I will examine the modern legacy of *Frankenstein*, and how the concepts of identity and sympathy tie the various adaptations together. The cinematic techniques used by the filmmakers to convey these concepts will be analysed, including how each director puts his own stamp on the story, and the importance of cinematography in creating an intellectual and emotional response in the viewer. To this end, the objectives will be as follows:

A – To investigate how closely each of the chosen adaptations mirrors the original story, paying attention to character, genre and plot with theory of adaptations.

B – To determine how identity is a main concern in each of the four adaptations, and to what extent the portrayal of the theme of sympathy between creator and creature affects the reaction of minor characters.

C – To determine to what extent the directors take influence from the ideological viewpoint of the novel and how this, in turn, impacts characterization.

D – To explore the cinematic techniques used by the filmmakers to portray the concepts of loneliness, isolation and sympathy.

1.7   Research Questions

In order to meet the objectives, the following questions will be taken into consideration:

1. How faithful is each production to the original novel in terms of character, genre and plot?

2. What impact does the director's vision have on the story?

3. How are the creatures' identities affected by their sense of love, rejection, isolation and loneliness?

4. How does the relationship between the creator and the creation affect audience sympathy?

5. What effect do technical and aesthetical decisions, including stage design, make-up, costume and cinematography, have on the emotional response created by the film?

1.8 Research Methodology

The research method will be qualitative, featuring textual and performance analysis. For the analysis of the adaptations and secondary sources, including reviews, library-based study will be conducted. Materials will include critical and biographical books, scholarly journal articles, both printed and online, critical essays and reputable online sources. Performance analysis will involve watching the four adaptations and analyzing directorial features, applying dramatic and literary elements. The four adaptations that will be the focus of the study are Kenneth Branagh's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein;* Chris Carter's *The Post-Modern Prometheus,* the fifth episode of the fifth season of *The X-Files;* Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie;* and Stuart Beattie's *I, Frankenstein.* When considering the dramatic elements, theatrical aspects, visual aspects, performance and aesthetics will be taken into account; this will include looking at the way the actors portray the characters, scene design, lighting, costume, make-up, set design and cinematography. The significant of this research is, to exploring and investigating a new region in the social science especially in literary and performance studies where matters are not yet understood or properly identified.

CHAPTER 2: THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

As this work focuses on four adaptations, in various guises, of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, it seems natural to begin by looking at theories of adaptation. Adaptation theory, including theories of cinema and adaptation, media theories in cinema, and theories of inventive adaptation, will be used in this study. Important theorists in the area of adaptation theory include Bakhtin, Balazs and Bazin. Bakhtin, a Russian literary critic who among many other things, carried out important work with his theory of intertextuality. In *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (2010), theory argued for a shared identity which exists between all texts, rather than each text being unique. If this is true, then all texts must be seen as related; each utterance within a text is neither unique nor original and must be viewed in the context of previous works. In this study, the adaptations under consideration will be compared both with each other and with Mary Shelley's novel to attempt to discover how they work in relation to each other. To what extent does one film, for example Stuart Beattie's *I, Frankenstein*, rely on the prior existence of Kenneth Branagh's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*? Are the characters more closely related to those in the novel or those from earlier films? From the point of view of character, this is interesting in terms of how each director envisions the way in which characters think, feel and act. More importantly for this study, though, is the visual relationship between the films. How is costume design, for example, related to earlier films? How much of it is inspired by the description of Mary Shelley, and how much of it by the early film versions from which much of the public consciousness of Frankenstein originates? If each text is related, as put forward by Bakhtin, then how does a director create something unique and original?

Other theories of adaptation take a different view of how closely films are related to their parent novels. Balazs, a Hungarian-Jewish critic, in *Early film theory:*

Visible man and the spirit of film (2010) argued the case of a film adaptation standing as an entirely new work of art, with the novel existing purely as raw material to be used by the scriptwriter to conjure up new ideas. In this theory, the power is on the adaptation, which can be considered a masterpiece in its own right rather than owing its existence entirely to the source novel. Bazin, a French critic and theorist, in *What is Cinema?* (2004), argued against this idea, believing faithfulness to be the true mark of achievement in a film. Staying true to the spirit of the original, according to Bazin, is essential, and while the film can add intensity and discover new angles, the vision of the original creator should be respected first and foremost. The differing viewpoints of these theorists offer different approaches for analysing film adaptations. The contrast between the theories offers the potential for interesting counterpoints; is it possible that all texts are related, as suggested by Bakhtin, and yet also an independence of thought and direction can override this and create something truly original? For this to be the case, the term 'original' must be taken to mean something created personally by a particular director, rather than being the first or earliest incarnation.

Literature dealing directly with the chosen adaptations is relatively scarce, particularly in the case of the most recent film, *I, Frankenstein.* Looking at adaptation in a more general sense, the process in the first place requires us to consider the separate ways in which literary fiction and films function in terms of verbal and cinematic signifiers. Dudley Andrew, in his book *Concepts in Film Theory,* points out that the two mediums work in opposite fashions. Film, for the most part, works "from perception toward signification", beginning with the external facts and then working towards inner meanings, significance, motivations and consequences. A film begins by displaying the world and then depicts the stories within that world, and from within those stories meaning is found. With literary fiction, the opposite is true: "it begins with signs (graphemes and words) building to propositions which attempt to develop perception"

(p. 101). Therefore, the nature of language means that in literary fiction the motivations and inner meanings come first and work together to build the world from the story. This research will focus primarily on the cinematic rather than the literary aspects of the films; nevertheless, as the objective of the research relates to aspects of character, I feel it is important to assess the films not just in relation to each other, but also in relation to their parent novel.

In order to help distinguish the different types of adaptation, Geoffrey Wagner's *The Novel and the Cinema* (Geoffrey, 1975) suggests three distinctions. Firstly, there is transposition, which he defines as an adaptation where "the novel is given directly on screen with a minimum of apparent interference" (p. 222); this definition fits Branagh's version of the story, which sets out to remain as faithful to the novel as possible. Secondly, there is commentary, in which the vision of the film director supersedes a perceived need to stay entirely true to the source material, although for the most part the narrative remains the same. Changes are made in order to enhance the viewing experience in areas in which it is felt that another narrative strand might work better for the visual medium than the words originally written. And thirdly, there is analogy, sometimes known as 'free adaptation', in which the adapted story differs greatly from the original "for the sake of making another work of art" (Geoffrey, 1975, p.37). *The Post-Modern Prometheus* and *Frankenweenie,* it can be presumed from pre-existing knowledge of the storylines, fit into this category. It could be argued that *I, Frankenstein* occupies a fourth category, not cover by Wagner. This is a category of the imagined continuation of a story. In this instance, the adaptation element exists within the backstory and the characters, but they are taken in a different direction with a new story. This research will consider whether *I, Frankenstein*, and films like it, fit into the category of adaptation or whether they exist as something else entirely. The reason for these considerations is to help to determine whether the type of adaptation has an

influence on the way the characters are portrayed, and the effect this has on the audience.

Stuart Beattie's *I, Frankenstein* could also fit into the analogy category, as it takes the characters and ideas of Shelley's novel and creates a new story with them. Another way of looking at this is that adaptation consists of copying, connection and loyalty. Andrew describes adaptation as "the matching of the cinematic sign system to prior achievement in some other system" (Geoffrey, 1975, p. 50), and talks of borrowing, transforming or intersecting sources. Of these categories, borrowing is most common, as it requires the least interpretation of the text. Using the ideas or material which are already set out and, in most cases, proven to be successful, takes away much of the risk that comes with unleashing a brand new creation on the world, although simultaneously opening the floodgates for unflattering comparison and criticism of unoriginality. The appeal of a well-known work is already established, and thus a market for the consumption of a new work exists. Sticking faithfully to the original text negates the problem of alienating an extant fan base with its own ideas of how the story should play out. On the other hand, in the case of *Frankenstein* there have been nearly two hundred film versions made, and thus sticking with a faithful rendition carries with it the danger of treading over familiar ground unless other ways are found to entice an audience both new and old.

There are those who believe that the film version has to go further to impress than the original novel. Karen Kline for example, states that "the novel is the privileged artistic work, while the film exists to 'serve' its literary precursor" (Kline,1996, p.70), while Thomas Leitch says that novels are "the medium that gravitates toward psychological analysis, so that the absence of such analysis becomes a highly marked, non-novelistic or cinematic device" (Leitch, 2009, p.160). Thus, there is pressure on the

film adaptation to 'do justice' to the original, particularly in the eyes of longstanding fans of the novel, and adaptations of classic novels can be held to higher standards than original screenplays.

Adaptation related specifically to the gothic horror genre is one of the subjects covered in Benjamin Joplin's thesis *New Breed, Old Blood: Gothic Horror in Contemporary Fiction and Film.* He argues that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,* with its subject of the reanimation of dead matter, can be seen as a "parent" text for love object tales. It is not just the bringing back to life of the physical body that is the main concern, though. The "relationship between creator and created" is defined by the need for the creation to match the desire of the creator (Joplin, 2006, p. 22). Further to Joplin's argument, it can thus be contended that the creation owes its identity to its creator in a way in which the normal human being does not. Although we may all be influenced genetically and environmentally by our parents, creations such as the one who came to life in *Frankenstein* are, by definition, a product of the designs and whims of their creator. Joplin relates that there are usually disastrous consequences, as more often than not the creation does not go according to plan. He puts this down to the problem of "designing a counterfeit human being or forcing a human being to act counterfeit" (p.132). While he feels that this usually leads to "heavy handed didacticism" (p.132), it is difficult to separate the implication of the actions and the lessons they teach us. When looking at stories which create moral conundrums, the decision of a writer or director can have significant consequences on how a film is received by its audience. Joplin says that there is little distinction between sequels and remakes, which is interesting to consider in the case of *I, Frankenstein*. As the "parent text", *Frankenstein* the novel, was itself a mishmash of different perspectives, allusions and quotations from other works, such as poems, the quality of a new film relies on how successfully the director and screenwriter create a story from the bones of several different, existing stories. If

they succeed on their own terms, even if the influences are "as telling as muddy footprints leading back to the original grave" (p. 134), then that should stand as testimony to the worthwhile nature of the project. This is an interesting theory, and one which I believe holds some weight.

As well as adaptation theory, it is important to make use of film theory in order to meet the objectives of this research. Three theories have been considered, among them screen theory, formalism, auteur theory and genre studies. Screen theory, which grew from the British film journal *Screen* in the 1970s, is concerned with a psychoanalytical approach to the critical analysis of films. The psychoanalytic aspect of the theory relates to the ways in which cinema taps into the unconscious mind, suggesting that the spectacle creates the spectator. In other words, what appears on screen engages the spectator at an innate level, unbeknown to them as it is disguised by the realism of what they are watching. Kuhn (2009) says, in relation to screen theory, that "what we are seeking to explain or understand, very broadly speaking, are the moving image screen or screens, what is displayed on these screens, and the nature of our encounter with them" (p. 5). Screen theory also involves analysing films from an ideological perspective. In essence, this means that films can seek to enforce or subvert existing ideologies depending on the viewpoint of the filmmakers. This can include areas such as gender, race and social roles. In regard to this research, screen theory could prove useful in this respect, as identity is inextricably tied up with ideological beliefs and our responses to them.

Leaning heavily on literary theory, genre theory in film considers the similarities in narrative components between films of comparable types. As well as the aesthetics of filmmaking, genre theory takes into account the cultural elements which have grown up around film. The categorization of films attempts to create a sense of order to facilitate

the studying of films by grouping together those which share similar traits. Writing in *Screen,* Ben Brewster described genres as "specific instances of equilibrium' between transgression and canon, canonic systemisations of deconstruction" (Brewster, 1974, p.67). *Frankenstein,* slotting into the genres of science fiction, gothic and horror, invites filmmakers to take many different approaches to adaptation. This also highlights the limit of genre theory, though. It can be difficult to categorize films into specific genres, or for consensus to be achieved of how a film should be classified. This is increasingly the case as more and more inventive adaptions are created, meaning that a single story could fall into several different camps, and therefore studying it in relation to genre becomes problematic.

The critical role of the director in establishing the impact of a film on the spectator is explored in auteur theory, as put forward by Bazin and Roger Leenhardt (Bazin & Cardullo, 2002). This theory suggests enormous influence on the part of the director, who uses his or her version to bring the film to life by individualistic use of camera, lighting, stage design and other directorial tools. The theory is useful in determining the extent to which the story is affected by the vision of the director, and the extent to which the director is simply the arbiter between the original author and the film that ends up onscreen. Related to this work, which focuses on adaptations of *Frankenstein*, auteur theory fits in with adaptation theory as a means of explaining the fidelity between film and novel. However, in terms of establishing the role that identity plays in the adaptations, auteur theory is limited. Concentrating only on the supposed dictatorial role played by the director, the influence of other important players, such as screenwriters, cinematographers and actors, is neglected. Also, the concept of the auteur is explored within the broader context of another film theory, that of formalism, which takes an aesthetical approach to the analysis of film.

Focusing on the technical side of cinema, formalism is an important theory in film studies as it concentrates on the base elements which make up a film, such as light, sound, design and editing. By looking at the nuts and bolts of putting a film together, formalism is concerned more with creativity and art than ideology and system (Andrew, 1984). However, that is not to say that ideological concerns are not an important part of formalist theory as well. Each technical decision made by a production team has a consequence in terms of the effect eventually produced by the film. The composition of shots, for example could be designed not just for aesthetic purposes but also to engender an emotional or intellectual response. Similarly, when it comes to editing, each decision, from the initial stylistic considerations to the smaller, more subjective cuts, will change the way in which the film is consumed. Sound, music and lighting can all work together to alter the sympathetic response of the spectator to the character actions they are witnessing.

It can be said, therefore, that formalism straddles both the ideological and the creative. It also, as mentioned previously, considers the role of the auteur. In relation to this study, this is an important consideration, as the films which have been chosen all have directors with singular styles and strong authorial voices. How they put this across on screen will be a key part of establishing how they build and develop their characters. Formalism thinks about how ideas and themes are put across, rather than analysing the themes themselves. In this sense, from a film studies point of view it delves into how and why a film is created in a certain way, rather than the underlying theme of the film itself. For example, it might ask why particular creative decisions have been made. Is a character portrayed in a certain light because it helps to tell the story, or because that is how audiences expect such characters to behave? For Hollywood films with substantial budgets, such as the three films considered within this study, the main consideration of the studio is to make money. In order to do this, formalist theory raises the possibility

that creative decisions might be affected by these external budgetary concerns, rather than as purely artistic narrative devices. If decisions are made purely in consideration of budget constraints, does that have an impact on the overall quality of the film? Does it have an effect on how audiences receive the film? Is it possible for the viewer to notice instances where decisions have been made for financial rather than creative reasons? Conversely, do directors with large budgets sometimes concentrate too much on the visual aspect of the film to the detriment of the story?

Béla Balázs (2010) in *Early Film Theories*, established what he felt was the importance of formalism as a means of viewing the merits of films. In relation to the objectives of this research, Balázs believed that it was difficult for those critics who specialised in literary theory to truly appreciate film, as they were coming at it from the wrong angle. By concentrating on the words and the story, as one would when critiquing a novel, literary theorists miss out on the crucial visual elements created by a filmmaker putting together a movie. To ignore this, he felt, was to denigrate the skill of great directors, in whose hands even the simplest of stories could be transformed into great cinematic works. Another theorist who embarked upon significant work in the area of formalism was Sergei Eisenstein, who wrote about the film needing to live and breathe in order to act upon the spectator. This involves every member of the creative team playing their part, from the director whose vision informs the whole piece, to the actor who breathes life into the character. As with the theories of Balázs, it is clear that looking at a film from a literary standpoint would be to miss out on a huge range of techniques which filmmakers use to put their individual stamp on a project.

The merits of different film theories in assisting researchers to ascertain the true value of something as subjective as film is, of course, one which has inspired lively debate. In *Concepts in Film Theory*, Dudley Andrew (1984) says that he hopes to create

a dynamic theory which is led by films and history, rather than the other way around. He speaks about the movement from an interest in "structure" to "structuration", which seeks to recognize both structure and agency equally without favouring either. Film theory, according to Andrew, moved from humanism to formalism to structuralism and poststructuralism, with some degree of overlap. The limitations of formalism, he feels, are that it relies too heavily on technical ingenuity as a marker of the strength of a film, to the detriment of the culture which surrounds it and the tradition from which it stems. To this end, the introduction of genre theory allowed a broader understanding of all the external factors which influence the way a film functions, in order to explain "a film's power as well as its meaning" (p. 109). Rather than simply a strict, technical overview of film, genre theory is more useful, argues Andrew, because it opens up a new area of analysis in the form of comparisons of related works which operate as variations on a single theme, whether cultural or formal. Indeed, this is a useful theory in many ways, but the opening up of criticism to the cultural or traditional moves away from an appreciation of the aesthetic, and also neglects the possibility that formalism covers similar ground, albeit in a more oblique way. Concentrating on the technical aspects does not automatically mean eschewing the cultural trends which act upon the film; in fact, each director is a product of their own cultural experiences and background, and the aesthetic decisions they make are inextricably bound up with the history of film and their understanding of and involvement in it. Andrew's primary concern with formalism, as mentioned in his book *The Major Film Theories: An Introduction,* is that it tempts one towards simplistic reductionism. He describes it as "distant, cold and objective". It is this distance and objectivity, though, which I believe gives it a strength lacking in other theories. Applied wisely, it can be a revealing and valuable theory.

In *The Major Film Theories,* (Andrew, 1976), Andrew devotes a chapter to Béla Balázs. His book, *Theory of the Film,* described by Andrew as one of the earliest and

most influential works on film theory, sought to find a film's truth. Balázs believed that a filmmaker must "bring into play every means of expression available to the art of the film" (Balázs & Carter, 2010). In doing so, every possible avenue of creativity is explored, and there is nothing more the filmmaker can do to bring the truth of the film to the screen. In her notes in *Béla Balázs: Early Film Theory*, Erica Carter related that he rejected the distinction made in Russian formalism between plot and story, in favour of the substance of a film being made up of "the 'inner life' that…is revealed in the physiognomy of the film"(p.25). Balázs' outlook is shaped by a belief that people grounded in literary criticism are unable to fully appreciate film because they are viewing it from the wrong angle. In essence, this means that they try to transplant literary criticism techniques onto film, which are then inevitably rejected. The temptation is to focus on the story, ignoring "the way the story is shaped visually"(p. 19). Balázs argues, with some merit, that to concentrate on the story is to expose oneself to a simplistic understanding of the art, and that the simplest of stories can be transformed by a great filmmaker, in the same way as they can by a great poet. In this, we can see that what is presented on screen, even stripped of cultural or historical context, can be enough to create a lasting impact on the viewer, and it is the technical considerations as much as the plot which build this effect. He also contends, though, that the story should not be neglected entirely. Obviously, as mentioned previously, it is his belief that every element available to the filmmaker should be exploited, and there exists within film considerable scope for what he terms "parallel scope and deeper meaning", with meanings hidden behind the image surface (p. 20). Further to this, he suggests that if a film is conceived in literary terms, it exists purely as a means of telling a story through images with no hidden meaning or extra dimension. In terms of adaptation, this is something which needs to be considered when determining the success of a film which has been adapted from a novel, which is why adaptation theory

is just as relevant to cinematic studies as it is to literary ones. If films are considered "bad since they contain nothing that could be expressed only in film" (p. 21), then the importance of the aesthetic in moviemaking cannot be overstated. A viewer may feel satisfied, at a superficial level, with a film which simply depicts an old story using pictures on a screen and adding no deeper levels or texture, but as a work of art can it stand on its own terms in these circumstances? In order to assess this, we need to consider whether an original screenplay, with no literary predecessor, would have the same impact on a viewer as film which tells a story with which they are already familiar. If the answer is no, then it can be argued that neither film is genuinely successful, only that the familiarity of the story invokes a feeling of goodwill which enables enjoyment of a film which would otherwise have been a disappointment.

The notion of understanding a work of art as a process of "arranging images in the feelings and mind of the spectator" (p.17) is discussed by Eisenstein (1975) in his work *The Film Sense*. This, he says, is what distinguishes a "truly vital work of art" from "a lifeless one" (p. 17). Essentially, this means that the film is acting upon the spectator, furnishing them with the readily assembled fruits of the filmmaker's creative labours, rather than drawing them into a collaborative process. This can only happen, though, where the image unfolds "before the senses of the spectator" (p. 18), and is not just a case of the filmmaker presenting them with the finished article and offering no more; the film needs to live and breathe, from the actor creating feelings within the spectator, through the character growing organically throughout the piece rather than arriving fully-formed, to the use of images in invoking every sense in order to invigorate the spectator. According to Dudley Andrew, Eisenstein's weakness as a theorist lay in the broadness of his range, leading to an inability to boil his ideas down into a single, workable theory. Certainly, his work incorporated a huge, wide-ranging array of thoughts and concepts which are useful in understanding the way that film

works, and I would argue that rather than this being to his detriment, it in fact is of great use to researchers.

For the purposes of this research, taking into consideration the benefits and limitations of different theories, the formalist theory of film will be applied alongside theory of adaptation in order to seek an understanding of the motivations and effects sought by the directors of each of the adaptations being studied. The reason for this is that formalism covers a broad a range of areas which are relevant to this research. Critical analysis of the technical and aesthetic approach of the filmmakers will help to consider the objectives from a cinematic as well as a literary point of view. This ties in with the use of adaptation theories, which consider film from the perspective of its relationship with the source material. It is impossible to extricate the two elements from each other; in a film which owes a debt to an original literary work, the vision of the film director is always going to be influenced to a variable degree by the earlier work. One of the areas this study will look at how much of a difference the level of fidelity makes to the way in which a director approaches the job of creating the film. If a film is very faithful to a novel, for example, does that mean that the director has an easier or more difficult job? What decisions are made on a technical level which affect the outcome? How and why are they made, and by whom? Only by addressing the film as a counterpart to the earlier novel can a researcher fully understand the role the film director plays in creating a work of art which stands alone from the source material. Taken simply as a film on its own, without also considering the novel from which it was adapted, it is impossible to correctly determine how and why creative decisions were made. In the case of adaptations of Frankenstein this is particularly true, as it would ignore the great literary and cultural weight which surrounds the franchise. Since my area of working is covering both literature and cinema techniques simultaneously, the

most two suitable theories to apply in this work are Adaptation theory and Formalist theory.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1   Frankenstein on Film

In her thesis *Mary Shelley's Novels, the Guillotine, and Contemporary Horror Film*, Kristen Lacefield (2013) seeks to offer a study of cinematic adaptations of Shelley's novels, and what she feels is the underestimation of the influence *Frankenstein* has had on modern cinema. The approach taken is to analyse the way in which filmmakers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries relate the novel's motifs to contemporary audiences. One aspect of the mythology that she brings out is the fear of new technology which existed at the time of the original novel, and how this manifests itself in creating an underlying sense of fear which permeates the narrative into modern times. With specific relation to Branagh's version of *Frankenstein*, described as "the first attempt at a serious, sophisticated film adaptation of the classic literary work" (p. 101), much of the focus is on Frank Darabont's screenplay. She contends that Darabont's script reveals an interest in reproduction and ontology, themes in which he has shown an interest in many of his other works, including *The Walking Dead.* This is of interest to my research for a couple of reasons. Firstly, it suggests that the screenwriter, in putting together his adaptation, has taken those elements of the novel which are of personal interest. An adaptation from novel to film is a complex, non-linear process, the results of which might be entirely different from two different writers while still broadly and arguably coming under the umbrella of 'faithful adaptation'. This is because of the depth of meaning which can be found in great novels. The second reason why this is of interest is that it could shift the focus of influence for some of the major decisions made in the filmmaking process from the director to the screenwriter. The influence of the director on the direction of the writing, and on drafts subsequent to the first one, is something that needs to be considered when looking at this part of the process, but the interest in reproductive themes shown by Darabont could explain why

the 'birth' scene was so much more vivid in the film than it was in the novel. Lacefield highlights the criticism that the adaptation faced and suggests much of it was aimed in Branagh's direction, which was regarded as: "tonally inconsistent," "over-the-top," "melodramatic," "overwrought," and even "campy" (p. 102). She also notes that Robert De Niro's portrayal of the Creature came in for some harsh criticism, and wonders whether this was partly because of the weight of expectation which lay heavily on the project because of its grand objectives, well-regarded actors and Shakespearean director. It is also questioned whether the fidelity of the adaptation itself was to blame for the poor appraisal by critics, as it necessitated staying true to some of the slower, less cinematic sections of the plot. On the more positive side, the researcher felt it a shame that the critical response overshadowed some of the bold attempts to add to Shelley's text, such as the introduction of new motivation for Victor's experiments in the death, during childbirth, of his mother. As well as the literary implications of this change, it also lends itself to the gruesome, highly cinematic treatment it received in the form of Branagh's direction. The subject of monstrous births is discussed in *Cartesian Creations: Frankenstein's Battle Against the Body* by Heather Clampitt. The main thrust of this thesis is the suggestion *Frankenstein* and its associated films exclude the feminine in favour of the masculine subject position (Clampitt, 1999). In relation to the novel and, in particular, Branagh's adaptation, the supposition here is that the birthing scene is evidence of what the author describes as man's vision of "the ultimate scientific accomplishment – to grant men childbearing power" (p. 20). Branagh takes the scene much further than Shelley's original vision, raising the question of whether this particular aspect was consciously built upon by the male director. After the struggle which ensues following the 'birth' of the Creation, Victor asks, "What have I done?", the implication being that in this moment "the male imagination meets its monstrous creation" (p. 21). If this theory is correct, the repercussions of Victor's experiments can

be seen as a direct result of the manifestation of male ego. This problem with this is that, while the viewpoint is certainly valid, it takes too narrow an approach to Victor's motivations, excluding the many alternative reasons for his scientific curiosity.

Homing in on the motivations of the Creator, as captured on screen by the director, is crucial to fulfilling the objectives of this research. The classic image of Victor as the "mad scientist", driven by his insatiable scientific thirst to push the boundaries of scientific knowledge in defiance of the horrors which may be unleashed, is one which lends itself to the gothic horror genre. However, in *Looking at Frankenstein: Ten Film Visions of Mary Shelley's Novel, 1990-2015*, James Elliott Osborne relates that Branagh set out to create a "dangerously sane" scientist (Osborne, 2018). His interpretation of Shelley's meaning behind the character is that it should move away from the stereotype of the "mad scientist", introducing a sense of the rational at the expense of the emotional. Victor, according to Branagh, is a character who is educated enough to know everything that is currently known and, therefore, avidly curious to learn about those things which are yet to be discovered and, in the truest of senses, gain every scintilla of knowledge by knowing everything it is possible to know. Osborne, then, believes that Branagh's Victor is defined not by "some popular notion of the madness of genius", but instead by his "radical sanity" (p. 57). Osborne also contemplates Kamilla Elliott's (2003) idea of the "trumping concept" in relation to Branagh's re-evaluation of Shelley's text, in which rather than asking the question 'what's wrong with the adaptation?' we are encouraged instead to ponder 'what's wrong with the original?' In this way, our focus is necessarily drawn away from the standard assessment of a film from the viewpoint of its weaknesses in comparison to the novel, suggesting instead that perhaps the adaptation stands on its own as a superior work. Whether or not this turns out to be the case, the trumping concept at least allows for an adaptation to be assessed from a different angle. This research will take this concept on

board, in order to give the adaptations due respect rather than automatically approaching them as works of art inferior to their originating novel.

Apart from the character of the scientist, Osborne also looks at the character of Elizabeth, whose relationship with Victor is an important component of Branagh's film. Helena Bonham Carter, who was cast in the part, was initially reluctant because of the usually passive nature of such roles in the Gothic genre. In contrast to the exciting and interesting characteristics of the monsters, she felt that female roles in these films tended more towards the supporting actress category, as a buffer to the action rather than playing a leading role. Branagh's solution to this was to create the role of Elizabeth in the mould of Mary Shelley herself, using Shelley as a basis for a more rounded, more involved character. In this way, she became an equal to Victor, rather than just a background character designed to introduce a superficial love interest. Osborne relates that this emboldening of the character was not universally appreciated by critics, with Julie Sloan Brannon suggesting that it had completely the opposite effect to that which was intended. Sloan Brannon felt that the change was made in order to play up to modern day sensibilities, and that, reading the subtext of Shelley's novel, Elizabeth was already ahead of her time in terms of an adherence to feminist ideals than Branagh gave her credit for. Regardless of how the change is interpreted, it remains an interesting point of analysis when it comes to determining the relationships within the film. In regard to the Creature, Osborne quotes Pedro Javier Pardo García who noted that Robert De Niro's portrayal was enhanced by intertextuality, drawing on the audience's foreknowledge of his previous roles as criminals and psychopaths, bringing out the complexities of a character who is both victim and murderer. This suggests that the impact of what we are seeing onscreen is informed by our knowledge of the De Niro's previous work, in contradiction of a formalist perspective, which is interesting to note.

However, a spectator who is unaware of De Niro's place in film history would view his portrayal without those preconceptions.

De Niro is a master of psychological realism who makes use of dynamic stillness in his realistic portrayal of the monster, according to Gerry Large's (2001), *Werewolves, Vampires, Robots and Extraterrestrials: Problems of Representation in the Performance of Non-Human Characters in Science Fiction and Horror Stage and Screen.* The creature is complex and highly emotional, and is portrayed more as a human than a monster. Only the frightening appearance really marks him aside as something other than normal, and even that is more human than the classic image of Frankenstein's monster as something resolutely non-human and 'other'. Large asserts that actors playing the Creature "benefit from using biomechanics or Chekhovian exercises as part of their preparatory work" (p. 116). As part of this, moments of stillness are an important part of bringing the monster to life, although there is a fine line to be navigated to strike the correct balance somewhere between emotional emptiness and melodramatic pathos. Whether the creature is human or monster is pivotal when looking at how the relationships within the films work. One might suppose that a more human creature would inspire more sympathy, although the reverse could also turn out to be true. Large mentions that "actors playing Frankenstein's monster may dig deep into their own past history to help them with feelings of loneliness and isolation" (p. 2). The acting method is one of the main ways in which the nature of the character is transferred to the screen, something which will be considered when analysing each film.

In contrast to Branagh's faithful attempt to recreate Shelley's novel, Ayra Quinn's (2014) *Novel ways of seeing: Victorian novels, animated adaptations, and the disoriented Reader/Viewer* states that Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie* "combines a highly

stylized and self-reflexive mode of production with a more conventional emotionally-driven narrative plot" (p. 144). Among the ways it could be categorized as "highly stylized" are the exaggeration of the characters' physical features and the suburban American setting, with the rows of identical houses along tree-lined avenues. Quinn maintains that *Frankenweenie* makes a virtue of its unusual, campy style, contrasting those idyllic, old-fashioned American neighbourhood styles and classic Hollywood monster motifs with a modern, satirical irony. *Frankenweenie* is distinguished from films which favour realism by the fact that it fails to hide its technical prowess in the way that many films do in order to help the view suspend their disbelief. By embracing and celebrating the ingenuity required to make the film, it is almost as if you can see the strings that are working the magic, and almost as if that does not matter. The fact that Victor is also a filmmaker only serves to highlight the technical side of the film. In keeping with the thesis's subject of disorientation, Quinn mentions that the painstaking process of stop-motion animation becomes visible to the viewer in the way the props move, leading to a disorienting experience. For the purposes of this research, the weird, unusual style and movement of the characters will be scrutinized in relation to the effect it has on characterization and the relationship between characters. Animation in and of itself is, says Quinn, an important component in breaking away from the conventional approach of adaptation theorists focusing on the fidelity aesthetic.

The far-reaching influence of *Frankenstein* on modern horror films is visibly expressed in *Frankenweenie* in the form of Victor's classmates being allusions to characters from Godzilla and The Shining. In effect, this sets up *Frankenstein* as the parent of later American horror films, say Megan Troutman (2015) in her thesis *(Re)Animating the Horror Genre: Explorations in Children's Animated Horror Films.* Victor, although outcast, is far from a "challenge to stereotypical childhood", in fact typifying it in a traditional Disney sense (p. 46). As a consequence, he is a relatable character around whom the action of the

band of misfits unfolds. Victor and his dog, Sparky, are misunderstand outsiders, while the other children, who actually resemble monsters more than children, are normalized, giving an oddly unsettling effect. Like Quinn, Troutman talks about the aesthetic decision to place the action in the late 1950s or early 1960s, as evidenced by the clothes the characters are wearing, the hairstyle of the women, the appliances and decorations which adorn the houses and the school, and the gender divide in terms of working and homemaking. Although the target audience of the film is much too young to remember those times, the style is well-known due to its appropriation in modern popular culture, and therefore is identifiable to people of all ages. Despite this, some of the terminology and references do not sit within this period, but the anachronisms do not feel out of place. The film creates a timeline all of its own.

Another aesthetic decision yet to be considered is that of the musical choices made in the films. In the case of *Frankenweenie,* as with several Tim Burton films, Danny Elfman provides the score, and this is subject of Andrew Powell's (2018) *A Composite Theory of Transformations and Narrativity for the Music of Danny Elfman in the Films of Tim Burton.* One excellent, scene-setting moment right at the beginning of the film is the gothic alteration to the familiar Disney castle logo, which introduces the fact that this is a children's film, but much darker and more sinister than we would usually expect. In order to drive this point home, Powell describes the "thickening of the women's chorus upon the descending melodic line" being the "first intimation of something amiss, providing strains of Elfman's orchestrating trademark" (p. 31). There follows crashes of thunder and lightning, alongside loud, dramatic organ chords. This is also the moment when the film changes to black-and-white, a change signified by mist rolling over the moat. The juxtaposition of Cinderella's castle and the gothic lighting and music establish the feeling of the film straightaway.

The subject of allusion, present in Frankenweenie in the form of the horror film-inspired children, also makes an appearance in The Post-Modern Prometheus. Daniel Peretti, in The Modern Prometheus: The Persistence of an Ancient Myth in the Modern World, 1950 to 2007, quotes the character of Fox Mulder speaking about, and quoting from, Victor Frankenstein from Shelley's novel (Peretti, 2009). Peretti (2009), terms this "an allusion to an allusion" (p. 70), as his mention of 'the post-modern Prometheus', which gives the episode its title, is also a reference to the subtitle of the novel. The self-reflexive nature of this episode also comes in for comment in Robin Silbergleid's Narratives of Loss, Loss of Narrative: Crises of Representation in Twentieth-Century Fiction, wherein she describes The X-Files turning to "meta-fiction and self-parody" (331) in instances where the narrative relies on visual imagery and artefacts. This episode, as well as others including "Jose Chung's From Outer Space" (331) and "Bad Blood" (331), are all said to give the protagonists, Mulder and Scully, an "awareness of constructed nature of narrative" (331), a technique which is bound to have an effect on characterization.

That tone of "self-consciousness and ironic humour that very much stands out from the rest of the series" (179) is remarked upon by Potter Palmer in Auteur TV: "Twin Peaks", Quality TV and the Cult-ivated Audience (Palmer, 1997). The fact that the episode, as well as the others mentioned, stand out from general tone and nature of The X-Files reflects that the program-makers were trying to create something different by taking an unusual approach. Potter ascribes this to the vision of Chris Carter, the producer, remarking that it was uncommon at the time for a TV show to owe so much to the vision of one person. Humour is not a quality that is general associated with Frankenstein or horror films in general, except in the case of direct parodies. For The X-Files, the more tongue-in-cheek of this episode approach helps it to stand out, while also affecting the characterization. He quotes David Lavery in Generation X – The X-Files and the Cultural Moment, who says the postmodern style make "some heavy demands on the viewer" (Abbott, Brown, & Television, 2013). The episode is more playful than others in the series but is not dissimilar

to others in the canon in the way it raises questions about the truth of what is happening onscreen. Potter believes that the episodes are actually an indicator that Carter, despite being instrumental in their development, is not the sole auteur of The X-Files, as another voice becomes "strong enough to be identifiable" (p. 180). I would argue, in fact, that the opposite is true – Carter's influence is writ large throughout this episode, and he had the final say on all crucial aesthetic decisions that were made. Analysing the role and nature of the director will be instrumental in the course of this research.

Silbergleid's work on narrative in the episode is mirrored by the contribution of Christine Wooley in Visible Fandom: Reading The X-Files Through X-Philes, in which she looks at "the stability of narrative and its relationship to the construction of meaning and of intersubjectivity" (Woolet & video, 2001, p.39). The framing of the episode, as a story from a book of fairy-tales, ends with Mulder asking to "speak to the writer", building up to the happy ending of Mulder and Scully dancing together, alongside the Creature. In effect, Wooley argues that this is fans of the show having the chance to write their own ending, to construct a happy conclusion where the protagonists come together in celebration. Again, this reflects the self-reflexivity of the episode. The question is whether this is, in fact, the real ending, or one concocted by Izzy, the comic book writer in the episode. In this instance, it is up to the viewer to make up their own mind. No mention of this event is made in future episodes, further adding to the doubt as to whether or not it actually happened.

Branagh's *Frankenstein* is the subject of Laplace-Sinatra's *Science, gender and otherness in Shelley's Frankenstein and Kenneth Branagh's film adaptation,* which considers some aspects of character as portrayed in the film. In terms of identity, the gender aspect is the main focus, looking at the differences in gender portrayal between the book and the adaptation and considering Elizabeth to have a stronger presence in the film (Laplace-Sinatra, 1998). This is seen as a conscious decision on the part of the director and the screenwriter. Laplace-Sinatra also subjects the interpersonal

relationships of the characters to scrutiny, although this is mostly done from the literary rather than cinematic angle. He contends that sexuality plays an important part in both the book and its film translation.

The subject of gender in Branagh's film is also the subject of Pataki's *Women in Frankenstein: Mary Shelley's Novel versus Kenneth Branagh's Film,* in which the author concludes that the film shines a light on the subordination of women and the destructiveness of female absence (Pataki, 2014). Garcia's *Beyond Adaptation: Frankenstein's Postmodern Progeny* looks at the differences between the novel and Branagh's adaptation, arguing that despite the film's claims of fidelity that there are in fact many significant changes which alter the impact of the story (Garcia, 2005). One important change that he notes in relation to identity is Branagh's decision to place a scientist's brain in a convict's body. It is said that: "The brain always determines the creature's personality and behaviour, thus asserting the supremacy of brain over body as the seat of individuality and identity" (Tropp 1999: p. 63-4, cited in Garcia, p. 235). The implication here is that the filmmakers' decisions deliberately affect the narrative and the nature of the monster itself.

Cultural identity is remarked upon in Irvine and Beattie's Conspiracy Theory, Pre-Millennium Tension and the X-Files: Power and Belief in the 1990s, which quotes the character of Scully saying: "I think what we are seeing here is an example of a culture to whom daytime talkshows and tabloid headlines have become a reality against which they measure their lives. A culture so obsessed by the media and a chance for self-dramatisation that they'll do anything in order to gain its spotlight" (N. Beattie & Irvine, 1998, p.32). Heffernan's *Looking at the Monster: Frankenstein and Film* again considers Branagh's film from an adaptive perspective, criticising it for cutting out the creature's narrative, and thus ripping out the heart of Shelley's novel in the same way

that his monster rips out Elizabeth's heart (Heffernan, 1997). This work also looks at the film from an aesthetic viewpoint, particularly in terms of shot composition and the use of certain camera angles and editing techniques. The analysis here concerns the effect these techniques have on the viewer but does not look specifically at how they are used to apply character traits or garner sympathy.

As this is a new area of research, existing literature on the subject is scarce. Although much work exists in relation to the novel, studies on the film adaptations, especially that which concerns loneliness, sympathy, identity and love, is rare. This study considers the adaptions in tandem with the novel; very few researchers have covered *Frankenstein* in this way.

CHAPTER 4: AN EXPLORATION OF HOW DIFFERENT DIRECTORS BRING FRANKENSTEIN TO LIFE ONSCREEN WITH REFERENCE TO FORMALIST THEORY AND THEORIES OF ADAPTATION

4.1   Introduction to Theories of Adaptations

Adapting novels into films or television programmes is a complex process which can be considered from many different angles. Stories which work on the page sometimes fail to come to life onscreen. An oft-repeated maxim makes the generalized claim that the book is always better than the film, but as with all generalizations this is not entirely the case. The four adaptations chosen for this study were selected in part due to the directors who created them. Each of the directors chosen for the study have individualistic styles and recognizable traits which reoccur throughout their work. Kenneth Branagh, with his background in Shakespearean acting, brings a theatrical style of performance to his films, and embellishes the visual with extravagant sets and eye-catching design. Chris Carter, as the creator of *The X-Files*, is renowned for working on the fringes of the supernatural, causing the audience to ask questions of what they are witnessing. Tim Burton is known for the Gothic style of his work, dressing characters in dark clothing, using elaborate costume design and gloomy, broody music to create an atmosphere. Stuart Beattie originally worked in graphic novels, and from this comes a style reminiscent of the landscapes created within those works; the worlds he creates exist in a world other than our own.

Whether or not the adaptations are successful will always be a matter for debate, but the intention that lies behind creating any film or television programme must always be to create something of worth, either creatively or financially. On the creative side, the decisions made by directors in terms of plot, character and the aesthetics of the film play a crucial role in determining the effect they will have on the viewer. Regardless of the film's source literature, it is incumbent on the director to create a moving visual

spectacle, and this can involve playing round with ideas and straying from a piece's origins. Therefore, fidelity to the original is not necessarily the most important factor when analyzing the success or otherwise of an adaptation. The image can be assessed as an almost entirely separate entity from the written word, and to conceive a film purely on literary grounds rarely produces anything of great value. While words can have hidden meanings and trigger memories or use allusions to create meaning, the image speaks for itself (Balazs & Carter, 2010).

It is important to distinguish between the different types of adaptation, and in order to do this it is helpful to look at definitions of various types of adaptations. In his book *The Novel and the Cinema* (1975), Geoffrey Wagner classifies three types. Firstly, there is transposition, which he defines as an adaptation where "the novel is given directly on screen with a minimum of apparent interference", and this definition fits Branagh's version of the story which sets out to remain as faithful to the novel as possible. Secondly, there is commentary, in which the vision of the film director supersedes a perceived need to stay entirely true to the source material, although for the most part the narrative remains the same. Changes are made in order to enhance the viewing experience in areas in which it is felt that another narrative strand might work better for the visual medium than the words originally written. And thirdly, there is analogy, sometimes known as 'free adaptation', in which the adapted story differs greatly from the original "for the sake of making another work of art" (Geoffrey, 1975, p.296). *Post-Modern Prometheus* and *Frankenweenie* fit into this category. It could be argued that *I, Frankenstein* occupies a fourth category, that of the imagined continuation of a story, where the only element of adaptation comes in the characters and backstory taken from the original. This film could also fit in the analogy category, as it takes the characters and ideas of Shelley's novel and creates a new story with them. Michael Klein and Gillian Parker defined similar categories, again divided between adaptations

which remain faithful to the narrative, those which retain the core while significantly reinterpreting, and those where the source is used as raw material for a new story (McFarlane, 1996). Another way of looking at this is that adaptation consists of copying, connection and loyalty. Andrew describes adaptation as "the matching of the cinematic sign system to prior achievement in some other system" (p. 96), and talks of borrowing, transforming or intersecting sources. Of these categories, borrowing is most common, as it requires the least interpretation of the text. Using the ideas or material which are already set out and, in most cases, proven to be successful, takes away much of the risk that comes with unleashing a brand new creation on the world, although simultaneously opening the floodgates for unflattering comparison and criticism of unoriginality. The appeal of a well-known work is already established, and thus a market for the consumption of a new work exists. Sticking faithfully to the original text negates the problem of alienating an extant fan base with its own ideas of how the story should play out. On the other hand, in the case of *Frankenstein* there have been nearly two hundred film versions made, and thus sticking with a faithful rendition carries with it the danger of treading over familiar ground unless other ways are found to entice an audience both new and old. There are those who believe that the film version has to go further to impress than the original novel. Karen Kline (1996), for example, states that "the novel is the privileged artistic work, while the film exists to 'serve' its literary precursor" (Kline, 1996, p. 76), while Leitch says that novels are "the medium that gravitates toward psychological analysis, so that the absence of such analysis becomes a highly marked, non-novelistic or cinematic device" (2009, p. 98). Thus, there is pressure on the film adaptation to 'do justice' to the original, particularly in the eyes of longstanding fans of the novel, and adaptations of classic novels can be held to higher standards than original screenplays.

It is not as simple as boiling down theories of adaptations to three categories, however. Within the categories, namely transposition, free adaptation and analogy, there are other factors which contribute to the success or otherwise of an adaptation. Within his suppositions on the concept of borrowing as a form of adaptation, Andrew (1984) postulates that fidelity comes in two forms: the "spirit" and the "letter" of the text (Andrew, 1984). In order to recreate the letter of a text, the process is aided by the fact that it encompasses those things which are ordinarily present in a film script, such as the characters, their relationships, the geographical setting, sociological and cultural factors which inform the narrative, and the part of the narrator. In contrast, it is more difficult to stay true to the spirit of a piece, as this often involves less tangible notions such as tone and value which are more open to interpretation. In a sense, although it is harder to capture the spirit of an original work, the result requires a more creative slant on the part of the film-maker, and thus opens up more opportunity for revealing fresh parts of the story which have hitherto remained hidden. In *The Discourse on Adaptation* (1984), Christopher Orr shares this belief that discourse on adaptation has been dominated by concern over the reliability of the adapted film in terms of spirit and word (Orr & PRACTICE, 1984). This can be seen even more clearly in the second and third broad categories of adaptation, those of commentary, or transforming the text, and of intersecting. Where fidelity is at a premium, there is less room for manoeuvre when it comes to a film-maker putting their own spin on a story, but where the original is used merely as a foundation on which to construct a new story using the familiar precepts. Orr (1984) mentions that intersecting is becoming an ever more attractive proposition to film-makers, as it requires originality and a fresh take on sometimes stale ideas. Rather than simply copying, and as a result producing a facsimile of little worth, intersecting allows a creative reproduction which adheres to the spirit of the original without becoming another tiresome duplicate. This problem has been highlighted in several

studies, not least by James Agee in *Agee on Film* (1958), in which he spoke of the problem of fidelity being that it led to a "debilitating reverence", the implication of which is that adhering slavishly to the original text stifles innovation and creativity and suppresses progress (Agee, 1958). McFarlane (1996) concurred, adding that one of the major problems with fidelity is the effect it has on film criticism, as criticism of a film which attempts fidelity will be read as a simple disagreement with how the book has been brought to the screen, rather than as an analysis of the merits of the film itself. Bazin believed that critics would simply base their perception of the success of the film on its similarities with the novel, which is an unhelpful basis for criticism. Anyone with knowledge of the source novel will have their own idea of how the film should capture the spirit of the original, and if it fails then this is what will be taken notice of, and not the qualities of the film. This also manifests itself in a different way with less faithful, more inventive adaptions, but the problem in those instances is often that the viewer wishes the adaptation had been more faithful and stayed more true to the novel.

Some scholars have questioned whether fidelity in film adaptation is even possible. Beja, for example, pondered what relationship a film should have to its original source, and whether it should, or even could, be faithful (Beja, 1979). He suggests that the mediums are so distinct as to render faithful adaptation neither possible, nor desirable. McFarlane (1996) adds to this by suggesting that fidelity becomes even more difficult when it comes to period pieces, using the examples of Dickens and Austen. *Frankenstein,* of course, would also fall under this category. To genuinely remain true to the original, a film must be set at the same time as the novel, and this brings with it a fresh set of problems, causing a huge amount of very detailed research for film-makers which could still, in the final instance, end up accidentally producing anachronisms that the author, writing in the time, would not make. The only cases in which this would not be true would be in the case of a novel set in a different

time to that in which it was written, either future or past, or using different circumstances such as an entirely imaginary world, or a place such as outer-space to which few people have ever travelled.

Whichever type of adaptation a film-maker chooses to adopt, the key areas on which the success of an adaptation will be judged are plot, genre and character. Looking at plot, Terence Hawkes, in *Structuralism and Semiotics* (1977), draws a distinction between story and plot, saying that story is "the basic succession of events, the raw material", while plot is the "distinctive way in which the 'story' is made strange, creatively deformed and defamiliarized" (Hawkes, Bosk, & Science, 1977, p.193). Using this idea, we can see that when it comes to the different forms of adaptation, different elements will come into play. More inventive adaptations, which take intersecting as their starting point, use plot as a means of distinguishing their creation from both the original and other adaptations, while still using the same 'raw materials', or the 'story'. Andrew (1984) focuses on the work of Barthes in relation to plot, and his suggestion that narrative in which "fragments are joined in a way to promote an illusionistic experience". Furthermore, Barthes compared plot in narrative with design in graphic art, with specific reference to Gombrich's *Art and Illusion,* in that plot is the thing which first grabs us, and which sets up the structure of the whole piece. Everything else within the narrative is there to "flesh out the plot, just as texture, colour and ornament operate on design" (Gombrich, 1961). In adaptations, as with anything else, the plot exists as a means to give the viewer something to grasp, something referential with which to find meaning in the experience. Andrew refers to cinema as a "medium of excess" (p.75) and stipulates that "meaning in cinema comes by way of calculated or ideological limitation of this excess" (p.75).

To assess whether adaptations remain faithful to the genre of the original novel requires some analysis of the notion of genre. Andrew (1976) refers to them as "specific networks of formulas which deliver a certified product to the waiting customer", and suggest that they "ensure the production of meaning by regulating the viewer's relation to the images and narratives constructed for him or her" (Andrew, 1976, p.231). However, genre cannot be taken as an absolute. There are works of literature which straddle different genres, and also subgenres within particular more well-known and easily defined genres. The original *Frankenstein* is often placed into the Gothic novel genre, which embodies fiction which features mystery, the supernatural and horror, and is characterised by darkly atmospheric locations such as castles. Equally, it can be considered part of the Monster literature genre, as it obviously features a monstrous creature at its heart, and induces those feelings of horror and fright which are synonymous with the genre. Certain adaptations might favour the gothic over the monster, drawing more on the romanticism and the atmospheric imagery than the suggestion of evil evoked by the presence of a monster. *Frankenweenie* certainly plays more on this side of things, utilising Tim Burton's well established gothic credentials to create imagery redolent of classic gothic literature. The Monster literature genre can be considered part of the horror genre, as both play on the same fears of the audience, with the obvious distinction being that horror does not necessarily have to contain a monster. *Frankenstein* is also considered to be an early example of science fiction, which is itself a genre of speculative fiction which plays with imaginative concepts and the possible pitfalls of scientific experimentation, both of which are clearly evident in the original novel. Within science fiction there are the subgenres of hard and soft science fiction. *Frankenstein* is generally regarded as falling within the latter, as it is more concerned with psychological aspects than the hard sciences of physics or chemistry, with very little mention of the scientific processes involved in the creation of the monster.

However, it could also slot into the hard science fiction category, as that chiefly deals with those things which could become possible in the future with the advancement of science, and it is not beyond the realms of possibility that science may one day take us into these seemingly impossible areas.

The variance and cross-tabulation of the genres means that it is necessary to take each of the adaptations on its own merits in order to assess the fidelity with the original novel in terms of genre. It is perfectly possible that those adaptations which choose to take a more inventive approach will also cross into a different genre, and the result of this might be that the new work would appeal to people who have no love or loyalty for the original. This is another tool at the disposal of film-makers in order to distinguish themselves from the herd, and to find new ways in which to tell an old story. Analysis of character within the adaptations is tied towards the theories of identity which are central to this research. One of the main themes found in the novel in terms of identity is that of human sympathy. Howard Sklar, in *The Art of Sympathy in Fiction*, makes an important distinction between sympathy and empathy, saying that "sympathy involves greater distance between the individual who feels it and the person to whom it is directed" (Sklar, 2013, p. 25). He further goes on to quote Clark (1997), who says that sympathy is chiefly associated with feeling sorry for someone "whose situation is somehow difficult, unfortunate or unpleasant" (Clark, 2002, p. 26). Sympathy is a complex issue, as it is possible to feel sympathy for characters who, on that surface, appear largely or entirely unsympathetic.

In the novel, questions are raised around the need for identity, companionship and meaning in life, but also about disgust, selfishness, thoughtlessness, fear and the ability of people to share their feelings. As much as sympathy, the book also deals with the failure of sympathy, and it is this which runs as a common theme throughout

adaptations. It is the hook on which the reader's response to the monster is formed; the lack of sympathy shown to the monster by the other characters enhances the sympathy felt by the reader as an onlooker from the outside. However, were the reader to find themselves in the same position as the family who feel such disgust, for example, then the reaction might be different. The creature does receive sympathy in the book but it is temporary, and this also works to increase the sympathy of the reader. The different adaptations take different approaches to the concept of sympathy. *Frankenweenie*, to use an example, focuses more on the concept of love than on the selfishness and hubris of the creator, and thus the opportunities for sympathy are more apparent.

The reason for exploring the fidelity of the adaptation is to assess whether films which stick closely to the source material are more successful on an artistic level than those which bear little resemblance to the original work. Looking at this from a formalist stance, it seems at first as though the faithfulness of the adaptation is not a criterion on which a film can be judged. The way the film is brought to life on screen is the crucial factor, and whether or not this is in keeping with the original material is irrelevant. However, another argument is that every decision the director makes is vital to understanding his or her approach to making the film, and therefore it is important to consider how much of an influence the source material had on the resulting final product. In order to do this, I will analyse each of the four adaptations and make observations about their relationship to Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus.* In doing this, I will also seek to explore whether any decisions to change the story or the characters might have been made for cinematic reasons, in keeping with the formalist approach to film theory.

Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein,* it could be argued, is very visual, in that it uses vivid descriptions of visually striking characters and situations, and imagery which

conjures up images in the mind of the reader. In essence, the process of adaptation is stripping the novel to a naked skeleton, keeping only the bare bones, and covering it in a completely different flesh (Balazs & Carter, 2010). Where a novel already lends itself to the visual in terms of the scenarios it depicts and the characters who act them out, the job of the director is made easier in the sense of giving them a useful starting point from which to develop their own ideas. Where the process becomes difficult is in realizing these depictions in a manner which will satisfy fans of the book, who enter into the film-going experience with a specific set of expectations in mind.

The cause death of Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft who advocate of women's right and an English philosopher and writer, had influenced on Shelley's life. She considered herself a kind of monster or her birth a monstrous birth. Shelley was also solely the creation of man in a sense, she had no mother and in movie Victor is the one who has the ability to create life in Frankenstein. Similarly, the way Apollo argues in *The Oresteia* by Aeschlylus that Orestest' killing of his mother to avenge his father is not a crime, because a mother was not really a parent. The envy by men of the life-giving abilities, power and properties of women seems like it has deep root.

In the following sections, the four adaptations, namely Kenneth Branagh's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein,* Chris Carter's *The Postmodern Prometheus,* Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie* and Stuart Beattie's *I, Frankenstein* are analysed in relation to adaptation theory, as discussed above.

4.2   Branagh's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* vs The Novel of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

In terms of fidelity, the Kenneth Branagh's film *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* stays very close to Shelley's novel. From the beginning, it is clear that Branagh is intending to remain faithful to the source, opening with a representation of Shelley reciting her

own words and beginning the action with Walton encountering Frankenstein while sailing to the North Pole. These opening shots are certainly engaging cinematically; the sweeping shop of the North Pole, for example, looks beautiful onscreen, and brings the viewer into the action. As mentioned previously, Shelley's writing is visual in its scope, Branagh is able to use the scenes described by the author to open his film with a stylish flourish.

After the similarity of the opening scenes of the film and the novel, a key difference between the two works is the manner of the death of Frankenstein's mother. In the novel, she meets her end from scarlet fever, contracted from Elizabeth. In the film she dies in labor, whilst giving birth to his younger brother, William. The reason for the change is almost certainly for the enhanced cinematic experience of witnessing the gruesome, bloody death in childbirth which, while far from pleasant to watch, is very memorable and therefore stays in the mind and helps to give an understanding of Frankenstein's later motivations.

In both instances, the death of his mother is obviously traumatic, and in both cases death strikes unfairly and arbitrarily. Although his mother dies in both the novel and the film, her death in the film version is more distressing due to the amount of blood and gore. Nevertheless, it is not shown to affect him in a different way. In both case, his reaction is the human reaction of the loss of a mother. Branagh does not show the character to suffer any more despite the graphic nature of the death. In the novel, his mother dies because she catches the disease despite the warnings of those around her, with Frankenstein commenting: "During her illness many arguments had been urged to persuade my mother to refrain from attending upon her" (Shelley, 2009, p. 256). The fault, such as it is, lies with Caroline for ignoring this advice, and so Frankenstein can apportion no blame on Elizabeth for carrying the disease in the first instance, and can

only lash out at death itself. The death of his mother is a pivotal moment in the story, shaping his identity, pushing him towards his life's work and installing in him a burning desire to avenge death by creating new life. It is for this reason that Branagh sets out to make it such a memorable moment; it is important that the upsetting scene lodges itself into the mind of the viewer, in order to make sense of the story that subsequently unfolds. It does this by showing an excessive amount of blood, and by intensifying the music to create dramatic impact. The cameras move quickly, creating a dizzying scene, but also a claustrophobic one. The viewer feels trapped in the room as a witness to this great tragedy. In creating the scene for the screen, Branagh opts away from realism, creating a filmic experience which is gruesome and vivid but which feels theatrical rather than natural. This is in keeping with the general style of Branagh's direction, which favours performance style over realism.

Over the course of Branagh's adaptation, Victor is forced by circumstances into losing his ability to act rationally, instead having to react to the horrors unfolding around him. Similar is true of the novel, but where the film version differs is Victor's relationship with the society around him. In the novel, the hubristic nature of the character is well-developed, giving the sense of a man whose creation is all-defining, who cares only for what he can achieve with his experimental science. In the book, he is more detached, less sociable, more readily drawn to his need to attain success. There are elements of this in the film, as well; for example, when the cholera epidemic has broken out, but he is blind to the perils and cares only to finish work on his creation. However, this mania develops from the experiment starting to work, and he is driven by a need to finish what he has started, to act against the cruelty of death which claimed his mother. On screen, this manifests itself with a memorable scene of a man driven close to madness. This is achieved partly by the acting, and also partly by creating a sense of claustrophobia by filming in the relatively small space of the lab, making use of shots of

the walls which enclose the character. When he receives a visitor, the characters feel large against the small space, in contrast to scenes in the Frankenstein family home or at the North Pole where the vast spaces create a sense of the loneliness and fragility of the human condition. In the laboratory, Victor is a large man trapped in a small space, which could be taken as a metaphor for him being trapped in his own brain at that point of the story.

The character in the film is seen to be a more sociable creature than the one in the novel, larking around with Elizabeth and forming a close, good-humored friendship with Clerval. While his friendship with Clerval is certainly solid in the novel, it lacks the playfulness of the film version. In the film, Victor meets Clerval when they are both attending Ingolstadt, whereas in the novel they were already friends from childhood, so perhaps much of that mischievousness had already occurred, unseen, in the characters' youth. This enables some fun an jollity to punctuate the darkness of the film, and set up a contrast between the carefree Victor beginning his studies, and the troubled one who finds himself in the midst of an all-consuming experiment.

In the novel, Frankenstein more closely resembles the archetype of the 'mad scientist', driven to eccentric lengths by his obsessive, adventurous research. The impact of the differing characterization in the film is to present a portrait of a flawed but otherwise normal man. The focus on the love story between Victor and Elizabeth makes him seem more human, and perhaps more relatable, than the somewhat isolated intellectual of the novel. As a cinematic decision, it also means that Branagh can achieve pleasing shots of the loving couple, in keeping with the expectations of Hollywood films containing love stories. This could be for the purposes of creating an emotional attachment, for titillation, or simply as fulfilment of the formulaic requirements of blockbuster films.

Victor's experience at Ingolstadt is represented in a slightly different manner in the film, and again this has some impact on the identity of the character. In both variations, the professors are portrayed as dogmatic, believing only in the accepted principles of science and not allowing students to voice any original ideas or suggest new ways of looking at things. The main difference between film and novel in this instance is that in the original story Victor originates his experiments, including the idea of reanimation. However, in the film it is shown that Professor Waldman has already carried out extensive work in this area, and it is Waldman's notes that Victor uses to conduct his own tests. This serves to change the identity of Victor in the sense that, although the idea is already forming in his mind, he uses Waldman as his inspiration and cannot be seen as the true instigator. He is, therefore, more of a follower than a leader in the film, although it is true to say that as soon as Waldman is out of the way, having been murdered, Victor then takes matters into his own hands by breaking into the professor's house to locate the notes. The notes add a cinematic motif, similar to the diary that is found in Stuart Beattie's *I, Frankenstein*. It is introduced as a visual signifier of an important plot point.

In the novel, being the originator of the idea solidifies the concept that he is out to avenge his mother's senseless death by any means necessary, and from this his obsession as a 'mad scientist' grows. In the film, it is a little different, as he finds a kindred spirit in Waldman; albeit, one who gives him ominous advice that he should stay well away from the experiments given the havoc he feared they could unleash. With Waldman gone, there is nothing to control Victor, or instill in him any sense of responsibility. He is free to conduct his experiments as he wishes, without paying any heed to the problems that might be round the corner, and without giving any thought to reason. This change could be seen as an example of one of the principles of Branagh's directing method. As discussed in an interview with *Reel Life, Real Stories* on the

MakingOf Youtube channel, Branagh believes that the storytelling instinct is more important than technical expertise. However, while this particular tweak to the original story changes the way the character of Frankenstein develops, other changes are clearly made for cinematic, visual reasons, as discussed elsewhere. Nevertheless, Branagh maintains that the technical side of film-making, such as choosing the correct cameras and lenses, is there to support and facilitate the telling of the story. In this sense, he feels that his directing is more about the substance than the style. Rather than developing an expertise in the technical aspects himself, he instead surrounded himself with a team of people who were experts in each individual field, such as the director of photography, sound technician and producer. This is particularly crucial as he also acted in the film, and therefore had to split his time between the two roles. As a director, he saw himself as guiding the story, rather than simply creating an epic visual spectacle. This approach could be due to the fact that he began as an actor, and therefore developed an interest in how best to bring stories to life.

When it comes to the creation of the monster, the film is once again faithful in some ways to the novel. For example, Frankenstein is horrified by what he has created. In the film, the creation takes place in a laboratory rather than Frankenstein's apartment, as in the book. Although Branagh's film shows the monster in a different way to the traditionally well-known cinematic image, it does not exactly mirror the creation as described by Shelley. Robert De Niro's monster has normal human skin, albeit sewn up in various places, and a bald head, as opposed to Shelley's description of "yellow skin scarcely [covering] the work of muscles and arteries beneath" and "hair of a lustrous black" (Shelley, 2009, p. 20). This is compelling on screen as it confounds expectations. Anyone watching the film without having seen any trailers or promotional material might expect a monster who looks like the traditional Hollywood image, but are presented instead with something out of the ordinary. Thus, it could be argued that this

visual decision by Branagh creates a more interesting situation for the viewer than simply sticking with what is expected. Confronted with an image which differs from expectations, the spectator is made aware that this might not be the film that they were anticipating. For better or worse, this raises questions in the mind of the spectator about the events unfolding onscreen, and potentially causes them to think about the story in a deeper way. In the context of a director such as Branagh, who sees himself principally as a story-teller rather than an aesthete, this ostensibly aesthetic decision can be viewed in fact as another way of drawing the audience into the story.

Another notable difference between the book and film occurs when the monster hides out in the woods. In both, he seeks refuge in the outbuilding of a cottage, and learns to speak, read and write, but in the film the creature keeps watch on an entire family, while in the novel there are just two people, a middle aged couple called Agatha and Felix. The film adds the idea of a blind man reacting differently to the monster, showing him acceptance, because he cannot see the hideous visage which is viewed as unacceptable by society. However, it is not quite such a clear-cut situation; although the old man cannot see the creature, he does touch his face and come to realize that the monster is abnormal in appearance. He can still see the creature's inner qualities, calling him a "poor man". This shows that reaction to the monster cannot be seen in black and white terms, as some people are capable of judging him on his actions despite his deformities. It works visually, as we can see that the man is blind and therefore understand that, until he touches him, he is judging him only on his words rather than his looks. In the novel, the fact that the reader cannot see the creature allows it to be judged more fairly. As Heffernan says: "In the novel, the words of the creature-especially as we read his autobiographical story- cover our eyes, and our blindness to his appearance is precisely what enables us to see his invisible nobility" (Heffernan, 1997, p.185). In contrast with novel, the graphic bloody death in childbirth was

someway a reference to Shelley's mother Wollstonecraft. Branagh portray this scene with the reference of Shelly's life.

The film is faithful to the novel in the killing of William Frankenstein by the monster, the monster's confrontation of Victor in Geneva and the request for Frankenstein to create a mate. The movie plays with the concept in order to cause a conflict for Victor, by inserting the new idea of the monster wanting him to Justine's body. In both versions, the monster kills Frankenstein's father and Elizabeth. Branagh generally selects those parts of the novel to keep the same which highlight the extremes of the creature; on the one hand, the cruelty of killing innocent people and the murderous desire for revenge, and on the other hand the sympathy brought about by being chased through the streets, or rejected by the family in the woods. By heightening the viewer's sense of these aspects of the character's existence, the film draws us in to an ambiguous feeling of horror tempered by understanding.

Looking at the creator himself, the film makes him a sympathetic character in as much as his motivations, in the first instance, are sound – he simply wants to avenge the death of his mother, and in doing so create the possibility of other grieving people being able to resurrect their loved ones. That fact, combined with the idea that his creation is trying to kill everyone he loves, goes some way to helping to override the other most likely response to Frankenstein, which is to feel that through his hubris he has triggered all the bad things that happen to him. In his devoted love for his wife, the film version of the character reanimates Elizabeth, but she cannot cope with what she has become and kills herself. This is different to the book, in which he does not try to revive her. The ending of both book and movie share similarities: Frankenstein and the monster both end up in the Arctic sea, with Victor telling his story to Walton, and both creator and creation die in both versions. In the case of this adaptation, there is no need to

change the ending, as the ending from the novel has cinematic as well as literary qualities. The Artic setting lends itself to beautiful visual interpretation.

Looking closely at Branagh's adaptation, we can say that it meets the requirements to be classified as "Gothic" in the Hollywood sense. The term "Gothic" in cinema can be defined as an artistic category, marked by aesthetics, that brings together all the different forms of non-realist dark cinema, including science fiction and fantasy (Reyes, 2020). Stylistically, it combines the "authentic" settings and costumes which evoke the period in which Shelley lived. "Authentic", in this instance, refers to the historical accuracy of the costumes and settings. In order to achieve authenticity, producers use a combination of production designers, costumer makes and historians to produce the genuine look that will satisfy audiences. In practice, this often involves a mix of contemporary styles in keeping with the need to look good on camera (Magerstadt & Journal, 2015). In utilizing this style and playing up the actual romance between Victor and Elizabeth, Branagh shifts some of the focus away from the monster, although the relationship between creator and creation is still fully explored and the key theme is still that of a new life being created from dead bodies by a scientist (Parker, 2009). O'Flinn mentions that the film puts more emphasis on the creation as a visual scene, delighting in the cinematic manifestation of the bringing about of new life, in a much more elaborate way than the book. Where the novel settles for a paragraph of explanation with no specific detail about process, the film showcases the creation as a visual event (O'Flinn & History 1983).

As a choice of material for adaptation, *Frankenstein* lends itself to cinematic interpretation in various ways. One notable feature is at the core of the story, where new life is created through scientific discover rather than by miracle of magic. While fantasy often works well in cinema, the grounding of the story in science-fiction enables the

audience to feel greater sympathy for the characters. Viewed from a postmodern cultural perspective, corporeality, which plays an important part in the novel, is even more integral to the film. The notion of the body as a physical form, visible and tangent, informs the viewer of creation at its purest form. The film, as opposed to the novel, shows creation in action twice; firstly, the birth of William, which leads to the death of Caroline; and secondly, the creation of the monster, which also in the end leads to the deaths of William, Elizabeth and the Baron, as well as, indirectly, Victor and, in the film, Justine.

There are, of course, varying viewpoints as to the success or otherwise of the adaptation in terms of fidelity. Certainly, in comparison with earlier film versions, Branagh's movie maintains a steady course and covers most of the plot points and key themes of the original novel. One dissenting voice on this point is Garcia, who cites Branagh's attempt as just another version of the Frankenstein myth, rather than a true interpretation of the source (Garcia, 2012). He believes the film should be viewed as cultural intertextuality. While he accepts that Branagh set out with the honest intention of filming a version closer to the book than those that came before, he suggests that he failed in "circumventing the cinematic myth" (Garcia, 2005, p. 224). Perhaps the depth with which *Frankenstein* is lodged into the collective consciousness would make this virtually impossible, and he concedes that Branagh does succeed in introducing parts from the book that are usually omitted in cinematic adaptations. As noted by Lavalley, the Justine subplot, the narrative frame including Walton and the Arctic setting, and the creature educating himself, are usually absent (Geduld & LaValley). These inclusions help to solidify the idea of the film as faithful representation. Scenes such as Elizabeth's self-immolation are created in order to add terror to the film, to affect audiences by giving them a visual depiction of a horrifying event not imagined by Shelley in the book. It can be argued that such additions take away from the fidelity of adaptation, but

then it can also be argued that the presence of those points mentioned by Lavalley as usually being omitted are more important in terms of fidelity than plot points or action scenes introduced to enhance the story for the screen.

It is interesting to note at this point that as well as the additions, there are also some parts of the novel which Branagh saw fit to omit, even though they might suggest themselves as cinematic experiences. One such moment, as related by Heffernan, is one which Branagh himself called "supremely cinematic", and yet chose to omit. It involves the time shortly after the creation when "the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart" (Heffernan, 1997, p. 133). At first, Victor is unable to sleep, but when he does eventually manage to drift off, he is disturbed by a terrible nightmare in which he encounters Elizabeth in Ingolstadt, but on embracing her she transforms into the corpse of his dead mother, crawling with grave-worms (Shelley, 2009). This "sudden dissolving of one image", as well as the implication that Victor's creation of new life will lead inevitably to death, suggests cinematic treatment, and yet Branagh chose not to include the moment. There are, perhaps, many reasons for this. Heffernan qualifies Branagh's assessment of *Frankenstein* being "supremely cinematic" by pointing out that large stretches of it are, in fact, "stubbornly un-cinematic" (p. 134), using much of the monster's self-education as an example of a part of the book which would be "numbingly static on the screen" (Heffernan, 1997, p.134). Building on this thought, Heffernan also suggests that a truly faithful adaptation of the novel would never actually show the monster. Shelley does not ask the reader to imagine the monster apart from brief descriptions by Victor and in relation to Victor's disgust at the monster's appearance. When the book is told by the monster's words, we are blind to his deformities. Therefore, to genuinely capture the spirit of the novel, it can be argued that we should hear the monster rather than seeing it. However, this would make for a very dull and unsatisfying cinematic experience. The description of the monster in the

novel envisions him as gigantic but, other than that possibility of monstrousness, the rest of his appearance comes across as strange but not overly repulsive. The stitching of Branagh's creature, which give it a terrifying look, owes more to James Whale's film version than Shelley's novel, perhaps giving yet more credence to Garcia's argument that the film buys into previous filmic myths as much as into the original book. Heffernan feels that Branagh is fully aware of the cinematic tradition of adaptations that form a central part of the Frankenstein myth, and that he utilizes them to add to the "mythic text", creating a screen version which is dramatically effective while still true to the core of the myth. Further to this, he believes that Branagh's adaptation plays on the fears and tensions of the time in which it was made, a feeling sharing by Goodson who believes that Branagh's film exhibits many traits which reflect the depression of the 1990s.

4.3 The X-Files' *The Post-modern Prometheus vs* The Novel of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

As a free adaptation, "The Post-Modern Prometheus" exhibits many similarities with the *Frankenstein* novel, and many recognizable tropes and plot points, but also takes things in a very different direction. The plot of the episode is a clear transposition of the *Frankenstein* myth, reflecting the themes of the novel and transporting them to a town in the mid-west of the USA and a new set of characters. The Great Mutato is an identifiably new take on the character of the monster, and Pollidori plays the role of Victor, albeit a nastier, more selfish, more vitriolic version. The anger of the townsfolk and the rejection of the monster are all present, with the difference that in "The Post-Modern Prometheus" the creature is actually given a chance to tell his side of the story, and he manages to win the sympathy of the angry the mob. This is an unusual perspective on the familiar tale, as normally the mob is unaffected by any reasoning or suggestion of sympathetic response, seeing things in a black and white fashion; the

monster is a monster, and therefore they will not stop until it is killed. The different approach of The X-Files episode leads to an unusual experience for the viewer, as it means the conclusion of the episode is, to all intents and purposes, a happy one. McRae theorizes that this acceptance shows a common desire for belonging, with the Great Mutato representing the difference that is necessary to create a bond within a community. In a way, there is an "internalized otherness" which is at odds with "socially sanctioned identities", and the community reaches out to the monster as a welcome disruption of what is generally accepted as the normal (McRae, 2002).

Although this change only occurs towards the end of the episode, it is a pivotal moment when it comes to understanding the effect of this adaptation. In other adaptations, the creator himself generally gets away without too much scrutiny, although his story ending is rarely a happy one. Despite inflicting the creature on the world, abandoning it and thus heightening its thirst for revenge, and effectively being the cause, whether directly or indirectly, of the deaths that occur, the creator's main sense of blame is self-inflicted. The guilt and burden cause an inner turmoil, rather than external forces conspiring to bring him to justice for the consequences of his harmful experiments. In the "Post-Modern Prometheus", the tables are turned. At the end of the episode, Pollidori is taken away by the police and the implication is that he is going to pay for price for his crime. The crime in question is the murder of his father, rather than the experiment, but the circumstances are all interlinked. This ending serves to affect the emotions of the viewer in a softer way, with the viewer cheering on the loveable monster and happy to see the criminal brought to justice. It is, perhaps, a more modern, "Hollywood" ending, where the good guy wins, and the bad guy loses.

Another example of Carter using a more contemporary theme can be seen in the process of the creation itself. The scientist uses genetic modification, a subject which

was often talked about and created a lot of controversy in the 1990s, when the episode was made. Carter himself saw the events of the episode as far from happy, saying "Prometheus is an episode that starts out as a mistake and ends up becoming extremely sad and oddly horrific, a story where everyone is cruel to each other" (C. J. T. F. Carter, 1997). In terms of tone, this ties the adaptation neatly together with the book. It is not necessary for the events to be happy, nor the characters to be particularly likeable, for the stories to have an effect. Carter's episode, in fact, does have a happier ending, but the dark themes which pervade it are never fully resolved.

In keeping with other versions of the myth, the townsfolk make their judgments instantly, without reason or sympathy, and based purely on the fearful appearance of the monster. The framing of the episode categorizes the story as a comic book fable, and the monster is portrayed as a cartoonish character, with his unnatural appearance and two mouths. This is a variance between the episode and the novel, in that the monsters are portrayed in differing ways. In the novel, the monster is eight feet tall with yellow eyes and skin, and visible muscle tissue and blood vessels. In the episode, the monster has two mouths, three eyes and lumps on its head, and covers its deformities with a rubber mask. Carter chose to light the episode in such a way that the monster would only gradually be revealed. In fact, the creature inspires pity more than revulsion, as its deformity is designed to emphasise the sadness of the character rather than its monstrosity.

Despite these differences in appearance, the effect is the same. The people are scared of the monsters, and react as is expected of them, forming into an angry, baying mob, without stopping to think or discuss the issue. This enables the well-worn cinematic trope of villagers marching with lit torches, which is particularly effective in black-and-white. The notion that the monster is evil is further embedded in their

collective consciousness when he becomes the prime suspect for the murder of the old man. Surely someone who looks as frightful as the monster must be guilty? Again, this allows Carter to create a busy crowd scene of people jostling for position, arousing fear in the Great Mutato.

Mutato is not given a chance to explain, being chased simply because of what he looks like. This is broadly in keeping with most other versions of the myth, and certainly with the original novel. The creation is defined by his monstrosity, and no other facet of his character is considered by those who would do him harm. The episode only deviates from the myth when he is eventually given his chance to speak, aided by the FBI agents who believe they have uncovered the truth of the situation and know that the Great Mutato is innocent of the murder.

Another similarity between the episode and the novel is the creature's desire for a mate. This very human longing helps to throw a sympathetic light on the character, and the viewer can empathize with the craving for companionship. It shows that the monster, despite his appearance, has feelings just as valid and real as anybody else. The mass panic which occurs just on the merest sight of this strange looking being comes entirely from the people misjudging him. They misjudge him because they do not take the time to explore his personality, instead making a knee-jerk response to his outer deformities. In this, the episode reflects the novel very accurately. Deviation comes when they do eventually have the chance to see the real person behind the distorted façade, and listen to the words he so carefully expresses, explaining that his terrible plight has never overridden his caring nature. The episode, in the spirit of the novel, paints a vivid picture of human beings' tendency to rush to judgment over things which are non-human and, indeed, over humans as well (C. J. T. F. Carter, 1997).

In both the novel and the episode, sympathy generally lies with the creation rather than the creator. By its very nature, the monster always inspires pity. It has been thrust into this world with no say over its predicament. Although nobody asks to be born, in the case of the scientist and the monster at least the scientist was exercising his free will when he chose to conduct the experiment, whereas the monster is simply abandoned, and has no access to any of the privileges afforded to his human creator.

The variation in the ending, with the monster ending up being loved by people, is an attempt by the writers of the episode to challenge the stereotype of the baying, bloodthirsty mob unwilling to change from their entrenched position. This makes the adaptation interesting and, it could be argued, more worthwhile than a standard, straightforward retelling of the old story. This makes the adaptation less faithful than, say, Branagh's film version. In a way, this makes Carter's job easier than Branagh's, as Branagh, by aiming to stay as true as possible to the original, is forced to find other ways of making his adaptation interesting whist still respecting the source novel while aiming not to alienate existing *Frankenstein* devotees. By attempting to tell a new story using the old themes, Carter does not fall into the trap of critics saying that he is bringing nothing new to the table. He is able to explore the story in his own way and bring in new touches such as the happier ending. Free adaptations give a director more leeway to put their own stamp on a story, while hopefully still drawing in existing fans and giving them a satisfying experience. The ending uses another crowd scene, but this time people are watching Cher perform. Carter's music choices are an important part of the film. Cher (or a lookalike, as Cher was unable to take part in the recording) is a highly recognisable pop star who reoccurs throughout the episode and is shown from creative angles to make it look as though it is the genuine singer. The theme tune of the episode is reminiscent of the song from *The Elephant Man*, another film based on

humans and monsters. Carter uses the *Frankenstein* myth as the foundation on which to build his own work.

Other influences on the episode can be found in the character names. Dr Pollidori, for example, although spelled slightly differently, was named after Dr. John Polidori, the writer of *The Vampyre*. The short story was the first published modern vampire story, predating the more famous *Dracula.* Polidori, Lord Byron's personal physician, was an acquaintance of Mary Shelley and Percy Bysshe Shelley. From Byron's suggestion that they each write a ghost story, Shelley eventually wrote *Frankenstein* and Polidori penned *The Vampyre.* It is possible that *Polidori* was also the inspiration for a character in the television series *Highlander: The Modern Prometheus*, from which it is also possible that Carter took influence for the name of his *Frankenstein*-inspired episode. Another parallel between the episode and the novel can be found in the name of Dr Pollidori's wife, Elizabeth, which mirrors the name of Victor Frankenstein's wife. Pollidori leaves his wife at home to deliver a lecture at the University of Ingolstadt, the exact same place where Frankenstein first formed the idea for his experiments. In reality, the university closed in 1800, and so is clearly mentioned here as a reference to the novel.

4.4 Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie* *vs* The Novel of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie* is an example of a free adaptation, as it differs from the original in many ways "for the sake of making another work of art" (Geoffrey, 1975). It parodies previous versions of the book and plays more with the concept of bringing things to life rather than envisioning its own version of the monster. In this adaptation, science is used as a tool to explore the love felt between the boy and his dog, rather than to satisfy arrogant whims and God-like tendencies.

The first point to note is that the adaptation differs substantially from the novel in terms of plot. The idea of reanimating corpses is still present, but is transported to a strange, cartoonish world where the scientist is a young boy rather than a man. Burton's style, honed in films like *Edward Scissorhands* (Scissorhands & Fox, 1990) and *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (F. Thompson, 2002) often conjures up other-worldly, surreal, cartoonish images which are part-dream, part-nightmare. The setting of *Frankenweenie* is entirely in keeping with this visual world, and therefore people watching the film who have prior knowledge of both Burton and Frankenstein will find more familiarity with Burton than with the traditional expectation of a Frankenstein film. This automatically sets it apart from other Frankenstein adaptations from the very beginning. As a director, Tim Burton has an easily identifiable style which runs throughout his canon. In much of his work, the art direction is key. He marries a Gothic atmosphere of darkness, lightning storms, disenchanted characters and wild, barren settings with an idyllic, 1950s vision of suburban America, with rows of uniform bungalows surrounded by picket fences with postboxes at the end of the driveway. The juxtaposition of these two vastly contrasting styles ends Burton's films a creepy, unsettling atmosphere, which he builds on by introducing into these worlds unusual, odd-looking characters who behave in strange ways.

As well as the design, Burton also has a signature camera style, incorporated lots of expressive camera movement to create a feeling similar to that of being on a rollercoaster. Lots of tracking shots are employed to show off the set, and to create a sense of being in the neighbourhood. To achieve this, dolly shots are used. Ominous music creates a sense of foreboding, while low angle shots, dimly lit but with backlighting on the characters in focus, also add drama to scenes. For example, the reanimation scene makes the most of these techniques, also adding thunder and lightning to build the atmosphere. In scenes in the Frankensteins' house, the low level of

lighting creates lots of shadows which feel enclosing and make the house feel claustrophobic.

The youth of the character also gives him an innocence which the original Victor lacks. In the novel, Frankenstein was a scientist who knew exactly what he wanted to achieve and had dedicated vast amounts of his time in education to learning the necessary secrets. This could also be said about Victor in *Frankenweenie,* but the difference is that Victor is still a school-boy, motivated solely by his love of his pet, and driven by grief. He does not set out to avenge all death, merely to bring back the one creature who means so much to him. This differentiates him from the original Frankenstein who, so devastated by the loss of his mother, swears to eliminate death altogether. From Burton's point of view, this creative decision can perhaps be explained with reference to the chosen genre of the film. Making a cartoon lends itself to the idea of a child hero, and once that character has been established, the tone of the film would be substantially affected if the child were to be vengeance-seeking and angry at the world. Thus, it makes more sense in the world of the film for Victor to be a science-obsessed boy with a strong emotional attachment to his pet, and for his motivations to spring from this particular facet of his character. This is especially pertinent when it comes to considering the sympathy the character generates, which might be lesser were he to be a less likeable person. One big difference between the novel and the adaptation is the relationship between the creator and his creation. In *Frankenweenie*, the bond that exists between them is evidently one of love. There is no such bond in the novel; it is never shown that Victor has any positive feelings towards his creature. He creates him because he wants the praise and admiration of others. He is narcissistic and selfish. In contrast, the young Victor cares only about resurrecting his friend, and is not interested in the approval of his peers. When Igor discovers his experiment, he goes as far as to deny it.

One link between the film and the novel is the characters' names, which allude to Shelley's original as well as other classics of the genre. For example, Victor, Elsa Van Helsing, Edgar 'E' Gore and Mr Burgermeister all contain references to characters from classic horror stories (Samrick, 23). The use of the name 'Victor Frankenstein' is the most obvious example. Rather than just an allusion, Burton chooses to use the same name in order to make it clear that the character will be the one to conduct the famous experiment. The name of the film itself is, of course, evidently a reference to Shelley's novel. The reanimation of the dead body is a link to the novel. It is carried out in a different way, while using similar principles. It is designed to be highly cinematic, with lightning bolts and thunder claps creating an atmospheric experience.

In both versions, the creator is inspired by a teacher to conduct his experiments. In the novel, it is a university professor who brings creatures back to life by harnessing the power of lightning, and he inspires Victor to follow his lead. In *Frankenweenie,* the role of muse is played by the science teacher, the strange, intellectual Mr. Rzykruski. In both cases, the creators are drawn to the charismatic demonstrations of their tutors. The different methods of experimentation are explained by the circumstances of the characters. Victor is a schoolboy with limited resources, and conducts his experiments using anything he has to hand. For example, he uses household items like a toaster, as well as a bicycle. Obviously, he would not have access to any more specialist equipment. In the novel, Victor is able to draw on complex tools in a proper laboratory, while in *Frankenweenie* the young scientist must make do with his attic. The simplicity of *Frankenweenie* is another indicator of young Victor's innocence (McCallum, 2018). From a cinematic point of view, the use of household items is both recognizable and amusing for an audience. It is a marked difference from bubbling test tubes in laboratories or incomprehensible machines, and grounds the experiment in a relatable reality.

A subtle humour runs through *Frankenweenie*, which is in keeping with the cartoon format. The decision to film in black-and-white helps to set a downbeat tone. It also feels somewhat old-fashioned, which creates a sense of nostalgia. The plot is driven by the children's contagious belief in a diverse reality (Diestro-Dópido & sound, 2012). Victor tells Mr Rzykruski about his experiments with Sparky and the goldfish, without going into detail, showing his enthusiasm for science even though he had obtained mixed results. The science teacher responds that the difference between the experiments was that one was carried out for love, with his heart, while the other one failed because Victor's heart was not in it. This is an example of Burton staying true to the spirit of the original, and is what Wagner refers to in his adaptation theory as "commentary". When his teacher tells Victor that "science is not good or bad, but can be used both ways", the adaptation stays true to the intention of Shelley's novel (Diestro-Dópido & sound, 2012).

The ending of the film is completely at odds with the closing scenes of the novel. This is in keeping with the differing tones of the two pieces. *Frankenweenie* is more light-hearted and comic in tone, and therefore it is correct that the ending should be a happy one, with Sparky being reanimated once again and touching noses with the dog he loves. In the novel, the ending is significantly less happy, with the death of Frankenstein and the monster. The tragedy of the novel is not reflected in this adaptation, where the ending is happy, and the monster becomes much-loved by all. As this is a "commentary" adaptation, Burton has changed the story to suit his own interpretation of events, bringing his own imagination and established film-making style to the existing myth. While the film had a very different plot, it does maintain elements of the original. In terms of fidelity, it is certainly not as close as Branagh's film. However, the film would not have existed without the influence of the book, as can be seen in the characters, the themes and, to a large extent, the plot. The finale of the film,

the kiss between Sparky and his mate, is visually pleasing, and helps to round off the story of the film. However, it could be argued that it is overly-saccharine and this, in turn, could lead to a conclusion that sometimes a director's decision to proceed with a moment which looks good on screen can, in fact, be detrimental to the story.

4.5   *I, Frankenstein vs* **The Novel of Mary Shelley's** *Frankenstein*

Stuart Beattie's film *I, Frankenstein* attempts to continue the story of the original novel, acting as a latter-day sequel. The film is an adaptation of a digital-only graphic novel by Kevin Grevioux. As such, it cannot be viewed as a direct adaptation of Mary Shelley's novel, but instead is an imagining of the events which followed its conclusion (DESTINY). This is seen by summary of events in the novel at the beginning of the film, shown in a flashback sequence which brings the viewer straight into this new story. Wagner refers to films such as these as "borrowing", meaning that the filmmaker is not attempting to replicate the original work, but rather the audience "calls up new or powerful aspects of a cherished work" (McFarlane, 1996, p. 24). This short flashback gives Beattie an opportunity to recount the familiar story and, at the same time, set up the visual style of this film. As the film is based on a graphic novel, the art direction closely mirrors that style. At the time of directing *I, Frankenstein,* Stuart Beattie was a relatively inexperienced director, having previously directed only one film. However, he was an experienced screenwriter, having contributed to various blockbuster films such as *Pirates of the Carribean* and *Collateral.* A screenwriter moving into direction often brings with them a keen storytelling instinct. Beattie also wrote this film, so was involved in all the creative aspects. In an interview with the website *wegotthiscovered.com,* he admitted that as an action film, *I, Frankenstein* focused on action at the expense of plot. Rather than a coherent story, it is actually driven by characters making choices which put them into different situations, the result of which

being that the filmmaker can then subject them to high intensity, CGI-driven action sequences.

Apart from the opening sequence, strands of the original story are present throughout in the shape of the recognizable monster. He is named Adam by Leonore, the queen of the gargoyles, whereas in the novel he is never given a name. Reference is made to Adam, but not in terms of actually giving it to the creature as a name for him to be known by. The creature, and the journal he keeps on his person, both stem from Shelley's novel. One difference is that at the beginning of the film, the monster is still alive, and buries his master in his family cemetery. In the novel, the creature killed himself after his master died. The filmmaker could have chosen to keep this ending and then reanimate the creature in order to spark this new story but chose to keep it simpler so that the action could start without any significant preamble. Also, the burying of the Frankenstein is an important scene within the flashback sequence. It signifies the end of the old and the beginning of the new. It also enables Adam to deliver a damning line over the image, which helps to establish his character. By saying that burying him was more than he deserved, we know he is full of bitterness and anger.

I, Frankenstein is an imagined continuation of a story, where the only element of adaptation comes in the characters and backstory taken from the original. This film could also fit in the analogy category, as it takes the characters and ideas of Shelley's novel and creates a new story with them. Michael Klein and Gillian Parker defined similar categories, again divided between adaptations which remain faithful to the narrative, those which retain the core while significantly reinterpreting, and those where the source is used as raw material for a new story (McFarlane, 1996). Another way of looking at this is that adaptation consists of copying, connection and loyalty. Andrew describes adaptation as "the matching of the cinematic sign system to prior achievement

in some other system" (p. 50), and talks of borrowing, transforming or intersecting sources (Andrew, 1976). Of these categories, borrowing is most common, as it requires the least interpretation of the text. Using the ideas or material which are already set out and, in most cases, proven to be successful, takes away much of the risk that comes with unleashing a brand new creation on the world, although simultaneously opening the floodgates for unflattering comparison and criticism of unoriginality. The appeal of a well-known work is already established, and thus a market for the consumption of a new work exists. Sticking faithfully to the original text negates the problem of alienating an extant fan base with its own ideas of how the story should play out.

If we take it that the success of an adaptation is linked to how closely it sticks to the spirit of the original, then before making an assessment we must recognize that people's reactions to literary works are necessarily subjective. Therefore, *I, Frankenstein* would be considered a successful adaptation by those readers of *Frankenstein* who regard it as a fantasy story, as opposed to science fiction. In the novel, although the events depicted are extraordinary, they are not beyond the realms of our wildest imaginations. In *I, Frankenstein*, the same cannot be said for the existence of a strange, supernatural world which overlooks the human world, and is populated by gargoyles and demons. Visually, this enables the director to create his own world for the story to take place in, which is reminiscent of the real world but enhanced with gothic scenery and supernatural characters. More is made of the religious aspects of the story in the film than in the novel. The concept of souls, for example, is explored in the film. This is clearly a conscious decision on the part of the filmmakers to delve into issues which are tangentially related to the original novel but are never given consideration in great depth as they are irrelevant to the main plot. The idea of bringing a new creation to life automatically creates in the mind a question of whether the new being possesses what we might think of as a soul. By focusing on this strand of creation, the director can

take the plot in a new direction and potentially unearth some interesting new revelations about the creature.

The depiction of the monster in the film is interesting, as the designers chose not to make him too horrific. While there are a few visible scars, they are nothing like as noticeable as the ones worn by Robert De Niro in Branagh's film. The creature is also not as frightening or ugly in appearance as The Great Mutato in The X-Files, with his two mouths and his peculiar body. In fact, the creature in *I, Frankenstein* could be considered to be handsome, and there is the suggestion of a love interest in the form of Terra, the scientist. One possible reason for this is that decision might have been made for financial rather than creative reasons. A handsome star is often seen to be a more bankable prospect. As the primary concern of major film studios is to make money, a rugged actor might help in this regard when compared with someone less visually appealing. It also facilitates the love story, although the viewer is still asked to believe that Terra would fall for someone with the emotional problems and backstory of Adam. Stuart Beattie also said that part of the reason why Adam was created in this way was as an attempt at fidelity to Mary Shelley's novel. The version of the monster with bolts in his neck was created by Universal Studios rather than Shelley, and so Beattie took the conscious decision to remove them and therefore stay closer to the original version of the creature. He also suggested that choosing a good-looking actor was not simply to entice viewers to the film, but also served a logical purpose within the story. It was his theory that if someone were to create a new creature from the body parts of corpses, they would choose body parts from people who, when they were alive, were attractive.

The plot of *I, Frankenstein* is not closely related to the original novel, and it could be argued that the story could exist independently of its source. However, it is not as simple as an attempt to "cash in on its cultural respectability and popularity"

(McFarlane, 1996). While the story of a battle between gargoyles and demons would work regardless of any link to Frankenstein, the concept of bringing dead creatures back to life is integral to the story, and therefore it is understandable why Frankenstein was chosen as a start point. Added to this, the presence of the journal provides an important dramatic purpose, and there is evidence of intertextuality as the gargoyles are already aware of the story of Frankenstein and his monster. The scientists, who are humans, are also aware of it but, unlike the gargoyles, believe it to be a myth until shown otherwise by the entrance into the story of the journal and then, even more significantly, the creature himself.

CHAPTER 5: BRINGING CHARACTERS' TO LIFE ONSCREEN- LOVE, ISOLATION, SYMPATHY AND IDENTITY IN FOUR ADAPTATIONS OF MARY SHELLEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN*

5.1 Relationships in Cinema

Throughout all adaptations of the Frankenstein myth, one of the most important elements in terms of understanding the motivation of the characters lies in the relationship between the creator and his creation. Creating believable, empathetic relationships in film in a difficult but crucial process. Exploring this area effectively means looking at relationships "through simulations that permit individuals to identify with substitute agents and thus create the subjective experience of relationships" (Vorderer, Steen & Chan, 2006, p18). When we talk about identity in film, the concept of sympathy is inevitably intertwined. Frankenstein lends itself perfectly to analysis of sympathy, due to the nature of the characters and the story. The monster is among the most sympathetic of all great literary creations; a terrible, lonely plight being forced upon it from the moment of its creation. The situation is a little more complex when it comes to his creator, and the relationship between the two, although it can be seen that there is an unbreakable connection which binds them together. Those facets of the relationship between the two principal characters are transposed from novel to film with some elements inevitably changing, and other holding firm. How these characters are portrayed on film is a matter for the screenwriter, the director and the actors, and other external voices may also come into play. As the primary concern of a major film studio is to make money, decisions on casting might be completely out of the director's hands. A box-office star, whose name alone is a virtual guarantee of ticket sales, would be preferable in the eyes of those in charge of finances when compared with someone who may suit the role better, but who is less of a draw to the film-going public.

Taking a formalist approach to analysing the films, it must be taken into consideration that the over-riding concern of the director is to create a film which impresses on a stylistic footing, and which expresses their own subjective view of reality. Conveying a sense of genuine reality is secondary to creating a work which stands on its own merits as a piece of art. This is important when it comes to assessing the relationships in the film, as characterisation would perhaps be less of a consideration than it would be for realists, who are less interested in style and form and more in capturing the reality of the story. In a formalist understanding of film, the personality of the director shines through on screen. The beauty and the power of the image is more important than whether or not it comes across as "real". However, for any film to work and engage with the audience on any kind of intrinsic level, creating great characters is essential. In the case of Frankenstein, which is already a work of science fiction and therefore not grounded in reality as we actually know it, a certain flamboyance is easily achievable while still remaining faithful to the spirit of the narrative.

To understand the relationship between characters, we must first consider how those relationships are formed. In the first instance, this means looking at the character in totality: what are the features of this fictional being, how is it constructed as an artifact, and how does it relate with other characters, actions and character constellations (Tröhler, Eder, Jannidis & Schneider, 2010). Eder stipulates that how characters relate to each other is determined by how they behave in general, behaviour which is often defined by the manner of their formation, which in turn is influenced by sociocultural constructs. As a consequence, structures may be created which isolate certain characters; for example, characters from marginalized communities often suffer from stereotyping, becoming the "bad-guy" or, perhaps, never quite reaching the heroic position that their actions should realistically see them achieve (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004). In the case of Frankenstein, the implication of this theory is that the monster will

always be portrayed in an unfavourable light as an antagonist. This is, in fact, rarely the case. In each of the works which form part of this study, there is considerable light and shade in the painting of the "monster" character, and it is this which helps to build empathy.

Understanding this relationship between the creator and the creation helps to give us insight into the motivations of each character, as well as a wider appreciation of the inner turmoil of the scientist who has brought a monster into creation, and a monster who must cope with the knowledge that he exists in a world which does not want him. This is not only important from a literary aspect, but also in the realm of film studies. How directors approach this fundamental relationship gives us insight into the wider creative process. In this chapter, I will assess the relationship between the creator and his creature in each of the adaptations.

5.1.1   Branagh's Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

A question that is raised by Heffernan and others is why Victor was so frightened by his creation, given that he had spent so much time putting it together? In the novel, it is pointed out that the features he selects for his creature are chosen for their beauty, and yet in the process of assembling them they become hideous. Branagh's film goes some way to explaining the reaction by designing a monster covered in unsightly stitching, which looks like exactly what it is – reheated fragments of dead bodies, thrown together into an eclectic melting pot, rejecting each other even as the creature is reanimated and comes to life. The director ramps up the sinister nature of the character by using close-ups which show enough of his hideous countenance, but still hold something back. Low angled shots, lit from below, convey the character's underlying sense of menace, which is offset by the sympathy that is built up when the audience discovers he has learned to read, and that he wants to become part of the family on which he finds himself spying.

Contrast this with the depiction of Frankenstein at the beginning of the film, before his experiment begins in earnest. At this point, he is carefree and happy-go-lucky for the most part, happily ensconced in a relationship with the woman he loves and bouncing around in scenes of jubilation. He then shows his more serious side, but nevertheless his lighter characteristics have been established. Thus, the creator and creation are pitted against each other as opposites from the outset, sharing hardly anything in common. What they do have in common is what makes them real; they are imperfect, they make mistakes and they often act irrationally and without thinking about the consequences. In the case of Victor, the clearest example of this is the experiment itself, while for the creation perhaps the best case study is his venomous desire for revenge which sees him attack the love of Victor's life. This revenge can be viewed as catharsis. Bazin relates that the Aristotelian conception of catharsis bleeds through from the character to the viewer, and that it "mollifies the soul after having shaken it so violently" (p.139). It moves beyond human morality, operating on a visceral level and tapping into emotions which usually remain hidden. Hence, when the monster exacts his revenge, although the viewer should feel outraged and appalled, on some level there is pleasure on behalf of a character who we believe has been terribly wronged.

Another answer for the extreme reaction which Victor has to his creation is one put forward by the critic Ellen Moers, who feels that Frankenstein is demonstrating "revulsion against newborn life", the kind of post-natal response which affects some mothers (Moers, 1974). Shelley had lost a child before writing the book, which perhaps influenced this section. The explicit manifestation of this in the film, with the monster hatching from a "great copper sarcophagus filled with water to make it a kind of womb", shows birth in its rawest form (Heffernan, 1997, p. 143). The earlier death of Caroline in childbirth also shows creation not as a beautiful miracle, but as a bloody, chaotic, painful affair with potentially disastrous consequences. The inner self-loathing

of Victor is manifestly represented by the great horror he has unleashed. However, he does try to come to the creature's aid, trying to help him walk among the slippery birth slime which coats the floor. He is also distraught when he fears that he has killed his newly hatched creation. This differs from film to book; in Branagh's version, Frankenstein initially shows a more paternal side than the Victor of the novel. It does not last long, though. By the following scene, Victor has already fled in fear, leaving the newly awakened monster to brood on the most traumatic of early experiences, namely rejection and abandonment. This moment of betrayal occurs very early in the relationship, setting up the ensuing plot and, eventually, the resolution. Both creator and creation are beings torn apart by their fundamental flaws

It is understandable, given the abandonment by his creator at such an early stage of its existence, that the creature is downhearted. His terrible, frightening, stitched up appearance does nothing to endear him to people, and the second reaction he receives after that of his maker is the fear, abuse and brutal dismissal of rabid townspeople, who want nothing to do with this monstrous being. Importantly, the monster is shown as intelligent, evidenced by his ability to teach himself to read, write and speak. Ebert describes his emotions as all too human; a mixture of kindness, a desire to fit in, and finally kicking against his treatment with a vicious lust for revenge (p. 6). This creative decision can be viewed through a formalist lens, as it eschews what we might consider to be the closest relationship to reality and moves almost from science fiction to fantasy. In effect, the director is showing that the creature has virtually mastered a language in a very short space of time, which would require the use of tools which, realistically, would not be at his disposal. This could potentially be explained by the fact that the creature is constituted of body parts taken from human beings who had already experience life, and who had learned to speak and to read. However, as a caveat to that, the human beings from which the creature was made were criminals, who in those times

would not have had the greatest of educations and who may not have had the learning capabilities to pick up new things so quickly. Therefore, the monster learning to read is a device used to humanise it, to increase our empathy and sympathy with this beleaguered creature. A realist approach would be to dispense with this useful device in order to stick closer to what would more likely have happened were this story based on fact. In this case, the creature would be illiterate, which could raise sympathy, but which would not allow him to converse so effectively with his creator in order to build the tension which stems from the hatred the pair eventually feel for each other.

The abandonment of the creation by its creator so early in its existence paints the creator as selfish in the extreme. He leaves the poor creature to fend for itself, unwanted and unloved, and thus the viewer is initially drawn to it with a great deal of sympathy. Events later in the film tarnish this somewhat, but the creature is shown as essentially excluded from any kind of welcoming society. Therefore, he is desperate for a soul mate and Victor denying him the chance of companionship with his own kind is the final straw. His revenge, while not justified, is comprehensible. The relationship between Victor and the monster is explored by Branagh in one way which is absent from Shelley's novel. When the creature is confronting Frankenstein, he plays on his conscience, asking him whether he had ever given any thoughts to the consequences of his experiments. Barbara Johnson views the monster as a projection of aspects of Frankenstein's own self, and so being questioned by the monster is like he is interrogating himself. Therefore, he knows that he cannot lie. The answer is already known. The overt demand for a mate, and the later love rivalry between the creator and creation when Elizabeth is reanimated, are elements in which the film differs from the novel. In essence, they are both looking for love, a search which stirs up jealousy and conflict. The creature probably does love the new Elizabeth, viewing her as a kindred spirit with her disfigurement and stitching, but also the act of stealing Victor's beloved

is the ultimate revenge. One theory proposed by Goldberg is that Victor is frightened of love, embarking on his experiment as a means of running away from marriage (p. 33). If this were true, it could perhaps explain why in Branagh's film Victor is shown to abhor the creature almost from the second of its inception. He fears the creature because he fears the unconditional love which one is supposed to feel for those who created them. Linking back to his mother's death in childbirth, it is possible that Victor felt abandoned by her. By extension, the very act of childbirth may be significant; for Victor, his mother giving birth to a new child was an act of replacing him, and therefore even had the child and his mother lived he would no longer play quite such a central role in her life. He then felt the need to replace what was missing within himself by creating the monster which, in the end, only made things worse.

5.1.2   The X-Files' *The Post-Modern Promethues*

As an adaptation, "The Post-Modern Prometheus" fits in to Wagner's category of analogy, or free adaptation, in that it takes the idea of the original but subjects it to pastiche, creating a new work rather than a faithful translation. Carter uses both interpretation and recreation, inventing his own monster and circumstances rather than using the characters from the book, but sticking with the recognizable themes of hubristic science, creation of new life, rejection, fear and revenge. While the characters differ from the novel, the relationships between them are similar. The scientist, Dr Francis Pollidori, is markedly different to Victor Frankenstein. Pollidori's creation is borne of scientific curiosity and hubris, much the same as Frankenstein's, but the motivation lacks the same human sympathy. Frankenstein was driven by the death of his mother to create new live as a vengeance on death, whereas Pollidori's backstory lacks this very human driving force. The monster bears more similarities to the character in the novel, being monstrous, self-teaching, rejected and sympathetic. Carter gives clues as to the doctor's motivation within the dialogue. In a seemingly innocent exchange

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with his wife, named Elizabeth as a nod to Victor's enduring love interest, he reveals a little more of himself than is perhaps apparent on the surface:

POLLIDORI: Elizabeth, you know how I feel about children. They're mewling little monsters.

ELIZABETH: But I want children.

POLLIDORI: What happened to our dream? Of getting out of this place? Getting away from this hick town.

ELIZABETH: I think that's your dream.

Essentially, in this exchange, we learn that the doctor feels trapped within his existence, and no longer wants to live a small-town life. However, this is as odds with the desires of his wife, which means he has no way out other than to leave her. Carter chooses to use medium shots to drive home the closeness of the relationship; after all, this is long-married couple. The emotional acting, though, hints at something else. Also, the conversation hints once again at the pregnancy motif which runs throughout the episode. Pollidori never wanted children, and yet he seeks to create new life in a different form, giving a clear sign of his complete selfishness. Throughout the episode, Dr Pollidori is shown to be a selfish man. There is never a sense that he cares about anything other than himself. His genetic experiments are conducted purely in order to prove his excellence in his chosen field, and with no regard to any altruistic desire to further scientific knowledge and help to improve the world. Indeed, when questioned by Mulder as to why he is dabbling in genetics, he very proudly replies: "Because I can". He enjoys "playing God" and wants nothing more than to be considered a genius. This also spills over into his private life. He views children as monsters, and despite his wife craving to start a family he is unwilling to agree to her requests. As a result, his wife is

sad and lonely. He is willing to think about the consequences of having children; he does not want them, as he feels they would ruin the life he has made for himself. Essentially, he is married to his work more than he is married to wife. He does not want children and will not have them just to make his wife happy. This foresight and concern for the impact children would have on his life is unfortunately not reflected in his work. He did not consider the consequences of his actions when creating the Great Mutato, and selfishly abandoned the creature when he realized it did not fit his image of what he hoped to create.

Pollidori is made to look incredibly sinister throughout, and particularly so at certain times. For instance, the actor maintains a furrowed brow which is at once confrontational and at the same time suggests that he is hiding something or has a guilty conscience. Carter makes great use of the black-and-white style of filming to leave viewers in no doubt as to the features of his characters' personalities. In his laboratory, while revealing the ideas behind his genetic experiments to Mulder and Scully, he is shot from below standing next to his blackboard. Where the natural light source might be expected to come from above, in fact he is lit from below, casting a shadow over most of his face but leaving eerie streaks of light across his neck and the left-hand side of his lab coat. The effect is to make it look as though lightning has just struck, in keeping with the horror film motif of the episode. It is notable that this lighting choice was made for the creator, casting in him a sinister light, as opposed to the other characters, as it makes him stand out as a potential purveyor of wrong-doings. This part of his character is established in order to make sense of the relationship that he has with the Great Mutato which, in terms of what we actually see in the episode, is virtually non-existent. What we learn of the relationship comes from the tales that are recounted by the central players in the story, rather than by actually witnessing them together. Therefore, our knowledge of the relationship between the creator and the creation in this

instance is largely left to our interpretation of reported events. That Carter chose to unfurl the story in this way is interesting, as it allows him to build up a set of tensions which differ from other versions of Frankenstein. Although we suspect that Pollodori is responsible for macabre goings-on, this is not confirmed until late on in the episode. In fact, he is portrayed in such a sinister light that at times it feels like he is a red herring. The situation is made more complex by the fact that his father, who was not the creator, develops a very close relationship with the creation, establishing a greater father-son bond than he has with his own biological son.

In fact, it could be argued that The Great Mutato is not the monster in this telling, but rather the creator himself also fulfils that role. Pollidori kills his own father, a heinous enough crime in any circumstances, but in this case exacerbated by the fact the he is eliminating from existence the one person who truly loves Mutato. Consequently, he isolates his own creation even further. The scene where Mutato buries the old man was conceived as a touching moment to puncture the cartoonish extravagance of the episode. Carter mentions in his director's commentary that the scene felt "very cold and bleak and it felt like death" due to the weather at the time of shooting. This was a fortuitous turn of events, as the atmosphere matched the intentions of the screenplay perfectly. It is underpinned by Mark Snow's score, which reinforces the very poignant action taking place on screen. As with much of the episode, the subtext is important. In this case, we now know more about the character of The Great Mutato, his motivations and his feelings towards the man who created him.

There is something a little unusual about the way the creator is portrayed in this episode, when other factors are also taken into consideration. The only possible reading of the piece is that Pollidori is the villain, as he is shown throughout to be conniving and selfish. In fact, The Great Mutato refers to him as a "spiteful, hateful man of science

incapable of deeper sentiments". He feels true hatred towards this man, who embodies the notion of the mad scientist: driven, merciless and unconcerned by morality where it gets in the way of scientific discovery. However, the way Pollidori is treated by the script is perhaps somewhat unfair, given that his father is the one who was responsible for the morally reprehensible experiments which included non-consensual impregnation of women within the small-knit community. The outrage should have been shared between the perpetrators of the wrong doing and yet, in the end, it is Pollidori who feels the full force of the opprobrium, both from the people of the town and, it is to be presumed, the lawmakers. The reason for Pollidori being painted in this light is to enhance the adversity between him and his creation. He is shown as being completely unpleasant and irredeemable in order to provide a contrast with the lovable monster, who, it should also be remembered, was party to the crimes of Pollidori's father.

5.2   Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie*

Frankenweenie takes a very different approach from other adaptations when it comes to the relationship between creator and creation. In this regard, it is a breath of fresh air. Where the novel, and the other adaptations which form part of this study, depict the creator as considering his progeny a hideous mistake, in Frankenweenie the relationship is one borne of nothing but love and affection. This is largely due to the way the story is constructed. In order for the plotline to work, the reanimated Sparky the dog has to strike fear into people, to set up the conflict which eventually leads to a satisfying resolution. However, unlike other versions of the story, in Burton's film the creator does not feel afraid of the results of his experiment. Victor's only fear is that people may find out and not understand, viewing Sparky as a monster. Despite this, there is never a moment when he, himself, feels anything other than love for the dog. This love is reciprocated; in fact, it is possible that the choice to use a dog as the creation in this film

was deliberately made for this reason, as dogs are known to be loyal, faithful and loving to their human owners.

Unlike other variations of the Frankenstein story, in Frankenweenie there is a clear, undeniable motivation for the creation of the creature. Quite simply, Sparky is Victor's best and perhaps only friend, and he wants him back. Burton formulates the relationship by making clever use of the stop-motion technique. He does this in a number of ways, starting at the beginning of the film by making a meta-reference to the technique itself in the form of the film made by the character of Victor. In this film, to highlight the fact that it is a cartoonish production within the world of the cartoon we are watching, the movements are deliberately even more exaggerated and jerky than those of even the most unusual characters in the film. By way of contrast, as noted by Quinn, Sparky's movements are in fact more naturalistic and less obviously influenced by the technique by which they are created (Quinn, 2014). This makes him stand out from the other characters, even before he is killed and reanimated and looks more obviously different. Making him stand out reinforces in the mind of the viewer that this is an important character, and as Victor is established as the leading character by virtue of the amount of focus specifically directed upon him, we know that this relationship is an important focal point in the movie. Quinn believes that the self-consciousness of the film, and Burton's conscious decision to avoid the usual method of hiding the mode of production in order to establish a sense of realism, have the effect of establishing a different kind of reality which, in turn, aids in the suspension of disbelief (p. 28). To do this effectively, the viewer must completely buy into the world developing before their eyes. The reanimated Sparky differs from his previously living self only by the presence of a few scars and the bolts in his neck by which he is jolted back to life. The viewer is constantly reminded of this reanimation, as is Victor, and as such we become part of Victor's world.

Sparky is not the only creation in the film, of course. In other adaptations there is more than one creation, but in Frankenweenie, once the children become aware of the method of reanimation used by Victor, there are several. The other creations are much scarier than Sparky, particularly the cat/bat crossover, and are not loved by their creators. Sparky is the main focus, though, and despite his stitched-up appearance, and the fact that his tail occasionally falls off, he remains loved by Victor. Eventually, even those who are afraid of him, such as Victor's parents, come to realise that he is still the same adorable dog that they have always known. As the film is comic in tone, this is important, as it helps the story to resolve in a way which is in keeping with the light-hearted nature of the cartoon. Were the relationship between creator and creation to be adversarial, it would be more difficult to tie up the story in a pleasing way.

The relationship between Victor and Sparky is very emotional. This is established before the tragic incident which causes Sparky's original death, as the dog is shown to be Victor's only real friend. Therefore, when he succeeds in reviving him it is only natural that he is thrilled and loves the pet as much as ever. Sparky's intentions are only ever good. Even when he escapes and causes problems for Victor, it is only through boredom and a desire for companionship. In this sense, Victor probably feels guilty for having brought the dog back to life only to have to hide it from the world. Victor's motivation for bringing Sparky back to life differentiates the film from the novel. In the novel, Frankenstein is driven by scientific ambition to prove to himself and the world that his theories are correct. There is never a sense in the novel that Frankenstein is expecting to love his creation or has put any thought into how the relationship might develop. In Frankenweenie, Victor is a keen scientist and is obviously hoping to prove his worth, but by far the main reason for him conducting the experiment is to bring his beloved pet back to life, and therefore restore his relationship with his one true friend.

The fact that Victor is lacking friendship, other than the cherished bond he shares with his dog, helps to create a character who embodies a sense of alienation. Ben Frankenstein, Victor's father, tries to encourage him to take an interest in outdoor pursuits such as baseball, but Victor is only interested in making films. The films he makes require no fraternisation with other people, and he feels happier on his own. Nevertheless, his loneliness is a cause for concern to his worried parents. Burton chose to highlight the character's isolation in order to facilitate the creation of the important relationship which exists between Victor and Sparky. Many contemporary reviews referred to the relationship being the film's main driving force. Making Victor a lonesome being creates a space for someone or something to provide companionship, a space which Sparky occupies. The Frankenstein family dynamic is a loving one, and there is never a sense that Victor is neglected or unwanted. This, perhaps, increases his father's concern, as there is no reason for his son to have become a solitary figure. Ben Frankenstein is clearly proud of his son and wants the best for him. Having a friendly, caring father as a role model, it could be argued, informs the character of Victor, and by extension helps to explain his similar relationship with Sparky.

To understand the relationship between Victor and Sparky, it is necessary to look at the origins of the characters. Tim Burton was inspired to create Sparky by the memory of his own childhood dog, Pepe, who died when Burton was ten years old. The personal nature of this character shines through in the emotionally charged portrayal of the pet. Burton described his childhood relationship with his dog as being like his first love, and Sparky plays the role of Victor's first love. The film tells the story of the totally pure love, made even more special by the fact that it is the first time Victor has experienced these feelings. Burton chose not to create a dog which looked like his own, but to create something which did not resemble a real breed. The reason for this choice was that he did not want the audience to associate Sparky with any particular real dog,

but rather he wanted them to experience Sparky as a unique creature, albeit one who displayed dog-like qualities. Visually, this means that the dog in the film stands alone as an unusual, new creature, the like of which the audience has never seen before. This is in keeping with both the idea of the Gothic nature of Burton's work, as well as the broader world of Frankenstein. Also, importantly, it means that we recognise the dog as something unusual and otherworldly even before it dies and is subsequently resurrected. This adds to the odd, strange feeling which Burton tries to invoke in his work; we know that Victor loves his dog, and the dog loves Victor, because of the way they behave and also because of the traditional closeness between canines and humans, and yet there is also something perturbing about the bond between this weird pairing.

5.2.1 Stuart Beatties's *I, Frankenstein*

The relationship between the creator and the creation in I, Frankenstein is more oblique than in other adaptations. This is due to the design of the story; the events follow on from the original, and therefore begin at the end of the original story with the death of Victor Frankenstein. These events are summed up in a short flashback sequence at the beginning of the film, and direct reference is given during this section to the monster's feelings about his creator. He mentions that he buried Frankenstein in the family cemetery, before saying very pointedly: 'It was more than he deserved.' The relationship can be summed up in this one phrase. The monster has nothing but contempt for the man who brought him into creation. The opening montage is designed to evoke a traditional image of the Frankenstein story, in contrast with the supernatural world created for the main body of the film. The creature himself narrates the montage, which gives the viewer the sense that we are hearing the story from the perspective of the character, and therefore it may be skewed by his viewpoint.

Both the opening and closing scenes are narrated by the creature, echoing the narrative framing device of the novel. Stuart Beattie's choice to bookend the film in the way can be seen as a customary framing device which is often used in film screenplays, but it can also be regarded as a key signifier of the main emotional element of the film, which is to say the relationship between the creature and his creator. The opening scene summarises the events of the novel, in which that relationship takes a central part. Then, the closing scene not only makes reference to the relationship but makes the boldest claim yet: by saying 'I, Frankenstein', Adam takes on the mantle on the father he has, throughout his life, hated and wanted to disown. In this one phrase, which also gives the film its title, the ties between Adam and his creator are eternally bound together. Therefore, all the other elements which make up the film must be considered in again in light of this pivotal development. While the film ostensibly tells the story of demons and gargoyles, by focusing on Adam's feelings about his creator in both the opening and closing scenes, Beattie demonstrates that the true meaning of the film is to be found in bringing to light more details about that central relationship.

The choice to use the creature as the narrator adds impact to the aforementioned line spoken over the cemetery scene, which gives the clearest indication of his views about his creator. Later in the film, there are hints that he feels some guilt about murdering Elizabeth, but this is never directly addressed. His continuing hatred of Frankenstein provides an interesting distinction from the interpretation many readers would take from the novel and other adaptations of the story, where the monster weeps over his creator's dead body. In I, Frankenstein, the monster is unable to come to terms with what he is, and he still blames the scientist for his unholy experimentation.

Aesthetically, Beattie made the decision to create a creature far removed from the hideous representations in films of yesteryear, such as James Whale's 1931 version.

This is in keeping with a general shift away from the idea of a hideous monster in films. Looking more ordinary, even handsome, and speaking eloquently in an educated voice, the theory is perhaps that a more complex character is created. It could be argued that this is more in keeping with Mary Shelley's novel, in which the monster was certainly unusual and disfigured but not to an overwhelmingly frightening extent. However, Beattie takes this idea much further. At one point in the film, Adam removes his shirt and shows off a muscular, attractive figure. Far from being presented as a monster, he bears more resemblance to the heartthrob leading man in a romantic blockbuster. It therefore becomes somewhat difficult to buy into the idea that this character is lonely and shunned by society. While he may appeal to audiences as a conventionally good-looking film star, it is hard to believe that he would really be cast aside from society. In fact, many people would be envious of his charm and physique. In this case, the decision by the director or, perhaps, the film studio, to proceed based on aesthetics rather than sticking to a more realistic looking monster is a mistake, as it detracts too much from the reality of the situation. We cannot believe that this creature has much reason to hate himself and thus, this hatred cannot be projected on to his creator in the way that we are led to believe it should be.

The creature is named Adam by Leonore, which bestows on him a humanity previously lacking. The fact that the queen of his captors treats him better than his own creator ever did, displaying clear signs of sympathy and imploring her minions to describe Adam as 'him' rather than 'it', perhaps solidifies this notion that Frankenstein failed him both by creating him in the first place, and then by abandoning him. Nevertheless, Adam is desperate to hold on to the journal which holds the secrets of his existence. Given his disdain for his creator, one might imagine that he would be eager to destroy the journal, and with it all evidence of the horror of his creation. However, he views the book as an essential part of himself, the only link to his history and his origin.

This could be seen as Adam requiring validation and clinging on to anything that offers a link with his originator. Despite his hatred for Victor, he still needs his memory. However, eventually he does destroy the journal by throwing it into the fire. This occurs as the film nears its conclusion and is therefore an obvious sign of the creature reaching a milestone in the journey of his life. With this act, he can finally banish his past. Cinematically, the use of fire enables the director to create a compelling image as well as the symbolism of the finality of the action. Also, the journal is open at a page which shows one of Frankenstein's sketches of the creature he was intending to bring to life. The heavy symbolism of this again shows that the director is not aiming for realism, but to get the message of the story across as visually as possible. Once the journal is burned, not only has that symbolic link with his past been extinguished, but also the contrast between the scientist's intentions and the reality that he has imposed on the world is made plain. However, while the intentions of the director may be apparent, the final effect of this seems to be closer to the story of the novel than the film, and is somewhat removed from the narrative of I, Frankenstein. Whilst it arguably works as a signifier of the creature we know from the novel reaching a significant point of his life, it has little connection with the demons and gargoyles which populate this film. This is, perhaps, a problem with trying to create a new world based around an existing, extremely familiar character. The audience's emotional investment is determined not just by the story unfolding before them, but also by their pre-existing knowledge of the character, and therefore the film feels somehow less complete. In destroying his link with his past, there is nothing now on Earth which connects Adam with his creator, and he can go forth and live a new life, with an identity of which he is in control. To truly create a new story, the film could have started at this point. The final words of the film suggest that rather than banishing his past, he is in fact embracing it. Given the confusion that has always existed between the name of the creator and the creation, it perhaps seems odd to

end the film with Adam declaring 'I – my father's son. I – Frankenstein'. Having burned the journal, and put his own history firmly behind him, to then declare that he has decided to take on his creator's name suggests a character who is still in the midst of confusion, and who may never truly escape the shadows of the past.

As Victor only appears briefly, as a corpse, it is impossible to glean much information about his own views about his creation. Getting rid of the creator shifts the emphasis entirely onto the creation. As the sole protagonist of this story, Adam's experiences can be explored without reference to his creator, although knowledge of his origin always lingers. Nevertheless, it creates him as a more singular character. It is mentioned that the gargoyles are aware of the Frankenstein myth, and also of the cruelty with which he treated Adam, but no mention is made of the motivations behind this other than several allusions to the scientific experiment. In the end, the redemption of Adam is shown by his acquisition of a soul. At this stage, Terra also describes him as 'him' rather than 'it'. Adam is finally able to say that he no longer needs the journal. Having a soul makes him as close to human as it's possible to be, and he can now sever ties with his past and, therefore, with Victor Frankenstein.

CHAPTER 6: CINEMATIC ADAPTATIONS OF THE *FRANKENSTEIN* MYTH

6.1   Bringing Characters to Life Onscreen

Bringing characters to life in film is a shared responsibility. The screenwriter creates the dialogue for the actor to speak. The actor, through words, actions, stillness, intonation and expression gives his or her portrayal of the character. Perhaps the most important part, however, is played by the director, whose understanding of how a character should be brought to life in order to fit in to the film as a whole. The character does not arrive as a predetermined figure with a set of rigid, inflexible characteristics. Eisenstein related that characterization, in order to give a genuinely living impression, is build up and unfolds before the spectator throughout the course of the action. Both the idea and the image of the character should be built up the events of a film unfold. Creating the image of the character, therefore, is a case of reproduction in the same way that in life, "new images are built up in the human consciousness and feelings" (Eisenstein, 1964).

In the first instance, the director has control over which actor will play which part. When creating a film, a director is looking not just for a performer, but the character itself. How they appear in the director's thoughts is how they will subsequently appear onscreen (Belázs & Carter, 2010). The actor then has to work towards realizing that vision, by expressing in just a few character features or modes of behaviour the elements which create the image desired by the writer, the director and by the actor himself (Eisenstein, 2014). This is a dynamic approach, meaning that the image of the character is not ready-made, but is created over tie, or born (Eisenstein et al., 1975). The character may change and evolve before, eventually, being put before the spectator, who will then bring their own perception to the image onscreen. A director's ultimate aim is that the perception of the spectator should very closely mirror their own. If the character is created well, it emerges fully formed and helps to create a satisfying

end product. Conversely, if the creative act is executed poorly, then the character will not come to life. As the basic material of film is the visible gesture, if what we see on screen is bad acting then this mistake will affect the entire film (Belázs & Carter, 2010).

In this chapter, the techniques used by directors to establish the personalities of their characters and inspire sympathy in their audiences will be discussed, looking in turn at each of the four adaptations which form part of this study.

6.2 Kenneth Branagh's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*

In Kenneth Branagh's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, the characters are designed with the style of the novel, and the times in which it was written, very much borne in mind. This is in keeping with Branagh's attempt to create a faithful adaptation. His film satisfies the Hollywood requirements to be categorised as "Gothic", conjuring up romantic landscapes and depicting authentic settings and costumes in a baroque style. The term "Gothic" in relation to film is linked to the genre of "horror". The term "horror" relates to works which cause fear, terror, shock and anxiety in the viewer (Joplin, 2006). Works which are considered "Gothic" tend to induce these feelings in the viewer. Why such negative emotions are sought-after by readers and cinemagoers is a subjective of conjecture. William Veeder suggests that the "Gothic" "acts as a counterdiscursive formation that fosters pleasure in terms of both psyche and society by the releasing of repressed affects and by the exploration of foreclosed topics" (p. 28). "Horror" and "Gothic" share many similarities and often intersect, but what distinguishes them is the form which "Gothic" stories take. They concentrate on themes of fragmentation and wandering outcasts who never find a home (p. 11). From a cinematic standpoint, "Gothic" films are based on the literature from the Gothic genre, although it is not necessarily as clear-cut a situation as simply referring to one genre.

"Gothic" elements are found in many different genres, usually in the form of introducing a nightmarish feeling.

Discussing his vision for the film, Branagh commented that his intention was to "create a fairy-tale world of primary colours, of large rooms, of space and size, of big buildings, of big nature" (Fuller, 2003, p. 72). The accentuation of natural forces is a technique used to make humans seem dwarfed by their presence, highlighting that people are helpless against the powers of nature which act upon them. In terms of shaping character identity, this is a significant decision on the part of the director. Creating huge, airy sets can have the effect of making the characters seem lost within a large world over which they have no control. In the case of Victor Frankenstein, when events begin to get out of hand, he is shown to lose control of his own destiny as external factors act upon him. The fact that these events were triggered by his own hand adds an inner sense of guilt, of letting the genie out of the bottle. Feeling responsibility for his plight lies at the heart of the character's existential woes and knowing that he cannot change what he did only makes the spiral of depression worse. Branagh's choice to film in large, spacious sets has an impact not just on Victor Frankenstein, but on the whole atmosphere of the film, and therefore on every character, major or minor. In effect, it creates a sense of the insignificance of people in relation to the wider world. When we consider a character's sense of isolation, this insignificance plays an important role. Clearly, the stories of these people do carry some significance, otherwise the story would not need to be told. And yet, despite their best efforts, the characters can only have so much influence on their lives, and no more. They are at the mercy of nature.

Conversely, the distance of these characters from their surroundings increases the power of the close-up, wherein the action moves directly into their personal space and

vision. Branagh makes good use of close-ups in this film. For example, in the shot of him peering through the gap in the wall and spying on the family, the close-up technique is used to convey the monster's emotions; curiosity, but also the "complex expression of his desire to see and his fear of being seen" (Heffernan, 1997). To see a face up close, isolated and enlarged, removes our awareness of the space surrounding it; we are alone with just the face, even if we have previously seen it as part of a crowded scene (Balázs & Carter, 2010). In the scenes where Victor's anguish is at its height, and in scenes where the monster is deep in thought or melancholy, Branagh makes effective use of close-ups to take us into their intimate space. Audience sympathy depends much on their connection with the pain of the characters, which these close-ups serve to highlight. Some critics, such as Stephen Hunter writing in The Baltimore Sun at the time of the film's release, felt that Branagh overdid the largeness, leading to an overwrought production which moved too fast and removed the intimacy by making the film into too much of a spectacle rather than a story. However, the quieter moments often work well in contrast with the fast-moving frenzy surrounding them.

In assessing Victor Frankenstein's identity in Branagh's film, Goodson posits a theory that Victor's struggle in the end turns out to be against himself (p. 19). Where it might be thought that he is fighting against death, or the unwillingness of the professors at Ingolstadt to see beyond the accepted science of the day, or the monster he has created, in fact his ultimate enemy is to be found closer to home. More than previous cinema takes, Goodson believes that Branagh captures the desolation in the romantic narrative which identifies with the artistic temperament, enabling a postmodern reading of the text. While Goodson argues that not everything within the adaptation is successful, the way it deals with self-understanding distinguishes it from other versions. Victor is driven by inner pain, which he believes to be madness, and this untamable mental pain is at the heart of his decision-making throughout (p. 21). Goodson explains

that the rounded nature of the Frankenstein character, as medical student, writer and diarist, separates him from the usual concept of the "mad scientist". His madness springs from within, from his eternal struggle, and does not just occur at the whim of some familiar notion of scientists as eccentric, lonely fantasists. It comes from his family background, the traumatic death of his mother, and also his temperament. He uses science as a distraction from his overwhelming mental anguish, from the inner prison of the depressive mind (p. 21). In this despair, he finds out much about himself, and not all of it is good. If we take the scenes we see to be a faithful representation of the tale he is relating to Walton, then Victor does not spare himself. He is conscious of his flaws and understands that he is battling against inner turmoil. Branagh, as both actor and director, captures these feelings and enhances them by keeping the action constantly moving.

Frankenstein is never given much time to dwell on his circumstances, as the quick, non-stop camera movements continually carry the story forward. Even when he is holed up in his laboratory, deliberately shunning the world, he is constantly working, and never allowed to rest for a moment. Therefore, while his situation feels desperate, it also feels like it is constantly getting worse, and he never has a still moment to look at ways of improving things.

The intention behind the camerawork was to transport the audience straight into Victor's fevered imagination (Fuller, 2003). To capture this, Branagh decided that the camera should move a lot. He described the camerawork as expansive and bright for the most part, although sometimes changing to a grimmer, darker style to reflect scenes such as the plague in Ingolstadt. This was partly done to reflect similar decisions made by Shelley in the novel, who conveyed these contrasts with stylistic differences. For his part, Branagh's co-producer Francis Ford Coppola wanted the film to have a lush,

accessible 'literary' style in the manner of his earlier film, Bram Stoker's Dracula (Braun, 1994). The camera moves around constantly, often swinging across the room or around the actors, circling them before coming back to the starting point. The film feels stylistically consistent throughout its runtime, which helps to build a believable reality. Once you are transported into the world of the film, the actions of the characters make sense within that world.

A question that is raised by Heffernan and others is why Victor was so frightened by his creation, given that he had spent so much time putting it together? In the novel, it is pointed out that the features he selects for his creature are chosen for their beauty, and yet in the process of assembling them they become hideous. Branagh's film goes some way to explaining the reaction by designing a monster covered in unsightly stitching, which looks like exactly what it is – reheated fragments of dead bodies, thrown together into an eclectic melting pot, rejecting each other even as the creature is reanimated and comes to life. The aforementioned close-ups of which Branagh makes creative use are noticeably absent when it comes to the face of the monster, which is never seen in great, close detail. Possibly, this is a conscious decision to retain some mystery about this most mysterious of creatures, but also it helps to strengthen the sense of reality if the make-up is not scrutinized too closely while the action unfolds. While we see his eyes, as in the previously mentioned scene where he peers at the family, the emotion they convey is enough without having to focus too much on the rest of him.

Once the monster appears, he obviously becomes the focal point of the film. In order to portray the part, it took twelve hours to apply the make-up to Robert De Niro. Much research went into how the character should look, bearing in mind the era in which the film is set. The first consideration was how limbs would have been stitched

together during those times, and then which parts of the body would be missing and the reasons for their absence. Branagh, working with the design team, considered whether the body should show any signs of disease that would have been present in the person from whom the body parts had been taken. They looked at photographs of facial reconstruction, plastic surgery, and crime scenes (Fuller, 2003). One green eyeball was deployed, to contrast with the other, human eyeball. Its creepy, glowing air adds to the creature's monstrosity. This look was achieved using contact lenses. Clay and plaster was used to create a cast of De Niro's body, in order that the design team could create different outfits for him. Only the eyes were left uncovered on his face, the rest covered with synthetic skin, specially designed so as not to lessen the effect of facial expressions. It is very important for the creature to be able to convey emotions despite its monstrous appearance. As well as the costume design, the way De Niro moves give the monster an air of otherness; he does not walk like a human being, and thus the audience know instantly when they see that movement on screen who he is, and that there is something different about him. This otherness increases the creature's sense of isolation. He is not normal, and he does not fit in. Therefore, as long as he behaves in a human fashion, we have sympathy for him. When he learns to read, and wants to become part of the family, the contrast between his human longing, and capacity for love, with his deformed countenance and awkward motion, enhance that sympathy. These are deliberate choices on the part of the filmmaker and actor. On the other hand, when he starts to behave in a monstrous, murderous fashion, the otherness paints him in an even more gruesome light, accentuating his monstrosity. A formalist approach to film theory asks us to consider whether a character is constituted in a certain fashion in order to tell the story, or whether it is because that is how the audience expects them to behave. In the case of Frankenstein's creature, as portrayed by Branagh's film, the answer is a combination of the two scenarios but veering more towards the former.

Whilst the behaviour of the character, and its general identity, is not broadly dissimilar in most respects to other versions of the Frankenstein story, its appearance certainly is unusual. It bears little relation with either the description in the novel, the "classic" film look established in such works as James Whale's 1931 film version. There are a few ways of looking at Branagh's decision. Firstly, the unusual appearance of the creature could be a deliberate attempt on Branagh's part to set his film aside from other versions, such as Whale's 1931 film, to make it stand out from the crowd. In one way, this is slightly at odds with his professed desire to create a film more faithful to the novel than any other adaptation. Had he stuck closely to Mary Shelley's description, then he would have come closer to accomplishing this feat. Therefore, the decision must be seen as a filmic one, in line with the formalist approach to film. It is more concerned with creativity than ideology; the most important thing is how the creature looks on screen, and the impact this has on the audience. Making him look like he has been assembled from the body parts of various corpses is in keeping with the character as written by Mary Shelley, but also looks effective before the camera. It does help the creature to stand out from other versions which are closer to the "classic" appearance made famous in Whale's 1931 version. Also, in terms of the impact it has on the character in terms of sympathy and isolation, it helps to clearly define how we are meant to view the monster. His appearance is, frankly, terrifying, which naturally isolates him from society. The reaction of the family when they catch him spying, for example, is a clear indicator of how "normal" society views this frightening spectacle of a creature. For the audience, this builds our compassion, even though we know the monster will, if the story unfolds as it does in the novel, eventually transgress and challenge our sympathy.

Another answer for the extreme reaction which Victor has to the monster is one put forward by the critic Ellen Moers, who feels that Frankenstein is demonstrating "revulsion against newborn life", the kind of post-natal response which affects some

mothers (Moers, 1974). Shelley had lost a child before writing the book, which perhaps influenced this section. The explicit manifestation of this in the film, with the monster hatching from a "great copper sarcophagus filled with water to make it a kind of womb", shows birth in its rawest form (Heffernan, 1997, p.135). The creation scene is, aesthetically, one of the most striking scenes in the film. While the original novel went into little detail about the 'birth' of the monster, Branagh recognised the cinematic possibilities of creating a gruelling, gruesome beginning for De Niro's creature. Branagh's attempt at fidelity to the novel is not undermined by this exaggeration of the creation, as fidelity is important for reconstructing historical accuracy in terms of sets and costumes; however, this should not be the entire point of the artistic exercise (Jackson, 2009). The scene is "slick with the creature's birth fluid" (Braun, 1994). Branagh endeavored to use as many "explicitly sexual birth images as possible" (Fuller, 2003), creating a laboratory filled with phallic tubes and a womblike sarcophagus. During the birth, amniotic fluid spills out of the sarcophagus, creating the slippery surface on which the creator and his creation tussle. The laboratory, with its enormous test-tubes full of bubbling liquids, is in keeping with the film-noir genre, creating an air of foreboding and menace. The simplicity of the creation in the novel is all that is required to convey the emotion of the situation, but in order to construct an exciting cinematic experience; Branagh chose to focus on chaos. The characters roll around on the floor of the laboratory, Frankenstein sticking needles into the monster, and there is a general air of disorder and confusion. Fast camera movement is again employed to bring these moments to life. Martinez mentions that the camera tracks Victor from behind, which "plays down the figure and plays up the anticipation of his destination: the Creature" (Lombardo, 1997, p.458). The impact of the scientist's rejection of his creature is stark; from the beginning of its time on earth, the creature knows only rejection and negative emotion, and the absence of love weighs him down.

The earlier death of Caroline in childbirth also shows creation not as a beautiful miracle, but as a bloody, chaotic, painful affair with potentially disastrous consequences. Branagh cuts into this scene without warning, deepening its horrific effect. From that moment on, Victor is a changed man, a man who no longer has a living mother. The inner self-loathing of Victor is later manifestly represented by the great horror he has unleashed. However, he does try to come to the creature's aid, trying to help him walk among the slippery birth slime which coats the floor. He is also distraught when he fears that he has killed his newly hatched creation. This differs from film to book; in Branagh's version, Frankenstein initially shows a more paternal side than the Victor of the novel. It does not last long, though. By the following scene, Victor has already fled in fear, leaving the newly awakened monster to brood on the most traumatic of early experiences, namely rejection and abandonment.

It is understandable, then, that the creature is downhearted. His terrible, frightening, stitched up appearance does nothing to endear him to people, and the second reaction he receives after that of his maker is the fear, abuse and brutal dismissal of rabid townspeople, who want nothing to do with this monstrous being. Importantly, the monster is shown as intelligent, evidenced by his ability to teach himself to read, write and speak. Ebert describes his emotions as all too human; a mixture of kindness, a desire to fit in, and finally kicking against his treatment with a vicious lust for revenge. The abandonment of the creation by its creator so early in its existence paints the creator as selfish in the extreme. He leaves the poor creature to fend for itself, unwanted and unloved, and thus the viewer is initially drawn to it with a great deal of sympathy. Events later in the film tarnish this somewhat, but the creature is shown as essentially excluded from any kind of welcoming society. Therefore, he is desperate for a soul mate and Victor denying him the chance of companionship with his own kind is the final straw. His revenge, while not justified, is comprehensible.

The relationship between Victor and the monster is explored by Branagh in one way which is absent from Shelley's novel. When the creature is confronting Frankenstein, he plays on his conscience, asking him whether he had ever given any thoughts to the consequences of his experiments. Barbara Johnson views the monster as a projection of aspects of Frankenstein's own self, and so being questioned by the monster is like he is interrogating himself. Therefore, he knows that he cannot lie. The answer is already known.   Branagh makes the film smaller when he approaches these confrontations, taking them out of vast expanses and focusing closely on the characters. Balazs highlights this framing technique as a deliberate way of ensuring the surroundings do not detract from the pathos of the situation, saying that while words can be meaningless, images never are (Balázs & Carter, 2010). The overt demand for a mate, and the later love rivalry between the creator and creation when Elizabeth is reanimated, are elements in which the film differs from the novel. In essence, they are both looking for love, a search which stirs up jealousy and conflict. The creature probably does love the new Elizabeth, viewing her as a kindred spirit with her disfigurement and stitching, but also the act of stealing Victor's beloved is the ultimate revenge.

6.2.1   Visual Techniques in Kenneth Branagh's Film

The film is visually striking, and the constant, stirring musical background accompaniment works with the images to engender a frenetic experience to the viewer. The cinematography is impressive from the start, with the opening sweep of the Arctic Circle. This is an early indication of the vast expanses of nature which punctuate the film. In her review, Perlman comments that "the barely visible glaciers of the Arctic and the raw wintertime of the Alps send shivers down the spine". However, she felt that the visual chills were not matched by psychological ones. Much of the artistic direction of the film concentrates on how it looks, possibly at times to the detriment of the drama it

is intending to create. The screen is often busy, and the fast, frantic camerawork often produces a dizzying experience, rather than a horrific or frightening one. The look of the monster, as well, could prove to be a distraction to some viewers. According to Gene Siskel, the horrifying appearance of Robert De Niro's monster could lead audiences to concentrate on studying how the bodysuit was made, "rather than looking for his soul". He posits that "character is typically found in the eyes" but felt that De Niro fell short in conveying this.

6.2.2   Music in Kenneth Branagh's Film

In those early scenes, Earl says that the music "acts almost as a cautionary alarm to the beast in the snow beyond", and the soundtrack continues to play a part in setting the scene throughout the movie. He describes the score as "intrusive", while also feeling that it is "enjoyably cranked up to full effect in moments of drama", with the background music coming in right on cue as dialogue ends, almost as if being used as markers. Lowry found "Patrick Doyle's relentlessly bombastic score…simply overbearing". The sweeping music is high in the mix, and the loudness fits in with the noise of the action onscreen. The relentless soundtrack elevates Branagh's desire to focus on the expansiveness of nature. The music is particularly dramatic during the creation scene, heightening the intensity of that pivotal moment.

6.3   Chris Carter's The X-Files' *The Post-Modern Prometheus*

The Great Mutato is portrayed throughout *The Post-Modern Prometheus* in a sympathetic light. The way he looks, the way he moves and the way he talks all combine to tug on the heart-strings of the viewer. Despite the dreadful things that we are led to believe he has responsibility for, the character is nevertheless drawn as one about whom the viewer should care. A major part of this characterization is the creature's loneliness; he is seen as a lonely being, shuffling sadly back into his hiding place and

eating alone. Loneliness is tied together with rejection, and before we even know the full story it is clear to see that the creature has suffered from the abandonment which plagues monsters in literature. Shunned for being different, the monster retreats into loneliness, without any companionship, and as a result becomes bitter and swears revenge on society. The X-Files plays with this concept, and although the viewer is led to believe that it is possible that Mutato is following that path, in fact he is at pains to point out the he has never harmed anyone. This is not quite true, but it does differentiate the character from other representations of Frankenstein's monster.

Chris Carter mentioned in the DVD commentary that his intention when directing this episode was to capture the spirit of classic horror movies, particularly those by James Whale. He plays around with style and from, conjuring up an affectionate homage to the Universal monster films from the early days of taking cinema. The use of dramatic lighting is one way in which this is achieved. It was this that led to the decision to shoot in black-and-white, to evoke the same atmosphere as those old-fashioned films. Another reason was the fairy-tale aspect of the story, which he felt could be best captured with the use of black-and-white. By doing this, the episode instantly had a different feel to other episodes, which emphasizes the magical qualities of the tale. Carter originally thought that recording in black-and-white would be easier, but soon realised that the opposite was true. More time was required by the Director of Photography, Joel Ransom, to light each scene, for him to fully consider the grayscale (Carter, Adlard, Petrucha & Kim 2015). Filming in black-and-white was certainly one of the biggest production decisions when it came to producing this episode. The lack of colour does not automatically create atmosphere, and the skill comes in the Director of Photography bringing out the contrast between dark and light, making use of silhouettes and the spaces between the shadows. It also helps with the realism of the monster's make-up, as the greyness does not show up any imperfections.

Clever camera-angles are employed to stop the Great Mutato being seen until near the end of the episode, but when he is the close-ups show a convincing monster in black-and-white. The make-up artist, Toby Lindala, approved of the decision, as he felt it helped to avoid regarding the prosthetic as "a painted, opaque, false translucency" (Fischer, 1998). Carter also felt that the use of black-and-white helped enormously in the scene which featured a house covered in red-and-white termite tenting. Shot in colour, it would have lacked the ominous feeling that it eventually inspired. The director believed that viewing this without colour hinted that "something evil and dark and bad was going on" (Carter, 1997). These dark hints of evil and wrongdoing help to create a feeling of unease. This is reflected in some of the characters, particularly that of Dr Pollidori. The creepiness of the character is enhanced in black-and-white. The lack of colour means the audience is taken out of the reality somewhat, and the doctor never quite gains our sympathy even before his villainy is revealed. Black-and-white conjures up a disquieting feeling, as though we are watching an old horror film rather than engaging with a hyper-realistic film or television programme.

The establishing shot of the house gave the viewer much information about Shaineh's situation, and the aforementioned shot of the house covered in termite tenting creating an unsettling feeling. The close-ups in the diner highlighted Mulder's uneasy feeling among these strange townsfolk. The angles captured the strangeness of their demeanour, and their forced smiles. Carter also uses tricks to convey the weird nature of the town, and the uniformity of its residents. When the agents leave Shaineh's house, behind them is a man raking leaves. The camera follows the agents, and the man turns up again in the background, in a place where he logically could not be. This was done to highlight that everybody in the town looks the same. Similarly, in the second diner scene, the same faces are seen in the same order as they were shown in the first scene. Their expressions have changed, to show that they no longer like or trust this strange

newcomer to their town, but they are still the same people. By evoking this strangeness, this feeling of a weird town in which non-locals will never quite be welcome, the feeling of isolation is ramped up. Mulder and Scully may be visitors, but they will never quite be part of the lives of these people. This is subverted by the ending, but until that section there exists in the town a sense of otherness shared by all its inhabitants, which rejects normality and is inhospitable to strangers. Given this situation, in order to make the Great Mutato stand out as an odd figure among a town full of odd folk, he is portrayed almost as a comical figure. This is heightened by the fact that he is literally shown as a cartoon character. He lurches around like the Hunchback of Notre Dame, and enjoys himself by singing Cher songs. Carter creates an entire darkly comic scene highlighting this facet of his character. Making him comic also heightens his tragic side. He is a tragicomic figure with a strange, loveless past full of rejection. However, he is also greatly loved by the doctor's father, creating a confused identity.

The element of yearning for a mate is present in the episode and ties in with one of the core concepts of The X-Files, as well as staying true to the Frankenstein myth. The lack of a companion, that other half to make one complete whole, exists within The X-Files in the form of the platonic relationship between its leads, Mulder and Scully. In the episode, not only does the creature long for a companion, but he also has somebody who is willing to help him to find one. On this point, the story differs from other versions, as the monster is generally left to its own devices, but Pollidori's father acts as a surrogate father to the creature and wants nothing more than to see his protégé happy. This relationship also affects the character in terms of the loneliness it suffers; the father-son bond between them means that the creature is not quite as lonely or isolated as other iterations of the monster. However, because the old man has to ensure that the creature remains hidden, so that his son will not know that he rescued it, and also so that the townsfolk will never discover this strange, monstrous being that they would surely

turn against, they are unable to act normally or develop an ordinary relationship. The creature remains the old man's guilty secret, and therefore the loneliness remains. He may have one friend, but will never be able to have another, and especially not one of his own kind unless the desperate experimentation comes to fruition. Carter portrays this isolation and loneliness by once again making the most of the black-and-white setting. The Great Mutato is hidden away in the shed, with eerie shadows and a looming sense of imminent discovery, shown by strategic camera placement and the use of subtle lighting techniques. The audience feels the sense of being cast aside, unwanted, and hidden from view like a guilty secret. Thus, whatever terrible secrets the creature is hiding are almost forgiven, given the huge sympathy we feel for the creature in contrast with the creator who abandoned him.

The relationship between the creature and the old man is fundamental when it comes to understanding the concept of identity in the episode. In most versions of the myth, it is the loneliness, and the feeling of being wronged by society, that leads the monster to swear murderous revenge. However, because of the ties between the old man and the creature, this is not part of the story in the "The Post-Modern Prometheus". The old man is willing to act in an immoral, illegal way in order to try to help. Despite the failures of his experiments, he is driven by a need to try to create happiness for the creature, at whatever cost. The bond that this creates between them is never more clearly illustrated than when the old man is murdered by his son. The creature realizes that the old man has met his death because of the son's disgust at his own creation, and therefore is mourning not just for the loss of Pollidori's father but also feels guilty at his role in the man's demise. This increases the sympathetic aspect of the character, as we know his guilt in this instance to be misplaced. Were it not for this sympathy, the concept of the episode would perhaps collapse in on itself. Considering what happens, in terms of women being impregnated with animal-human hybrids, it is not only

disgusting and indefensible but also completely ludicrous. In reality, it makes little sense that the townsfolk should bestow their forgiveness on him at all, let alone quite so easily. One speech, albeit such an impassioned one, would be unlikely have quite such an effect. However, because the character is painted in such a sympathetic light, the conclusion to that storyline does make some sort of sense. The people see genuine evil in Dr. Pollidori and recognize that the creature never had a chance of a normal existence. Therefore, they turn their anger onto the creator, and realize that they have misjudged the creation. Any blame for the wrongdoing is placed on the shoulders of Pollidori's father, and the viewer sympathizes with him because he is only trying to do the right thing by his adopted son. The father believes his son is the real monster, and the sense we get is that the Pollidori cares only for his own scientific triumph. The father takes the creature on as a surrogate son, perhaps in an attempt to finally forge the genuine father-son bond that he never achieved with his biological offspring. The speculative experiments of the father are an attempt to put right the wrongs his son had inflicted on the world. Nevertheless, despite these details, the episode attracted criticism and controversy from some quarters, the plotline being seen as condoning rape.

6.3.1   Visual Techniques in Carter's *The Post-Modern Prometheus*

The camerawork was specifically directed by Carter to increase the intensity of the performances by encouraging the actors to act directly to camera. This was achieved by using wide-angle lenses, complete with matte boxes on which were stuck photos of the actors with whom the actor in shot is supposed to be conversing. The actors are obviously not looking at those people while acting to camera, and the pictures are there as an aid to memory and to enhance the performance. The wide-angle lens technique gave the director the chance to create interesting, cartoonish angles by angling the camera low into people's faces. This cartoonish feeling is in keeping with the comic

book motif of the episode, but also takes the audience out of the reality and gives the characters and other-worldly feel.

This cartoonish aspect creates a contrast with the usual style of The X-Files, which errs towards the more natural approach. Again, this helps to distance this episode from others in the series. The thinking behind this is that the show is less scary if it is less believable but, in this episode, the cartoonish nature is amplified by the surrealism of some of the shots. The scene in the farmhouse where Dr. Pollidori confronts his father was filmed with four cameras, including one under the table. Added to the lighting effect, this was a very complex scene to film. The difficulty with filming in this wide-angle style is maintaining correct eye-lines, creating the need for camera blocking. Carter felt that he did not quite manage to solve the problem he had created for himself, which was only able to be rectified in post-production with the aid of clever editing (C. Carter et al., 2015). Nevertheless, the impact created by this filming style is certainly effective on many occasions. The intensity of the confrontation is amplified, ratcheting up the explosive relationship between father and son. It is in this scene where we first glimpse the true nature of the doctor, which we might previously have suspected but which had hitherto remained hidden. The use of four cameras gives the editor lots of different options as to how the scene should eventually play out. The choice of shots helps the scene escalate from confrontation into full-blown argument, and camera angles are chosen which best illustrate the doctor's anger at each stage, as well as his father's defensiveness and fear.

Throughout the episode, Dr Pollidori is shown to be a selfish man. There is never a sense that he cares about anything other than himself. His genetic experiments are conducted purely in order to prove his excellence in his chosen field, and with no regard to any altruistic desire to further scientific knowledge and help to improve the world.

Indeed, when questioned by Mulder as to why he is dabbling in genetics, he very proudly replies: "Because I can". He enjoys "playing God" and wants nothing more than to be considered a genius. This also spills over into his private life. He views children as monsters, and despite his wife craving to start a family he is unwilling to agree to her requests. As a result, his wife is sad and lonely. He is willing to think about the consequences of having children; he does not want them, as he feels they would ruin the life he has made for himself. Essentially, he is married to his work more than he is married to wife. He does not want children and will not have them just to make his wife happy. This foresight and concern for the impact children would have on his life is unfortunately not reflected in his work. He did not consider the consequences of his actions when creating the Great Mutato, and selfishly abandoned the creature when he realized it did not fit his image of what he hoped to create.

Set decoration was important in constructing the bizarre world of this episode. The director's instruction was that the set decorators, helmed by Shirley Inget, could go as far as they wanted to, and that nothing was out of the question. The doctor's house was deliberately cluttered with ornaments, which in black-and-white gave the house the look of a place where a mad scientist might live. Instantly on sight, the viewer is therefore let into the doctor's inner sanctum and discovers the kind of person he is. Clutter is redolent of a disorderly, untidy lifestyle. The diner was also decorated with a sense of well-meaning disorder, inducing the nostalgic feeling of old-time diners as well as capturing the cartoonish spirit of the episode. Again, this establishes a weird feeling of unreality, yet a familiar feeling at the same time, in which we can believe that these characters' lives are unfolding.

The Great Mutato is similar to the creature in the novel in the sense that it is able to feel human emotions. This is helpful in order to connect with readers' and viewers'

emotions. Without that connection, it would be more difficult to relate to the monster. The creature feels lonely, miserable and isolated, but also happy when he is in the company of the old man, and particularly when he is listening to songs by Cher. His devotion to Cher is one of the most important parts of his identity. It helps to make the creature more rounded as an individual, as someone who we know can become attached to things and develop fanaticism in the same way that ordinary humans do. We also know that he feels an innate longing for intimacy. At first sight, people do not realize that the creature is capable of these feelings and treat him very poorly. He is certainly also capable of grief. One of the most moving scenes concerns the discovery of the old man's body by the creature, which immediately breaks down in tears. This echoes the scene in the book where the monster finds Frankenstein's body and cries over it, although the difference is that the old man is not the creature's creator. The Great Mutato buries the old man, another sign of human feeling. He recognizes that the man is dead and wants to give him the dignity of burial. This shows how much he loved the man, for supporting and teaching him, and showing him companionship where the rest of the world turned its back. The sense of loss is heightened by the fact that he has lost his only protector. Without the old man around, he is truly alone, and any dreams of one day successfully creating a mate have vanished.

As mentioned, the make-up artist for the episode was Toby Lindala, who specialises in special effects. It took between five and seven hours to apply make-up to Chris Owens, who played the Great Mutato, on every day of filming. The cost of the make-up was $40,000, and it consisted of five pieces. He wore gloves, contact lenses and dentures. Owens was still able to speak despite being covered in several pounds of latex, for which he won the admiration of Lindala. The look of the character induces sympathy. Mutato is lonely due to the circumstances in which he finds himself, hidden from view in order to avoid terrible repercussions. Nevertheless, the hideous design of

the character suggests that loneliness and isolation would befall him whatever his situation. People fear his grotesque features, and yet there is still something in the design which makes him inspire pity and makes him, in a strange way, almost loveable. The character of Mutato has two mouths, and Lindala created a mask which actually allowed the second, animatronic mouth to move. At one point in the episode, shot on a freezing cold night, Owens' breath was visible. Breath was also added to the second mouth to enhance the realism. Carter felt he never quite captured the brilliance of the mask because of the black-and-white and the shadows (C. Carter et al., 2015). However, keeping the mask away from plain sight added a mysterious edge to the character. It led the audience, and other characters within the show, to question what they had seen. The character's air of enigma is an integral part of his identity; without the mystery, he would lose much of his impact.

One of the most striking aspects of the Great Mutato's character is his love of the singer Cher. The character's identity is intrinsically tied to this fanaticism, as it is one of the dominant parts of his personality. In particular, this passion stems from Cher's role in the film Mask, in which she played the mother of a deformed son (Bowden & Science, 1948). The boy suffers from Craniodiaphyseal dysplasia, which causes facial deformity. The Great Mutato bemoans that he has never known a mother's love, while the creature in Mask was lucky enough to have Cher's character as his loving mother. The character is shown watching the film, and dancing along to Cher's music. At the end of the episode, Mulder and Scully take him to a Cher concert which, with the possible exception of creating or meeting a likeminded companion, is the fulfilment of the creature's ultimate dream. Giving the creature a celebrity to obsess over is another way of increasing the sympathy and making him more relatable. The fact that his connection to the celebrity is clearly signaled, Cher's character being his ideal of motherly love, only helps to cement this.

6.4   Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie*

Like The Post-modern Prometheus, the creative decision was taken to release Frankenweenie in black-and-white. The director, Tim Burton, made this decision on the aesthetical basis that it would give the film an eerie feel, and the lack of colour would automatically make it stand out against the vast majority of modern films which are released in colour. It was actually shot in colour, according to executive producer Don Hahn, because the chips in the cameras capture everything in colour. Once it was shot, each scene was then converted to black-and-white. Miller suggested that the desolate, colourless setting was designed to give aesthetic pleasure, playing on the audience's emotions. Just as in the case of The Post-modern Prometheus, the decision does imbue a strange, other-worldly quality on the film, which has an impact on the viewer. Again, it transports the viewer into times past, invoking the spirit of classic, old-fashioned horror movies. The effect this, allied with the way the characters are drawn, has the effect of giving even the friendlier, more well-meaning ones an air of menace. However, the film opens with the familiar Disney logo in full colour. This then dissolves into black-and-white, with an eerie full moon and a crack of lightning, signalling that this is not going to be a cosy family film, but something a little more disturbing. These initial moments are very effective, as they use an existing idea with which the audience is already conversant before twisting it into something new, yet also familiar. This is analogous of the film as a whole, as it takes the story of Frankenstein, with which many are accustomed, and subjects it to a fresh approach to create a new story with underlying recognisable themes. As mentioned, the black-and-white filming also captures the essence of old movies. We know we are about to see something new, but also something nostalgic.

6.4.1   Visual Techniques in Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie*

Following the Disney opening, the first real scene of the film focuses on a film that Victor has made himself, intercutting with shots of his family watching it, wearing 3D glasses. This is our first glimpse of this bizarre world in which the story takes place. The characters have a very distinctive look, enhanced and given ambience by the lack of colour on screen. The look of the people and places is timeless, in a way which Burton has a habit of bringing to his work. It could be set in the present, but equally it could be taking place in the 1950s, or anytime in between. In a sense, this timelessess stops Burton's work from truly ageing. It does not feel dated, because it was never really of its time in the first place. Also, it means that the characters do not belong to any one particular era, and thus can exist as their own, unique beings. Eisenstein said that a film needs to live and breathe to act upon the spectator, and Burton brings the whole world of the film to life.

Burton stated that he used stop-motion techniques in this film to present something new and fresh to the audience. His love of stop-motion is because "it's got to do with giving things life" (Cox, 2012, p. 419), which bears obvious comparison with the Frankenstein myth itself. The more alive the characters feel, the more the spectator cares about them, and gets swept along by their story. The peculiar movements of the characters serve to embolden their quirky characteristics. The facial features, the movements of the eyes and the way they speak all make them relatable and likeable, despite their strangeness. Even the bad characters have charm, because of the way they are drawn.

The job of the designers was to visualise relations between the real and the unreal, beween life and death. Mingjue Helen Chen, the set designer, described the importance of animation sets in providing a stage for characters, story and all of the action that

occurs in the world of the film. Painstaking attention to detail is required in each frame to best facilitate the telling of the story. The set design must be completed in a way which aids both the camera and the story. Visualising the look of the film from an aesthetic standpoint, bearing in mind lighting, texture and stylisation, was the key to capturing Burton's vision for Frankenweenie. The look of the film is completely ingrained in the finished production. Without its singular style, the script would fail to spark, as the one thing relies upon the other. In this way, the importance of assessing film from the standpoint of film theory rather than literary theory is underlined and becomes crucial. As Balazs puts it, "the artistic nature of film resides in the power and subtlety of its images and its gestural language" (Balázs & Carter, 2010, p.19). The story alone is an interesting take on the Frankenstein myth, but relies heavily on the visual. For example, as a radio play it would lack much of what makes it fascinating. The way the characters look, move and speak, in a physical sense, is all part of who they are. They could not exist on the page, or in any other non-visual medium, in the same way. Also, had Burton used real-life actors and action then the overall effect would not have been the same. One of the most important reasons for this is that the "monster" in this version is the dog, which works superbly as an animated concept but would lack authenticity as a live-action spectacle.

One of the connections between creatures across the whole spectrum of monster literature is the issue of isolation and loneliness, of resentment at their plight and an inability to form relationships or gain sympathy from other people. As a consequence, the loneliness is self-perpetuating; the more they drive away others due to their frustrations, which often manifest themselves in violence, the lonelier they become. However, in Frankenweenie, although some of these factors are at play, the main relationship at the core of the film differs from what would normally be expected. The concepts of loneliness and love can both be found in the very close relationship between

Victor and Sparky. The bond that exists between them is incredibly strong. Their relationship exhibits the features of co-dependency. It is a clear example of love, which motivates the actions of both characters throughout the film. The loneliness aspect is intertwined, as Victor forms this relationship with his dog at the expense of any social interaction with his peers. It is easier for him to accept the unconditional love of his pet, rather than seeking the approval of the other children from school. For this reason, his parents are worried about him. For Victor, though, the situation is perfect, as he does have someone to love, and to love him, but can also concentrate on his science and his film-making without interference. From a human perspective, he would still be considered to be living a lonely life, as he has only an animal for companionship, and when Sparky is killed it means he is left alone.

The creation of the handmade, hand-painted puppets and sets took two years. The puppets were created by Ian Mackinnon and Pete Saunders, whose main task was to ensure that Sparky was perfectly depicted. It was felt by Burton that Sparky was the spirit of the film, and if they got him right then the others would follow. This was true both artistically and pragmatically, as the size of the other characters also depended on how big Sparky was. Burton was keen for Sparky to be something a bit different, and not to be an identifiable breed. The animation director, Trey Thomas, said that Burton was keen not to anthropomorphize the dog, wanting it to come across as a real animal rather than a humanoid. However, he also wanted it to be capable of expressing emotion (Salisbury, 2012). That the dog could express emotion was obviously vital in fully communicating its relationship with Victor, which is the central relationship in the story. A cold, emotionless dog would not inspire a great deal of sympathy, whereas a realistic dog wins the heart of the viewer from the start and keeps it until the very last scene and beyond.

When Victor brings Sparky back to life, he is motivated by both love and loneliness. He cannot live without his faithful friend, both because he loves him but also because without him he has nobody. Unlike other versions of Frankenstein, in Frankenweenie the creator does not fear his creation. He does, however, hide him away. This is because he does not want others to see the resurrected dog, because he worries that people might be frightened. Therefore, he leaves Sparky alone in the attic while he goes to school. Although this is not the same kind of abandonment that Frankenstein bestows on the monster in the original story, it still means that the creation is left alone and confused. In fact, this is an interesting new direction for the story to take, as it is a form of abandonment, but not for a selfish purpose. Victor is trying to safeguard his beloved dog, to protect him from an uncaring society. For the dog, this leads to feelings of isolation and alienation, which is why he escapes to try and find his master.

Production designer Rick Heinrichs, who had worked with Burton on many occasions, designed the sets. The town looks like a very familiar American suburbia setting, but with a Gothic feel to it in keeping with Burton's signature style. The sets were painted black and white or grey, in order to look as good as possible in the final edit. Burton described the artists as "actors, breathing life into inanimate objects" (Salisbury, 2012, p. 23). The style of the sets bears similarity with The Post-modern Prometheus, in which the feeling of American suburbia was captured by Chris Carter, particularly in the scene set in the old-fashioned diner. Again, as with the episode of The X-Files, Burton deliberately creates this setting to give the town a sense of being instantly recognizable, but also slightly out-of-this-world. The unsettling feeling this creates acts on the viewer throughout. It also makes every character seem a little odd and displaced from normality, yet perfectly normal within this world. This has the effect of distancing the viewer from who is supposed to be good, and who is supposed to be the monster. Once the set was created using actual props, the camerawork was able to

float among it, exploring every corner and getting into the shadows. This works particularly well in the pet cemetery, where Sparky's exhaustion and loneliness are perfectly captured by the cameras (Diestro-Dópido &sound, 2012). The camera follows him and sees him wearing himself out, capturing his desperation and sadness.

After people discover that Sparky has been reanimated, it turns out that Victor was correct in his assumptions that people would fear him. His own parents, for example, react in a terrified way. This is partly because of Sparky's monstrous appearance, having been stitched back together, but also largely because they were not expecting to see him. The fact that he had been brought back from the dead played on their fears and superstitions and made them fear the dog. Their reaction is bewildering to Sparky, who is used to receiving love from his owner's parents. This reaction adds to his alienation, and he runs away again. Later, others blame him for many of the problems which befall the town, even though it is the other reanimated corpses which are running amok. Redemption only comes when he finds himself in a position to be able to rescue Elsa's pet, at which point he finally wins over the townsfolk and gains their sympathy. It seems at first that it is too late, as he has once again died, but the people use their car batteries to help bring him back to life once more. The story therefore ends on a positive note compared to other versions, and there is no lingering possibility of loneliness or rejection. The film ends on a loving note.

Alongside love, there is also a sense of longing in Victor's desire to bring back Sparky. The contrast between his motivations and those of his classmates make this clear. When they resurrect their own dead animals, they do it simply to give them a chance of winning the science fair. The science teacher suggests to Victor that it is only because he resurrected Sparky through love that his experiment was successful. As an example, he says that the reason the goldfish experiment ended ultimately in failure was

because he did not conduct it for the right reasons. The point being made here is that if we act through love, good things will happen. By contrast, his classmates bringing back to life their own animals only in order to prosper in the competition leads to outright disaster, inflicting upon the town creatures who are more akin to the conventional monster in monster literature. They are horrifying and pose a very real threat to the people of the town. Love, therefore, plays a big part in the moral purpose of the story. Unlike in the novel, where Frankenstein creatures the monster out of an egotistical need to prove himself as a scientist, young Victor, despite his scientific ability, is concerned only with the love he feels for his pet. Perhaps this is why Frankenweenie has a happy ending, while other versions do not. Being overly concerned with one's ego tends to drive people to self-destruction, as they can never truly be satisfied.

The actual process of stop-motion animation requires precise, patient work over countless hours. Every gesture, from gesticulation to the simple act of blinking, must be executed "frame by laborious frame", and a whole week's work harvests only five seconds of footage (Salisbury, 2012). The puppets had to be manipulated and moved twenty-four times to produce one second of action on screen, meaning that it took a week to film a whole scene (Cox, 2012). While the process is painstaking, it is also necessary in order for the characters to convey emotion. Without facial expressions, for example, they would come across as robots, and humans with robotic movements inspire less sympathy than fully mobile, expressive ones. The animal characters in the film move realistically, whereas the movement of the humans is odder and makes them seem other-worldly and weird. The personality of the animals shines through more than that of the human characters, perhaps for this reason. Many of the children, for example, rely on knowledge of existing characters from monster literature in order to fully appreciate them, rather than existing in their own right (Ruggiero). In other ways, though, the strange movement of the humans adds something to their personality. The

science teacher is a good example of this. His strangeness, allied with his brash nature when telling the parents of the children what he thinks of them, is complemented and enhanced by the weird movements of his puppet. In a town full of odd people, he stands out as one of the oddest and yet, at the same time, one of the most interesting and memorable. The fact that he is memorable for the viewer helps to explain why he would also have a big impact on Victor Frankenstein.

As well as the presence of love, it is also the desire for love which helps to define the characters in the film. Just as in the novel, the creation wants to form relationships and make friends with people. The need for love is intrinsic in the character, and this is perhaps one reason why Burton chose to portray the character as a dog, an animal which is known for showing great affection to humans. It is not just love in the form of human companionship which Sparky seeks, however. He is also drawn romantically to Elsa's dog, a relationship which is shown throughout the film, and the consummation of which, in the form of a kiss, brings about the culmination of the film. The dog displays human emotions, despite being an animal, in the same way as the monster in the novel, which will also never be truly human.

6.5   Stuart Beattie's *I, Frankenstein*

Loneliness is present in I, Frankenstein from the very beginning. The film begins with a recap of events from the original story, concluding with the fact that the monster was now left roaming the earth, completely alone. It is clear from his words and actions that he is bitter about the treatment he has suffered, when he says that burying his creator in his family cemetery was "more than he deserved". There is a double meaning to this. Firstly, it reveals that the character has no fondness towards his creator, even in death. From this, many of the monster's characteristics can be explained. Secondly, it is interesting that the hostile comment is made in reference to a burial at a family

cemetery, as it highlights the point that there would be no such option for the monster. Were he to die, there would be no family to bury him alongside. The closest he has to family is Frankenstein himself, who he despises.

The film begins with a flashback sequence, with a "more-or-less accurate two-minute rundown of Shelley's original novel" (Barker, 2017, p. 47). This brings the viewer up to date and sets the scene for the film. The new story begins with a voiceover telling us that Adam has been walking the earth for two hundred years, and so he transitions from the 18th century opening scenes into a modern-looking city. The city is gothic in design, with striking architecture and ancient cathedrals. Stuart Beattie, the Australian director, chose to film in Melbourne. Although the city is not known for its gothic architecture, it was chosen for its versatility, and the director was able to faithfully recreate an authentic-looking European city. Much like Branagh's film, the gothic is very important when it comes to understanding I, Frankenstein. Beattie creates a world in which incredible, fantastical things happen to an assortment of creatures of various types, but they are all grounded in a recognizable gothic world, which helps to place it in the mind of the viewer as a typical setting for a horror movie.

As an adaptation of a graphic novel, visuals are very important in the film. Production designer Michelle McGahey visualised a city which was empty and cold, and "clean but messy in the corners", basing it on European and Eastern Bloc cities. The emptiness and coldness are important in building a world from which it is conceivable that Adam has been displaced, condemned to walk around for thousands of years. It feels like a detached world, and for Adam that has been the case for many centuries. He is isolated and alone, one of a kind with no hope of finding a soul-mate. He has no realistic prospect of ever escaping his turbulent past, no matter how hard he tries, or how long he runs away from it. The set design plays a large role in making us feel that

we are witnessing a familiar world which has undergone many changes. Weirdly, for some reason we are in the rooftops, again adding to a sense of isolation. Later, we find out that this is because the demons live above the city, and the humans live below. Humankind is kept separate, and Adam is stuck somewhere in the middle.

The imagination and creativity are there on screen for all to see. Ross Emery, the director of photography, chose to film with the RED Epic HD camera system, which enabled him to take risks and gave the actors more freedom to react to the story and each other. He also used different colour palettes, selecting colours which fell between pure primary ones, to contrast the three worlds of the film, demon, gargoyle and human. This helped to create a distinctive world and highlighted the fact that the film is a fantasy. Most versions of the Frankenstein story have been science-fiction, but the addition of demons and gargoyles marks I, Frankenstein out as something extremely different. As a consequence, we are never sure exactly whether people are what they claim to be. For example, we do not know for absolute certain who is human, as there is always the possibility that they may be a demon in disguise. There is nothing in the human performances to suggest this other than a somewhat sinister edge to the character played by Bill Nighy, but that could also be explained by the character's narcissism. Nevertheless, we are placed on alert by the strangeness of the setting.

The monster's rejection by society in this instance is not necessarily a consequence simply of his monstrosity. The fact that he killed Elizabeth means that he is an outcast in a more traditional sense; one who has taken a life, a murderer. Apart from the fact he is running away from that dark element of his past, it is possible that he is also tortured by the knowledge of the crime he committed, and therefore he banishes himself from society as much as society banishes him. He is alienated and alienates himself further by acting violently towards others. He first encounters sympathy from

Leonore, the Queen of the gargoyles, who regards him as a being with feelings rather than a soulless robot. She tells the other gargoyles to refer to the monster as 'him' rather than 'it', and also gives him a name, Adam. She asks him to stay, to be a part of the community. Adam spurns this chance to overcome his loneliness, determined to continue walking around the world forever. At this point in the story, it seems that he has no desire for acceptance or love. Perhaps he has travelled too far by then and is now incapable of believing that he could ever truly be accepted by any society. He has been roaming the earth for two hundred years and is unmovably set in his ways.

6.5.1   Visual Techniques in Stuart Beattie's Film

Much of the look of the film depends on the appearance the different, non-human lifeforms; the gargoyles, the demons and Adam himself. Cappi Ireland, the costume designer, envisioned the gargoyles as "an ethereal, monastic warrior group", which meant they had to be powerful but also vulnerable. She decided to stay away from gladiator uniforms, concentrating more on warrior monks. The costumes were purposely aged to make them look as though they had seen centuries of battle. While we know much of the backstory of Adam, this little detail clues us into the fact that these creatures have a vastly greater lifespan than humans. They live for many hundreds of years and have seen much war and conflict during that time. Naberius was designed to be evil but elegant, bringing out the sinister nature of the character. Adam was supposed to look unusual but reasonably normal, so that he could pass for human after two hundred years of his scars healing, but still stand out as being something different. In each of these cases, the look of the characters is designed to have an impact on the viewer. In the case of Naberius, we should be mistrustful and fearful, while with Adam we should believe that he is generally a force for good and has been cruelly wronged by fate. The responsibility for the make-up lay with a company called Make-Up Effects Group, whose job it was to make-up a range of fantastic characters who would look

perfect against the gothic backdrops. Beattie wanted the demons not to be caricatures, but "dark, twisted riffs on human form". Aaron Eckhart, who played Adam, said: The team put a lot of thought into the scars around Adam's face and body. We looked at the scars as an ingenious way of telling Adam's story. The decision was made that there would be no bolts on his neck, or stitches on his forehead (Dilley, 2014). Effects supervisors Nick Nicolaou and Paul Katte based their design on pictures of people with wrinkles and solid jaws, then distorted them to create a demonic look. Adam, it could be argued, looks rather too good for a creature who has been roaming the earth for many epochs. Balazs stated "a film star has to be beautiful", suggesting that this could be an indication of cinema's lack of interest in the human soul and spirit, focusing instead on the "emptily decorative" (Balázs & Carter, 2010, p.23). Adam would, perhaps, inspire more sympathy were he to show a few more signs of having suffered over the years, and were he to be portrayed by a less conventionally good-looking actor. However, the main concern of film studios is to make money, which often overrides such considerations as the main star looking jaded and disheveled, whether the character calls for it or not.

Full-head prosthetic make-ups, using silicone faces and foam-latex cowls, were designed for the demons. Originally, this meant sculpting them, getting them right, and then adding details and making the moulds. The company was responsible for all the design and concept. After casting was complete, the designs were then fitted to the actors. The purpose of the demons is to be the villains, to scare and intimidate. They are given no redeeming features and are purely a tool to introduce an opponent for Adam. Silicone appliances and prosthetic transfers were used to create Adam, who had two different versions in the film. At the beginning, in the flashback sequence, he was heavily scarred and more in keeping with the traditional idea of the monster. For the remainder of the film, he was cleaned up, and more handsome and rugged. The flashback version featured prosthetics for the stitched-up arm and a hand-punched

eyebrow, while the main version used prosthetic transfers. The horns for Naberius were made from hard, two-part foam. The make-up for that character was also transferred to a stunt actor, using the features of Bill Nighy's face to make it recognisable (Hall, 2014). The attention to detail and realism, despite the fantastical scenario, is commendable, although the demons never really inspire any real fear and, as such, fail somewhat in their role of creating sympathy for Adam. There is never a feeling that Adam is in real danger, although the plot attempts to make us believe that he is.

In contrast to the painstaking work of the artists to perfect the look of the demons, the gargoyles, in their shape-shifted state, were created entirely by computer graphics at Beattie's behest. Beattie wanted to take them from the cathedrals and bring them to life, saying: "What I loved about the idea of gargoyles is that they are just so cinematic" (cinemareview, 2014). In order to do this, he felt that CG was the only way to believably create these unusual gothic creatures, as prosthetics would not have made them look real enough. James McQuaide, the visual effects supervisor, oversaw the transformation from gargoyle to human, which had a nice look due to the use of flowing garments and capes (Hogan, 2014). The process involved them wrapping their wings around themselves, before materialising as a human. The trickiest part of the operation was making the transition from stone to robe, and vice versa, seem real in terms of texture. Using CGI brings the problem of conveying real emotion, although in the case of the gargoyles this was not necessarily an issue. They are living versions of stone objects, and so in keeping with their character should be cold and emotionless. The transition scenes are certainly effective as a visual feast, but the characters never really seem to come to life in the way, for example, Tim Burton's stop-motion creatures do in Frankenweenie.

6.5.2   Other Monsters in Stuart Beattie's Film

Unlike other adaptations, the creature in Beattie's film is not the only monster. The demons, soulless entities looking for host bodies, are also monstrous as, it could be argued, are the gargoyles. Despite this, it is still difficult for Adam to break out of his loneliness and alienation. Although the two communities the film focuses on are not human, they are nonetheless still communities from which he is excluded. Leonore asks him to join the gargoyles, but even if he did, he would never be one of them. He is cursed to always be lonely, as there is no other entity like him. In other versions of the story, of course, he longs for a mate to be created, but this is not a feature of this particular adaptation. There is no sense that he is longing for anything or anyone, apart from to find some sense of peace within himself.

6.5.3   Special Effects in Stuart Beattie's Film

The special effects in the film are complemented by the stunt work. The stunt supervisor was Chris Anderson, whose challenge was to ensure that each of the many battles brought something new to the film. Also, the action had to look real, and reflect the fact that it was the actual actors and not stunt people performing in the action scenes. Eckhart performed his own stunts, learning the art of Filipino Kali stick fighting to help Adam win one particular fight (Dilley, 2014). An actor performing his own stunts adds realism to the end product. Even carefully chosen stunt performers often have something about them which signifies they are not the real thing. Camerawork played an important part in making sure that the battle scenes looked as real as possible. Beattie "keeps his camera in constant motion throughout", and this dizzying effect is matched by the loud volume of the score and the sound editing (Barker, 2017). The cameras are swept in to show Frankenstein in isolation, pulled backed to focus on the fighting, and generally used to make the most of the city skyline and the flying, battling creatures (Hogan, 2014). The film was post-converted into 3D, which led to its release

being delayed by a year. Post-conversion sometimes looks a little empty, but the heavy use of green screen and CGI, as well as large, cavernous locations like the cathedral and the laboratory, means that the cinematography works well in 3D. The spacious locations, like in Branagh's film, help to convey a sense that the individual characters are small, and are being acted upon by the much larger forces of nature.

The spiritual aspect of the film is one that cannot be ignored when analyzing the characters and the concepts of love, loneliness and isolation. Leonore describes the journal as "written proof that God is no longer the sole creator of man", and this comment again reveals the 'otherness' of Adam. It says that he is regarded as a man, as opposed to a demon or a gargoyle, and yet he is still not really a man as he was not born to a mother. A belief in God is shown when Gideon takes the journal and says, "may God forgive me". Later, Adam tells Gideon to remember that he has no soul. Gideon says, "God will surely damn you", to which Adam replies "he already did", which shows that Adam feels that the universe has treated him unfairly. The concept of good or evil is explored in different ways to other adaptations. Usually, it is accepted that the personification of evil in the story is in the form of the monster, although there are also questions raised about the presence of evil in the scientist who created him and the society which shuns him. In I, Frankenstein, Adam is fighting against evil. He says he will "hunt those who are hunting me", referring to the demons, the true purveyors of evil.

In the two centuries that have passed since Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was first published, innumerable adaptations have appeared on stage and screen. Adaptations have varied from the very faithful to those inventive portrayals which take inspiration from the novel but bear only the merest of resemblances to the original story. In terms of cinema, there have been more than forty film adaptations of *Frankenstein*, and the thirst for new versions of the story shows little sign of abating. Finding new ways to bring the story to life onscreen is a constant necessity for writers and directors who wish to tackle this instantly recognisable cultural myth, as there is a need to ensure that a fresh angle is found in order that audiences are not just subjected to a stale retread. The four film versions chosen for this study each take a very different approach, and each instance provides a fresh, interesting take on a familiar theme.

7.1 Fidelity

When analysing the adaptations, one of the key areas considered was fidelity. As a starting point, looking at how faithful each movie or television programme was to Mary Shelley's novel provided an early indication of how each director had approached the challenge of bringing *Frankenstein* to the screen. In order to ensure that a wide range of approaches were considered, the four adaptations assessed in this study were carefully chosen to represent different types of adaptation. While they all reference the novel, some of them do it in a more oblique way. For instance, Chris Carter's *The Postmodern Prometheus* references the subtitle of the novel in its own title, and contains many of the familiar tropes associated with the novel and with other adaptations, such as a monster shunned by society and angry townsfolk marching with lit torches. However, there is no direct crossover between the plot of the episode and that of the book. The characters have different names, different back-stories and exist within the already well-known

world of *The X-Files,* which had been established over the course of four previous seasons. In stark contrast, Branagh's film, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, makes a conscious effort to stay close to the novel, even though it differs in various significant ways. It could be argued that this makes the challenge of creating a fresh version of the story even more difficult, for a few reasons. Firstly, a director who wishes to take this approach faces the obstacle of satisfying an audience with prior knowledge of the story and the characters. With this comes a level of expectation as to how those characters will look and how they will behave. While some scholars, such as Beja (1979) have questioned whether fidelity is even possible given the wide-ranging differences between literature and film, nevertheless a film which attempts to be faithful to its source material will always encounter comparisons. In the case of something with history of adaptation like Frankenstein, the comparisons are not just with the novel; many people watching new Frankenstein films will have seen different adaptations in the past and will therefore hold new works to a certain standard. Branagh rises to this challenge by creating a monster who bears no resemblance to the 'classic' image of movie Frankensteins, as depicted in versions such as James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931). The creature also differs from the description written by Mary Shelley, who envisioned an eight-foot-tall, repulsive being, covered in translucent yellow skin under which the arteries and muscles could clearly be seen. In fact, Branagh's creature is almost a cross between what Mary Shelley imagined, and the work of previous film directors such as Whale. Apart from one brief description, the actual look of the creature is never referenced in the novel. Branagh created a monster which was unlike other depictions in order to help the film stand aside from the many other versions.

In creating his film, Branagh embraced the visual style of Mary Shelley's writing. From the start, using Shelley's own words over the opening shots is an indication that this is to be a faithful representation of her story. Those elements of the

story which lend themselves to visual interpretation are utilised throughout, beginning with the sweeping shot of the North Pole. Some changes are made for cinematic reasons; for instance, the death of Victor's mother is far more gruesome and visual in Branagh's film than in the novel. In this case, the vivid, bloody death was inserted by the director as it created a more filmic experience than the death from scarlet fever which occurs in the book and would be more difficult to bring to life in an interesting, memorable way. Throughout the film, where the story follows a different path from the novel there is usually a cinematic reason for this. Minor changes to characterisation aside, the changes are usually made on the basis that the screenwriters and director believe a more visual spectacle can be created by altering sections of the story. The love story between Victor and Elizabeth is heightened in the film, allowing loving shots of the couple in keeping with Hollywood expectations of films containing love stories. While Branagh has a recognisable style all of his own, in keeping with auteur theory, there are also certain requirements placed on filmmakers by studios, especially in relation to blockbuster films with large budgets such as this one. Therefore, changes made to the story by Branagh must also be considered as necessities imposed by the studio in order to sell cinema tickets. Branagh himself considered storytelling to be more important than the technical aspects of filmmaking, but as a filmmaker this can only have an impact to a certain extent. In the final summation, Branagh created a film which aimed for fidelity, and achieved it up to a point, but which was also conscious of the need to look, sound and feel effective onscreen.

The contrast between Branagh's film and Chris Carter's episode of The X-Files, *The Post-Modern Prometheus,* in terms of fidelity is clear from the start. Carter's work stays true to the spirit of the Frankenstein story, introducing a creator, a creation and a society which shuns the 'monster'. However, as a 'free adaptation', the characters, settings and storyline are all significantly changed. Mary Shelley's story was used as

inspiration, rather than as an exact blueprint for the plot of the episode. Therefore, Carter made use of recognizable tropes, such as torch-wielding villagers, in order to facilitate the telling of his own story, which in fact was just the latest entry in a long-running drama serial revolving around two well-known central characters in Mulder and Scully.

As with *Frankenweenie, The Post-Modern Prometheus* was shown in black-and-white, in order to evoke nostalgic feelings in the viewer, who is reminded of horror films of yesteryear. In this sense, Carter is referencing earlier film versions of Frankenstein, such as James Whale's 1931 classic, more than the original novel. The naming of characters after other people from Frankenstein and other horror stories is another nod to the whole cultural phenomenon of Frankenstein, as much as it is to the novel. The struggles of the creature, who is outcast from society and has a great desire for belonging, mirrors that of Shelley's creation, but the way the storyline progresses is very different. This is an example of Carter putting his own stamp on the material, rather than just rehashing what has come before. Regarding this, in contrast with Branagh's film, it could be argued that it is easier for Carter to create an original work which stands apart from others, as there is less scope for direct comparison. However, Carter is faced with the task of establishing a wholly original cast of characters and telling an entire story with them in just one hour.

Despite the black-and-white nature of *The Post-Modern Prometheus*, which harks back to earlier film portrayals, the story is in fact a contemporary take on the events of the novel. In this way, it is oddly contradictory; it is deliberately made to look like an old-fashioned piece from the classic days of Hollywood horror, and yet its themes were modern for the times in which it was made. For example, the use of the popular singer Cher brings the story up-to-date, while mention of contemporary

technology and the subject of genetic modification, which was a much-discussed, controversial new practice in the 1990s, ties the story into world of The X-Files.

Another example of free adaptation is *Frankenweenie,* Tim Burton's quirky, cartoonish take on the Frankenstein story. Burton moved away from the traditional idea of monster, instead creating a more instantly lovable dog. The backstory of the dog's relationship with Victor is firmly established before the accident which causes its death. Unlike the other versions analysed in this thesis, and most other adaptations, in *Frankenweenie* the relationship between the creator and the creation is a loving one. The creator is not driven by God-like tendencies, but simply wants to bring his best friend back to life. In this way, the film automatically stands apart from other versions. Like with Carter's *The Post-Modern Prometheus*, this helps the film to stand alone as its own original work of art, rather than being assessed simply as another new version of Mary Shelley's novel.

In the other adaptations which form a part of this thesis, the creators are all adults, whereas *Frankenweenie* sees the world through the eyes of a child. This gives him a sense of innocence lacking in the character in the novel, and those in the other adaptations. This distinction helps to endear Victor to the viewer from the beginning. When his experiments have unfortunate and unforeseen consequences, there is less of a sense of responsibility on his shoulders as he is merely a child who knows no better. This makes it easier for the audience to root for Victor, and to hope he comes out of the film unscathed. In the novel, there is a feeling that Victor, as well as trying to avenge the death of his mother, has unleashed the terror out of arrogance, desperate to prove himself as a great scientist. This makes him more difficult to empathise with.

As with *The Post-Modern Prometheus, Frankenweenie* is bound with the history of the horror genre by virtue of carefully selected character names. As well as Shelley's

characters, references are also made to other famous horror characters, such as Van Helsing from the *Dracula* story. The most obvious reference comes in the name of Victor Frankenstein himself. Although this film varies a great deal from the traditional Frankenstein story, unlike other inventive adaptations the deliberate choice is made to give the character the same name in order to establish the character and give him the element of recognition that comes with sharing the name with such a famous forebear. The cartoonish nature of *Frankenweenie* allows for a strain of subtle humour which differentiates it from the novel. Burton's decision to take the film down this route imbued it with a lightness of touch which helped to soften the elements of horror.

Taking a completely different approach, Stuart Beattie set out to continue Mary Shelley's story in his film *I, Frankenstein.* The origins of the film as a digital-only graphic novel are apparent in the design as well as the story. The use of non-human beings such as gargoyles transports the world of the film from science fiction to fantasy, and therefore it provides a completely different experience from the other adaptations in this thesis. The summary of events from Mary Shelley's novel at the beginning sets up the story, but from there the direction the creature takes is influenced by the original story but follows an entirely different path. The film attempts to take the backstory of the character and imagine what happened next in his existence, although it chooses to do so in an unconventional way which, in fact, owes little to Mary Shelley's work other than using it as a starting point. It is possible that this approach was taken in order to appeal to a new generation of film-goers who have in interest in Gothic fantasy, and to win them over to the Frankenstein story. The storyline in the film could, in fact, have used completely new characters and did not have to use the existing ones are all. However, using Shelley's creature, and the memory of his creator, avoided the obstacle of having to establish a new character with a troubled backstory, as well as helping to attract people on the strength of the name of the franchise.

The naming of the creature as Adam is a reference to a passage in the novel, although it was never actually given as his name. Famously, the creature in the novel remained nameless. In terms of characterization, Adam is certainly recognizable as the creature from the novel. Also, the exposition at the beginning of the film makes it clear that he has been walking the earth for thousands of years and feels great vengeance towards his master, so his motivations are clear and understandable. The journal which he keeps, which forms a central part of the plot of the film, also comes from the novel. Beattie chose to use some parts of Shelley's novel in order to facilitate the storytelling, but also as they helped to create cinematic moments. On the other hand, some events were changed for similar reasons. In order for this film to exist at all, one significant change which had to be made was the ending of the novel itself, where the creature killed himself after his master died. Given the nature of the story, this change was not absolutely necessary, as the theme of resurrection is at the heart of the novel. However, it was simpler to begin the film with the creature never having killed himself, and sometimes the easier explanation helps to draw the reader into the narrative.

7.2   Love, Isolation, Sympathy and Identity

Analysing the way in which different directors employ various cinematic techniques to bring their characters to life in adaptations of Frankenstein was one of the principle objectives of this thesis. This involved looking at the way sympathy between the creator and the creation was created, display and explored by each director, and the impact this had on the finished product. Due to the nature of the original story, a natural degree of sympathy exists on the part of the reader or viewer. The inherent sadness of the situation into which the creation is 'born' means that, even if some of his actions are disagreeable, the motivation behind them is generally understood. In literature, this is achieved by describing the condition of the character and placing him in situations where he faces struggles and conflicts thrust upon him by external forces and his own

inner turmoil. Similarly, the sense of isolation felt by the creature and, to some extent, by his creator, as well as the love, or lack of it, that exists between them, all come together to help create the identities of these pivotal characters .In order to bring this to life effectively onscreen, directors use various methods which are not possible simply using the written word.

In Kenneth Branagh's *Frankenstein,* the production design is the first area in which these ideas are allowed to flourish. By choosing to embrace the "Gothic" world of horror novels and films with dark, brooding set designs and period costume. In essence, the use of Gothic styles is intended to induce a nightmarish feeling, against a backdrop of which the characters are placed in situations which inspire a sense of sympathy in the audience. Branagh set out to create a fairy-tale world, in which nature is an overwhelming force which dwarfs humanity. This idea of the unstoppable forces of nature creates sympathy for the characters, who are powerless to act against them. Branagh utilizes big, open spaces, large rooms and wide camera angles to give a sense of the enormity of the world. He is then able to contrast this with enclosed, confining shots when the action becomes small and claustrophobic, such as the scene in which Frankenstein is frantically trying to create his monster. In these scenes, the smallness of the laboratory creates a feeling of the creator being trapped in his own mind. The use of close-ups makes important scenes seem personal and takes the audience into the personal space of the protagonists. For example, when the creature peers through a gap in the wall to spy on the family, the close-up lets us know his emotions. In opening up his emotions to the viewer in this way, sympathy is heightened, and another fragment of the identity of the character is revealed.

The camerawork in Branagh's film is fast-moving and constant. This works together with the aforementioned power of nature to invoke a manic feeling, as though

the character of Victor is never allowed to rest for a moment. He is on a constantly moving rollercoaster, never sure of where it will lead him next. This means that he is never able to pause and dwell on his circumstances, and in a way is left to deal with whatever life throws at him. Despite his ill treatment of his own creation, the motivations of the character are perhaps more understandable when read in this light. The camera moves a lot, often swinging around the actors, circling them and then arriving back at the original start point. This gives the audience a panoramic feeling of viewing the events as a whole, rather than just glimpsing snippets of Frankenstein's world. In terms of colour the film veers between expansive brightness and grim darkness, in order to reflect the action onscreen at any particular time. Mary Shelley also used stylistic changes to highlight these differences, something which influenced Branagh. It helps to bind the film together with the book, and gives it an accessible, literary style.

Stitched together hideously and walking in a pained-looking, ungainly manner, Robert de Niro's monster inspires a great deal of sympathy. Shunning the 'classic' vision of Frankenstein from such films as James Whale's 1931 eponymous version, the more human look of De Niro's character makes the situation feel more real and less cartoonish, and therefore has more impact on an emotional level. It is believable that this creature was assembled from fragments of dead bodies, and because it looks like no other previous version of the monster the audience brings no prior judgment. Close-ups focus on the eyes, which almost gives us a glimpse into the soul of this presumably soulless creature. De Niro's movements aid the costume design, giving the creature an air of otherness. He is clearly something close to, but not quite, human. This heightens the character's sense of isolation; how can he ever be accepted in 'normal' society when he is so different and strange? The birth scene of the creature is given more prominence in the film than in the novel. In all likelihood, this is due to the cinematic possibilities of

creating an enormous sarcophagus to act as womb from which the slimy, grotesque creature hatches. Aesthetically, this is one of the most memorable moments of the film. The bombastic score also helps to carry the scene along with dramatic intensity, although some critics felt that it actually detracted from the action by being too intrusive.

In Chris Carter's *The Post-Modern Prometheus*, the depiction of the monstrous creature is designed to inspire sympathy, even though he is revealed towards the end to have been party to some terrible deeds. As with De Niro's monster, the odd movement of the character inspires a degree of pity in the audience. Added to this, his deformed features are also a source of sympathy. He is shown to be a lonely creature, and Carter makes good use of lighting to keep him in the shadows, shuffling along in the background. Before we even know the full story, we are aware that this is a character who has faced rejection, and the ensuing isolation which comes with being outcast from society.

As with Branagh, Carter's intention with his direction was to capture the spirit of classic horror movies. In fact, he named James Whale as an influence. This is obvious in the use of style and form, which help to conjure up an image of the early days of monster films. Playing upon the audience's pre-existing knowledge of how monstrous characters behave in these films, as well as the depiction of 'mad scientist' characters, and the way society reacts to such events, means that Carter is able to concentrate on telling his story without worrying about bringing the viewer up to speed beforehand. Shooting in black-and-white helped to create this atmosphere. Another similarity with Branagh's direction is Carter's desire to create a nightmarish, fairy tale feel, in keeping with the traditions of the horror genre. Clever use is made of camera angles in order to hide the full extent of the Great Mutato's appearance until later in the film, when he is

exposed in close-ups to show a convincing monster. The use of black-and-white aids the realism of these shots; in colour, it would have been more difficult to reveal a convincing monster, however good the makeup.

The strangeness of the monster is usually exacerbated by the normality of those around him, but in the case of *The Post-Modern Prometheus, Frankenweenie* and, to an extent, *I, Frankenstein,* this is not the case. The town itself is strange, as are most of its inhabitants. This is in keeping with the style laid down by Carter in the first five seasons of The X-Files and beyond. Therefore, the creature stands out largely due to his deformities, while the others around him are perhaps more identifiably human but are also a little strange. Carter deliberately highlighted the weirdness of the town, using tricks such as showing a man in the background in two successive shots, in the second one inhabiting a place he could not logically be given his location in the first shot. Normally, this would be seen as a continuity error, but it was a deliberate act on Carter's part to show that everybody in the town looks and acts the same. In this sense, although they are strange, they also represent the normality from which The Great Mutato deviates. The placement of people in the diner, in the exact same order but with differing facial expressions to convey different emotions in different scenes, is another example of this. By creating this strange sense of unity, the loneliness of those who fall outside it is heightened. This is true of Mulder and Scully, as well as the Great Mutato, although it is more pertinent for the monster as he lives in this town and has no realistic means of escape.

The relationships between the characters was intensified in performance by the director's direction instructing them to act directly to camera. Usually, actors are required to look past the camera, but Carter decided to achieve a point-of-view effect by having them speak directly to cameras on which were stuck photos of the actors they

were supposedly conversing with. Using this method, the intensity of the acting is amplified. Sympathy for the Great Mutato, with his deformities and his speech defects, is increased by having him talk almost directly to the viewer, while the evil intentions of the creator slowly reveal themselves by the same method. Use of wide-angle lenses meant the director could play around with different angles, placing the camera low into people's faces, and highlighting the power dynamics within relationships by shooting more powerful characters from below, and less powerful ones from above.

Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie* shares with *The Post-Modern Prometheus* the decision to display the film in black-and-white (although, in the case of *Frankenweenie,* it was actually shot in colour and converted in post-production). The black-and-white conjures up an eerie feeling and stands out against most other modern films which are released in colour. As with Carter's work, *Frankenweenie* harks back to the classic, old-fashioned horror movies of the past. Also, the two films have in common a cartoonish element which moves them into a hyper-reality beyond the usual remit of science-fiction. In the case of *Frankenweenie*, it is not just a case of referencing Gothic comic books, but the film actually takes place in a stop-motion world inhabited by a grotesquely-drawn, vivid cast of characters. Despite the grotesque depictions, the characters seem friendlier and less threatening. The use of child protagonists and antagonists helps in this regard; the innocence of the children leaves the viewer with less of a sense of foreboding, although a distinct air of menace is somewhere in the background throughout the running time of the picture.

Beginning with the familiar Disney logo in full colour, which then dissolves into black-and-white amid thunder and lightning, sets up the world of the film in one very short sequence. It also helps to establish the characters. The viewer is made aware that this will not be a cosy, family-oriented film, but will be something darker. However, the

fact that it is a Disney film also means that the audience is aware that nothing truly terrible will happen. This means that when Victor Frankenstein and Sparky are introduced, the viewer recognizes the closeness of their relationship, and prepares themselves for an emotional rollercoaster with the inevitability of something bad happening to either the boy or the dog.

Frankenweenie takes place in a strange world which is both recognisable and unfamiliar. As a director, Burton gives his films a distinctive look and feel. The sense of Americana created by the old-fashioned, perfectly envisioned 1950s-style Americsn neighbourhood is offset by the strange look and movements of the characters who move within it. Although the setting looks old-fashioned, the film has a timelessness to it. The technology being used by Victor as part of his filmmaking his hobby is contemporary to the time the film was made. Therefore, it is difficult to say exactly then the film is set; it exists in its own world, and takes place during its own time. Given this, there is also an innocence to the child characters, including those who are the 'baddies', which belongs to a fictional, cartoon world rather than the real one. In a sense, this also makes the film old-fashioned, although perhaps it could be said that it is redolent of a time in the past which never really existed. Nevertheless, Burton creates a world where this is no real anti-social behaviour among the school-children, and where the antagonism between them is one of competition rather than real threat or danger.

Burton's use of the stop-motion technique was a choice made due to his belief that it gives life to his characters, as opposed to hand-drawn cartoons which can feel two-dimensional. The characters are instantly quirky and charming, simply because of the way they have been drawn and put together. With a film so visually captivating, Burton had to take care to ensure that the characters spoke and behaved in interesting ways, as well as appearing aesthetically pleasing. The script itself is served by the

design, and vice versa. Without the qualities of either one, the film would fail. The characters have to behave in a way which fits in with the unusual movements and strange appearance in order to be believable, but similarly the way they act and behave would not work if the puppets did not ring true. The way the characters relate to each other is also serviced by the visual aspects of the film. The facial features can be manipulated to convey emotions in a way which works differently from human faces. During emotional scenes, the eyes can be made bigger and more pleading, for example.

The loneliness in *Frankenweenie* is handled differently from that in the other adaptations in this study. Rather than the 'monster', it is actually the creator who feels the strongest sense of isolation in the film. Victor is portrayed as a talented, rather shy boy, who can never quite fit in with his classmates. His classmates serve as 'normal society', although they are actually far from normal themselves. Loneliness becomes one of the key motivating factors, along with grief, as to why Victor sets out to resurrect his beloved dog after the accident. Without Sparky, he feels bereft; his one true friend has departed. In fact, it could be said that he uses Sparky as a crutch to mask his inability to form friendships with his peers, and this only heightens his sense of loss when the dog dies. The dog was deliberately not given human qualities, although it can express emotion. This was done in order to increase the believable nature of the relationship between the boy and his dog. By doing this, the viewer then feels more of a sense of sympathy when the two are parted.

Loneliness is the driving force behind *I, Frankenstein* from the very beginning. The character of Adam is set-up via the means of a recap of the original story, at the end of which we discover that, after the death of his creator, the creature has been roaming the earth alone for two centuries. His bitterness is enshrined in his words and actions; it is clear that he feels a great deal of antipathy towards his creator for cursing him to live

a wretched, lonely existence. However, the nature of his feelings are later shown to be ambiguous, as he also feels some residual love for the man who brought him into the world.

Having lost his creator, Frankenstein is alone in the world. He has no other family, and, because of his frightening appearance and strange history of origin, he has no friends either. Also, because he has been walking around for two hundred years, he is now a creature out of time. Created in the 18th century, he now finds himself in a modern-day city, albeit one with a Gothic design replete with ancient cathedrals. The sense of the Gothic, similarly to Branagh's film, is very important to Beattie's vision. The world he creates is home to various types of fantastical creature, the sort found in horror and fantasy movies. As with *The Post-Modern Prometheus*, this means that the 'monster' is no more unusual or strange than the other creatures who inhabit the same world. In this instance, that includes non-human figures who live against a cold, empty background. There is little warmth to the sets. This coldness helps to build the sense of isolation. Adam's displacement in this world is further heightened by the fact that he is the only one of his type. While the gargoyles and demons are strange and otherworldly, as least there is a population of each of them. Adam is alone, and therefore has no hope of finding anyone like him with whom to build a close, loving relationship.

Unlike most version of Frankenstein, *I, Frankenstein* contains non-human characters. As a result, there is always a chance that someone may be something different from what they are claiming to be. There is always a possibility, for example, that one of the humans may actually be a demon, or vice versa. This eventually manifests itself in the revelation that Bill Nighy's character is not the human scientist he seems but is actually a fearsome demon in disguise. Mostly, the satisfaction of this reveal is managed by the acting of Nighy, who plays the scientist with a sinister edge

which hints at some underlying darkness. The tension is built by a feeling that he is not quite what he seems, although he is played as an archetypal narcissist which suggests that his motivations may be to do with money or power.

Sympathy does generally lie with Adam, although he is outcast because murdered Elizabeth as well as the other reasons mentioned. Therefore, he is perhaps punishing himself by banishing himself from society. In some ways this increases sympathy, but it could also play against him as a self-pitying criminal. The decision to cast a good-looking film star in the role, who is scarcely made less attractive by the application of 'monstrous' make-up, slightly spoils this notion of Adam as an outcast misfit. The believability is diminished by the fact that he does not have the deformed, gruesome appearance of The Great Mutato, or the unsightly, stitched up scarring of Robert De Niro's character in Kenneth Branagh's film. Nevertheless, he does encounter sympathy, mainly from the female characters. When the queen of the gargoyles refers to him as 'him' rather than 'it', it humanises him for possibly the first time. The character has complex emotions, though, and rejects this chance to finally banish his loneliness. Again, this can be seen as a continuation of his self-punishment.

The notion of love does come on the horizon when Adam meets Terra, the human scientist working on a regeneration project. Terra fulfills the love interest role in the story, although it is never anything more than a mutually affectionate companionship, with nothing more than a hint of the development of any romantic feeling. Terra is initially skeptical of the existence of Frankenstein and his monster, believing them to belong to a fable rather than existing in real life. She is also skeptical of the presence of gargoyles and demons, until a demon reveals itself and she has no choice but to believe. Her acceptance of Adam, then, has much to do with her being won over from this scepticism by the undeniable facts before her eyes. By this point, she clearly feels

sympathy for him. She tells him that "you're only a monster if you behave like one", urging him to curb his violent outbursts. After the resolution of the plot, she refers to Adam as "him, not it" in the same way that Leonore talked about him at the beginning, showing that she accepts him as a person due to his display of selfishness and his newfound maturity.

Throughout the film, it is made clear that humans are the highest form of life. Receiving acceptance from a human is validation in its purest form for Adam, and he begins to see that there is more to life than violence, adversity and revenge. Eventually, it is his selflessness which burnishes him with a soul. At the beginning, Leonore had said that she didn't see a soul within him, only "the potential for one". His path to gaining a soul is not a smooth one, as a human dies as a consequence of his fight against the demons. Adam does not seem to be able to accept that anybody genuinely wants to help him and rejects the society that once rejected him. Leonore says that where she once saw the potential for a soul, she now sees only darkness.

In all the adaptations which formed part of this study, the role of the director is crucial in establishing the world of the movie. Despite all originating from the same source text, the differences between the films strongly outweigh the similarities. Much of this difference is directly attributable to the director's vision. In the case of Branagh, the film he made was an attempt to represent Mary Shelley's novel as faithfully as possible. However, even a straight adaptation will never entirely reflect the novel, as the descriptions, characters and plots will always be subject to the imagination of the person responsible for bringing them to the screen. Parts of a book will be cut from the screenplay, either for reasons of time, because they do not drive the plot forward, or because they are difficult to represent onscreen. This could be for technical reasons, or perhaps because they recount the inner thoughts of a character which can be recreated in

the form of a voiceover, but only sparingly so as not to detract from the action. In Branagh's case, the adaptation ran faithfully in terms of capturing the times in which the novel was set, concentrating on set and costume design, and dialogue, which accurately reflected the early nineteenth century, whilst also adhering to the Gothic template favoured by the director. The screenplay mirrored the plot to a large extent, staying true to most of the main points. Where changes were made, they were necessitated by Branagh's vision for the film; embellishing Victor and Elizabeth's love-story, and increasing the learning capacity of the creature, for example. The more cinematic portrayal of Victor's mother is another instance in which necessary changes were made in order to add to the visual spectacle. These changes highlight a truth that adaptation will only ever be faithful to a degree. The vision of the director, added to technical challenges, and the way in which film companies and audiences demand that film plots work, will always be a factor when it comes to the fidelity of adaptation.

In less faithful adaptations, such as *The Post-Modern Prometheus, Frankenweenie* and *I, Frankenstein*, the role of the director is perhaps even more important. The main challenge faced by the director of a faithful adaptation is meeting and satisfying the pre-existing expectations of an audience. However, they also have the knowledge that the material they are working with is proven and solid. For the director of a less faithful adaptation, this is not the case. Chris Carter, with *The Post-Modern Prometheus*, straddled both camps. He was able to use existing characters, Mulder and Scully, who had been established over the course of four previous seasons and were popular and recognisable. He then had to put these characters into his 'Frankenstein' scenario, and create a believable world, and an interesting and satisfying story, in the space of just under an hour. He achieved this by making use of various visual techniques, including unusual camera angles and filming perspectives, recording in black-and-white, increasing the intensity of performance by filming actors acting

directly to camera, and intentionally creating a parody of classic horror films and 'Frankenstein' tropes, such as angry townsfolk marching with lit torches. Stuart Beattie's film was a broadly faithful adaptation of a graphic novel, rather than of Mary Shelley's original novel. In this sense, he had knowledge of the strength of the source material given the popularity of the graphic novel in question, although he was still filming a story with which most of the audience would not have been familiar before watching, In order to facilitate this, he created a world of fantasy and mystique, utilizing CGI technology to create visually interesting non-human characters, scenes and scene changes. In the case of *Frankenweenie,* Tim Burton was presenting perhaps the most original take of all, featuring no pre-existing characters (although, it should be noted, he had already created a short-film version of *Frankenweenie* in 1984, which was not distributed to a wide audience). The film stands alone from the others due to the use of stop-motion animation, which helps to create a grotesque, other-worldly feel, although the use of child protagonists gives it an innocence lacking in the other titles. Sympathy is generated by the relationship between Victor and Sparky, a relationship which could be overly-saccharine but stays true due to writing which avoids cliché and direction which leads us to believe in these strange characters by presenting them as real people and animals, rather than broad caricatures.

The angle of research in this study differs from the existing literature as it seeks to discover the motivations of the filmmakers in their approach to developing their characters in terms of identity and sympathy. The films that this study analyses were chosen because they each offer something different. While a few studies have looked at Branagh's film, very little critical research, other than reviews, has been conducted on any of the others. Branagh's film was worth revisiting as part of the reason for making it in the first place was to deliver a film which was more faithful to the novel than previous attempts. However, while it has been considered by researchers from an

adaptation standpoint, detailed study in terms of character that takes into account both literary and cinematic perspectives is lacking. *The Post-Modern Prometheus* bears scrutiny because it is interesting both aesthetically and as an inventive adaptation. Filmed in black-and-white with a film noir feel to it, the look and style of the film is noteworthy and thought-provoking. *Frankenweenie* is another inventive adaptation which is fascinating aesthetically and, as a stop-motion animation, is another completely different take on a familiar story. *I, Frankenstein* is perhaps the furthest removed from the relative reality of the book, venturing into fantastical realms far beyond the scope of the novel, and therefore was another interesting subject for study.

Scholars and researchers will be able to research about which medium people are more interested in: the novel or the movie. Another area for future research could be why books based on the movies have not been successful; for example, novelisations of the adaptations covered in this study. Also, they can research the political and social background of the novel, looking at how it affects the directors of modern movies. This can look at movies that have already been made and also movies that will be made in the future.

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