



Monstrous Behaviour: A Deviant Approach to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*



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Abstract

Psychiatrist and educator Rudolf Dreikurs once said, “It is autocratic to force, but democratic to induce compliance” (67). Criminologist Lonnie Athens asserted, “Not poverty or genetic inheritance or psychopathology but violentization is the cause of criminal violence” (qtd. in Rhodes 137). And the ‘monster’ in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* postulated, “I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous” (114).

This article proposes to be all about how Mary Shelley, in *Frankenstein*, iterates an innocent and attachment-seeking child’s potential transformation into a vengeful ‘monster’ caused by cruel behaviour of the society. The Mongolian looking helpless child-creature here serves as the ubiquitous mouthpiece of rejected, marginalised and suppressed existence. What the ‘monster’ blamed for his misconduct is actually the absence of the fulfilment of the lower-order needs as in Abraham Maslow’s pyramid of the hierarchy of needs for achieving self-

actualization. Here, what Dreikurs would call the 'active-destructive' child asserts that he indulged in revengeful behaviour only to seek attention by demonstrating his reaction against lack of secure relationship, thereby clinching what psychologists and criminologists today claim in saying that lack of recognition for good behaviour catalyses misbehaviour in children.

This paper aims to take up a psychoanalytical perspective a la the theories of Merton and Sykes and Matza, alongside Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to analyse the subtleties of the formative influence exerted by the so called grown-up world on the impressionable child psyche.

Key words :

Pyramid of hierarchy of needs, Maslow, Lonnie Athens, Violentization, Ecological Systems Theory, Urie Bronfenbrenner, active-destructive, Rudolf Dreikurs, Sykes and Matza, Merton, strain theory.