

Character analysis – the monster in frankenstein essay sample

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The monster's physical grotesqueness, as well as murderous deeds - his strangling of William, Clerval, Elizabeth and framing of Justine - tempts the unthinking reader to believe that the monster is the embodiment of evil. However, on analysis, the reader realizes that this is not entirely true.

Mary Shelley has gone to great lengths to portray the monster as less of a 'daemoniacal corpse' and more of a human. When he is first brought to life by a mysterious spark, he is an innocent, benevolent and sensitive creature, who views the world around him with child-like wonderment and awe. On first seeing the moon, he is filled with wonderment and 'gave me (him) a sensation of pleasure'. Also, he was 'delighted' by the 'pleasant songs of the birds'.

Furthermore, he is actually a creature of good deeds. Unknown to them, he collects firewood for the De Lacey's and leaves it at their door, and saves a girl from drowning, but is rewarded only with brutal beatings and rejection because of his outward appearance.

The monster is also an extremely intelligent and eloquent creature. He managed to persuade Victor to hear his story, in which describes how he learnt language and acquired knowledge through reading and observing the De Lacey's. The irony of this is that instead of easing his integration into society, his education only made him more aware of his isolation. Also, reading Frankenstein's journal entries, heightened his hatred towards his creator. The monster's education is partly the cause of his misery.

The monster is almost human in his desire for love and companionship. Since his creation, he is rejected and mistreated by everyone he meets, including his own creator. It is his loneliness and rejection by society that makes him so malicious. If only his longing for a female companion had been satisfied, he would have been a different creature. Unfortunately, the barrier between his being accepted by humans is merely his physical ugliness. The only person who initially accepted him as a lonely being who needed understanding was De Lacey, and it was because he was blind and therefore did not judge the monster by appearances. In a reverse sort of way, while De Lacey's blindness allows him to see the monster's goodness; society, which sees the monster's hideousness, is blinded by this to see his innate goodness.

After being so cruelly rejected, the monster feels a natural - and humanlike - desire for revenge. He murders Victor's loved ones, because he himself is denied closeness with anyone, and therefore wants to make Victor suffer like he did. His killing of William marks the point at which he turns into a monster, and from this point onwards, he is overcome by his demonic side and is only satisfied when he reduces Victor to despair.

However, even after his creator's death, the monster feels only some relief. This is because he has finally taken full revenge on Victor, but in doing so, has severed his only connection with another being.

Some may view the monster as a Romantic hero, because he was initially good, but made evil by the tragedies inflicted on him. This is a reflection of

Rousseau's belief that man is born innocent, but corrupted by society. The monster is Rousseau's 'noble savage'.