

THE MUTATING MONSTER: FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER AND HIS TRANSFORMATIONS

*“Man’s yesterday may ne’er be like his morrow;
Nought may endure but mutability.”¹*

From its initial publication in 1818, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein: or, the modern Prometheus* grabbed attention of readers and critics alike. A unique tale, Frankenstein weaved together elements of Gothic, Romantic, Horror and Science fiction traditions. Through changing eons, *Frankenstein* has morphed into various literary aftershocks that have captured cultural, political and scientific inquiries of their respective time periods. George Levine comments “that novel has qualities that allow it to exfoliate as creatively and endlessly as any important myth; if it threatens to lapse into banality and bathos, it yet lives through unforgettable dreamlike images.”² Mary Shelley’s tale has served as a muse to not only literary and cinematic works but also low-budget film translations that in peculiar ways address various issues of cultural and social importance. While the many psychological, political and cultural implications of the novel are famously potent, it is Victor Frankenstein’s creature that seduced the fantasy of creative minds all over the world. Mary Shelley’s phenomenal literary creation rapidly came to life through visual media “animation upon lifeless matter” through their peculiar interpretations of the miraculous monster. The monster’s creation was more of an imaginative venture than a calculative one and much like Dr. Frankenstein, artist across various mediums adapted their expression of it, creatively and experimentally. The reinterpretations and retranslations of the monster has proved to be a myth making exercise that alludes to anxieties

¹ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: or, the modern Prometheus* 1823 (Oxford and New York: Woodstock Books, 1993). pp 201 (volume I)

²George Levine, ‘The Ambiguous Heritage of Frankenstein’, in: *The Endurance of Frankenstein*, ed. by George Levine, U.C. Knoepfelmacher (Berkley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1979). pp 3-30

of the rapidly developing modern world unable to cope up with its own advancements. This essay will examine the interpretation of Frankenstein's monster in three different forms, namely Lurch³, Rocky⁴ and King⁵. This essay will delve into the various underlying implications of each version and explore the relationship the three characters share with their makers.

The Addams Family was a domestic take on the life of a family of monsters based on the cartoons created by Charles Addams for The New Yorker between 1938-1988. Charles Addams created the Addams family as a satirical response to the quintessential 20th century American family and their values. The fictional family primarily consisted of the parental couple Morticia and Gomez Addams, their children Wednesday and Pugsley, their servant Lurch and a dismembered hand called Thing. Lurch was the loyal butler of the family. Formed in the image of a stooge, he is devoid of language and intellect. Lurch is seen stumping away his monster-like frame with his hands dragging on the floor, speaking a language solely based on groans and grunts. Lurch's physique is largely a replica of Frankenstein's monster, but the aura of horror and danger is absent in his persona. His giant frame and horrific features are undermined by the menial domestic chores he is made to perform by the members of the family. In the words of Charles Addams himself "generally the family regards him as something of a joke."⁶ Usually monotone Lurch is shown to have tender parental tendencies towards the children in the family, much like Frankenstein's monster who harbors an understated attachment with its creator. Lurch tends to the children, dropping them to school, cooking them lunch and protecting them from potential danger. Lurch is bereft of the gifts of knowledge and

³*The Addams Family*, dir. David Levy and Donald Saltzman (Filmways, 1964) [on TV]
Based on the Charles Addams' New Yorker Cartoons

⁴ *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, dir. Jim Sharman (Michael White Productions, 1975) [on screen]

⁵ *Rock N Roll Frankenstein*, dir. Brian O'Hara (Brain Damage Films, 1999) [on screen]

⁶ Addams Foundation website

speech and is essentially domesticated to the extent of servility; in contrast to Mary Shelly's monster who is well-read, educated, proficient in the language of his maker and is self-aware of his interior conflicts and emotions. In this way, the absence of the two characteristics that enabled Frankenstein's creature to rebel — language and education — in Lurch surrenders him to be tamed.

The treatment of the creator-created relationship in the two narratives distinguishes the fate of the created in respective tales. Both narratives manifest multifarious understanding of the idea of 'otherness'. Frankenstein feels isolated from his community due to his overbearing ambition that is beyond the intellect of the common man. His creature is abandoned by him and the community for his hideous appearance. Similarly, the Addams family occupy the space of the 'other' as a monster family in the community. Lurch, their butler, is further 'othered' as a grunting servant with no self-awareness and knowledge of the dominant linguistic discourse. The first level of understanding the creator-created is through the intertwining of the master and slave, as theorized by Hegel. Frankenstein's inability to control his creature leads him to accept defeat. The Addams family successfully subdue a giant into subservience and are in hierarchal dominance in terms of language and education. Allan Lloyd Smith notes that "the bondsman has power over the master by refusing him autonomy and forcing him into psychological dependence. Paradoxically, then, the slave has a greater awareness of freedom, whereas the master is only conscious of his need for control of mastery,"⁷ a trait that Frankenstein's creature showcases but is absent in the well-tamed Lurch. The second level of understanding arises by unearthing the correlation of the idea of liberation with literacy. While Frankenstein's creature is able to comprehend his 'otherness', Lurch remains unaware of it throughout. The Addams family has trained Lurch in a way that he responds to the ring of a

⁷ Allan Lloyd Smith, 'This Thing of Darkness: Racial Discourses in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein', *Gothic Studies*, 6:2 (2004) 208-222 (pp 216)

bell with a reflexive ‘you rang?’. Contrastingly, Frankenstein fails to subdue his creature due to its command over language and self-awareness developed through experiential as well as literary knowledge, which Lurch ostensibly lacks. Consequentially, it can be said that the opportunity of using knowledge as a means to understand his consciousness is availed by Frankenstein’s creature but is not presented to Lurch in his narrative.

Additionally, the utility of language as a means of control corroborates the hierarchy within both relationships. The creature acquires the language of the creator and is efficiently able to hold dialogues with him about the fate of its existence. The fact that the creature is unnamed also enables him to explore and develop an identity of its own. Lurch, on the other hand, is named by his masters and has a definite role to serve. He is named in the language of his masters that he can understand but cannot speak and the fragments he can speak is only of convenience to his master. It is interesting to note that Lurch’s language of grunts and groans serve as comedic intervals in the series. In one of the episodes, we witness Lurch performing a musical piece in his gibberish language⁸ which is directed as a parody accentuated by a cohort of young fans cheering at the grunting butler.

On closer comparisons of the novel and the television series, there emerges a clash of postcolonial readings. Mary Shelley’s novel is widely read as a successful attempt to give voice to the subaltern or underrepresented sections of the society as suggested by Kari J. Winters who said that it “attempts to give voice to those people in society who are traditionally removed from the centers of linguistic power, people who are defined as alien, inferior, or monstrous solely because of physical features (such as sex or race) or material conditions (such as poverty).”⁹ The monster in the novel becomes the representative of the unheard voices and

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VwpTcimbPLM>

⁹Kari J. Winter, ‘Subjects of Slavery, Agents of Change: Women and Power’, in *Gothic Novels and Slave Narratives, 1790–1865*, by Kari J. Winters (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1992). pp 51

brings to the forefront their anxieties and conflicts. The description of the monster itself – “his yellow skin”, “lustrous black” hair, “teeth of a pearly whiteness”, “shrivelled complexion” and “straight black lips”¹⁰-becomes symbolic of the colonial countries whose residents were often referred to as ‘savages’ by the colonial masters due to their distinctive features. Despite being represented as a wretched monster, Frankenstein’s creation has his capabilities and can fathom his emotions – “I was, besides, endued with a figure hideously deformed and loathsome; I was more agile than they, and could subsist upon coarse diet; I bore the extremes of heat and cold with less injury to my frame; my stature far exceeded theirs....Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled, and whom all men disowned?”¹¹ In sharp contrast, Lurch lacks the boldness of Frankenstein’s monster. The most important tool employed by the monster is language that he uses to haunt and challenge his creator but Lurch is deprived of verbal ability that reduces him to an unnatural brute. Lurch, in this sense, can be read as a take on the colonial enterprise that enslaved communities and robbed them of their identities as well as agencies, and as an antithesis of Mary Shelley’s creature that aroused in readers abundant curiosity.

Rocky from *The Rocky Picture Horror Show* brings an eccentric value to the palette of the many adaptations of Mary Shelley’s literary monster. Rocky is the creation of Dr Frank N. Furter, who hails from “transsexual Transylvania” and has discovered the “secret to life itself.” In this musical horror-comedy film, Rocky emerges from Dr Frank’s laboratory as a chiseled man clad in tiny golden skin-tight shorts that blatantly brings to focus his obvious sex appeal to the viewers’ gaze. As Rocky acquaints himself with his form, Dr Frank dances to the lyrics “I can make you a man”¹² and instructs him to perform different physical exercises. Dr Frank is visibly pleased with his creation as it inspires an awe in him. Alternatively, Frankenstein

¹⁰ Shelley, *Frankenstein*. pp 98 (volume I)

¹¹ Shelley, *Frankenstein*. pp 12 (volume II)

¹² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEx8__ie6bg

notices his creature's bare arteries, muscles and the cloudy eyes which fill him with disgust for it. The idea of the body, then, becomes paramount in understanding the approach of the two narratives towards the artificially constructed man. Shelley's monster is repeatedly addressed as "filthy", "devil" and an "ugly wretch" by his creator, whereas Rocky is referred to as a "beautiful creature" and "exceptional beauty". While Dr Frank's sexual obsession with Rocky's form drives *The Rocky Picture Horror Show*, it is Victor Frankenstein's disgust and appalled withdrawal from his creation that shapes the narrative's conflict. Discussing the idea of beauty, Paul Guyer notes that "in case of adherent beauty, the concept of the object that is presupposed by the judgement constrains or restricts what forms can find beautiful in an object of a certain sort by considerations, deriving from its intended function."¹³ The creature is sutured by Frankenstein to become a supreme being that will inspire awe within society catapulting him into the realm of the ultimate creator. However, the creature's gigantic frame, rough skin that barely covered the muscles, and his disheveled physicality failed to achieve the purpose for which it was created and thus was inept to 'beautiful'. Rocky, on the other hand, with his well-formed muscles and the love it invokes in Dr Frank is symbolic of him being the replica of all that Dr Frank expected him to be. Rocky, only through his physicality, was able to attain his "presupposed" purpose and hence categorized as 'beautiful'.

Rocky and the creature overtake the lives of their respective makers, physically and psychologically. Victor Frankenstein's is isolated from his kin due to the looming threat of violence by his creation. Dr Frank is maniacally driven to make Rocky "a man" and protect him from other characters pursuing him in the narrative. As a result, the social and emotional harmony of both their worlds is disrupted which ultimately leads to the suspension of meaning and symbolical order that the makers in the equation are situated in. Rocky and the creature

¹³ Paul Guyer, 'Free and Adherent Beauty: A Modest Proposal', *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 42:4 (2002), 357–366 (pp 358)

slowly feed on reason and meaning in the social spheres they are introduced to, hollowing the *raison d'être* of their makers' lives and in process playing the role of a monster traditionally defined "as a figure disruptive of traditional social categories of rank and distinction."¹⁴ The creature first isolates Frankenstein from his family as the idea of creating the superior being consumes him. Secondly, the creature being abandoned by Frankenstein is a significant breach of a social responsibility that is owed to the creature by him which ultimately unleashes a murderous spree on those closest to Frankenstein. These instances are symbolic attacks on the foundation of a familial relationships defined by security and empathy. The creature's repeated attempts to be accepted into Frankenstein's world and its ultimate refusal "threatens the very definition of the closest family unit upon which traditional social structures are grounded."¹⁵ On similar lines, "transvestite Transylvania" is dismissive of all social boundaries and relationships. Dr Frank's appeal to submit to "absolute pleasure" induces a world where the normative heterosexual relationships are superseded by homosexual encounters and polygamous affairs. Brad and Janet enjoy carnal pleasures with multiple partners as they free themselves from the heteronormative foundations that bound them together in the world outside Dr Frank's liberal paradise. Moreover, the prime relationship of procreation is circumvented in both narratives as the role of a female body in the process of giving birth is replaced by scientific experimentation. Additionally, the postnatal duties of a parent are disposed in both cases which rears abnormal creatures that prevent the life of their makers from becoming a harmonious whole. David Hirsch suggests that the "the asexual construction of a creature without women's agency, has been frequently interpreted as a gynophobic attack on

¹⁴ Hirsch, *Liberty, Equality, Monstrosity*, pp. 128

¹⁵ David A. Hedrich Hirsch, 'Liberty, Equality, Monstrosity' in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) pp. 115-140 (118)

woman-centered family domesticity.”¹⁶ This reading further elucidates the way in which the novel as well as the film obliterate the social contracts that their characters are implicated in.

The film captures in its entirety the sexual themes that Mary Shelley’s novel addressed in the capacity of its social context – “the aggression, the suppressed sexuality, and the asocial components that permeate the novel have grown in importance, and these constitute a dynamic counter-thrust made especially vivid through the optical medium of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.”¹⁷ Victor Frankenstein’s obsession with his creation is only implied through his detachment from familial relationships, specially from Elizabeth. On the other hand, Dr Frank proclaims himself to be a “sweet transvestite” who swims in “the warm waters of sins of the flesh”¹⁸ and aims to build a sexually liberal paradise - and Rocky comes to be his pleasure object. Simultaneously, the creature longs for companionship in the form of a female creature, while Rocky experiences a lopsided relationship of sexual fixation where he is a subject without agency. The relationship between the creator and the creature in both the narratives echoes an excessive fascination and unnatural fetish that translates into the end of the creator, and metaphorically the created. The creature’s failure to attain acceptance and sympathy lead him to wreak havoc in Victor Frankenstein’s life. The deeply unsettled creator is overcome by the consequences of his experiment and succumbs to his death on a boat while his creature broods over his dead body. Dr Frank’s overbearing personality that transgresses all social boundaries create envy in his assistants, Riff Raff and Magenta, who then murder him. Rocky in an uncharacteristic show of emotions leaps to his death with Dr Frank in his arms. The similarities in the end of the creator and the creature reflect a tussle of rationality and sexuality

¹⁶ Hirsch, *Liberty, Equality, Monstrosity*, p.123

¹⁷ Wolf Eichler, ‘In the Romantic Tradition: *Frankenstein* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*’, in *Beyond the Suburbs of the Mind: Exploring English Romanticism: Papers Delivered at the Mannheim Symposium in Honour of Hermann Fischer*, ed. by Michael Gassenheimer and Norbert H. Platz (Essen: Blaue Eule, 1987).

¹⁸ All quotes from Sharman, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*

in a social order with rigid boundaries where “when hierarchy dissolves anarchic-erotic energy surges forth.”¹⁹

*Rock N Roll Frankenstein*²⁰ has identical thematic concerns at play in its narrative. The movie is centered around a megalomaniac music producer called Bernie who wishes to create the century’s biggest rock and roll star. He approaches his nephew, Dr Frankie Stein, who is a necrophiliac scientist, to create a being constituted of the body parts of famous music legends in order to inculcate the best of each field in a single being. Along with a drug addict named Iggy, they visit various cemeteries digging the graves of famous musicians and collecting their body parts. The new star is formulated from the remains of legendary musicians Jimi Hendrix²¹, Elvis Presley²², Buddy Holly²³, Sid Vicious²⁴ and Jim Morrison²⁵, and is named King. Their seemingly successful experiment becomes complicated when King’s sexual organs that were supposed to come from Jim Morrison’s corpse are accidentally desecrated by Iggy and are replaced by him with Liberace’s²⁶. Unlike many other adaptations, *Rock N Roll Frankenstein* focusses extensively on the process of creating the monster in Dr Frankie Stein’s laboratory. The entire process comes alive on the screen with each stage being explained and enacted by the cast. The performance of suturing King on-screen demystifies the process of creation and renders the overambitious experiment credibility. Christopher Toumey argues that it is a dependable technique in science fiction genres to closely showcase scientific equipment and processes which is not only symbolic of pride in technological advancement of the human race

¹⁹Jerry B.Brown, Judith Hoch, ‘The Rocky Horror Picture Show: A Galactic Gothic Epic’, *Studies in Popular Culture*, vol. 4 (1981), 59–66 (p. 64)

²⁰ This movie is highly inappropriate, insensitive and offensive. If you plan on watching it, please be warned.

²¹ American guitarist

²² American singer

²³ American musician

²⁴ Member of Sex Pistols, an English Punk Rock band, as a bassist

²⁵ American singer and songwriter

²⁶ American pianist

but also earns the tale “credibility from the visual fidelity of its scientific equipment.”²⁷ Mary Shelley also devotes the initial chapters of her tale in exploring the motivations of Victor Frankenstein’s promethean adventure, the knowledge he has acquired to achieve it and the actual process of coalescing the creature. Concurrently, both the narratives launch an inquiry into the very nature of scientific knowledge. Christopher Toumey further suggests that in stories of mad scientists “young people are innocent until exposed to scientific knowledge.”²⁸ Till the birth of his creature, Victor Frankenstein is an enthusiastic student of science who is then corrupted by the consequence of his scientific experiment. Similarly, Dr Frankie Stein exudes rare scientific knowledge that guides his life before he meets a tragic end induced by his creation.

In an invasive scene, King exclaims that his body “feels unnatural” as he acquaints himself to his physical existence. Dr Stein’s creature is fully conscious of the abnormal construction of his body and it visually manifests on-screen as viewers watch him feeling the movement and the lack of it in his body. The inability of King’s body to physically move like a human body is reflective of the incompetence of even the most meticulously crafted endeavor of replicating the divine mortal creation. Mary Shelley in the introduction to the third edition of *Frankenstein* wrote “frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavor to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world”²⁹ and so is the outcome of Dr Frankie Stein’s endeavor. This film’s creation combines nature and science but the limitation of human knowledge in the act of creation and its impossibility to compete with the craft of the ultimate creator provides the crisis in the movie. The limitation of mortal knowledge is further accentuated g to note that despite not having any animal remains in his

²⁷ Christopher P. Toumey, ‘The Moral Character of Mad Scientists: A Cultural Critique of Science’, *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 17:4 (1992), 411–437 (p. 414)

²⁸ Toumey, *The Moral Character of Mad Scientists*, p. 415

²⁹ Mary Shelley, Introduction to *Frankenstein* (1831), in *Frankenstein: Critical Edition*, ed. by Maya Joshi (Delhi: Worldview Publications, 2016), pp. 201-6

technical composition, King is dominated by impulses usually found in animal species. Moreover, even the intricately constructed psychological composition is unable to bestow King with a stable mortal existence. Dr Frankie Stein introduces “grey cells”³⁰ from a living organism into King’s adopted brain to enable powers of intuition and judgement in his being. Unfortunately, like his malfunctioning physical body, King’s psychological construction is also unable to create a synergetic whole. King’s body is birthed as an anthropotechnical venture where the intricacy of the psychological construction is complimented with an equally methodical process of engineering a physical structure. Theoretically, Dr Stein’s experimental creation comprises of the best physical attributes of great music legends brought together with an excellent combination of scientific knowledge and technical skills, and thus holds the potential to be extraordinary in itself. Media theorist, Mark B. N. Hensen³¹ proposes that “any integrated organic or inorganic “body,” the human included: as the twin operation of anthropotechnical interface, embodiment and technology work together in a cosmic dance continuously generates nature itself.” However, the unnatural combination of parts in Dr Stein’s creation coupled with mortal limitation of mastering the promethean life-creating magic leads to tragic ends and his ambition to replicate nature in the image of an artificially perfected being is unsuccessful. Furthermore, the elaborate scenes of dismembering and assembling bodies in the film are symbolic of obliterating history and legends to contrive a novel myth. The bodies of musical giants are disintegrated only to be reincarnated as a new music megastar, King, who then overtakes the public imagination through his extraordinary talents. As theorized by Fred Bottling “de and re-materializations of bodies into bits of information tear

³⁰ famously associated with Hercule Poirot, invented by Agatha Christie. Detective Poirot employs a combination of deduction, intuition and reasoning, which he curiously refers as his “little grey cells”, to solve precarious mysteries. King’s inability to employ the said grey cells to facilitate self-awareness offers a stark contrast to Poirot, and thus consolidating his existence as a malfunctioning experiment despite the careful techniques employed to form him.

³¹ Shane Denson, ‘Foreword: Logic of Transition’, in *Postnaturalism: Frankenstein, Film and the Anthropotechnical Interface* (Transcript Verlag, 2014). pp 13

up traditions and habits and enable an array of new combinations and systems of control; genetic technologies rewrite codes of life.”³² In an eccentric manner, *Rock N Roll Frankenstein* also imbibes Shane Denson’s view of perceiving *Frankenstein* as a living history of art and technology as he comments that “Frankenstein films reveal specific, changing configurations of human-technological interaction: patterns, tendencies, and deviations that mark moments in a richly variable history that is at once a history of cinema, of media, of technology, and of affective channels of our own embodiment.”³³ The movie, thus, presents an advancement to the craft employed in the novel to create the being and goes beyond its implied investigation into human agency to expose the problems that arise with the interaction of human and technical mechanisms.

Through windows into his psychological turmoil throughout the film, King comes close to replicating the internal crisis and confusion that lurked in Frankenstein’s creature. The main conflict in both the tales is concerned with the becoming of a man. In the absence of social and cultural knowledge, Frankenstein’s monster learns through experience and books. On the other hand, King’s psyche is troubled by the friction between his phallus possessing homosexual tendencies³⁴ and his heterosexual brain that is unable to process its signals. His sexual organs are given a voice in the movie and often function as units independent of the body with a brain of its own. King is introduced to the world of casual sexual encounters as his music career launches and he makes use of the opportunities to explore his sexuality. In the movie, we witness him speaking to his phallus trying to control its homosexual desires and his phallus

³² Fred Botting, ‘What Was Man...? Reimagining Monstrosity From Humanism to Transhumanism’ in *Global Frankenstein*, ed. by Carol Margaret Davison and Marie Mulvey Roberts (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) 301-317 (p. 306)

³³ Denson, *Monster Movies and Metaphysics*, pp 26

³⁴ Liberace was rumored to be homosexual. When a magazine implied that he is homosexual, Liberace filed a lawsuit against them and the jury ruled in his favor. However, rumors still persisted about his sexual encounters with men. Some sources went to the extent of saying that his publicity team arranged for actresses that could act like his romantic partner to avoid the rumors.

convincing him to indulge in sexual encounters with men and women alike while also coercing him into murdering the people he has those encounters with. King's inept self-awareness guides him into precarious situations and also disrupts the lives of people around him. Jane Goodall contends that "perhaps the science that goes wrong in this story is not the science which takes place in the laboratory, but the science of self-knowledge."³⁵ Frankenstein's creature is catapulted into the world unaware of the social and cultural discourses that shape it. King is immediately introduced to a world of fame with no one to accustom him to his own dictates of existence, except for an unruly phallus that leads him to his end. The moral and social responsibility of the creator in both the relationships is renounced which makes the fate both creations pre-destined to doom. During certain reflective moments in the movie, King questions himself and his identity as he asks his maker, Dr Frankie Stein, "who am I?" The narrative often gives insights into his psychology as he navigates the "unnatural" urges arising from his sexual orientation and the realities of a life of fame unfolding in front of him. Ultimately, his outright sexuality proves fatal to him. The movie climaxes with his phallus growing to a monstrous size and demanding a satisfaction that King is unable to handle. In the cringe-worthy concluding scene, King dismembers his phallus from his body and bleeds to death. *Rock N Roll Frankenstein*, although obnoxious, creatively and outrightly addresses questions of anthropological, social, cultural and psychological importance through King and his relationship with Dr Frankie Stein, which ultimately lead to a narrative that fully manifests the themes in the other mentioned adaptations.

The literal act of fabricating the creature has acquired metaphorical meanings that portray the monster as a 'cultural problem'. *Monster Theory* insists that "the monster is a problem for cultural studies' code or a pattern or a presence or an absence that unsettles what

³⁵ Jane Goodall, 'Frankenstein And The Reprobate's Conscience' in *Studies In The Novel*, 31:1 (1999),19-43 (pp. 27)

has been constructed to be received as natural, as human.”³⁶ Lurch, Rocky, and King through their life experiences shed light on problems of language, politics, psychology, family, and society. The lopsided dynamic of the creator-created relationships hint at a sense of impending doom for both the sides. Lurch is outcasted from an already outcasted family of monsters, Rocky’s traumatic sexual encounters bring him to death along with his maker, and King succumbs to his unnatural anatomy while his maker also meets an end set in motion by his experiment. Through the trauma of this dynamic the narratives are able to capture the cultural anxiety that is collaterally born with rapid advancements in the field of science. The adaptations of our favorite monster, thus, are brimming with opportunities to navigate the society of their time and its accompanying discourses. The anatomy of each one of the characters mentioned in the essay is created from ideas and issues specifically chosen by the makers. While many of them derive inspiration from the original work, each adaptation adds a new layer of meaning to the prevalent understanding of Mary Shelley and her tale. They address important issues and can effectively be employed to trace Frankenstein’s monster’s trajectory through different time periods. Lurch, Rocky and King are essentially the product of their respective times and encourage an enquiry into the world they are situated in. The debates on colonialism, sexual revolutions, and scientific progress that these adaptations spark, familiarize us with the spirit of their respective eras. However, their true achievement lies in mapping the movement of a notable work from the past and how the product of a casual competition³⁷ between great artistic minds changed through mutating time periods and discourses.

³⁶ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ‘Preface: In Time of Monsters’ in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) pp. 1-8 (4)

³⁷ A reference to the competition between Mary Shelley, Lord Byron and Percy Shelley to see who writes the best horror story