
Frankenstein Versus Creature: Character's Analysis

The novel, *Frankenstein* tells the story of an ambitious scientist, Victor, who succeeds in creating life himself, but not the image that he had in mind. Instead, a Creature detested by the entirety of mankind. Through aspects of characterisation such as appearance, actions and inner thoughts, Shelley constructs a detailed image about what it means to be human. The development of *Frankenstein* is first demonstrated through his passion for learning, which soon introduces the Creature into the novel. The Creature and *Frankenstein* both share the deterioration that occurs from social isolation, which from the Creature's perspective, can be explained by the deformity of his features, helping the reader to understand the well-rounded image conventional to the typical human being.

Through use of the protagonists inquisitive nature, Shelley explores the idea that part of human nature is to have a thirst for the acquirement of new information. *Frankenstein* as a young boy first demonstrates the desire for extensive knowledge 'deeply smitten with the thirst for knowledge'. Knowledge itself drove *Frankenstein* to explore the world of science and compelled him to undergo the creation of new life. Through *Frankenstein's* decisions, Shelley indicates the quest for knowledge made through human curiosity as dangerous, which eventually leads to some form of self-destruction, foreshadowing the disastrous events that were to take place. With Victor's creation, comes another source of incentive for the appetite for knowledge. The Creature is brought into a foreign world, in which he is completely unconversant with. He compensates for this by eavesdropping on the villagers and gathers the knowledge required to make social interactions with other humans. As the Creature was neglected or tormented when attempting to develop relationships, he rebels and takes the lives of others, admitting that the 'increase of knowledge only discovered to [him] more clearly what a wretched outcast [he] was'. Therefore, Shelley reiterates that initial curiosity leading to the quest for knowledge had a dangerous outcome due to the character's decisions.

Through characterisation such as *Frankenstein's* neglecting actions, Shelley conveys the message that those with abnormal appearances are treated by humanity as inferior. At the beginning of *Frankenstein*, the characters have a general physical appearance and similar lifestyles, of which undoubtedly correlate to the image portrayed of an average human being. The introduction of the Creature contradicts the familiar aspects of characterisation, 'yellow skin' that 'scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath'. As a result of the Creature's physical deformity, he was shunned by society and neglected with any attempt to develop meaningful relationships. Shelley makes it evident that the Creature's personality does possess positive aspects of humanity evident when De Lacey treats him with kindness solely based on personality not appearance. The abnormality of the Creature amongst humankind is further explored through the use of intertextuality, specifically, the allusions made throughout the book to *Paradise Lost*. The Creature, 'like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence', can be related to Satan, who rebels against his creator and is ejected from heaven. The Creature's isolation and rebellion reflects Satan, again negatively connoting him, inducing that either through behaviour or appearance, there is always going to be an outcast amongst society. Thus, through the distinct physical juxtaposition of the characters and the incorporation of intertextuality, Shelley exemplifies common characteristics that help society distinguish whether or not one can be classified as human.

Shelley's characterisation of the Creature and Frankenstein accurately demonstrates the importance of social contact to human well-being. The decline in Frankenstein's mental and physical health during the creation process of the Creature, came as a result of his self-imposed isolation. His change in behaviour was made extremely apparent compared to his early life, by which he firmly believes that 'no human being could have passed a happier childhood'. He becomes so consumed in the wonders of natural science and the hopeful pride that 'a new species would bless [him] as its creator and source', that he tries to ignore the consequences that come with his isolation. Despite this, Frankenstein begins to notice physical responses to his self-inflicted solitude, such as that his 'cheek had grown pale with study' and he became regularly 'oppressed by a slow fever'. These are soon accompanied by psychological consequences, which lead him to 'be nervous to a most painful degree' and even become 'insensible to the charms of nature'. The countless hours spent over his creation caused him to become ill, malnourished and sleep deprived. Frankenstein supplements this with obsession, driving him to neglect any form of social contact and struggle to find enjoyment in anything else other than the Creature. Furthermore, the characterisation of the Creature in Frankenstein and his longing for a companion, further emphasises the role of community and its significance to human nature. Frankenstein claims that 'a ghastly grin wrinkles [the Creature's] lips as he gazed on me, where I sat fulfilling the task which he had allotted to me', the Creature finally has hope in his life, faith that he would gain acceptance from someone. Through the clearly portrayed aftermath of both characters confinement, Shelley articulates the role of communities importance in society and the necessity for social engagement to maintain one's mental and physical health.

Distinct ideas regarding what it means to be human are constantly explored throughout the protagonists growth and development in Frankenstein. Shelley utilises literary techniques such as foreshadowing, intertextuality and allusions, to accompany the analysed technique, characterisation. The use of other techniques enhances the reader's concept of notions surrounding humanity, especially the judgements made about physical appearance, thus, one's consonance in society. Furthermore, Frankenstein's passion for the acquirement and application of new knowledge exhibits the curious nature of humans and the detrimental effects it has. Frankenstein's isolation recessed his mental health, exemplifying the relevance of social contact amongst communities, with the addition of the Creature's strong desire to develop social connections.