

Example of literature review on the dangers of knowledge, gothic thriller, romanc...

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* was one of the most elegant and horrifying pieces of literature written in its time, and is still widely considered a Gothic horror classic. The book follows Dr. Victor Frankenstein, a reclusive mad scientist, who seeks to create new life by sewing together the limbs and remains of several other dead bodies and reanimate them. The book and its monster have been compared to many different things in a variety of subtexts, but one of the clearest readings of the book indicates that the monster represents the dangers of knowledge, especially as the book posits that the pursuit of said knowledge can lead us to give up our humanity and ability to love. The monster's own tragic existence comes about as the result of mankind abusing its gifts, as well as accomplishing things it is not ready to be responsible for - namely, the raising of the dead and the creation of artificial life.

Shelley's writing and characterization of Victor implies that the pursuit of knowledge is something that was instilled in Victor from a very young age, restricting his ability to have romantic feelings and behave as a sexual creature. The lack of affection that Victor receives as a child is extended, as a consequence, to the monster; neither know how to love properly (Williams, 2003). While, on the surface, his parents were loving and affectionate, the writing implies that Victor is unhappy about that. By being his parents' "plaything and idol," they do not allow him to be an individual or a part of the family (Shelley, p. 33). Victor's childhood recollections are sarcastic and ill-considered; there is no way that "every hour of [his] infant life [he] received a lesson of patience, of charity, and of self-control" (p. 34). This is made particularly true when it is revealed that he does not have those qualities

(Claridge, 1985). Later, when Elizabeth is added to the family, Frankenstein considers her an object of infatuation, which borders on obsession. This prefaces the obsession that he will have with the monster, which acts as representative of the pursuit of knowledge replacing romance (Nicolson, 2010).

After the creature disappears, Victor recovers from his illness and goes to search for him. Finding his brother William murdered, he knows it was by the creature; this makes him feel primarily responsible. " I was the true murderer" (p. 89). Eventually, Victor owns up to all of the death that the creature wrought before it was put down, though not without an ounce of apology: " I abhorred the face of manoh, not abhorred! I felt attracted even to the most repulsive among them" (pp. 184-185). Though he attempts to justify his own motivations by saying he truly respected life in the end, he knows that ultimately he was responsible, and that he did try to play God with the creation of life.

The dangers of knowledge, as presented in Frankenstein, are manifest in the creation of a creature that is immediately shunned and displaced from society, as well as permits Victor Frankenstein as a character to become a cold, socially awkward and amoral person, who cannot handle the consequences of actions taken as a result of his scientific know-how. As a result, this leaves both him and the monster broken people, and illustrates the Gothic horror of science going awry, as well as a dangerous emphasis of the human spirit on the pursuit of scientific knowledge.

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