

The conflict between the creator and his creation

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Genesis states, “ God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him”. Humans, therefore, were created as a likeness to God.

Frankenstein describes a similar act of creation in that in the novel, too, the creation is made in the creator’s own image. Victor Frankenstein succeeds in discovering the secret of animation, and brings a monster made of parts of the dead to life. The monster, from the moment of his birth, can be seen to mirror and to parallel the life of his creator: their lives and their fates are horrifically intertwined.

Frankenstein desires to “ give life to an animal as complex and wonderful as man” (55). He gathers his materials from dead humans, amassing bones to imitate the human frame, although on a grander scale: “ I resolved to make the being of a gigantic stature... proportionately large” (55). Frankenstein assembles the monster out of pieces of the dead and uses the human frame as his model; he thus makes him as close to his own image as possible.

Although it is obvious that the circumstances of Frankenstein’s birth and the monster’s construction are rather different events (although they are both indisputably “ births” of a kind), their early lives may be read as similar.

When discussing his earliest memories, Frankenstein describes how important he was to his parents. He declares, “ for a long time I was their only care” (41). He attributes their dedication to the fact that they were the creators, in a sense, of their son’s future: “ it was in their hands to direct me to happiness or misery, according as they fulfilled their duties towards me”(40). The monster’s fate, too, is utterly in Frankenstein’s hands; Frankenstein, however, deserts him, thereby condemning the creature to a

life of misery. While the monster's construction obsesses Victor, he does nothing for the well-being of "the wretch" who owes its life to him.

Frankenstein and the monster can also be said to mirror each other in terms of their education. Although he eventually attends university, Frankenstein attests that he "was, to a great degree, self-taught" (45). The monster, too, is self-taught: he learns how to speak by observing a French family and imitating their speech. He says, "My days were spent in close attention, that I might more speedily master the language" (105). In addition, the monster teaches himself to read, and devours such texts as *Paradise Lost* and *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. Both creator and creation study because they wish to understand life: Victor in a scientific sense, and the creature in a moral, practical one. As he (the monster) attests, "I ardently desired to understand them [human], and bent every faculty towards that purpose" (104). In both cases, their studies end in pain, suggesting that this is the inevitable result of the pursuit of knowledge. While Frankenstein is absorbed in the creation of the monster, he absents himself from society and forsakes human contact. Once the monster is completed, Frankenstein is further isolated by the enormity of his secret; he nearly goes mad with alienation and loneliness. Similarly, the more that the monster learns, the more he realizes that he is lacking: "The more I saw of [the family], the greater became my desire to claim their protection and kindness; my heart yearned to be known and loved by these amiable creatures" (115). His knowledge, too, causes him immense pain. He reflects: "O what a strange nature is knowledge! ...I wished sometimes to shake off all thought and all feeling"

(106). Both Frankenstein and his creation are destroyed by the weight of their loneliness.

Not surprisingly, both characters seek the same remedy for their loneliness: love. Frankenstein returns home to marry Elizabeth, saying, “” her gentleness and soft looks of compassion made her a fit companion for one blasted and miserable as I was” (159). The monster, too, exhorts Frankenstein: “ You must create a companion for me: with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being” (124). Again, the monster mirrors his maker: both need a lover who will sympathize with them and assuage their aloneness.

Both Victor and the monster regard women as gifts, to be bestowed upon them by a third party. Upon introducing Elizabeth to her son, Frankenstein’s mother exclaimed that she “[had] a pretty present for my [son]”(41). The monster’s bride, too, is positioned as a gift from his parent.

Toward the end of the novel, the relation between creator and creation is inverted; now it is the creature who is empowered. Frankenstein refuses to comply with his request for a bride, and the monster declares:

The roles have fully reversed: the monster seizes control of Frankenstein’s life and thereby recreates him in his own image. The “ hour of your birth” refers to both Victor’s natural birth and his new birth at this moment. By the end of the novel, Frankenstein has lost everyone that he cares about: his family, his wife, and his friends. He is the monster’s creation insofar as they equally share responsibility for the terrible bloodshed. Victor’s decision to

abandon his country, his home, and all his ambitions to pursue the monster to the Arctic Circle provides further evidence of the extent to which the monster now controls his life.

Shelley amply demonstrates that the monster is created in Frankenstein's image as man is in God's. He physically resembles a man, and is made from human parts. In addition, the life of the monster parallels his maker in terms of their childhood, education, and need for companionship. The monster, however, is not only the image of Frankenstein: Frankenstein is the image of the monster as well.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. New York: Bedford Press, 1992.