

Frankenstein and alienation



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Humans are brought into this world with a clean slate some may say. They are untainted by impressions of hate, guilt, vengeance, or any other negative or positive human developed emotion.

It is through social interaction and events that humans learn social behavior and how to cope with negative situations. The majority of the time, rejection, alienation, and abandonment will form negative emotions which can then lead to anger, hate and vengeance. Throughout Mary Shelley's novel Frankenstein (1818), the theme of alienation through rejection and abandonment is presented continuously. The idea that violence, due to rejection and abandonment, to control Frankenstein is what the Monster tries to do. Not always is violence the result of alienation, but if nurturing or mentoring is absent, it is easy for one to act out in violence due to confusion on how to deal with these feelings. Creature, daemon, creation are some of the names of the being that is created.

Never is the creation named. From the very beginning, this creature is abandoned and rejected by his own maker. From the earliest memories he has, he sees someone fleeing from him. Victor Frankenstein explains the feelings when the creature comes to life for the first time. One may consider this moment as his birth.

Instead of stating feelings and ideas of greatness he opts to describe it as "... this catastrophe..." (Shelley 35). Frankenstein continues to elaborate on his feelings toward his newly born creature by labeling him a wretch stating "...I rushed out of the room..." (Shelley 36) when seeing the monster for the first time. " I beheld the wretch-the miserable monster whom I had created"

(Shelley 36) when Frankenstein awoke from fainting a few moments before and saw the monster a second time. This shows the reader how instantly this creature is shunned on due to his appearances to his creator.

Frankenstein even runs away from this monster leaving him abandoned without anyone to nurture or show him love and acceptance into the world. Studies show that the first three years of human life are spent learning the most of how to socialize and form bonds with others. Those who are neglected of any social interaction are severely affected by low IQ's and inability to form healthy relationships with others. Feral children are examples of children who have been "...raised by animals and isolated from humans" (Henslin 70). These children act like animals by "...lapping water, tore eagerly at raw meat, showed insensitivity to pain and cold" (Henslin 70). Proof that social interaction is what teaches us how to behave.

In addition, institutionalized children are another example of how abandonment and isolation weigh heavy on formation of healthy positive social behavior. Studies show that children who are neglected are less likely to be social. Conformity to society and their ability to integrate into human interactions isn't easy for these children: " They can't grasp relationships with people...They don't become friendly or cooperate with others" (Henslin 72). The monster at first was like a feral child, without any human to help raise him or teach him a human lifestyle. It was in a way a bit different with the monster, however, since he learned about families and their interactions from the cottagers.

Mary Shelley enabled the daemon to possess a much higher IQ than most men which helped him learn and realize that we all need/yearn for acceptance. Feelings that the Monster possesses by realizing from the notes that Frankenstein had abandoned him are similar to the sense of rejection human children feel from their parents, friends or society. Humans are affected by negative and positive situations. It is human nature to desire a sense of acceptance. Through rejection or acceptance humans develop emotions as a result which then formulate their thoughts about themselves. When humans experience a situation of rejection, negative feelings are natural as a response. Those who have a family, close friend or professional help to interact with and to mentor them with these situations can cope with the rejection.

Though not easy, social interaction with those who care does soften the blow on this feeling of unacceptance from others. On the other hand, if there is not support or advice to give when this happens these negative feelings may and can result to anger and vengeance. Frankenstein's daemon is presented with this very feeling when attempting to form a relationship with the De Lacy family. He has no family of his own, he knows already "[He is] an unfortunate and deserted creature" (Shelley 3).

The monster elaborates on these feelings "[He has] no friend or relation" (Shelley 3) and shows that he realizes he is alone and deserted. The Monster is alienated by the abandonment of his creator. Followed by this, the rejection from the cottagers due to his appearance is the straw that breaks the camel's back. "I am an outcast in the world forever" (Shelley 93) were his thoughts if the cottagers rejected him, and they did. At this point he feels

all connections to mankind severed. Rage set over the daemon and one goal came to mind—revenge on mankind, especially his creator.

Acting out by burning the cottage and demolishing everything around him is the beginning of his determination to ease his pain. He is ultimately alone. This is a perfect example of how the daemon has not one person to console him or tell him this will pass. Unfortunately, this circumstance does exist in the real world. Children who are rejected with no guidance choose violent methods and have one agenda of revenge on humanity.

The shooting on April 20, 1999 at Columbine High School in Colorado is a perfect example of the outcome of rage due to rejection/alienation from society. Two students involved in social activities, yet not accepted, decided to lash out their fury on fellow high school students. Reports of their motives were written in journals and websites from the boys. Alienation was felt by the boys expressed when they stated “ I swear like I’m an outcast and everyone is conspiring against me” (Cullen). On the day of the shootings, the boys even wore shirts which expressed their ideals. One shooter was wearing “ natural selection” and the other “ wrath” (history1900s.

about. com) on their shirts the day of the killings. Sadly, the only outlet for their thoughts, were their videos and websites and not a mentor. All these materials were left in their room, proving that maybe, the parents seldom checked on them. These materials could have easily been found and the problem addressed of how they feel. Though not abandoned, the boys felt that there wasn’t any use in talking to anyone about the rage.

One could say that they were past the point of social interaction to help. The boys had been rejected so much, that any intervening was futile. Many times the aftermath of human rage due to alienation from rejection is only more alienation. One cannot fight fire with fire or evil with evil.

So is the case with the daemon and Frankenstein. The daemon upon creating revenge on Frankenstein ultimately causes his death. Frankenstein is not only fatigued but mentally and emotionally exhausted. No family is left of Frankenstein's all alone now. This idea is a heavy burden on him especially because he is to blame.

He was the ultimate cause for the monster's alienation. By creating a monster with such hideous features he set up the monster for automatic rejection. Society seems to reject any form of physical ugliness. Not only that, but he, the one responsible for care, turned on him the instant he needed acceptance.

Now, because of his selfishness, the monster took out his rage on mankind and annihilated all of Frankenstein's family. At this point Frankenstein himself feels isolated. By seeing the death of the only connection he has to the world, the daemon is saddened even more. He now feels even more alone in the world. Frankenstein was his only connection to life, and now that is no more.

Again, the feeling of isolation from society is prominent. Ultimately, the monster has no reason to live without a soul to interact with. He knows that no one else will ever accept him either and decides to commit suicide. It is human nature to accept the strongest, smartest, and most importantly the

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beautiful. Humans at one point in their life feel this way. Throughout life humans will come in contact with at least one individual whom socialization is possible.

Imagine, if from the earliest memory one is rejected, and feels that throughout life, what solution is there to cure them in the end? The sad truth about isolation is that once one feels that they are disconnected from society it is hard to make them believe otherwise. Society can not stop murderers from murdering, or children acting out in rage due to rejection. Society can only learn from what happens and try to educate those on these situations. Isolation, rejection and abandonment theme in Frankenstein can do just that.