

# Romanticism in frankenstein



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All literature is influenced by the time period in which it was written; whether it be war, poverty, or any other social trends. People tend to write commentaries of political events, or just describe the time period. Whether it is intentional or subconscious, an author can not help to include some aspects of the time period in which they are in. The Romantic Period had a tremendous influence on Marry Shellys writing of the novel, Frankenstein. The Industrial Revolution in England during the late 1700s was a time of great change.

The populace was moving into cities, and people were disillusioned by the destruction of nature and the living conditions in the cities. In response to this disillusionment, people started to envision the world differently than they had before. They saw nature as all beautiful, powerful, and perfect. Previously, the inspiration for literature was law, order, and religion; now, it is in the writers imagination and powerful emotions. This change in the attitude of the people is called Romanticism.

The Romantic Movement is one of the most important literary periods in history; affecting the literature, music, and art of the period. It encouraged spontaneity, and acting with emotions, not common sense. In the more classical style of writing, writers addressed their books to the upper class, but now writers addressed the common man and his problems. Their was a new feeling of spirituality. People were seeking eastern concepts of nirvana, transcendentalism and being one with nature. People wanted to experience life, not study it.

They sought extreme emotions, whether they were good or bad. Mary Shelley used all of these philosophies of the Romantic Period in writing, Frankenstein. Victor Frankenstein is a man with great ambition, he is obsessed and self-centered. His life is the mirror of a Greek Tragedy. In his case, the flaw is his excessive pride. This flaw causes Victor to rush into something, for which he is not prepared. He fulfills his ambition and makes the biggest mistake of his life by creating a monster. Finally, just before Victor's death, he has his catharsis.

He tells Robert his story and cleanses himself. seek happiness in tranquillity, avoid ambition (pg. 205) This paradox, that he created a creature to help society, but it turns out to be the undoing of society and himself is an example of Victor's self-centeredness. His life degenerates from here on. Victor is a product of the Industrial Revolution. In reaction to people with Victor's characteristics, the Romantic Period is born. His beliefs are in science and the known world, which is the opposite of the Romantic ideal.

He believes that he can conquer nature, and tries to be a god, but discovers that he cannot conquer nature and knows nothing on how to be a god. The two Romantic characters in the novel are Henry Clerval and the monster. Henry is the complete opposite of Victor. He is emotional, carefree, and innocent. Henry has studied eastern languages and cultures, and wants to go to the east to study the people. He is caring and Romantic. The monster is born as a romantic, but because of the world's transgressions on him, he becomes an anti-Romantic and a Gothic character.

The monster become dark, and wants to bring death and destruction to everything around him. Now, when he sees beauty, he becomes jealous. but she, shall suffer; the murder I have committed because I am forever robbed of all that she could give, had its source in her, she shall atone,; be hers the punishment! (pg. 137) When he first went into the world, all he desired was human interaction. After watching and studying a family of cottagers, the monster felt that he was part of their family without ever meeting them.

Even after the cottagers rejection he still had hope that they would accept him. But I did not believe my error to be irretrievable, after much consideration I resolved to return to the cottage, seek the old man, and by my representations win him to my party. (pg. 131) The monster had not condemned humanity until he saved the life of a young boy, and for a reward, he is shot. I had saved a human being from destruction, and as a recompense I now writhed under the miserable pain of a wound which shattered flesh and bone. (pg. 35)

After this event, he condemned all mankind. I vowed eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind. (pg. 135) He wanted to be accepted and to be human, but everyone he sees scorns and hates him. Even an innocent child despises him. You are an ogre Hideous monster, let me go! (pg. 136) He now hates the world and himself. The monster has all the connections to Romanticism, such as his temper being parallel to the weather, his physical and intellectual abilities surpass those of a normal person, and he represents all of man kind: good and bad.

The monster loves nature and its beauty, but when he is transformed into an anti-romantic, nature mocks him. Nature decayed around me, The sun became heatless; rain and snow poured around me; mighty rivers were frozen; the surface of the earth was hard and chill, and bare, and I found no shelter. (pg. 133) Shelly creates an excellent contrast between a Romantic and a Industrialist, and makes a social commentary about social acceptance in her novel. In the novel, Frankenstein, Marry Shelly definitely shows the influence of the Romantic Period.