

CRITICAL ESSAY



Mary Shelley is among the few renowned authors for her superb work on human nature and human desires. Though a Science fiction novel, she creates a connection to human nature that brings us into the work allowing us to see through and get the meaning and understanding that in a way can relate to our own lives. She uses inhuman creatures to bring out her themes among them love and hate, beauty and ugliness, compassion and hard heartedness in a rather captivating way for her audience.

Victor Frankenstein, who is the main character in her book and the modern Prometheus, appears to be on a mission to create a somewhat noble creature. He embarks on a 'journey to the unknown' resolving to come up with something spectacular unknown to man before driven by the desire to attain the god-like power of creation. He begins creating the 'human being' eight feet high without even stopping to think of the aftermath of his 'great invention'. His main concern is to have some sort of adventure into unknown powers and conquer by creating a beautiful being. He is however rebuffed almost disgusted by how ugly the creature turned out to be. He says, "When I thought of him, I gnashed my teeth, my eyes became inflamed, and I ardently wished to extinguish that life which I had so thoughtlessly made." Victor abandons the creature upon its birth and this drives the monster into depression as the only being he had a relationship with chooses to abandon him.

The society is also too quick to be blinded from seeing the internal

beauty of the monster and is led to reject him based on his outward appearance. The monster ends up despising himself saying, “I, the miserable and the abandoned, am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on.” Victor, at the beginning promises, to create a female monster to ease the solitude and loneliness of the monster. His far-fetched compassion or rather natural philosophy leads him to consider creating another creature to keep the monster company as he found himself unable to fulfill his responsibility towards his creation. He however goes back on his words after some serious thought. He destroys his work on the female monster aborting the whole idea altogether. He justifies his actions saying, “I at once gave up my former occupations; set down natural history and all its progeny as a deformed and abortive creation; and entertained the greatest disdain for a would-be science, which could never even step within the threshold of real knowledge.” Victor sees no sense at all in the so-called ‘natural philosophy’ and terms the whole idea as intellectually grotesque.

Though Victor had made a promise, he had no obligation whatsoever to create a female monster as a companion for the male monster. As the creator, he held every right to do as he so pleased since all this were in a bid to fulfill his inner desires. Since the idea did not materialize as he expected, he was not obliged in any way to rectify anything as this was nowhere in his plans. What he sees is not appealing to his eye and therefore it is expected that he lack the motivation to go ahead and play the same role of the creator of another hideous creature considering the former one almost led him to commit suicide out of disappointment. The monster was the worst kind of scientific experiment gone nasty thus creating another would require a lot of inspiration, which he lacked.

The monster’s attitude also dictates his creator’s actions. It appears to

have a very wrong attitude almost dictating things to its creator though indirectly. First, the monster demands other than request from its creator for a female partner to chase away the solitude. Although Victor chooses to go against all warnings posed by natural law, the monster did not have any freedom to handle things the way it did. It tries to seek revenge on its creator and ends up killing Victor's best friend and his new wife. This is unheard of and not even a fraction of the idea of creating a female monster could serve as punishment enough for this inhumane action by the monster. It lost reverence for its creator, Victor, thus creating it a companion would serve as a reward for a misdeed, which is not supposed to be the case. The monster caused the obsessive hatred Victor had for him thus the termination of the idea of creating it a comforter was its fault as even if he wanted to, he lacked the motivation to embark on the project.

The monster also exhibits no gratitude whatsoever even for his existence. This is very much evident when he says, "Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay, to mould me Man, did I solicit thee, from darkness to promote me?" In keeping to his promise, Victor would be indulging in a lot of vanity. If the monster were unable to appreciate itself, then the probability that it would appreciate another being of its own kind would be next to nil. Since the monster despised itself for its grotesque nature, there is no chance it would have the ability to love another creature of its own kind with almost the same features as it had with the same level of 'beauty' or maybe even worse than its own.

Victor also seems to have a reason not to fulfill his promise, as doing so would catalyze a master race between the two. He had analyzed his creation too well to know that the monster's expression of anger was fatal. After having lost two of his very dear people, he would not dare put

the monster in a position of power, as this would result in mass destruction. This is considering that the monster was already demanding for things among them the creation of a companion for him whilst he had no power to do that. He also blackmailed his creator saying that on fulfillment of his promise to create him a comforter, he would not bother him again, would in fact live away from that society, and would put an end to destroying his family. It is therefore evident that given a chance, he would have no trouble misusing it or rather using it for his own selfish gain.

Although many critics term Victor as selfish for creating a dangerous monster that takes the lives of many, his initial intentions were not selfish at all. The monster however turns it all against his creator avenging with his brother's death. Victor on refusing to go ahead with his initial plan of creating the female companion is very rational in his thinking. He analyses and gauges the amount of damage caused by his earlier creation and it is only logical that creation of another creature like the former will only lead to more destruction.

On the monster's demand for a companion, Victor is able to reason unlike the first time he thought of creating the monster. He looks at the consequences that would come with creation of another creature like the former one, it just does not add up, and so it is logical enough to abandon the whole idea. No matter how selfless Victor tries to be, another creature with the same physical features and probably the same psychological or rather mental ability would spur strife in the society just like it had previously occurred.

On a closer look at the whole matter, Victor appears to have thought thoroughly about the whole issue before he called it off. He believes he

is running a risk in creating a creature whose innate psychology he has no clue of. He is conscious not to repeat the same mistake he did with his first creation that caused him the lives of very special people in his life. Creation of the female monster would only serve to fire up the monster's ego causing it to be puffed and demand more at the expense of his master's happiness. Victor is therefore justified in forfeiting his promise to the monster as it was in the best interest of everyone.