

# Ethics of creation: frankenstein assignment

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**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

What Makes a Scientist Evil? Towards the end of the Renaissance era in Europe, a sensation we now call the Scientific Revolution Initiated and continued Into the late 18th century. This revolution brought about the ultimate thinkers and Inventors of our time, and some of the paramount scientific discoveries such as the microscope. Our world of scientific knowledge continues to develop across new horizons, and we have transitioned to impressive areas of study like cloning sheep, and even space exploration.

The new discoveries being made are so exciting and surreal; one could say it was science-fiction. Amidst all of the wonder in scientific discovery, it is easy to forget the question: What are the ethical implications of these discoveries? Through Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the reader discovers the ethical and moral concerns surrounding the creation of a human being by means of Victor Frankenstein's naivety, his lack of responsibility, and through the feelings illustrated by his creation.

Although dramatic, Shelley's arguments in *Frankenstein* show that our society should question the boundaries of science. While Frankenstein did ask the question "Should I really be doing this?" he forgot to think beyond his imagination and wonder. "I doubted at first whether I should attempt the creation of a being like myself, or one of simpler organization; but my imagination was too much exalted by my first success to permit me to doubt of my ability to give life to an animal as complex and wonderful as a man" (54).

Ultimately leading to his demise, Frankincense's childish wonder provided him justification to continue his work, and a fantasy world where he was a genius and creator of a magnificent race. "A new species would bless me as its orator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs" (55). Rather naive, Frankincense failed to see what this creature could mean for the future of man, and lived in the fantasies he saw in his head at the time.

Author Mary Shelley strongly criticizes the naivety and actions of Victor, and he is punished throughout the novel with the losses of his family members— notably the deaths of his family members, essentially being tortured until he reached his deathbed: "A fiend had snatched me every hope of future happiness: no creature had ever been so miserable as I was; so frightful an event is single in the history of man" (201). In addition to his naivety, Victor takes no responsibility for his creation or actions.

Seeing these undesirable traits in a creator, Shelley enforces her argument by immediately punishing Victor with the death of his beloved brother William. Despite Justice's persecution for the murder of William, Frankincense still decides not to take responsibility from fear of being regarded as a madman. He is afraid that his story will make him look insane, and this keeps him from doing anything about the situation. "I remembered also the nervous fever with which I had been seized just at the time that I dated my creation, and which would give an alarm of delirium to a tale otherwise so utterly improbable.

I well knew that if any other had communicated after first turning away from his creation and causing a tragic murder, Shelley offers Victor a chance to redeem himself by creating the monster a female companion. Nearly completing the female companion, Victor irresponsibly destroys it, and causes a series of devastating reactions. I thought with a sensation of madness on my promise of creating another like to him, and trembling with passion, tore to pieces the thing on which I was engaged. The wretch saw me destroy the creature on whose future existence he depended for happiness" (171).

Leaving the monster hopeless and alone for a second time, Shelley argues against Victor by taking away his best friend Henry. Perhaps the most convincing of Shelley arguments was the dejected monster's monologue. Living in a world where no one was like him; the monster despised Frankincense for creating him, and emphasized this continuously in his monologue. "' Cursed, cursed creator! Why did I live? Why, in that instant, did I not extinguish the spark of existence which you had so wantonly bestowed? " (138).

More importantly, Shelley wanted the reader to focus on her argument against the social problem Victor created. Should scientists engineer a real human and let it interact with society? If so, should it be given a companion so it can fulfill a natural longing to be social? These are all things Victor failed to think about, and his creation is tragically intelligent enough to realize this. " From my earliest remembrance I had men as I then was in height and proportion. I had never yet seen a being resembling me, or who claimed any intercourse with me.

What was I? The question again recurred, to be answered only with groans” (124). These feelings illustrated by the monster help the reader to empathic with him, and to discern why, of all Victor’s failures, this was the worst. Victor’s punishment is foreshadowed by the increasing rage of the monster. “ All, save I, were at rest or in enjoyment: I, like the archfiend, bore a hell within me, and finding myself unsympathetic with, wished to tear up the Reese, spread havoc and destruction around me, and then to have sat down and enjoyed the ruin” (138).

Shelley does not condemn the great discoveries we make in science, but she does take into consideration the ethical and moral concerns included with the new discoveries. Through her arguments in the novel, the reader is able to see why there are dangers that come with science and irresponsibility. After the arguments have been recognized, the reader is able to see that a balance needs to be established between these two elements and the scientist. A scientist needs to be inspired and driven by his ideas, but shouldn’t let his inspiration get in the way of his logic.

In addition, it is neither ethical nor moral for a scientist to “ cover up” or ignore his mistakes; there needs to be some element of responsibility. Lastly, a good balance between science and power is shown by a scientist who can empathic with his creation, and society as a whole.