

Victor Frankenstein: The Real Monster In *Frankenstein*

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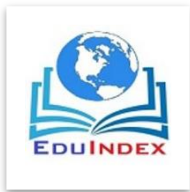
Abstract

Frankenstein or Modern Prometheus is a combination of Gothic Novel and Science Fiction by Mary Shelley. She studies a problem of human nature, comparing thoughts and actions of two main characters. Frankenstein has one of the most famous monsters in literary history. Victor Frankenstein is the protagonist and the creator of the monster. His ambition is to animate a lifeless human frame and to banish diseases from this world. When he is successful in animating the gigantic human frame, he is horrified to look at the monster he has created. The creature wants to be looked after, nurtured and brought up. But victor, the creator just leaves him to his fate. So far the monster is just an orphan trying to find a place for itself in the hostile world there is no evil in him except his gigantic size and loathsome appearance. The monster is no more innocent, no more Adam, but Satan incarnate. He is filled with hatred and revenge against Victor and vows to destroy all those close to him. The vile nature of the self-centered creator and the child like nature of the helpless creature is beautifully portrayed by Mary Shelley. On the whole, the real monster is Victor Frankenstein who is the perfect allegory for mankind and he is a morally reprehensible character.

Keywords: *Frankenstein, Alienation, Monster, Creator*

Frankenstein or Modern Prometheus is a combination of Gothic Novel and Science Fiction by Mary Shelley. It was published anonymously in 1818. When she wrote this, she was eighteen years old. She got the inspiration for the monstrous creation in the novel from a dream. She studies a problem of human nature, comparing thoughts and actions of two main characters. It is written in epistolary format. The story is told through the letters of Robert Walton, an English explorer in the Arctic regions. The story is related to exploits of Victor Frankenstein, an idealistic German student of natural philosophy who discovers the secret of imparting life to inanimate matter. Frankenstein has one of the most famous monsters in literary history.

Victor Frankenstein is the protagonist and the creator of the monster. He is the son of Genervere nobleman and has a happy family with two brothers, Ernest and William. He is interested in studying the ancient natural philosophers, Agrippa and Magnus. Gradually he becomes more and more interested in discovering the philosopher's stone and the elixir of



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life. His ambition is to animate a lifeless human frame and to banish diseases from this world. In order to understand the principle of life, victor must study the corruption and decay of human bodies. This leads him to setup a laboratory in an isolated apartment. He spends most of his time in digging graves and collecting human bones and tissues from the charnel houses to reconstruct a human frame.

Victor decides to create another species but it is of gigantic size. He feels proud to think that the new species would bless him as his creator. In this way Victor usurps the role of both God and women. He plays a dual role and eliminates the need of a female and natural sexuality. The fact transforms his very being and he develops on aversion to sexuality. When he is successful in animating the gigantic human frame, he is horrified to look at the monster he has created. The result is catastrophic. The monster is very tall about 8feet in height and proportionally large. Though he wants to create it as a beautiful one, it is hideous with watery white eyes and yellow skin that barely conceals the muscles and blood vessels underneath. He is misshapen, filthy and loathsome.

Victor is shocked and horrified. He rushes out and abandons his creation. The way the monster stretches his arms and opens his jaws as if to speak is pathetic. The creature wants to be looked after, nurtured and brought up. But victor, the creator just leaves him to his fate. Abandoned and totally rejected, the monster has to fall on his own devices in order to survive. The instinct of self-preservation carries him from nature to culture. He learns the articulate language of the humans and educates himself. At every stage, he learns more and more about human nature. Mary Shelley implies that the monster is not essentially wicked and brutal; it is the society that turns him so through its hostile attitude.

The monster sees friends and companions of the people around him and he too wants to have friends and companions. His contact with the De Lacey family enables him to master their languages when he sees Safie and Felix in love; the monster also acquires the same feelings and emotions. He longs for a companion. He tries his best to befriend the De Lacey's family. But all ends up in vain. He is beaten up and driven away from the neighbourhood. So far the monster is just an orphan trying to find a place for itself in the hostile world there is no evil in him except his gigantic size and loathsome appearance.

The monster educates himself through extensive reading. He particularly likes Milton's Paradise Lost and compared himself to the fallen archangel. He longed for a companion in the same manner as Adam had Eve. He cursed his creator, Victor. But he still remained virtuous and submissive. He finally realized that he is an outcaste in this civilized world and that he would have to fend for himself.

The monster succeeds in persuading victor to create a female companion for him. Victor sets himself to work again to create a female companion for his filthy creation. He is horrified at infesting the world with a race of devils. So, he decides to withdraw from the project. The



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monster now becomes more vengeful. He murders Victor's friend, Henry Clerval and his wife, Elizabeth on the night of their wedding. The monster's vengeance falls on his creator after he turns down his creature's appeal:

"Remember, then hast made me more powerful than thyself, my height is superior to thine: my joints are more supple. Remember, I am thy creature. I ought to be thy Adam: but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drives from joy to misdeed. I was benevolent a good, misery made me a friend. Make me happy and I shall again be virtuous. (F 129)

The monster is no more innocent, no more Adam, but Satan incarnate. He is filled with hatred and revenge against Victor and vows to destroy all those close to him. He could easily murder Victor as he is much bigger and stronger than him. But he chooses to eliminate all those that Victor loves. There is no name for the creature and it is identified in the novel by words such as "creature", "monster", "daemon", "wretch", "abortion", "fiend" and "it".

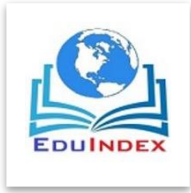
The readers too sympathize with him. But the sympathy is short lived when the monster turns vengeful and destructive. Victor is demented and helpless when his brother William is murdered by the monster and an innocent family dependent Justine is hanged for the crime on flimsy evidence. Victor confronts the monster in the valley Chamounix. The monster accuses Victor of having failed in his duty towards his creation:

You propose to kill me. How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind. If you will comply with my conditions I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, will glut the mau of death until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends. (F103).

Frankenstein suggests that social alienation is both the primary cause of evil and the punishment for it. The monster explicitly says that his alienation from mankind has caused him become a murderer. It says, "My protectors had departed, and had broken the only link that held me to the world. For the first time the feelings of revenge and hatred filled my bosoms." (F 105). Ironically, his murders only increase his alienation. For Frankenstein too alienation causes him to make bad decisions and is also the punishment for those bad decisions. Once he has created the monster, he becomes even more alienated from the people around him because he can't tell anyone about his creature.

Both Victor and the monster remain unfulfill till the end. Victor dies in his futile attempts to capture the monster and vanquish him, while the monster leaves the neighbourhood of man requited. His last words to Walton are as follows: "My spirit will sleep in peace; or if it thinks, it will not surely think thus, Farewell".(F 216). After that it disappears into darkness and distance after causing untold agony and anguish to his creator.

Shelley portrays the depressing and miserable world in which the creature is born into as full of hypocrisy, oppression and prejudice. The creature experiences neglect and is left to fend off for himself. When he is beaten and chased by the villagers, he is left with a sense of



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ultimate loneliness. It makes readers to consider who the monster really is. Whether it is the creature with the unsightly appearance, or the mad, heartless man who created him. Shelley cleverly uses the writing techniques of imagery and symbolism to shape the responses of readers towards the idea that the real monster is victor, not the creature. She is able to create the perception that the real monster is victor and not the monster himself. The society never gives the creature a chance. Although the creature is born innocent, the corruption and prejudice of the society spoiled the creature. Even though Victor thinks he has created a monster; the creature often acts more humanely than victor. Victor's actions are often monstrous. This ironic reversal as well as the similarities between victor and his creature, highlight the ways in which humans can sometimes be monsters. The vile nature of the self-centered creator and the child like nature of the helpless creature is beautifully portrayed by Mary Shelley.

On the whole, the real monster is Victor Frankenstein who is the perfect allegory for mankind and he is a morally reprehensible character.

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