

Ethical issues in the novel "frankenstein" by shelley mary essay

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Whenever the name Frankenstein is mentioned, there are often two possibilities that arise, viz. is it the monster God's creation (Adam) or a devil incarnate? To most people, the obvious answer is the devil reborn. He represents evil, and he chases Victor Frankenstein everywhere, thus leaving a trail of death and destruction. He supposedly targets the people that Frankenstein cares about in life. In addition, he lives in hiding and goes on a rampage whenever Frankenstein says 'no' to him.

The paper looks at the ethical issues that the author highlights in her paper, such as the promotion of artificial life to help in the development of the discussions of this paper. It borrows heavily from practical biblical references and symbolism, mainly those of the creation story and the outcast to show how the creature is misunderstood (Nardo 23). It approaches the work from two literature analysis perspectives that of religion and acceptance criticism from different analysts to help to show that the monster in this context is misunderstood. Victor Frankenstein is the flawed God to his creation and that the creation is misunderstood.

Victor Frankenstein spends most of his life trying to replicate God. His main "purpose in life was to grasp the secrets of heaven and earth...his questions were still directed to the physical or metaphysical secrets of the universe" (Shelley 39). Later, Victor Frankenstein continues to proclaim, "A new species would worship and acknowledge him as its origin and creator...many magnificent and joyful natures would owe their existence to him" (Shelley 55). In an overview, his objective is to nurture life out of death and defeat it in the process. In this way, he overly dedicates himself to fully learning

science and all its aspects, and he openly talks about pushing the limits of science even further.

At last, he manages to attain his objective of defeating death. He successfully creates the monster and gives it life, which is his ultimate achievement. To the readers, up to this point, Victor Frankenstein is a successful creator. However, the monster that he makes cannot be termed as a human or an animal. The description offered explains it as something unique. However, even without knowing his behavior, people judge him as evil.

In this context, the creation is indeed Adam, who is living being designed to look like his creator and reside on earth as instructed. However, the faults of the creator start to show when he intentionally abandons his creation, leaving the monster without any sense of right and wrong that would have helped him become a better being. The creator never teaches his creation anything, and he leaves the being to fend for itself. Left without any guidance, the monster naturally steps out to explore its surroundings.

In her article, Ann Mellor looks at the psychosocial and social effects themes of abandonment and lack of proper guidance on the nature of the monster. She shows that there is a close association between the author Mary Shelley and the Monster that Victor Frankenstein animated then abandoned (Mellor 19).

The author would relate better with the monster after it is left to fend for itself while excluded from all companionship and parental love. Mellor argues

that such settings typically promote the development of negative outlook towards other individuals and their surroundings (18). In her analysis, Mellor argues that there is no way to live normally when raised in such hateful and rough surroundings, and thus, the monster is a product of his surroundings (18).

Unknowingly, the creature's mindset follows the philosophy that all humans are good. Therefore, it also believes itself to be good, and this concept is derived from the ideas of Condorcet and Rousseau (Mellor 20). It only continues until he finally sees his reflection; then, he understands why he is consistently treated differently. The attacks and the constant rejections are on the rise. Mary Shelley uses the physiognomy concept to highlight how society judges character through the outer looks.

During the period that the monster spends residing near the De Lacey family, he learns how to read, and one of the books that he read is Paradise Lost. As the Monster reads the book, he starts to debate whether he is the devil incarnate or Adam. He reasons that he is similar to Adam. Like the biblical figure, he also had no earthly relations in existence, but if compared, their situations were far from being similar in almost all aspects...many times she believed his position related more to the devil's, for often, like him when he analyzed the magnificence of their creators, envy arose within them(Shelley 132).

This explanation clearly demonstrates that the Monster is more than the cruel being that his creator and society portrays him to be. He has a high

affinity for speech and thought. His creator, Victor Frankenstein, never even thinks of such possibilities. He never believes that the Monster can think for itself or even be a fully-formed creation. He just assumes that since he is an elaborate speaker, it is because he is well versed in using his speech to bad things.

Literary criticism on Frankenstein by Nardo explains that the self-destruction of Victor Frankenstein is due to his self-centeredness (64). His work supports Mary Shelley's argument of avoiding pre-judgment through the understanding that the scientist, Victor Frankenstein, is a representation of self-gratification behaviors. Nardo claims that the scientist's self-sufficiency nature offers the justification to do whatever is pleasing, even if it hurts others. In a bid to attain fame and personal objective, people risk losing everything, even those close to them. The need to know and discover is average (Nardo 45).

Nardo wonders what the limits of the 'discovering' in seclusion should be without public support or a guiding ethical motivation (61). His analysis mainly asks if excelling as humans are possible without first identifying primary boundaries as individuals.

Faced with the evidence of a higher divine power, viz. a god, the creature starts to question his ideas and opts for those of Frankenstein. From this point, the creature denounces all his ethical principles that he carefully nurtured and instead became obsessed with the principles of Frankenstein. Mellor states that Frankenstein is from an era where the freedom to seek

individual action and thought helped change the burden for life's results (19).

The 'creature' in the book is thus not a type of divine punishment for Frankenstein for attempting to copy God as many presume. The literature shows that regardless of whether there is a divine being or not, Frankenstein is accountable for his behavior and even the untimely demise of those he loves. He is fighting against his ego and not his God. From this suggestion, the main theme of the novel states that with wisdom comes individual obligation, and denial leads to an unfortunate end (Nocks 138).

Victor Frankenstein's failure as a god also shows by the fact that when asked to provide a companion, he fails in that respect since he cannot bring himself to give another life. In this light, he seems to own up to his mistake as a god by declining to add more evil through creating more monsters. He views the outcome to have affected his family by claiming, "three years before he engaged. Similarly, creating a Monster who's unrivaled evil affected him and left his heart with bitterness" (Shelley 170).

Nock explains that what he fails to see here is that it is not the fault of the Monster's existence, but his neglect of teaching it. From his perspective, he believes it is the right thing not to bring another Monster into existence. His reasoning helps affirm that the creature is not how he is due to nature but mainly because he is a product of his environment. He never thinks that creating a second creature would offer a better life and hope to the first one, hence heal and nurture the first. Victor Frankenstein goes ahead and

destroys the second creature before it comes to life, and consequently, the Monster vows to kill Frankenstein's bride, Elizabeth, on their wedding night.

In conclusion, Victor Frankenstein is a man out to seek fame and glory, but the only problem is that he searches in the wrong places. No one can argue that he is not a genius, but he uses his brilliance in ways that defy the laws of science and reason. As an individual, Frankenstein misuses his knowledge, and eventually, he is too selfish and angry to care for what he creates. In the end, Victor Frankenstein is not a God. On the contrary, he is closer to the devil incarnate than to God. As shown, the creature is full of kindness, love, and grace as opposed to the supposed creator, which shows that he is simply a misunderstood creature.

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Nocks, Lisa. " Frankenstein, in a better light." Journal of Social & Evolutionary Systems 20. 2 (1997): 138-146. Print.

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