Mary Shelley, who spent some time there as a teenager, when her father sent her to live with the Baxter family. The current author, along with artist Norrie Millar, and letterer and designer Phil Vaughan, produced a comic as part of this event. The story suggested that many of the things in the novel were inspired by Shelley's time in Dundee, a busy industrial city based around jute and whaling (Figure 15.7), drawing on her claims in the 1831 edition of the novel that Dundee and the surrounding area inspired her imagination. The comic playfully draws upon a range of versions of the story and the creature, and Millar's work displays the influence of many early comics adaptations, and like *Frankenstein's Womb*, turns its attention back on the creator of the novel.

The story of Frankenstein and his creature has become a very modern myth, which continues to communicate vital messages about creation, life and death, responsibility, vengeance, and the relationship between intellectual curiosity and morality across its various retellings. The creature itself, particularly as portrayed by Karloff, has become iconic and ubiquitous, but comics have offered many different interpretations of the story from adaptations that are very faithful to the tone and themes of the novel, to parodies, superhero versions of the creature, and ruminations on the nature of artistic and scientific creativity.

NOTES

3 Ibid., p. 51.
4 Ibid., p. 51.

In the author's note that accompanies the young adult novel, *This Monstrous Thing* (2015), Mackenzi Lee argues that while many people cast Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) as the first steampunk novel, it does not fit that genre's minimal definition of posing an alternative history, or position Victor Frankenstein's scientific experiments within an industrial framework of gear-driven, clockwork mechanisms driven by steam power. Steampunk is a form which is influenced by images of nineteenth-century technology and explores how such images can be elaborated as part of an alternative account of history. Lee's steampunk adaptation of Shelley's work does all of these things, drawing the writing and reception of Shelley's novel itself into an alternate history that touches on themes of discrimination, social and personal responsibility, teen angst and romance. In *Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich* (2006), a poetic adaptation for picture book readers, Adam Rex's oversized, green-skinned, neck-bolted but still somehow friendly looking creature leaves his home in search of lunch. When his abusive neighbours pelt him with garbage, he fashions their offerings into an enormous, disgusting sandwich. In this way, Rex turns the horrific moments of mob violence in Shelley's original and its film adaptations into a humorous narrative poem that depicts resilience in the face of bullying, one of the many themes he takes in a comic direction in this and the subsequent *Frankenstein Takes the Cake* (2008). These and many other authors that we will highlight in this chapter find in *Frankenstein* a peculiarly apt vehicle through which to explore certain anxieties and trends in both children's and young adult literature. While our chapter draws mostly from titles originally published in the US, our framework for discussing them applies more broadly to texts and readerships outside that context.

Contemporary teen fiction is littered with reanimated corpses and other things that should be dead but are not, giving metaphoric voice to many of the dominant themes in the genre, such as body dysmorphia; experiencing oneself as an outsider; bullying to the point of evoking violence; and
On the other hand, their family, and reasonable until proven otherwise. The Apprenticeship of Victor Frankenstein, and Kenneth Oppel's This Monstrous Thing are reasonably responsive, they learn patterns of trust, which recur when ever they encounter a new situation, such as going to school or entering a new relationship; they will expect the environment and people in it to focus on the desire to resurrect a monster. Even within a kinship model, though, developmental stage theories can provide much that is relatable to the adolescent experience. In thinking of children's reading, we often operate out of what Marah Gubar calls a 'deficit model', which considers young children as deficient adults, lacking the skills and intellectual resources they need to understand complicated ideas. A more accurate position aligns with what Gubar describes as a 'kinship model'; children are human, after all, and while they may be somewhat inexperienced and dependent, they are sensitive to themes, details and emotions that connect them in intimate ways to texts that, though written for adults, address concerns across the age spectrum. In Frankenstein, themes and issues such as family relationships, the roles and dangers of knowledge and secrecy, and the fear of isolation resurface, even failed or tragic romance. Bodily changes brought on by puberty may make a teen feel monstrous, clumsy, trapped in a body he or she does not understand, and rejected by peers. Social rules and conventions make this experience even more traumatic, as some teens, feeling disempowered themselves, turn their anxiety outward in bullying behaviours that isolate those whose bodies exceed normative parameters. One of the recurring themes of the middle grade and young adult adaptations of Frankenstein that focus on such mistreatment, interestingly enough, is redemption; either through providing a sympathetic back story for the scientist, or attending more closely to the social needs of the monster, adaptations for both children and young adults often end with forgiveness or at least understanding and empathy for their behaviours. And while the love affair between Victor and Elizabeth and the monster's demand for a mate have always featured prominently in adaptations, these elements transform in interesting ways in the middle grade and young adult adaptations; couple relationships matter, but siblings and peer friendships are as important as romance in the adaptations.

In addition, the monster's relationship to his creator offers an analogue to some teens' spiritual search; emerging out of the animistic worldview of childhood, many teens feel abandoned by a god who will not intervene in ways they can feel on an experiential level, just as Frankenstein's monster feels abandoned by his creator. The flip side of the teen reaching for a response from his or her god is the culture's fear that the teens they are responsible for creating through enforced obedience to repressive regimes of various kinds will rise up against them in the fashion of what Isaac Asimov dubbed the 'Frankenstein complex'. It is a tale at least as old as the book of Genesis and Milton's Paradise Lost (1674), and these twin themes resurface in today's trend of teen dystopias, many of which take the Frankensteinian motifs of scientific overreach and righteous anger against an irresponsible 'parent' as their guiding lights. Death itself becomes a prominent theme in literature for this age group as well, to the point that Roberta Seelinger Trites has called it the 'sine qua non of adolescent literature, the defining factor that distinguishes it both from children's and adult literature'. This is, according to Trites, because young adults must confront the fact that death represents the ultimate limit to their power. Hence, a story that challenges that limit, particularly one that replaces a seemingly absent god with an active human scientist, is bound to resonate, and indeed, both Lee's This Monstrous Thing and Kenneth Oppel's The Apprenticeship of Victor Frankenstein series (2011, 2012) focus on the desire to resurrect a beloved brother rather than create a wholly new person. But ultimately, Frankenstein adaptations, like so many other paranormal fantasies for teens, are stories about the terrible consequences of attempting to defy death, so they do the work Trites claims they do of forcing teens to confront the limit of their power. Given that the watchword for youth literature, for better or worse, is 'relatable', then, this nineteenth-century horror tale provides much that is relatable to the adolescent experience.

But the fact that Frankenstein has found its way into literature for very young children as well as adolescent literature is a bit more puzzling. To understand this phenomenon requires an understanding of the existential concerns of the developing child. Most psychological theorists believe that children develop socially, morally and cognitively in stages. The danger in thinking in terms of developmental stages, however, lies in considering them as uniform, defined and tied to particular age ranges. In addition, because we do not believe children to be cognitively able to process the full meaning of a text, we have a tendency to dismiss the complexity of their actual responses to and understanding of stories. In thinking of children's reading, we often operate out of what Marah Gubar calls a 'deficit model', which considers young children as deficient adults, lacking the skills and intellectual resources they need to understand complicated ideas. A more accurate position aligns with what Gubar describes as a 'kinship model'; children are human, after all, and while they may be somewhat inexperienced and dependent, they are sensitive to themes, details and emotions that connect them in intimate ways to texts that, though written for adults, address concerns across the age spectrum. In Frankenstein, themes and issues such as family relationships, the roles and dangers of knowledge and secrecy, and the fear of isolation are all live issues for even the youngest members of our species.

Even within a kinship model, though, developmental stage theories can offer a useful heuristic tool for understanding how and why the themes and motifs in Frankenstein appear and change in adaptations targeted at readers of different ages. A useful way of working with stage theories, then, is to understand that certain concerns impress themselves upon children at certain times due to social situations and developing physical and mental abilities. During these initial confrontations with new situations, children develop patterns of response that persist in similar situations throughout their lives. For instance, psychologist Erik Erikson argued that the first task of infants is to learn whether or not the world is a trustworthy place. If their environments are fairly orderly and predictable and their caregivers are reasonably responsive, they learn patterns of trust, which recur whenever they encounter a new situation, such as going to school or entering a new relationship; they will expect the environment and people in it to be kind and reasonable until proven otherwise. If, on the other hand, their lifestyles are unpredictable and chaotic, and if caregivers are overly intrusive or neglectful, then they will expect adults to be untrustworthy and will be suspicious and mistrustful of situations in which they are asked to act independently. Erikson believed that during the early formation of self, a child's trust or mistrust is established and carries over into later stages of life, influencing all future social relationships. In the case of Frankenstein, the scientist, Victor, is a 'monster' who is both feared and mistrusted by society, and the monster, himself, is a 'monster' who has been created by his creator, Victor. The relationship between the two is a complex one, and it is through this relationship that the themes of knowledge and secrecy, and the fear of isolation are explored in depth.
situations are chaotic and their caregivers unpredictable, they will approach new situations from a position of distrust. We can see this dilemma depicted on the monster’s first day out, so to speak.

From his first day and throughout his life, Frankenstein’s creature knows only loneliness. The first moments of his life are narrated by Victor Frankenstein, who is disgusted with and frightened by his creation, abandoning it at the moment it awakens. Later, the creature finds his way to Frankenstein’s bedchamber, giving Frankenstein a second opportunity to embrace his creation. This is not the case, however. Frankenstein recounts that the creature came to him and ‘muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks... I rushed down stairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house I inhabited; where I remained during the rest of the night.’ Thus, in his first moments of life, even as he smiles and gurgles like an infant, the creature is both abandoned and detested by the one who should care for him most.

For the creature, this is just the beginning of his loneliness and isolation. He is left alone to learn about love and pain, and his attempts to reach out to others are consistently met with fear and revulsion. Even his best efforts, such as his attempt to resuscitate the drowning child, are violently misunderstood, causing him to lament:

‘This was then the reward of my benevolence! I had saved a human being from destruction, and as recompense, I now withered under the miserable pain of a wound... Inflamed by pain, I vowed eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind.’ (p. 116)

Thus, based on his many tragic misadventures in the earliest part of his life, the creature approaches new situations and people with distrust, and even with hatred and violence in some cases.

The creature’s development continues to mirror that of a growing child. Like the creature, for instance, young children test the limits of their autonomy and bodily abilities. They learn language and its effects on others. And their behaviour, intentionally or not, is sometimes monstrous. So perhaps one reason why Frankenstein is so often adapted for children, and recognizable as a type even when children have no knowledge of the source text, is because of this sense of kinship between the monster and the child; he is a child, modelled on the view that children are born innocent and learn how to behave from the way they themselves are treated. Had the monster not been so maligned and harassed, had Victor taken responsibility to nurture him as a loving father, he might have become a hero. But therein lies the darkness: he is an unnatural child, and he intentionally kills a child when the child, William, rebukes him and acknowledges that he is a Frankenstein, that is, a naturally born member of what should have been the creature’s family. In testing his strength and his limits, the creature learns that “I, too, can create desolation; my enemy is not impregnable” (p. 117), a realization that he embraces with child-like glee. Thus, as the creature evolves into a monster in the social world, his development suggests a sinister undercurrent with regard to childhood itself: its innocence is no protection, and may become its doom if carelessly handled.

But the trajectory of adaptations for children does not follow this path toward the creature’s eventual isolation and despair. Instead, adaptations for children focus on themes of mastering fears and redeeming social relationships. Latent in all children is a deep-seated fear of rejection and abandonment by their caregivers as well as the feeling that their bodies are fragmented assemblages of parts rather than coherent wholes. And in fact, our ordinary language practice of saying things like, ‘He has his father’s eyes’ or ‘That nose comes from her mother’s side of the family’ probably adds to children’s sense that they are made of bits and pieces that may not all be pleasing. When Frankenstein recoils in horror at his patched-together creation, and other humans reject the creature because of his looks, these unconscious fears are given imaginative form. Psychologist D. W. Winnicott lists going to pieces and complete isolation as two of the ‘unthinkable anxieties’ for a child’s developing ego; as a text written for adults, Frankenstein makes these anxieties thinkable, while adaptations for children make them not only thinkable, but also enfold them in plots and images that help children overcome them. If someone who looks like Frankenstein’s monster can be lovable, then there is hope for the patched-together child reader.

Still, the undercurrent of incongruity between the innocent child and the monstrous child haunts adaptations for young readers, taking them in one of two directions: toward humour or horror. Children know that they are relatively weak, powerless and in need of protection; tweens and teens know that the social world is tricky to navigate. And while they may resent these generalized feelings of helplessness and/or social anxiety, being able to give them a specific form and location can make them manageable. For the youngest readers, for instance, if the monster is under the bed, he’s not everywhere all around. For older readers, understanding the motivations behind unfriendly social actors may inspire forgiveness, empathy or even tactics for managing difficult circumstances. But representing either the monster or the scientist as ridiculous, friendly or even in need of the child’s protection is even more empowering.

‘Given our cultural abhorrence for subjecting child readers to horror, adaptations of Frankenstein and his monster for very young children are always...’

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more funny than scary. One example of the funny monster is displayed in Neil Numberman’s picture book, *Do Not Build A Frankenstein!* (2009), in which a child builds a ‘Frankenstein’ that follows him around, annoying him. The monster’s annoying behaviour is comical to readers as he dresses in women’s clothing, pushes the child too high on the swing, and unsuccessfully pretends that he is not actually following the child. Ironic humour is used in adapting Shelley’s famous monster in Adam Rex’s hilariously clever poetry picture books mentioned above. Like Rex’s texts, Rick Walton’s *Frankenstein: A Monstrous Parody* (2012), by the pseudonymous Ludwigm Bemonster, parodies a variety of literary monsters, such as Dracula, the mummy, the wolfman and, of course, Frankenstein’s monster in intertextual dialogue; Walton parodies Ludwig Bemelmanns’ *Madeline* in style, structure and plot. This picture book is humorous for young readers familiar with the *Madeline* series (1959–1961) because they can identify the similarities and differences. The setting of the story is in contact with other well-known characters. In this particular example, ‘Frankenstein’, who is actually Frankenstein’s monster from Shelley’s text, is in a setting transformed into a world of ‘monsters’ in which the character is in contact with other well-known characters. In this particular example, ‘Frankenstein’, who is actually Frankenstein’s monster from Shelley’s text, lives in a town of monsters. Other infamous monsters also live there, such as Dracula, the invisible man and the creature from the black lagoon. Besides displacing the monsters into a world of imagination rather than reality, these books present readers with intertextual puzzles that highlight the fictionality of the characters and allow readers to experience the pleasure of knowing the references. We find such worlds in Lisi Harrison’s *Monster High* series (2010), Jon Skovron’s *Man Made Boy* (2013) and Allan Rune Pettersson’s *Frankenstein’s Aunt* (1978), as well as the TV show *Scooby-Doo and the Ghoul School* (1988) and the film *Hotel Transylvania* (2012). The settings may be metaphorical or have details that map onto real towns and schools, but they are clearly distinct from the real world, reminding readers that monsters only exist in safely contained story worlds.

Frankenstein is not only confined to an imaginary town in *Dracula and Frankenstein are Friends*; he is also confined to his domestic space, which is presented through Doug Cushman’s detailed illustrations. The first two-page spread shows Frankenstein’s neighbourhood and the types of houses each resident lives in. While Dracula lives in a turreted castle and the mummy lives in a pyramid, Frankenstein lives in a spooky house, complete with loose shutters and electrical equipment atop the roof. This illustration shows that monsters not only belong here, but that they each have their own special space, alleviating the anxiety about where monsters might be. To further emphasize this idea and to make the monsters seem friendly, readers are shown the insides of Dracula and Frankenstein’s houses. Dracula’s home
features a cozy sitting room with a roaring fire, a ‘Welcome’ doormat and a vampire sleeping snuggly in his coffin with his toes humorously exposed. In contrast, Frankenstein’s home depicts Frankenstein working in his laboratory in the middle of the night. Yet his home is also cozy with its stone fireplace, family photos and silly lab assistants bringing Frankenstein a variety of beakers. The familiarity of these domestic spaces makes the monsters seem similar to the reader; both monsters and children have happy, but clearly separate, homes.

While the beginning of Dracula and Frankenstein are Friends seems welcoming and even funny as Frankenstein and Dracula play tricks on their friends and experiment with chemicals, the fun fades when conflict arises. Frankenstein plans to host a Halloween party, but when he tells Dracula about his idea, Dracula commandeers not only Frankenstein’s idea but also his invitations, resulting in their mutual friends attending Dracula’s party while Frankenstein sits home wondering why his guests have not arrived. The juxtaposition of illustrations comparing Frankenstein and Dracula’s party preparations helps establish both homes as inviting places for a party. When all of the guests arrive and begin to enjoy themselves at Dracula’s party, however, readers are likely to sympathize with Frankenstein because he can be seen through Dracula’s window, sitting in his house alone. Guilt overtakes Dracula, and he decides to surprise his friend by bringing the guests to Frankenstein’s house. All of the characters are shown dancing and smiling in the end, and the book ends with the idea that the friendship has been repaired, restoring the domestic sphere and emphasizing Dracula’s redemption, rather than Frankenstein’s. Additionally, in vilifying Dracula, this picture book follows the adaptation trend that presents Frankenstein (or rather, his monster) as a victim with whom we should sympathize; even among monsters, he is sometimes an outcast.

The social anxiety and resolution in Tegen’s text address concerns characteristic of children entering the peer-intensive environment of school. Middle childhood, according to Erikson, is a time of finding out how the world works. He argues that the dilemma that children must resolve during this period is one of industry versus inferiority; they are interested in the technical aspects of how things work as well as the social respect that competence and skill will earn them. One of the reasons why this particular dilemma gains salience is because children in school are comparing themselves, and being compared through grading as well as social grouping, to their peers. Enter Franny K. Stein (2003), a series of illustrated chapter books designed for new readers. Franny is a scientist whose tastes and talents run toward the Gothic. Her parents do not understand or approve of her preference for bats and beakers over daisies and ponies, nor do her classmates, so, in the first book in the series, Franny feels sad, alone and unappreciated. Her sympathetic teacher suggests that she approach her problem like a scientific experiment, and her research leads her to transform herself into the kind of inoffensive girl who fits in by conforming to stereotypes. However, when the school is threatened, she lives up to her namesake by creating and animating a monster scary enough to take on the threat. Her classmates are at first stunned into silence by the revelation of her abilities and their fear of the creature, but by the next day, they laud Franny as both a hero and a friend, addressing her needs for social acceptance and acknowledgement of her particular set of ‘scientific’ skills. Like Frankenstein, Franny’s approach to science alienates her from family and friends, but unlike Frankenstein, Franny’s experiments eventually gain her positive recognition.

David Gooderham proposes that fantasy texts for middle grade readers address themes of ‘invention, construction and achievement’; they are characterized by ‘sustained thoroughness and painstaking rationality’, even going so far as to move toward the appearance of realism. In that respect, the Franny K. Stein series is transitional from an emphasis on wish fulfillment, where the science is vague and tinged with magic and silliness (her monster, for instance, is made of cold cuts), to books for older readers that take their science and their psychology more seriously. Goosebumps Most Wanted: Frankenstein’s Dog (2013) presents science in two competing and serious ways. On one hand, the main character, Kat, loves science, loves her scientist uncle and wants to become a scientist. Introducing herself and her situation, Kat narrates:

[Uncle Victor is] a brilliant scientist and I’m just a sixth-grade girl. But I really think we have a lot in common. He’s kind of my idol. He’s kind of my idol. I mean, I’d love to be a scientist and inventor like him when I’m older. He spends all his time just dreaming up amazing things and then building them. How much fun is that?

However, as Kat arrives at her uncle’s home to spend a week with him and document his work for a school project, Kat begins to doubt her uncle and his pursuit of science, casting science in a new light that suggests that it can be dangerous and scary. As Kat discovers that her uncle is creating artificially intelligent robots that often become rebellious and even violent, Kat begins to fear her uncle and his intentions. She breaks her uncle’s rules against going into his laboratory and against turning on his robot when her new friend wants to see it in action. Overall, this novel shows Kat to be balancing her own desires against the desires of her uncle and her new friend. She is trying to decide where she belongs socially, and she is testing the limits of her own agency. At the end of the novel, Kat discovers that
the man she thought had been her uncle all along is actually another robot, and her actual human uncle comes home from France in the final pages. The conflict is resolved as Kat realizes that all of the rules she has broken were never really rules that her actual uncle gave her. Furthermore, her uncle does not seem angry at her for being in his lab and playing with his experiments. The scientist is redeemed because he was never ‘mad’ or dangerous to begin with, Kat is reassured because her family status and friendships are intact, and she is free to explore becoming an industrious scientist in the future.

Themes of scientific and social competition between peers, as well as testing the limits of one’s power, are not confined to print; these themes are also explored on screen in children’s films such as Tim Burton’s *Frankenweenie* (1984/2012). Like Franny K. Stein and Kat, young Victor Frankenstein aspires to become a scientist in *Frankenweenie*. He is misunderstood by his family and classmates, and he turns to scientific experimentation to prove his self-worth to himself and others. What begins as a school science fair assignment quickly escalates to a dangerous competition between the students in reanimating their dead pets. In an ironic twist from Shelley’s text, Victor’s reanimated dog turns out to be the only non-violent creation, because Victor has performed his experiment out of love when his dog, Sparky, is killed by a car. The other children, however, reanimate their long-forgotten dead pets out of competition and by stealing Victor’s discoveries, causing their creations to become monstrous. This dark adaptation suggests that there should be limits to scientific experimentation, and also that one should evaluate the motivations behind scientific endeavours before beginning. In reanimating Sparky, Victor reclaims his only friend, but being the smartest kid in school and competing with his peers is detrimental.

Transitioning between middle childhood and adolescence, many adaptations of *Frankenstein* and its characters explore tween and adolescent anxieties regarding social status and the changing body, which are often related. *Monster High* (2010), by Lisi Harrison, is the first novel in a popular series that follows several teen monsters as they navigate typical adolescent scenarios such as high school, first loves, friendship and physical development. The *Monster High* series has seen great popularity within a broad spectrum of young readers for several additional reasons. One clear reason is that the series has spread beyond the novels to other merchandise, including dolls, animated cartoons, a clothing line and a kid’s website with the slogan, ‘Be yourself. Be unique. Be a monster.’ Part of the series’ popularity is also due to the variety of characters that it puts on display, providing today’s young girls with monster versions of stereotypes including ‘the popular girl’, ‘the rebel’, ‘the pretty girl’, ‘the athletic girl’ and so on, as characters that ironize
the time the series ends, monsters have become part of normal society, and artificial neck bolts have become a fashion statement among normal people. The *Monster High* series specifically targets a female readership, suggesting that the Frankenstein myth, and Frankenstein’s monster specifically, may serve the purpose of helping young girls learn to appreciate their changing bodies.

Through humor, domestication, and what we might call technological science-based fantasy, then, very young children as well as children in the middle find Frankenstein and his monster useful tropes for managing fears of inferiority as well as fears of being a social outcast. These adaptations for younger readers are most often redemptive and reassuring, both for the monster and for the scientist. Children need to know that they can make mistakes, that they can even behave monstrously, and still be forgiven. But as they develop a more nuanced understanding of their own interiority and their often contradictory motives and feelings, they look for texts that are more character driven and psychologically complex, and this is what we find in young adult fiction.

Like children’s picture books, novel adaptations for young adults represent variety in their world building. Some, for instance, focus primarily on Frankenstein and/or his monster, adapting Shelley’s characters. Novels such as *Mister Creecher* (2011) by Chris Priestley and Kenneth Oppel’s novels in *The Apprenticeship of Victor Frankenstein* series, *This Dark Endeavor* (2011) and *Such Wicked Intent* (2012), follow this trend. Priestley’s novel and Mackenzie Lee’s *This Monstrous Thing* include Mary and Percy Shelley as fictional characters themselves. In contrast, other novels build a world based on intertextuality, combining well-known literary characters, such as in Suzanne Weyn’s *Dr. Frankenstein’s Daughters* (2015) and Megan Shepherd’s *The Mad Man’s Daughter* trilogy that culminates with a focus on the Frankenstein myth in *A Cold Legacy* (2015). Some novels delve into a fantastic ‘world of monsters’ in which Frankenstein and his family are participants, such as in Jon Skovron’s *Man Made Boy*, while other novels, such as Peter A. Salomon’s *Henry Franks* (2012) brings Shelley’s work into ‘the real world’, creating a scavenger hunt as readers are invited to investigate the intertextual connections. Regardless of how the adaptation builds its world, the majority of these works all share one important aspect: they focus on how the scientist or his creation participates in domestic relationships, often exploring why Frankenstein becomes estranged from his family, or how Frankenstein or his monster is redeemed through familial reintegration. Through an emphasis on domesticity, the adaptations for teens provide the psychological complexity that many teens seek.

Redeeming the mad scientist and his monster through their relationships with others appears a priority for today’s adaptations. Chris Priestley’s *Mister Creecher* exemplifies this by revealing part of the missing narrative in Shelley’s novel – the duration of time in which Frankenstein and Henry Clerval are travelling throughout Europe while the creature awaits the creation of his bride. By telling the creature’s side of the story through the eyes of an orphaned child narrator, Priestley shows the positive, redemptive qualities of the creature, while simultaneously revealing Frankenstein’s baseness.

However, some novels, such as Kenneth Oppel’s, synchronously redeem and vilify Shelley’s characters through the explorations of domestic relationships. In *This Dark Endeavor*, Victor Frankenstein is revealed to be a heroic risk-taker, but also a proud and jealous twin. Set before Shelley’s novel begins, the first of Oppel’s two novels recounts Victor’s teen years before constructing his creature, following Victor’s adventures as he, Henry, Elizabeth and Konrad – his twin – discover the forbidden Dark Library in his home. When Konrad falls ill, Victor seeks a risky cure, but Konrad dies nonetheless, possibly as a result of the cure. Over the course of the novel, Victor is shown to be brave as he risks fighting wild animals, deep lake diving and disobeying his father, all for the love of his twin brother. These depictions redeem Victor before he ever begins his dark endeavours in reanimation. However, Victor is also shown to be a selfish show-off, craving attention from his parents, friends and especially from Elizabeth, his brother’s girlfriend. Overall, *This Dark Endeavor* presents a sympathetic backstory for the scientist while also providing a rich investigation into Victor’s domestic relationships.

*Such Wicked Intent* continues Victor’s story in the aftermath of Konrad’s death, appealing to teen interest in loss and death, showing the fallout when the teen protagonist tests the limits of his power and fails. Victor’s struggle with Konrad’s death is paralleled by his feelings of the loss of his personal power. However, Victor soon discovers a formula that allows the monster to return to life, creating a scavenger hunt as readers are invited to investigate the intertextual connections. Regardless of how the adaptation builds its world, the majority of these works all share one important aspect: they focus on how the scientist or his creation participates in domestic relationships, often exploring why Frankenstein becomes estranged from his family, or how Frankenstein or his monster is redeemed through familial reintegration. Through an emphasis on domesticity, the adaptations for teens provide the psychological complexity that many teens seek.

*Settling the score* by Karen Coats and Farran Norris Sands
comes through the exploration of domestic relationships, science and the occult.

*Man Made Boy*, by Jon Skovron, brings a completely new character's perspective into consideration as it follows Frankenstein's monster's son, named Boy, in the modern world. Boy and his parents live and work with a variety of well-known monsters in a freak show as a way of hiding in the modern world. Like any teen, Boy's problems consist of issues with his parents, popularity, romance and identity formation. While the novel is entertaining because it incorporates so many well-known characters and allusions from other texts, and because it answers the question, 'What if Frankenstein's monster actually had a family?', the novel is perhaps most intriguing because of the way it introduces technology as both cure and poison. Boy is actually a cyborg, created from both human and machine parts as a nod to what Shelley's creature might have looked like had she lived in the twenty-first century. To cope with his teen angst and his domestic relationship problems, Boy 'plugs in' to the internet as a hacker to relax and chat with his online friends. However, the technology that allows Boy to unwind becomes his greatest enemy when Boy creates a sentient virus and frees it into the cyberspace. Much like Shelley's Frankenstein who creates his monster and abandons it, resulting in the creature's fury toward its creator, Boy's feminized virus is abandoned and she retaliates. Because she is a computer virus, she can control electronics, as well as humans, recreating and adapting the Frankenstein myth for a contemporary teen audience. Including a complex variety of romantic relationships, exploring the social needs of the monster, feminizing the monster and integrating modern technology puts a new spin on an old narrative, revitalizing it for contemporary teen readers.

Adaptations of *Frankenstein* for young readers address a variety of concerns across the spectrum of childhood and adolescence. For the youngest readers and viewers, both the scientist and his creature are depicted as comic stereotypes that represent children's curious and sometimes monstrous natures and behaviours, and help mitigate existential and imaginary fears. For older readers, the characters exhibit more psychological complexity, providing metaphorical expression for the social anxieties, embodiment and identity issues and spiritual questions that plague contemporary tweens and teens. Their stories are by turns cautionary and comforting, redemptive and relatable, horrific and humourous, but no matter the tone or outcome, they engage young readers in the fundamental questions posed by Shelley's text: What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to be a monster? How responsible are we toward the 'monsters' we ourselves have created? What are the ethical limits of science and technology? Such questions have achieved an even greater degree of salience in a world where our technologies have the capacity to render us both more and less human: innovative adaptations of *Frankenstein* thus offer useful guides for helping young people navigate this contemporary landscape.

**NOTES**

4. Ibid., 453.