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Throughout Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the creature endures rejection to the point that he is consumed by violent rage. Although it can be argued that the creature's growth into a monster is the result of an innate monstrosity, his vengeful actions toward the end of the novel stem from Victor's abandonment of his creation and thus the absence of a healthy parent-child relationship. This change is especially evident when, upon Victor's destruction of the creature's soon-to-be mate, the creature asserts "You are my creator, but I am your master;—obey!" and initiates revenge against Victor for not accepting and nurturing him as a father should (Shelley 120). And if the complex and destructive relationship between Victor and the creature is a highlight of *Frankenstein*, readers need a conceptual basis to fully understand this relationship: attachment theory.

According to attachment theory, the kind of attachment children have with their parents determines the nature of the child's later relationships. Applying attachment theory to *Frankenstein*, then, allows for a more thorough analysis of the reasons Victor abandons his creation and of his subsequent encounters with the creature, as well as the extent to which these events were determined by his relationship with Alphonse, his father. As acknowledged by David Minden Higgins, "creating life without nurturing it is at the root of Shelley's concerns," which applies both to the parenting of Alphonse and Victor (55-56). By identifying the attachment types of Victor/Alphonse and Victor/the creature, readers realize the extent of Victor's role in the advancement of the creature's aggressive behavior and actions as well as the negative consequences of creating life without nurturing it.

Several critics have examined parental relationships in *Frankenstein*. For instance, Laura P. Claridge argues that Victor exaggerates the happiness of his childhood and actually received little sympathy from his father. In addition, Anne K. Mellor evaluates the tension between Victor and his creation, claiming that Victor's carelessness in the creation, and then subsequent abandonment, of the creature lead to the latter's vengeful and violent behavior. Moreover, Lee Zimmerman asserts that Victor's abandonment and mistreatment of his creation derives from the neglect he experienced from

Alphonse during his childhood. While these critics are thorough in their evaluations of the predominant characters' relationships in the novel, none of them use attachment theory to support their analyses. Using attachment theory to analyze the relationships between Alphonse/Victor and Victor/the creature can more fully explain their interactions and pinpoint their motives throughout the novel.

Before identifying the attachment types of Victor/Alphonse and Victor/the creature, it is important to review attachment theory. In the 1960s, John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth's "Strange Situation" examined the nature of the attachment between caregivers and children. Children and their caregivers were observed as they played in a room. The caregiver then left the room and the child's reaction to being left alone was monitored. When the caregiver returned, the child's reaction was then observed to see if they either continued playing like nothing happened or if they sought out their caregiver (Shemmings and Shemmings 23-24). As a result of the experimenters' observations, the attachment types were formulated. The first type is secure attachment, in which the child knows that they will receive protection and comfort whenever they need it because their caregiver has consistently met their needs before (Prior et al. 15). In contrast, insecure attachment occurs when a caregiver is "less predictably warm and responsive" to a child, leading to the development of stress (Seccombe 102). There are two types of insecure attachment: anxious-ambivalent and avoidant. In anxious-ambivalent attachment, children are uncertain whether their needs will be met and become nervous when their caregiver is not close by. When the caregiver returns, though, the child rejects them instead of seeking them out for affection. In avoidant attachment, caregivers disregard the needs of their children. As a result, children do not expect comfort from their caregivers and display no signs of attachment to them (102).

In the "Strange Situation" experiment, some children's behavior was unclassifiable. In the 1990s, though, Mary Main and Judith Solomon reviewed Bowlby and Ainsworth's work and classified these children as having disorganized attachment. Disorganized attachment is characterized by "fear without solution," in which the child has "an overwhelming sense of fear that cannot be resolved" (qtd. in Shemmings and Shemmings 34). This condition often manifests itself in aggression and violence. Identifying the attachment types through the "Strange Situation" experiment has enabled researchers

to better understand many parent-child relationships. In addition, because Bowlby “conceptualized attachment as a lifespan process,” researchers have been able to examine how a child’s attachment type later determines that child’s attachment type with his or her own future children (Jones et al. 235).

To understand the creature’s attachment type with Victor and the impact of Victor’s abandonment on the creature’s development into the monster, it is necessary to identify the attachment type that Victor has with his parents and how it leads to his mistreatment of the creature. It seems clear the type Victor has with his parents is *avoidant* attachment. Jones et al. observe that “[a]voidant attachment . . . is associated with tepid, unsupportive, and insensitive caregiving,” which characterizes much of Victor’s relationship with his parents, who spent an inadequate amount of time with him (238). He was “urged to application” in studying and reading, and his “hours were fully employed in acquiring and maintaining a knowledge of [English, Greek, and German] literature” (Shelley 21, 24). Even within his academics, though, his parents still failed to be supportive, as when Alphonse “looked carelessly” at the book Victor was studying and called it “sad trash” (22). Claridge argues that “[b]efore there can be an interplay of love between father and child, the father has to fulfill his duties” (18). In this instance, because Alphonse dismisses Victor’s interest in natural philosophy and fails to explain why, they are unable to develop a filial bond. The “insensitive caregiving” of Victor’s parents is also illustrated by his mother’s neglect, for instance when Elizabeth, Victor’s sister, becomes sick with scarlet fever and Caroline risks her life to take care of her, despite her family’s protests. Victor even acknowledges that Elizabeth was Caroline’s “favourite,” conveying the resentment he feels toward his mother (Shelley 25). Victor further feels neglected after his mother’s death when his father quickly resumes his trip to Ingolstadt before properly mourning Caroline’s death. In elucidating avoidant attachment, David Shemmings and Yvonne Shemmings explain that “the avoidant caregiver encourages the child to fend for him or herself” (153). Victor experiences an early abandonment when Alphonse does not offer him any support or sympathy for having lost his mother, instead sending him away, suggesting that it is Victor’s duty to move on with his life and not allow his emotions to consume him.

Alphonse’s inability to sympathize with Victor demonstrates a further characteristic of avoidant attachment: lack of affection. Jones et al. acknowledge that “[a]voidance reflects a tendency to deactivate

the attachment system and is characterized by discomfort with intimacy, dependency, and emotional disclosure in close relationships” (238). Victor develops an avoidant attachment since his parents do not display warmth or affection toward him. This lack of affection continues into Victor’s adulthood as Alphonse repeatedly rejects any chance of “emotional disclosure” with his son. For instance, after the death of William, Victor’s youngest brother, Alphonse does not comfort Victor. Instead, as Victor explains, he attempts

to reason with me on the folly of giving way to immoderate grief. “Do you think, Victor,” [says] he, “that I do not suffer also? . . . but is it not a duty to the survivors, that we should refrain from augmenting their unhappiness by an appearance of immoderate grief? It is also a duty owed to yourself; for excessive sorrow prevents improvement or enjoyment, or even the discharge of daily usefulness, without which no man is fit for society.” (Shelley 61)

Here, Alphonse conveys his life philosophy: no man should ever allow his emotions to overcome his ability to reason, and he should certainly not share these emotions with anyone else. Alphonse’s advice to Victor to repress his “excessive” and “immoderate” emotions, though, costs him a connection with his son on an intimate level.

Having had no emotional intimacy with their parent(s), children with an avoidant attachment nevertheless develop ways to remain physically close with them, as they “learn that the best way to keep their parent available—physically, rather than emotionally—is not to display their feelings” (Shemmings and Shemmings 27-28). Victor’s awareness of how to keep his father close is evident after his friend Henry Clerval is murdered by the creature and Alphonse comes to see Victor in prison. Before his father arrives, Victor is emotionally unstable and in the midst of a two-month-long illness. When he hears that his father has come, though, he notes, “the appearance of my father was to me like that of my good angel, and I gradually recovered my good health” (Shelley 130). While it can be argued that Alphonse’s presence genuinely brings Victor relief, this relief is superficial, since after his father leaves, Victor reflects, “I was absorbed by a gloomy and black melancholy, that nothing could dissipate” (131). Therefore, despite his emotional instability, when Victor is in his father’s presence he suppresses

his anguish and seemingly recovers his former happiness because he knows he must not express his emotions around his father. Through the course of the novel, the suppression of these emotions and Victor's isolation from the support of others will prove to harm his state of mind and ability to reason.

Victor's avoidant attachment to his parents causes him to abandon the creature. In order to properly understand this causal relationship, we first need to look more closely at the circumstances of the creature's creation. As noted earlier, after his mother's death, Victor feels abandoned and is overcome with extreme grief. He says, "I need not describe the feelings of those whose dearest ties are rent by that more irreparable evil, the void that presents itself to the soul, and despair that is exhibited on the countenance" (Shelley 25). While Jillmarie Murphy argues that Victor mourns his mother's death because he "[exalts]" her, in the context of the avoidant attachment between Victor and his parents it is more evident that he is overcome with grief because, with Caroline's death, his efforts at having a more intimate and loving relationship with her are gone forever (47). As a result, Victor seeks to create a source of affection and so becomes "engaged, heart and soul, in one pursuit": creating the creature (Shelley 34). However, since Victor is not surrounded by a loving and supportive environment during his experiment, his "imaginative energy . . . threatens to turn back on itself" (Poovey 347). If Victor was surrounded by his friends and family, they could have helped him channel his grief in a healthier manner. Because he is alone, though, his grief becomes overwhelming and he is absorbed in his "disordered mourning" (qtd. in Murphy 47): In an effort to learn the secret to restoring life, his imagination finds inspiration from "the unhallowed damps of the grave" and the "charnel houses," places of horror and death (Shelley 34). As a consequence of his own abandonment and lack of attachment to his parents, Victor's efforts do not lead to the restoration of a beautiful human form but to the creation of a hideous creature that he subsequently abandons.

Another reason that Victor abandons his creation is due to the lack of sympathy from his father, which leads him to create someone who would admire him. During his childhood, Victor received little affection from his parents, as when his father ignores his interest in natural philosophy. Because he received little support and attention from his father, then, he creates another being that "would bless me as its creator and source . . . No father could claim the gratitude of his child so

completely as I should deserve their's" (Shelley 33). Not only does Victor desire to create someone who will look up to him, like he looked up to his father, and who he can love, as he desired to be loved by his parents, but, as Claridge argues, he also seeks "[compensation] for the sense of smallness his father has imparted" and a way to "[act] out his anger at his family in an attempt to affirm his own selfhood" (18). In his preoccupation with proving himself, though, Victor does not pay attention to his creation and its appearance as he puts the body parts together. For while Victor says he took "infinite pains and care" and "selected his features as beautiful," he was so absorbed in his experiment that only once it is completed does he notice the creature's "yellow skin," "watery eyes," "dun white sockets," "shriveled complexion, and straight black lips" (Shelley 35). According to Mellor, Victor "never once considers how such a giant will survive among human beings" (47). As a result, when the creature awakens, Victor is disturbed by what he sees: "now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room" (Shelley 36). While Victor initially created the creature to resolve the neglect he received as a child, his over-ambitiousness ultimately prevents him from empathizing with his creation, so he subsequently abandons it.

Furthermore, Victor abandons his creation because of his realization of what the creature personifies. In analyzing monstrosity in *Frankenstein*, many critics argue that Victor is the true monster because of his mistreatment of the creature and his inability to prevent the murder of his family and friends. Similarly, and in relation to attachment theory, Victor abandons his creation because he sees in it his inner monster. In this manner, Zimmerman confirms that the self that Victor was denied during childhood, a self of rage and passion, "remains hidden and inexpressible, and is ultimately disowned by being projected into the monster" (84). Due to the avoidant attachment Victor and his parents have, he was taught as a child to reject his inner self and contain his emotions. When he is creating the creature, Victor reflects on his father's philosophy that "[a] human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind, and never allow passions or a transitory desire to disturb his tranquility" (Shelley 34). Instead of heeding his father's warning, though, Victor deliberately defies him and resumes his creation with renewed fervor. At the same time, he channels all the rage he has against his

parents into his creation. Subsequently, just as he rejects his inner self, so too does he reject the creature when it awakens. The neglect and lack of empathy that Victor experiences from his parents causes his abandonment of his creation and determines the attachment type he and the creature have.

In examining Victor's avoidant attachment with his parents, the foundation has been laid for an analysis of Victor's and the creature's relationship as a form of disorganized attachment. Shemmings and Shemmings state that "the predisposing factor most likely to be associated with DA [disorganized attachment] is maltreatment by a carer," which can take the form of abuse or neglect of the child (54). From the moment of the creature's birth, Victor abandons it and scorns it as hideous. The neglect that the creature experiences, then, is the number one factor that leads to the development of his disorganized attachment. In further describing the behavior of the caregiver, Shemmings and Shemmings assert that

caregivers of children with disorganized attachments . . . are either extremely insensitive in their caregiving, disconnected in their caregiving or they display very anomalous or disrupted caregiving behaviour. In an attachment context, extremely in-sensitive parenting is described as withdrawal, neglect, unresponsiveness (with regards to the child's need), lack of interaction or, conversely, over-intrusiveness and over-stimulation, aggression, rough handling, hitting, pushing and extremely hostile language. (160)

Victor displays this kind of caregiving behavior throughout *Frankenstein* after the creature is created. Foremost, Victor's "withdrawal" and "neglect" are seen following his experiment when he goes to his room to rest but awakens only to see his creation: "I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes . . . were fixed on me. His jaw opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks . . . one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped, and rushed down stairs" (Shelley 36). In this moment, the creature is seeking out his creator, his father, for affection and love, but Victor has already labeled him a "miserable monster" and is therefore unresponsive to his creation's needs. In addition, when the creature observes the kindness and gentleness of the cottagers, he remarks on Victor's "unresponsiveness" and

“neglect” as he observes, “But where were my friends and relations? No father had watched my infant days, no mother had blessed me with smiles and caresses” (84). Because the creature is able to recognize that he was abandoned by his creator, Victor’s caregiving seems even more “insensitive.”

Victor further scorns the creature when, later in the novel, he and the creature meet atop Montanvert and he notes that “anger and hatred had at first deprived me of utterance, and I recovered only to overwhelm him with words expressive of furious detestation and contempt. ‘Devil!’ I exclaimed” (Shelley 67). Victor continually uses “extremely hostile language” (Shemmings and Shemmings 160) in calling the creature “the wretch” (Shelley 36), “vile insect” (67), “the daemon” (67), “[a]bhorred monster” (68), “the fiend” (116), “the monster of my creation” (132), and “my hideous enemy” (132). Victor’s “insensitive” caregiving is further displayed in his inability to look past the creature’s hideousness. While he and the creature converse on Montanvert, Victor acknowledges, “His words had a strange effect upon me. I compassioned him, and sometimes felt a wish to console him; but when I looked upon him, when I saw the filthy mass that moved and talked, my heart sickened, and my feelings were altered to those of horror and hatred” (103). Not only does this demonstrate Victor’s inability to empathize with the creature because of the appearance he gave him, but it also illustrates his “anomalous or disrupted caregiving” as he moves between sympathizing with the creature and then feeling intense hatred toward him (Shemmings and Shemmings 160).

Another feature of disorganized attachment, as recognized by Shemmings and Shemmings, is “the paradox” the child experiences when “the very person who should be able to protect him or her is at one and the same time the source of danger” (54). This feature is evident in the relationship between Victor and the creature, and the creature even recognizes it himself when he states,

From you only could I hope for succor, although towards you I felt no sentiment but that of hatred. Unfeeling, heartless creator! you had endowed me with perceptions and passions, and then cast me abroad an object for the scorn and horror of mankind. But on you only had I any claim for pity and redress, and from you I determined to seek the justice which I vainly attempted to gain from any other being that wore the human form. (Shelley 98)

Here, the creature acknowledges the hatred he feels toward Victor for abandoning him and making him hideous to the point that no human sympathizes with him. However, he also realizes that Victor, as his creator, is the only person he can turn to for help and any kind of compassion, no matter how small. Due to this paradox in the connection between the creature and Victor, as well as Victor's abandonment of and hostility toward the creature, the creature's attachment to Victor is extremely disorganized.

Significant to an examination of the creature's vengeance against Victor is an evaluation of the affection and lessons that the creature failed to receive because of his disorganized attachment with Victor, and the consequences of this failure. According to attachment theorists, love and affection from a caregiver are important for the healthy development of a child. Because the creature was abandoned from the moment of his creation, though, he lacks any source of affection and so develops an aggressive and violent nature. After he is abandoned by Victor, he roams through the woods alone in search of food and shelter. Whenever he comes in contact with humans, he is shunned and attacked, reliving his abandonment over and over again. As a result, the creature develops a deep need for love and empathy and a "place of refuge. . . from the barbarity of man" (Shelley 73). When he finds the hovel by the cottage, then, according to Murphy, he finds "a kind of love, warmth, and nurturance analogous to that of a mother's womb" (59). From this hovel, the creature is also able to observe the kindness and gentleness of the cottagers, whom he grows to consider as friends. The more time he spends with them, the greater his desire to be loved by them grows. As the creature stresses, "my heart yearned to be known and loved by these amiable creatures: to see their sweet looks turned towards me with affection, was the utmost limit of my ambition," but he does not dare show himself right away for fear that he will be rejected again (Shelley 92). While the love and affection that a parent gives a child is important in their early relationship, the creature does not receive this and so is left with a deep desire for attachment that remains an unfulfilled void.

In addition to giving their children love and attention, caregivers must also teach them social lessons that will help them as they grow. R. Chris Fraley and Glenn I. Roisman emphasize the need for parents to establish a supportive relationship with their child early on, which leads to "the development of the skills necessary for developing and maintaining high-quality friendships" (16). Moreover, in

reviewing Bowlby's work, Fraley and Roisman note that

Bowlby believed that supportive and responsive interactions between parents and their children are crucial for children's development of these broad skills [the ability to take the other person's perspective, have empathy, and be able to resolve conflict in effective ways]. For example, he believed that a child's sense of self (i.e., whether the child perceives him- or herself as lovable) is rooted in the history of transactions between parents and children. In addition, the child's ability to regulate emotions in an appropriate way is rooted in early relational experiences.

(13)

In early interactions with their children, parents are supposed to teach them how to relate to others and be kind. Not only does this help children form friendships on their own, but it also teaches them to control their emotions and enables them to develop their individual identities. Because Victor abandons him, though, the creature is unable to learn these lessons. For while the creature does have the chance to form friendships, such as with the cottagers, the lack of affection and sympathy he receives from Victor and others encourages him to remain hidden in his hovel.

Without these foundational lessons from Victor, the creature also fails to develop a sense of self. During his stay in the hovel, the creature learns more about the cottagers' past and naturally thinks about his own. While the cottagers are all related, though, the creature realizes that he is "dependent on none, and related to none. . . what did this mean? Who was I? What was I? Whence did I come? What was my destination? These questions continually recurred, but I was unable to solve them" (Shelley 89). In addition to having no sense of self, the creature also does not consider himself lovable, instead seeing himself as a monster. This is evident when he reflects,

I was, besides, endowed with a figure hideously deformed and loathsome; I was not even of the same nature as man. I was more agile than they, and could subsist upon coarser diet; I bore the extremes of heat and cold with less injury to my frame; my stature far exceeded their's. When I looked around, I saw and heard of none like me. Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men

fled, and whom all men disowned? (83)

Feeling that in order to be loved and accepted one must be attractive and appear gentle, the creature does not show himself to the cottagers right away.

Furthermore, because Victor fails to provide him with a supportive environment and to teach him necessary social skills, the creature is unable to appropriately control his emotions. This is seen when, after he is attacked and later deserted by the cottagers, he develops extreme rage and behaves “like a wild beast” (Shelley 95). As the creature acknowledges, “I, like the arch fiend, bore a hell within me; and, finding myself unsympathized with, wished to tear up the trees, spread havoc and destruction around me, and then to have sat down and enjoyed the ruin” (95). As his rage remains unchecked, the creature sets fire to the cottage and declares “everlasting war against the species, and, more than all, against him who had formed me, and sent me forth to this insupportable misery” (95). To explain the creature’s rage, Zimmerman uses the work of W. R. Bion, a British psychoanalyst, on emotional “containment”: “For Bion, an infant’s overwhelmingly intense internal states, especially those of anxiety, fear, and rage, need to be made tolerable by the primary caretaker’s taking them in and returning them in a more bearable form” (88). Because Victor’s abandonment and the cottager’s desertion is the cause of the creature’s rage, and Victor is not present to help the creature work through his rage, the creature does not know how to control his emotions and so he becomes violent. Before he sets his mind on revenge, though, he turns to Victor one last time and asks him to make him a female companion. According to Joyce Carol Oates, the creature knows that “he requires love in order to become less monstrous” (33). Nonetheless, when Victor aborts the female creature, the creature is sent over the edge in rage and vows revenge against Victor. As a result of Victor’s inability to provide him with supportive and responsive care upon his creation, the creature fails to acquire the necessary skills to help him develop in a healthy manner. Consequently, the creature becomes the monster that people see him as, and he embraces an aggressive and violent nature that he unleashes on his attachment figure, Victor.

The defining element of the creature’s attachment type is the strong aggression he has toward Victor. According to attachment theorists, another feature of children with disorganized attachment is their use of aggression to restore attachment to their caregiver, which explains the purpose of the

creature's revenge against Victor not by killing him directly, but by killing his family and friends instead. Shemmings and Shemmings explain that a child with disorganized attachment becomes aggressive in the first place due to "unresolved" trauma or loss (109). This is evident in the creature's life when he repeatedly recalls Victor's abandonment and when he finds Victor's papers that describe the "accursed" and "disgusting" nature of his creation (Shelley 91). When the creature asks Victor "Why did you form a monster so hideous that even you turned from me in disgust?" he conveys that he does not understand why he was created and that the trauma of his abandonment remains "unresolved," causing him to become violent (91). Shemmings and Shemmings go on to explain that when children become "aggressive, sly, or powerful," their "disruptive" behaviours . . . are often unconscious ways to regulate unpredictable, frightening, and abusive caregiving patterns" and "[gain] some control" over a caregiver (63). Because the creature's trauma and loss from his abandonment remains "unresolved," he seeks to create order and understand his life more fully by controlling Victor's life. Subsequently, he achieves this control through manipulation of and aggression against Victor.

While the creature does seek revenge against Victor, he does so by killing his family and friends. Morris N. Eagle draws on the work of Bowlby to identify how a child's aggression toward their caregiver manifests itself:

Bowlby repeatedly views anger and hostility not as primary, but as reactions to separation and loss and to the caregiver's unresponsiveness and/or inaccessibility. As Bowlby simply puts it, the child's behavior is an "expression of anger at the way he has been treated." These reactions may take the form of protest (i.e., to loss or abandonment) and may be preceded by longing, anxiety, and guilt. [Bowlby maintains that] "in the absence of frustration . . . an infant would not direct aggression against his love object" [due to] "the trauma of separation from his mother." (129)

Here, Eagle recognizes that children who have been neglected or abandoned by their caregiver become hostile toward them because of feelings of loss. Before they become aggressive, though, as Eagle maintains, children may attempt to be gentler. For the creature, before he seeks revenge against

Victor, he comes to him looking for pity and sympathy, as when he entreats, “Remember that I am thy creature: I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous” (Shelley 68). In this passage, the creature appeals to Victor’s pity by using controlled and gentle language. The creature is making a demand here, but he is more supplicating since he knows that being aggressive would only dissuade Victor from helping him. Moreover, the creature exhibits a sound rationality and knowledge of theology in an attempt to be treated as an equal and gain Victor’s sympathy. However, because Victor ultimately destroys the female creature, the source of the creature’s potential bliss, the creature sees that Victor will not respond to gentleness and that “hatred and vice must be [his] portion” instead (Shelley 103). Subsequently, then, he turns to aggression and revenge.

According to Eagle, Bowlby theorized that the motive for a child’s aggression is to “aid in reunion to the attachment figure and [discourage] further separations” (133). As Eagle notes, the goal emphasized has to do with maintaining the attachment bond. Hence . . . removing the obstacles that frustrate one’s goals would mean removing the barriers to maintaining an attachment bond. [Bowlby] notes that anger and aggression in response to separation, loss, and abandonment are intended to convey the message “do not do this again” and thereby preserve the attachment bond. Thus . . . destroying the object could not normally be one of the motives for aggression insofar as it would contradict the primary aim of anger, namely, preserving and maintaining the attachment bond. (133)

In other words, the child does not want to destroy or remove a caregiver, because then there would no attachment figure. Therefore, the purpose of the creature’s revenge, in which he kills Victor’s family and friends, is primarily to keep Victor alive and available as his attachment figure while still inflicting pain on him. The creature acknowledges this power over Victor when, after killing William, he reflects, “I gazed on my victim, and my heart swelled with exultation and hellish triumph: clapping my hands, I exclaimed, ‘I, too, can create desolation; my enemy is not impregnable; this death will carry despair to

him, and a thousand other miseries shall torment and destroy him” (Shelley 100). In addition, after Victor destroys the female creature, the creature declares, “Remember that I have power; you believe yourself miserable, but I can make you so wretched that the light of day will be hateful to you. You are my creator, but I am your master;—obey!” (120). Furthermore, moments later, the creature remarks to Victor, “I shall be with you on your wedding-night” (121). In all of these instances, the creature is aware that by targeting Victor’s family and friends, he causes him more suffering and despair than if he simply killed him. Additionally, he also conveys his understanding of the importance of being surrounded by caring people, and he wants Victor to feel the despair that he himself has felt at not having these kinds of relationships in his own life.

The second reason why the creature seeks revenge by killing Victor’s family and friends, according to Higgins, is so that “he becomes the only individual to whom Victor has a close bond” (83). At the end of the novel, the creature recounts to Waldman his motive for vengeance against Victor:

But when I discovered that he, the author at once of my existence and of its unspeakable torments, dared to hope for happiness; that while he accumulated wretchedness and despair upon me, he sought his own enjoyment in feelings and passions from the indulgence of which I was for ever barred, then impotent envy and bitter indignation filled me with an insatiable thirst for vengeance. (Shelley 159)

Because the creature was made hideous by Victor, he is unable to form relationships with other people and must remain utterly alone in the world. By killing Victor’s family and friends, then, he aims to destroy Victor’s happiness and force him to feel similarly isolated. In addition, due to the abruptness of his abandonment and lack of other relationships, he also desires to resolve the trauma of his isolation and be reunited with Victor. Similarly, Oates observes that the creature possesses a “patient, unquestioning, utterly faithful, and utterly human love for his irresponsible creator” (31). Despite Victor’s abandonment, he is “all yearning, all hope. His love for his maker is unrequited and seems incapable of making an impression upon Frankenstein; yet the demon never gives it up, even when he sounds most threatening” (32-33). While the creature’s method of restoring his attachment to Victor is

extremely violent, he nonetheless demonstrates his deep desire to have a “close bond” with his father.

Examining the creature’s aggression toward Victor and his motives for revenge makes the chase through the Arctic ice seem more reasonable instead of only a manipulation on the part of the creature. Eagle asserts that a child’s anger toward his or her attachment figure can become “maladaptive when (1) the anger continues too long and (2) most important, when the anger attenuates and further threatens the attachment bond, for example, by triggering the attachment figure’s counter anger” (133-134). In this manner, when the attachment figure is angered, they threaten to end the relationship, which the child does not want, so they respond with despair and the belief that they cannot survive without the attachment figure (134). In *Frankenstein*, due to the progressive violence of the creature’s revenge, his anger toward Victor becomes “maladaptive” when Victor responds with his own anger after the creature kills Elizabeth and Alphonse dies of a stress-induced stroke. While Victor wants to kill the creature once and for all, though, the creature sees this as a threat to their attachment and so leads Victor on a chase through the Arctic ice. Because he knows that Victor could die under the harsh conditions of the Arctic and he cannot live without Victor, the creature provides him with food and other necessities (Shelley 147). While the Arctic chase may seem pointless to some readers, the creature’s motive is an attempt to maintain his attachment to Victor because he knows that if they meet face-to-face, then the anger that has built up between them will release itself and threaten the integrity of their attachment.

An understanding of the creature’s attachment type and the progression of his anger toward Victor also clarifies the final moment in *Frankenstein*—the creature’s suicide in the wake of Victor’s death. George Levine argues that “[t]he family is an aspect of the self and the self cannot survive bereft of its family” (315). In addition, as described by Fraley and Roisman, Bowlby believed that “a child’s sense of self is rooted in the history of transactions between parents and children” (13). Thus, upon Victor’s abandonment, the creature is unable to develop a “sense of self” apart from this traumatizing experience since he returns to Victor for sympathy and states “I am thy creature” (Shelley 68). Because he has no identity apart from Victor, then, when Victor dies aboard Waldman’s ship, the creature loses his only family and, subsequently, his self. In this moment, the creature observes, “But it is even so; the fallen angel becomes a malignant devil. Yet even that enemy of God and man had friends and associates

in his desolation; I am quite alone” (160). Whereas before the creature identified himself as “the fallen angel,” he now sees himself as “a malignant devil,” conveying that without Victor he has lost any chance of being moral and virtuous. Moreover, he realizes that he is now quite alone in the world. As the creature’s attachment figure, Victor gave him some semblance of an identity; however, now that Victor is dead and the creature no longer has an attachment to him, and thereby no identity, he no longer sees the point of living. Higgins supports this claim when he suggests that “it is not surprising that he wishes to die after Frankenstein’s death, for he no longer has an ‘other’ through which to define his own ‘self’” (84). Without such an attachment to Victor, the creature laments, “I, the miserable and the abandoned, am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on” (Shelley 160). In the final moments of the novel, then, the creature, who now sees that his existence was never desired by his creator, leaves the ship to “ascend [his] funeral pile,” as his creator would have had it from the beginning (161).

Using attachment theory to analyze Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* contributes to a greater understanding of the novel’s primary relationships. Foremost, attachment theorists assert that the type of relationship children have with their caregiver determines the attachment type they will have as parents. In this manner, then, the avoidant attachment between Victor and his parents determines the disorganized attachment between Victor and the creature, since the lack of sympathy and attention that Victor receives from Alphonse later influences Victor’s abandonment of and lack of empathy for his creation. In addition, this paper illustrates the significance of parent-child relationships and how important it is that parents provide a child with a loving and supportive environment. In this way, it is evident that Victor’s failure as a parent and his inability to provide affection for his creation and teach him necessary lessons played a significant role in the creature’s unhealthy development. Instead of growing into an empathetic, kind, and self-regulating being with a secure attachment to his creator, the creature turns into an aggressive and violent monster due to the unresolved trauma of being abandoned at birth and continuously rejected afterwards by Victor. As a result, one may wonder what would have happened if Victor had been more empathetic to and accepting of the creature. Would Victor have kept him hidden but raised him as a proper father should? Or would he have become an accepted member of society? Furthermore, by establishing the relationship between the attachment types of Victor/

his parents and Victor/the creature, the creature's acts of aggression and vengeance against Victor and humankind are more easily understood since the creature only desires to be loved and accepted and have his chance at happiness. By the end of the novel, then, as the creature laments the death of his father and martyrs himself, readers are stirred to feel sympathy for him, which is all he ever wanted from the moment he was born.

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