

The essence of humanity

Literature, Russian Literature



In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, humanity is cast under the shadow of physical form rather than character. As such, one must deeply analyze the emotional and not the physical attributes of characters. For the most part, society exudes monstrous behavior that conflicts humanity. For instance, the monster secretly helped a family but when it approached them in person, they ran away in horror and disgust. The monster laments, "There was none from the myriads of men who would pity or assist me; and should I feel kindness towards my enemies? No" (Shelley 16). Here, society is depicted as monstrous because nobody bothered to offer help to a kind and loving personality just because it was embodied in carcasses. Therefore, this suggests that judging is part of human nature. People often conceive ideas about someone or something just by observing their external appearance. Furthermore, it indicates that the true monster was Frankenstein whereas the creature was a victim of society's marginalization.

Apart from that, humans are depicted as monstrous because they alienate the innocent. When Frankenstein conceived the monster, he was deformed but equally innocent. Therefore, he deserved to be treated with a little compassion. "His jaws opened and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear, on hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. (Shelley 5)" Here, the creature was looking up to Frankenstein for guidance. In fact, he tried to restrain his master who unceremoniously walked out of him. However, Frankenstein refused to become a father figure to the creature. He does not take time to observe the creature and ascertain whether it was kind or intelligent. Instead he

dismisses it merely by its grotesque look. Additionally, society conceives the same perception of the creature that was abandoned by its own creator.

Furthermore, the monstrous part of humans is depicted in their selfish acts. After the monster escaped from Frankenstein's lab, he meets his master years later. He explains to Frankenstein the hardships he has met living in solitude. The monster laments, "Satan had his companions, fellow-devils, to admire and encourage him; but I am solitary and abhorred" (Shelley 15). Subsequently, he requests Frankenstein to create a partner for him. However, his creator dismisses the idea by stating, "Begone! I do break my promise; never will I create another like yourself, equal in deformity and wickedness" (133). Notably, this is an act of selfishness because Frankenstein himself sought company from society, yet he did not bother to attend to the creature's need for companionship. Later the creature decided that it would begin acting like a monster because that is how people treated it. Therefore, the selfish acts of humans portray them as monstrous and the creature as human.

On the other hand, the monster is portrayed as the human because of his kind intentions. Apart from that, the monster is sensitive and emotional. He observed the warmth that humans had and 'longed to join them'. Furthermore, evidence of the monster's desire to join the human society can be traced in his desire to learn their way of life. The monster learns to read and write with the hope of partaking in the human society one day. However, the more he learns the more he realizes how impossible his quest is. Because of this, he appeals to Frankenstein stating "You must create a

female for me with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being (Shelley 17). " In essence, this proves that the monster recognizes his emotional needs. Also, he is intelligent enough to observe and understand that he can never blend in society. The only way for him to battle solitude was if Frankenstein created him a partner.

Additionally, Victor's monster exudes humanity through his emotional reactions. When he is born, his immediate thought is to explore the world. He states, " I started up and beheld a radiant form rise from among the trees. I gazed with a kind of wonder. It moved slowly, but it enlightened my path" (Shelley 85). If the creature was the true monster, the first idea he would have conceived is that of destruction. Apart from that, the creature's decision to kill Frankenstein's wife and friend is a reaction to stigma from society. It shows that the creature is able of sustaining emotional injuries just like any ideal human being would. Therefore, the true monster in this story is not the creature; it is Frankenstein. The creature only became malicious after it was severely marginalized by society.