



استكشاف العزلة والوحدة والاختلاف في اقتباسات فرانكشتاين
"Exploring Isolation, Loneliness, and Otherness in
Frankenstein Adaptations"

Dr. Qahtan Mikhlif Salih

¹Ministry of Education -General Directorate of Education in Diyala -Open Educational
College,

Abstract

Loneliness, particularly the sense of isolation that characters experience and are depicted as enduring, is one of the most prevalent themes in monster literature. Monsters are frequently portrayed as monstrous and terrifying, separating them from everyday culture and positioning them as the "other." They become isolated as a result, which may lead to antisocial and occasionally violent behaviour. This article examines how loneliness is portrayed in a few Frankenstein adaptations, including Tim Burton's Frankenweenie, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Kenneth Branagh's 1994 film adaptation, and the X-Files episode "The Post-Modern Prometheus." The article examines the impact of isolation on the characters in these stories, considering how loneliness affects both creators and creations.

Email:

lqahtans839@gmail.com

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المخلص

تُعدّ الوحدة، ولا سيما الشعور بالعزلة الذي تعيشه الشخصيات ويُصوّر على أنه دائم، من أكثر المواضيع شيوعاً في أدب الوحوش. غالباً ما تُصوّر الوحوش على أنها وحشية ومرعبة، مما يعزلها عن الثقافة اليومية ويضعها في خانة "الأخر". ونتيجةً لذلك، تصبح معزولة، الأمر الذي قد يؤدي إلى سلوكيات معادية للمجتمع، وأحياناً عنيفة. تتناول هذه المقالة كيفية تصوير الوحدة في عدد من اقتباسات فرانكشتاين، بما في ذلك فيلم فرانكنويني لتيم بيرتون، ورواية فرانكشتاين لماري شيلي، والفيلم المقتبس من رواية فرانكشتاين عام 1994 للمخرج كينيث براناه، وحلقة "بروميثيوس ما بعد الحادثة" من مسلسل "ملفات إكس". تبحث المقالة في تأثير العزلة على الشخصيات في هذه القصص، مع الأخذ في الاعتبار كيف تؤثر الوحدة على كلّ من المبدعين ومخلوقاتهم

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Monster literature is a distinguished genre that amalgamates both virtuous and malevolent elements, primarily aiming to elicit terror and horror in its audience by depicting sinister characteristics embodied in a monster (Sanders 150). The concepts and themes of monster literature began in 18th-century Gothic literature; however, the monster genre first emerged in the 19th century with the release of Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein* (151). Gothic literature encompasses the fundamentals of dread and terror, with a protagonist who is forsaken and confronted by an adversary. The adversary frequently exerts psychic control over the victim, utilising this power to manipulate them. In monster fiction, the antagonist is typically depicted as a creature that afflicts the protagonist (Jackson 62). Furthermore, Gothic-inspired monster fiction evokes sentiments of remorse, melancholy, and isolation (63).

Furthermore, monster literature addresses the evident isolation of its characters, consistently depicting them as lonely and powerless. In *Frankenstein*, both the inventor and his creature experience solitude. *Frankenstein* becomes consumed with his scientific discoveries, forsaking both his beloved and his family. Upon completing his scientific creation, he allows it to operate independently. Consequently, the creature eliminates all of *Frankenstein's* relatives and acquaintances for retribution, resulting in their mutual isolation. In *Frankenstein*, the creature endures the pervasive silence that constantly surrounds him. He perceives no amicable presence in any location, evoking the prevalent motif of isolation in monster literature. This is an intertextual motif employed repeatedly in many contexts when the monstrous character is regarded as an outsider or "the other." Loneliness characterises these individuals, and their desire for visibility and acknowledgement serves as a primary motivator for their actions and emotions.

1.2 The Character of *Frankenstein's* Creature

The story emphasises many facets of the creature's psyche, which have been interpreted differently in film adaptations. Jack Pierce's portrayal of Frankenstein's monster in Boris Karloff's iconic film is characterized as follows: "As illustrated by Shelley, the monster is a perceptive, emotional entity whose sole desire is to connect with another sentient being akin to himself." The narrative depicts him as erudite and knowledgeable, having engaged with *Paradise Lost*, *Plutarch's Lives*, and *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. He is propelled by despair and isolation to commit acts of cruelty and murder" (43).

As a result of this circumstance, the creature is shunned by all he meets, and it becomes his aspiration to find a companion for dialogue. From the moment of his birth, he perceives that even his own creator rejects him. From the outset, it is evident when Frankenstein states, "...one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped" (Glut 92). Upon gazing at his own visage, the monster comprehends that he, too, is unable to endure the sight of himself (93). Nevertheless, he desires to attain respect and affection from others, yet this aspiration appears unattainable. He vows to exact vengeance on humanity, particularly on Frankenstein.

1.3 The Notions Of Isolation, Loneliness, And Otherness In Branagh's Frankenstein (1994)

The concept of monstrosity has demonstrated considerable allure in both film and literature. Indeed, the themes of ugliness and the uncanny were not only expressed in literature but also became integral to the evolution of film. Mary Shelley's narrative of unnatural creation has inspired and shaped literature since the 1818 release of *Frankenstein*. Numerous films depict Frankenstein's resurrected creature in countless ways, establishing it as an archetype of Western popular culture (Parker). One hundred seventy-six years after the debut of *Frankenstein*, Kenneth Branagh released his film adaptation of Mary Shelley's landmark work, entitled *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*.

The creature portrayed in this version is more anthropomorphic and less grotesque than the monster in the novel. Its look is quite unremarkable and bears a closer resemblance to humans than other modifications. A compelling point is that this creature derives advantages from free will. Similar to the monster in the story, this creature possesses the capacity for love and seeks a companion to share this emotion. It is noteworthy that when Branagh's monster requests a companion, it is not content with merely any partner. He implores his creator to utilise Justine's body to construct a companion, which is why the inventor dismisses the entire concept.

Audiences perceive greater "fidelity of adaptation" in Branagh's rendition compared to many others, as the director endeavors to remain true to the essence of the work. Throughout the film, viewers observe distinctions between

Branagh's creature and Mary Shelley's original; however, these variations do not impact the central theme of the movie. Branagh's modified creature appears less lonely and isolated than in the novel, as the director seeks to emphasise his interpretation of monstrosity and the fantastical by presenting a vivid portrayal of the creation. This aims to captivate spectators, prompting them to contemplate the true nature of monstrosity. It possesses enhanced human capabilities, including free choice and interpersonal connection. The creature's feelings of loneliness, isolation, and alienation are most evident in this rendition as it endures several months in solitude within the forest. This filmmaker suggests that a monster endowed with greater empathy will encounter diminished loneliness. The creature seeks a soul partner, indicating a desire to avoid being alone. He seeks affection.

Both entities in the novel and film progress in a unified manner to captivate the audience's attention and elicit sympathy for the beings. The director's ingenuity and creativity in crafting Mary Shelley's creature and ambiance are undeniable. Entities in both the novel and the film experience emotions of affection and pursue a partner with whom they may mutually share love. The filmmaker and screenwriter endeavour to depict latent selfishness in the portrayal of a creature who fails to consider the repercussions of his actions. Consequently, it may be asserted that Branagh's rendition has greater "fidelity of adaptation" in comparison to preceding renditions.

.1.4The Concept Of Isolation, Loneliness, And Otherness In "The Post-Modern Prometheus"

"The Post-Modern Prometheus" was the fifth episode of the fifth season of the American science fiction television series The X-Files. Loneliness is a major theme in monster literature. In most cases, the outcast monster is rejected by all and thus ends up sad and lonely. "The Post-Modern Prometheus", as with most of the best episodes of "The X-Files", is underpinned by a deep sense of loss. In this episode, Mulder's inability to find a happy ending without purposefully asking the writer to concoct one leads to an ending that is, in all probability, not even real. Loss and loneliness are twin emotional themes that drive "The X-Files."

In the series, there is a strong desire among viewers to see Mulder and Scully get together. In essence, it was Carter's idea that the two are a kind of perfect, platonic partnership; a couple who perfectly complete each other, making a sexual encounter unnecessary. At the centre of the show is an emotional core of longing and loneliness. One of the driving forces of the show is that so many of the people whom Mulder and Scully meet, both monsters and normal folk, are people who lack that essential 'other half'; people who are constantly searching for something or someone compatible but not finding it. In many episodes, this

leads the characters to kill, but in "Prometheus", it leads an old man, no matter how unethically, immorally, or haphazardly, to try to create something better, even if he always fails. Strictly speaking, the idea that this older man created most of the town (in an attempt to find a mate for his son) by impregnating women with farm animals and human hybrids is completely ridiculous and repulsive. The episode's attempt to let the creature off the hook when he admits to everything he did—except killing his father—should not work because the townspeople would never accept such terrible crimes, no matter how gullible they may be.

The episode manages to get away with it for two reasons. Firstly, there is a sense of isolation; the creature knows he cannot find a mate. Dr Polidori's father does not know what he is doing, and both of them will unavoidably be caught. Whatever anyone wants to blame him for, the creature, as is typical of rejected creatures, is an easy scapegoat. He might be an amusing local legend and the source of a comic book creation, but once he steps into the light, he is definitely hideous. The most offensive parts of the episode are softened by depicting a father caring for his son and not really knowing what else to do for his happiness. The son lives in an underground room and cannot show his face at night. He loves peanut butter and Cher. He is a monster, but if only he could find his own mate, he might not feel so monstrous anymore (Carter 152.)

Dr. Polidari's father accuses his actual son of being a real monster. He has more sympathy towards the creature and wants to create his own monster to act as a companion. He tries to get the FBI agents to ask his son about his scientific achievements. The relationship between Dr. Polidari and his father is weak, and they ignore each other. Even in his work, Dr. Polidari is a selfish scientist. He pays no attention to the consequences of his genetic experiments and the problems they might cause in the future. When Mulder asks why he does those kinds of experiments, he replies very proudly and selfishly: "Because I can". In his personal life, he is a selfish husband. When his wife asks him to have a child, he describes children as small monsters. His wife also suffers from loneliness. He has a passion for knowledge, but instead of using it to improve people's lives, he is only interested in being recognised for his achievements. Both the creators of the episode and the novel portray selfishness in the same way, by not considering the consequences of their experimental achievements.

The episode also addresses the fear that these men caused. The older man pays with his life, and the mad scientist is arrested for his murder. The creature is also arrested and sent to jail; even if everyone understands his real motives, he is still guilty of unlawfully entering houses and impregnating women against their will. In attempting to hinder their isolation, these men only created more isolation for themselves. "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" (Carter 205.)

An important similarity between the creature in the novel and the one in this episode is the fact that both creatures can feel human sentiments, including joy, happiness, loneliness, and isolation. The Great Mutato asks its creator to provide a mate for it in order to have a companion and stop being miserable and melancholic, which is the same as the demands of the monster in the novel. This fact reveals that no matter their appearances, these monsters are all capable of understanding these sentiments.

When people see creatures, whether in the episode or in the novel, they do not receive love or sympathy. They are regarded as strangers and encounter disgust and hatred in both cases. In fact, this illustrates how human beings judge others solely based on appearance before truly knowing them, leading to the isolation and loneliness of the monsters. As they are not accepted by society and lack a mate, they are all alone, fighting the whole world to be accepted for who they are. The only difference is that in this episode, people give the monster a chance to talk and explain the whole story.

After hearing the creature's story, people accepted him as part of society and felt sympathy towards him. They understood that it was not his fault that he was created in such a different way, unlike the novel, in which society did not even give the creature the chance to explain what happened to him, and immediately rejected him. In the novel, even his creator tries to kill him.

Two powerful scenes in this episode draw the attention of audiences and get their sympathy towards the creature; one is when the creature faces his dad's dead body in the house and starts to cry. This is similar to the novel and movie. Later, the creature buries his dad in the barn and cries, revealing his deep feelings toward his dad, who strongly supported him and taught him many things. With the older man gone, he has no one else to protect him. His dad tries to create a mate for him, and the creator feels loneliness. The second part is when people surrounded him, and he started to explain about himself; that he was an unfortunate product of genetic engineering whose appearance was horrible, but that he never acted to harm other people. His dad rescued him and loved him despite his deformities. He could not go to school or play sports. He emphasizes that he does not have a mother to love him, and if he had one, he would be loved like Cher's son in the film 'Mask', who has a deformed son and is loved. These scenes build up sympathy for the creature.

1.5The Concept Of Isolation, Loneliness , And Otherness In Frankenweenie (2012)

Frankenweenie is an American 3D stop motion animated film as well as a comedy-horrorfamily film. Tim Burton, the director of this film, made another

short film with the same name in 1984 which was, in fact, a homage to the 1931 film *Frankenstein* based on Mary Shelley's novel. *Frankenweenie* contains many references to Shelley's novel and classic horror films, particularly *Frankenstein*. The title *Frankenweenie* obviously comes from the same root. Those references spread further as the production records reveal some of the characters' names, which clearly allude to Shelley's novel and classic horror films, such as Victor, Elsa Van Helsing, Edgar "E" Gore, and Mr. Burgermeister (Samrick 23). Burton brings *Frankenstein* to the scene as a young scientist who brings his dog back to life with the same name as the main character in the novel *Frankenstein*. The reanimation of the dead body also shows a similarity between the novel and *Frankenweenie*. In Kenneth Branagh's *Frankenstein* film, Victor stitches together other dead bodies in order to revive the dead body of his wife (27.)

Victor's science teacher is weird but intelligent, always motivating Victor's mind to bring Sparky back to life, and actually acts as a mentor for Victor. The character was motivated by Burton's childhood picture. In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, *Frankenstein* is inspired by his professor at the university to reanimate corpses by the power of lightning. When Sparky is killed, Victor is inspired by the demonstration of galvanism made by his science teacher and decides to reanimate his dead dog. The provisional electrical apparatus in Victor's attic workshop is made from a bicycle, a toaster, and a Christmas-display rooftop reindeer, among other household items. However, in the novel, Victor has various complicated apparatuses and tools in his laboratory to perform his scientific experiments. Again, it reflects the simplicity of *Frankenweenie* (Liu 8). As in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, melancholy is one of the important elements in *Frankenweenie*. Burton has mentioned that the loneliness stemming from an awareness of otherness at an early age never leaves you (Dópido 6.)

In contrast to Shelley's Victor *Frankenstein*, Burton's is younger and more innocent. Burton's version discusses the same themes, including love, recreation, science, loneliness, and alienation, but in a child's world. Therefore, we undoubtedly encounter a completely different world in this adaptation. This version illustrates how a child finds it more difficult to lose something because he is not yet accustomed to the idea, and how he would do anything to get back what he has lost. An adult who has already lost too many loved ones finds it easier to adapt and will not try as hard as little Victor did. The monster desperately seeks to create one like himself, prompting adults to go to extreme measures, but then this is not an adult; it is a monster. It could be said that monsters have childlike motivations.

There is a link connecting most of the unworldly creatures of monster literature, as they all experience issues of isolation, resentment, loneliness, and a lack of

sympathy from others, which is usually manifested in their actions, thoughts, and emotions. In the original novel, the creator himself is afraid of the monster. However

In Burton's version, Victor has a nice relationship with his creation and actually loves the new Sparky. A similarity is that both Victor and Frankenstein hide their creatures and do not want others to see what they have made, albeit for different reasons. In the novel, Victor is afraid of his creature, abhors it, and knows the monster will not be accepted by society, which is why he hides it away. In the cartoon, Victor does not think his creature is ugly or dangerous by any means, but he knows that the recreated dog, which is charged by electricity, will not be accepted by others. So, though the reasons sound different, the new creatures are unlike their normal counterparts and are not accepted or liked by others. Therefore, they are alienated, isolated, and lonely. One must realize, however, that the fact that these creations are "other worldly" is what makes their creators hide them, so in a way, a central notion is acceptance, or lack thereof, of the "other."

However, there are moments in each version where the monsters are actually accepted. In the novel, the blind man cannot see the monster's appearance, so he considers him kind and warm-hearted and is not afraid of him. In Burton's version, when Sparky rescues Elsa's pet, people finally feel sympathy for the new Sparky and accept the dog. Moreover, when the dog dies as a result, they ask Victor to revive it using their car batteries. In a way, one concludes that despite one's appearance, one can make an impression on the masses by way of one's/deeds. Also, a small point to be made here is that, in most of these works, ordinary people are shown to have "monstrous" sides, but these can also be reversed.

The differences and similarities of the relationship between the creator and creature in these two cases may perhaps be explained by the concept of "love". The new Sparky was created because Victor longed to have his dog back. Victor recreates the dog and reanimates it using electricity, not as a mere science experiment, but in order to restore his beloved pet to life. His classmates do the same to other dead animals, even ones that they did not love, solely to participate in the science fair; therefore, they created monsters that were hideous, frightening, dangerous, and of no use. This is a relatively new concept put forth by Burton. In Shelly's novel, the creature is not made because of love. The creator is a scientist who pursues science above all else. He wants to create a living being to demonstrate his capability to achieve anything using science. It is his ego that is at stake, not his love, and as is the case in many of these classic works of fiction, one's ego tends to push oneself to oblivion.

Another similarity between Burton's and Shelly's versions is that both creatures are capable of love. The novel's creature wants to have relationships with other beings and tries to make friends. It is the same for the revived Sparky. The new Sparky loves Elsa's pet. In fact, the film ends when they kiss. So most of these creatures exhibit human attributes and emotions, but they are not appreciated in the more classical approaches. De-familiarization is carried out to remove us from our comfort zone and help us better understand this important fact. Burton does this in a truly formalist way and uses it extensively in his work.

Who is the monster in Frankenweenie? There may be many answers to this question. Science may be considered the real monster. It is science that causes all these problems. If the science teacher had not shown Galvani's dead frog experiment to his students, including Victor, they would have been unaware of the idea. The science teacher is regarded as a monster by parents. They do not let him keep teaching in the school because they believe he pollutes children's minds. Little Victor can also be considered the monster because he starts recreating dead animals and causes all these problems for the whole city. Compared to the novel, the new Sparky should be the monster. However, Sparky is not really a monster. The creature is not hideous, huge, or cruel. It is a small dog with stitches who loves and is loved. It is not dangerous to others and even helps them. The new Sparky is lonely because its creator believes that others will never accept a dog recreated with electricity. However, he is totally wrong. The recreated dog is the same as the old Sparky. The only difference is that the new Sparky has stitches and should be charged with electricity. The new Sparky looks different from the old one, but is as kind and affectionate as the previous one.

1.6 Conclusion

The novel is actually a classic tale of social awareness, a story of one looking for acceptance and asking for companionship, but being banned and branded a monster. His loneliness finally drives him to kill his creator.

This is where the two stories meet, and the monster in Frankenstein pleads with Victor, saying he is 'a good creature turned bad by unforgiving humans who scoffed at friendship'. The monster begs Victor to make him a companion, promising that Victor would never be heard from again. Victor reluctantly agrees but finds it incredibly difficult to do so, even though his family is in danger. Victor realizes that by giving a partner to the monster, he may be creating more monsters, as they could procreate. The monster in Frankenstein swears to take revenge by killing everyone close to Victor in an effort to demonstrate to Victor what it feels like to be alone. In the same respect, The Great Mutato also suffers from loneliness, and the scientist's father wants to find a mate for him so he will not be alone anymore (Barter.)

The creatures in Branagh's *Frankenstein*, the movie, and the original novel are similar. Branagh creates a creature that is identical to Mary Shelley's. The director attempts to incorporate the author's thoughts and merge them with his own concepts of the monster, resulting in a faithful manifestation of Mary Shelley's creature. Both of the creatures in these two media suffer from loneliness and isolation. Even the creator does not accept him. Frankenstein created the monster solely out of passion and selfishness, without considering the consequences of his deed. So, he rejects his own creature. Both creatures look for a mate and ask their creator to make one for them, but Frankenstein refuses. Instead of feeling sympathy, he tries to kill his own creation. Although Dr. Frankenstein tries to kill him, when Victor dies at the end, the only one beside him is his own creature, who feels sorrow and grief and cries for his creator, who had tried to kill him. In a nutshell, this adaptation falls into the first category of Geoffrey Wagner's theory, known as transposition, because the novel is adapted directly to the screen with slight changes, as mentioned before. Other scholars, like Dudley Andrew, discuss this kind of adaptation as "fidelity of adaptation". He states that the movie and the original novel are related. Based on the earlier discussion, this movie falls into the category of "fidelity of adaptation," and the director has fidelity towards the author of the novel.

Frankenweenie is a gathering of elements from classic thriller-horror movies. In particular, the greatest connection to make is to Mary Shelley's classic gothic novel, *Frankenstein*, where the holy barrier of divinity is broken, and man plays God, thereby bringing upon himself the hate of the world. The boy's name is the same as the scientist in *Frankenstein* who reanimates the corpse (dog) to life, and both main characters share a similar lonely nature (Samrick 25). Also growing up around the horror films of his time, such as *House of Frankenstein*, *House of Dracula*, and *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman*, Burton drew many similarities in the characters he created (Topel 4.)

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