

The debate between fate and free will in frankenstein

Life



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Free Will vs. Fate: A Deterministic Analysis of Frankenstein

The debate between fate and free will has led to massive schisms within the scientific and philosophical community for centuries. Because it has become such a decisive issue throughout the world it is important to find ways to settle the debate. The story of Frankenstein by Mary Shelley in many ways presents the division between these two ways of thinking and helps bring the discussion to a resolution. It does this by telling the story of a mad scientist who creates a humanistic creature from dead body parts and subsequently is faced with many obstacles as a result of the creation of his monster. Many examples throughout the story show the two concepts and how, in most cases, fate will reign supreme. Ultimately, Frankenstein is a narrative about how free will within human beings is only temporary at best when compared against its counterpart, fate.

Frankenstein's monster is born into a world in which he has no guidance. He is born without a parent since he is abandoned by Victor at birth and has to learn everything himself. This gave him a very skewed outlook on life and thus his actions, such as the killing of William, were inevitable because that was the only way he knew how to live. This is shown through the quotation " Frankenstein! You belong then to my enemy, to him towards whom I have sworn eternal revenge; you shall be my first victim" (Shelley 102) Even though it appears as though free will is apparent within the monster's life, he received absolutely no outside influence to help guide his decisions, making all of his decisions inevitable because there was no one else there to tell him to do it differently. This fact proves that his decisions

were fated because the monster was never given the chance to see things from a different perspective like all other humans are, eliminating his free will.

Another key victory that fate receives over free will is through the relationship Victor has with Elizabeth. Victor's marriage to Elizabeth was inevitable for a few reasons that are inconsistent with the notion of free will. First, Elizabeth was seemingly the only real eligible woman that Victor had ever known, there was no other option for him. However, some might argue that he did have the free will to decide whether or not to marry her, but this is false. Once Victor had realized how destructive his creation was he felt terrible, as if he had failed his father. In order to get back in good graces with him and restore honor to himself and put the monster behind him for good he had no choice but to marry Elizabeth (Shelley 137-139). In short, it wasn't free will that allowed Victor to marry Elizabeth, but fate that forced him to.

Victor's inevitable confrontation with his monster also provides an example of the superiority of fate. Although Victor made many attempts to avoid the monster, in the end he had no choice but to confront his creation at some point. This greatly exemplifies the reason why fate holds superior when compared to free will within the novel. This is true because no matter how many times he tried to make the free choice to put his monster behind him, the monster always found a way back into Victor's life, in the case of the death of many of Victor's friends and family and also in the case of the

monster demanding that Victor build a female companion for him (Shelley 104).

Another great example of championing of fate over free will is the monster's killing of Victor. The monster has spent months plotting the death of Victor, toying and playing with him as if it was a game. He had also recently killed Elizabeth, the wife of Victor at this point in the story (Shelley 145). However, deep down inside the monster, feelings of love and need of parenting were suppressed by the fate driven motive to kill his father. When confronted by Walton in the cabin of the ship where Walton says that he killed Victor because he is a fiend, the monster responds solemnly by saying " I seek not a fellow-feeling in my misery. When I first sought it, it was the love of virtue, the feelings of happiness and affection with which my whole being overflowed, But that virtue became to me a shadow" (Shelley 164). This quotation exemplifies how, after the death of Victor, all the trapped emotions of the monster come out all at once. Thus showing how the monster was fated to kill Victor. And also how even though his free will in the form of emotions of happiness and affection tried to stop him, fate, once again, overpowered free will.

Through the analysis of a myriad of different relationships and incidents that developed throughout the novel, it was shown how fate overwhelms free will in almost all situations. This was presented through the examples of the birth and early life of Frankenstein's monster, Victor's marriage to Elizabeth, Victor's inevitable confrontation with his monster, and finally the monster's killing of Victor. Each of these examples uniquely analyzes the relationship

between fate and free will and how, even if aspects of free will exist, fate will always over power it. This analysis has important philosophical, moral, and worldwide policymaking implications.

By recognizing that in many situations it is not the actor's fault for his or her actions, blame can be correctly placed on the situation the actor was placed in instead. Understanding the motive behind the actions of people is especially critical in a world that has and will continue to search for the answers to why people do what they do. Ultimately, the conclusion that fate is dominative over free will sheds light on to the complex concept of human nature and serves to explain that actions are not necessarily consciously chosen, but instead a product of the environment the actor was put in. All of which is proven numerous times throughout Frankenstein.