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The literary world was not ready for Mary Shelley and her novel, Frankenstein. Mary Shelley, the product of a feminist mother, speaks her mind freely about the stereotypic issues that are imbedded in her culture and distinguish between men and women.

When the novel, Frankenstein, was published, society was aghast, how could such a young girl write something so gothic? During the early nineteenth century an independent woman was not encouraged; her place was behind her husband. She was supposed to be a paragon of virtue and the patriarch of the family; someone on whom husbands look down, and the children look up with admiration as she performs her domestic duties. Mary Shelley coming from a household whose mother is not afraid to speak out against the inequality of women, deems it her duty to attack this issue in her novel Frankenstein. She believes in the Romantic convention that children need to be nurtured and given an education. Shelley believes that mothers are nurturing and are needed people in the home, but disagrees with their assumed label, domestic servants. Using her mother and herself as implied examples, she demonstrates the fact that women can excel intellectually and psychologically just like men.

According to Romantic, the mother, by nourishing the domestic environment, instructs her child on appropriate, moral behavior by setting examples.

Thus, when the children become cognizant of his or her own decision-making powers, he or she is able to think and act independently, based on a code of ethical conduct. During the same phase of life, however, the monster discerns his true nature just as the domesticated child learns of his or her

own worth from a loving mother in the sheltered, warm environment at home. Frankenstein's monster learns as well, but out in the barbarous wilderness (Keith R. Swaney 56)

Shelley makes the monster the creation of a man to prove to society that even if women's role is reproduction and childrearing, it is a role that men cannot grasp. For nine months all Victor thinks about was completing his creation, he absorbs himself into his work denying himself food and sleep. Even with all this diligence, Victor could not bring to life anything that looks like an animal much more a man. He lacks the refinement and the patience of a woman, he does not understand or value the virtues of a mother that is so easily taken for granted.. Unintentionally Victor uses the monster to represents women of the Romantic period; like women, he took away its ability to function on its own; its future is held in Victor's hands, just like the Frankenstein women. The one difference between them and the monster is the monster is discontent with its plight and they are happy in their captivity. The only time that Elizabeth is made to function without Victor is in a crisis when she writes a letter that he could not write for himself.

At a time when women are considered delicate and infant mortality is at a high, Mary chooses to give to man the burden of dealing with unpleasant issues like deformed children; and infant death. She could have used Frankenstein to agree with society that men are superior to women; instead she uses him to show that even if a woman's role is what society judge it to be, it is not an insignificant one. During the period of gestation, a woman goes about her other duties and usually produces a perfect baby; and here she gives to a man the same time to produce and all he could do is to

produce something so hideous that everyone, including himself, who sees it runs from it in disgust. . A child is really the creation of a man and a woman, yet childrearing is always the assumed job of the woman. When Shelley lost her first child there is no record that her husband was there to comfort her. In her own subtle way Mary Shelly uses Frankenstein to address her fears as a mother; to expose society's view of women, and to show men's indifference to anything disagreeable. More than fear of infant death, Mary had a hard time associating a malformed child with herself. She vents her fear and makes man accountable by giving him the task to use his superiority to reproduce. Transferring the nurturing from a woman to a man did not fare well; we see Victor abandoning his creation. Victor took nine painful months, the same number of months as gestation, to create this child, yet when it did not turn out the way he wanted, he immediately forsook it. " I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs" (Frankenstein, p. 51).

Other than challenging man's role the novel was also a catharsis for Mary; when Frankenstein, was unleashed on the public, Mary Shelley was barely out of her teenage years and had already buried an infant child. She hoped to have more children and was afraid that they would die; or worse, that they would be disfigured, would she be able to love such a child. Contrary to what many think, Mary Shelley was not someone who imagined some callous wickedness to shock society but her novel is born from the depths of her soul and her deep constant fear of motherhood; especially infant death and deformity. These thoughts plagued Mary continually and out of this panic she penned Frankenstein. .

Mellor says that since the claim has always been that man is the stronger of the sexes, Shelley decides to show up man's weakness through Victor. She depicts how the chauvinistic society of Victor's nineteenth century, places more values on the role of a man than that of a woman. Mary's desire is to cut man down to his rightful size and she accomplishes this. The stringent law that writes the role for men and women is crumbled when Mary makes her point by presenting Victor as a coward and shows his inability to face his creation that has gone awry. Even as she does so, she mocks the world with the death of her female characters, Justine and Elizabeth, while they wait on a man to defend them. (1988).

In her book, the most detail Shelly gives of any woman is about Elizabeth and Justine, women connected to Victor. Already she despises Victor when she shows him running away from his creation, but now she must destroy the mythical role entrusted on women. First Justine who is brain washed that her brother can fix everything is accused of murder and refuses to defend herself, hoping that Victor will take care of her. Her soon to be sister-in-law does nothing to help her, standing on the pretext that her fiancé can make everything right. Says Katherine Swan: "Justine is accused of William's murder, and the women in the Frankenstein family are completely helpless to defend her without Victor Frankenstein. Upon his return Elizabeth suggests that all will be made well with his presence" (2005). This woman is not given any self-worth, if she who is present cannot help Justine, how can Victor who was absent do anything for her. Shelly wants to show the plane dependency on man that is delegated to women.

Even in this modern society, there are people who feel that Shelley wrote the

novel because she was an atheist, and the novel was an illustration of her ungodliness. She takes away the creation from God and gives it to man. It is easy to understand why people in Shelley's time can think of such folly but it is hard to imagine in this twenty-first century that anyone would utter such foolishness. In the early nineteenth century anything might be said to excuse a young girl from writing a novel like *Frankenstein*. *Frankenstein* is not the type of novel that a young girl who has class or any kind of breeding would write; if she were to be bold enough to write it should be about love. If Shelly wanted to decry God, she would have given Victor more power; his masterpiece would have been a sight that is more granger than any mortal man could ever be. Losing a child can be devastating, and makes one deny God, however, not even a hint is found in this book that support how she feels about God.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, is a product of her culture and her fear of motherhood. Her own mother died eleven days after she was born. Everything she knows about her mother is what was told to her or what she read about her. Her first child was born prematurely and lived little less than a month. Given her youth and her loss, she would wake at nights with night mares, dreams of a deformed child; once she wrote the novel her dreams disappeared. At this tender age she writes to free herself of the bondage of her nightmares and to disprove the typecasts of their Romantic notions.

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Anne K.