

The Destructive Ripple of Rejection in *Frankenstein*: A Comprehensive Exploration

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Abstract

Mary Shelly, the author of *Frankenstein*, explores the theme of rejection and destruction in her work. Robert Walton is a polar explorer who meets Victor Frankenstein on a voyage of discovery towards the northern pole. When Walton states that he would sacrifice his own life for the sake of a greater good, and for lasting glory, Victor then launches into his own story as a warning of the dangers of such a life philosophy. Because, in the past, Victor used his knowledge to form a hideous monster, which became the source of his misery and demise. Victor rejected his creation because of the hideous demeanor of the monster, and he allowed the creature to escape. The monster was then without the control of its creator and began to wreak havoc around him. Victor was ambitious and wanted to be popular by creating the monster. He worked hard at it. In the process of creating the monster, he neglected his family and even his own health. The monster compared itself with others and felt inferior, unloved and inadequate. The rejection that the monster experienced in its life was so much that it paved its way for the destruction in its life, in the life of its creator, and in the world.

Keywords:

Rejection, Destruction, Self-esteem, Monster, Despair and Revenge

Psychologists say that the physical appearance and self-esteem are often closely linked. Our perception of how we look can have a big impact on the value we place on ourselves. Self-esteem is the value and worth we attach to ourselves as a whole. If we don't like something about how we look, it is often difficult to feel good about other aspects of ourselves. This was the case with the

monster in the work of Mary Shelly. It couldn't love itself, and the monster testified to it: "When I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am, I was filled with the bitterest sensations of despondence and mortification" (Shelly, *Frankenstein: The 1818 Text* 105). This poignant moment in Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein' underscores a poignant connection between physical appearance, self-esteem, and the monster's harrowing experience. The creature's disfigurement not only becomes a visible manifestation of its outsider status but also serves as a catalyst for overwhelming feelings of inferiority, unlovability, and inadequacy.

The monster also compared himself to other people and found their grace, beauty and delicate complexions, and it was unable to appreciate its own qualities. His disfigurement made him feel inferior, unloved and inadequate. It was because of this that Victor had rejected his creature, and the cause of the rejection, the disfigurement that made the creature feel inferior, unloved and inadequate, wreaked havoc not only in the creature's life but also in the creator's life and in the world at large. Thus, Mary Shelly demonstrates through her work *Frankenstein* how being rejected leads to destruction in the world.

Mary Shelly, the author of *Frankenstein*, explores the theme of rejection and destruction in her work. Robert Walton is a polar explorer who meets Victor Frankenstein on a voyage of discovery towards the northern pole. Victor confesses his story to Walton and he, in turn, writes the narrative down in a series of letters to his sister Margret Saville back in in England. The following statements are from Walton's 4th Letter to his sister: his limbs were nearly frozen, and his body dreadfully emaciated by fatigue and suffering. I never saw a man in so wretched a condition. (Shelly 16) Walton nursed him back to life. In the course of their conversations, they realize that there is something common in them, that both of them seek knowledge and wisdom. Victor warns Walton, saying that I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you,

as mine has been. (Shelly 17). This has reference to the rejection and destruction the author explores in this work. Victor admits that his own creation, the monster he had created, destroyed his family and dear ones. The cause of this destruction in the work is the rejection experienced by the monster from his creator Victor:

I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardor that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. (Shelly 45)

Victor rejects his creation because of the hideous demeanor of the monster, and he allows the creature to escape. The monster was then without the control of its creator and began to wreak havoc around him. Victor was ambitious and wanted to be popular by creating the monster. He worked hard at it. In the process of creating the monster, he neglected his family and even his own health. When the monster didn't turn out like he had hoped it would, he was desperate and fell ill for months:

Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room, and continued for a long time, traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured; and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavoring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain; I slept indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. (Shelly, Frankenstein: The 1818 Text 46)

Frankenstein's disgust and his hasty physical decline reflect the feeling he has for his creation. He loses his appetite, he is weak, his "heart palpitated in the sickness of fear" and his friend, Clerval, finds him bordering on insanity. The endless wanderings of his disturbed mind mirror the guilt and horror he feels for the creature he has created. He is deteriorating while his monster is becoming more eloquent and expressive. The more he is disturbed by the monster, the more humanlike emotions the monster displays. However, Victor has no empathy for the monster as he becomes more and more disturbed by the daemon he sees before him. The more the monster wants to be accepted, needing his desires fulfilled, the more Victor alienates himself from his own family and friends. (Mary)

Victor is spiritually blind and selfish and he leaves the monster all alone. Since the living creature is seeking love and does not get what it is looking for, the monster starts killing Victor's brother and others close to Victor:

My abhorrence of this fiend cannot be conceived. 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 bestowed. When I reflected on his crimes and malice, my hatred and desire for revenge burst all bounds of moderation. I would have made a pilgrimage to the highest peak of the Andes, could I, when there, have precipitated him to their base. I wished to see him again, that I might wreak the utmost extent of anger on his head, and avenge the deaths of William and Justine.

(Shelly 83)

As a result of the death of William, the brother of Victor, and Justine, the servant for the Frankenstein family, the house of Victor was a house of mourning. His father's health deteriorated and Elizabeth became sad and desponding. Because of the impact of this destruction in their

family, Elizabeth's state of mind was: "men appear to me as monster thirsting for each other's blood. William and Justine were assassinated, and the monster escapes; he walks about the world free, and perhaps respected" (Shelly 83-84). Elizabeth was true in expressing her feelings. Victor's ambition to play the role of God resulted in the creation of the monster. When the creation did not turn out to be what he wanted, Victor rejected it. As a result, the monster is thirsting for blood. He satisfies this thirst by destroying the family of Victor. Victor, who is responsible for all this walks about the world free and respected. Elizabeth observed the expression of despair in Victor and will desire for revenge too, but did not really know the role of Victor in the murder.

In an encounter with Victor, his monster expressed what it was going through:

"All men hate the wretched: how then must I be hated, who am miserable beyond all living things. Yet you my creator detest and spurn me, thy creature to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us. You purpose 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 condition, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends" (90).

The Monster disclosed to Victor what he was feeling, how people relate to him, and how Victor, his creator, reacts to him. The creature wants Victor to do his duty as a creator, and then he will do his duty towards Victor and the rest of mankind. The aforementioned reference makes it clear that the monster is willing to compromise, provided Victor, the creator, does his duty. The destruction that happens in Victor's family is the result of Victor's unwillingness to assume responsibility for his action and his pride.

In the course of time the monster learned the reason why people reject him. He is rejected because of his deformity:

“I had admired the perfect forms of my cottagers- their grace, beauty, and delicate complexions: but how I am terrified, when I viewed myself in a transparent pool! At first, I started back, unable to believe that it was indeed I who was reflected in the mirror; and when I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am, I was filled with the bitterest sensations of despondence and mortification. Alas! I did not yet entirely know the fatal effects of this miserable deformity” (104-105).

It is interesting to note that the "monster" grows from being disparate parts sewn together into a thinking, feeling being. Although it grows into a thinking, feeling being, there is no self-reflection that propels a change in its behavior. In real self-reflection, a human being dives deep into thoughts, emotions and motivations so as to retain or change certain types of behavior or patterns of life. In our world today, teenagers are sensitive about body image like the monster, and our social media impacts their self-esteem and personal worth. They tend to spend a lot of time on social media and are often influenced by what they see there. Instead of being happy and grateful about who they are, they look at others, like the monster, who are better than them and compare themselves with their beauty, talents and qualities; they underestimate their self-worth. They finally end up lonely and rejected or develop destructive behaviors that are harmful to the society like the monster. Personhood comes not from without, but from within and grows throughout life, regardless of aging and physical deterioration.

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