

Frankenstein's downfall comes mostly from his inability to love. Discuss.

Brimming with death and anguish, Mary Shelley's Gothic novel Frankenstein proposes considerable questions regarding responsibility and the Enlightenment of mankind against the backdrop of the Industrial Revolution's advances. An ambitious scientist, Victor Frankenstein, seeks to destroy his scientific creation after it wreaks destruction and chaos on the scientist's life. Frankenstein's tragic downfall can be attributed to many factors, however it comes mostly from his inability to love. The scientist rejects his family's love, which could have suppressed the overpowering ambition that destroys his life. As a creator of life, Frankenstein's failure to love the creature upsets his creation, and challenges and breaks the fundamental ideals in religion, which causes Frankenstein's downfall. Finally, his inability to love his own flawed personality drives him to blame others instead of taking responsibility for the adversity he encounters.

Without a strong love for his caring family, Frankenstein's scientific obsessions cause his downfall. His 'ardent desire' remains unchallenged by any other interest in his life. As a child, Frankenstein was raised by parents who were full of "kindness and indulgence". Thus, he was part of a strong, united relationship with his family. Despite the pleas by his father and sister to keep in touch while in Ingolstadt, Frankenstein lacks the capacity to care sufficiently for his family from whom he isolates himself. Frankenstein's limitless pursuit for scientific knowledge heightens his isolation. Shelley conveys that the family plays a big role in taming Enlightened ambition, but the feminine presence in the form of Romantic ideals plays an even bigger part. Frankenstein's isolation from his family due to his lacking love restricts him from the influence of the feminine figure, Elizabeth. Elizabeth's role is clearly depicted as a carer when she "strove to act for the comforter" in place of her mother. Shelley links this typical role of females with the sublime "Mother" nature. Both of these aspects display traits of Romanticism. Elizabeth's compassion and the "sunshine of her smiles" combined with nature's "placid" and "calm" waters accompanied by a "heavenly scene" show that there is a strong aspect of Romanticism in the novel. As Frankenstein seeks the comfort of nature, Shelley reveals the idea that he seeks a Romantic influence in order to restore the equilibrium between Enlightenment and Romanticism. Thus, not only does Victor's inability to love his family lead to his isolation, but it removes the Romantic aspects of his life that allow his Enlightened ambition to wreak havoc on his own life.

Frankenstein also lacks affection for his creation, instead abhorring which mirrors the serious universal consequences of abandoning one's creation and fuels the anguish of the that ultimately decapitates him. Frankenstein assume the role of a creator when he brings his creation to life. With this idea of creation, Shelley subtly alludes to the book of Genesis, in which God creates Adam. However, unlike in the Bible, Frankenstein's abandonment of the creature parallels a moral anarchy. Not only does he pursue nature to its extents, but he plays the role of God and fails to take responsibility. His prejudice towards the creature's "shrivelled complexion and black lips" leads him to feel "breathless horror". Therefore, Frankenstein's inability to love his creation mirrors a divergence from the religious order through the abandonment of his creation. The absence of love for the creature also leads him to seek revenge on Frankenstein. The creature's isolation provokes him to condemn Frankenstein as an "accursed creator". He compares his terrible situation to the comfortable life that Frankenstein lives and gains an "insatiable thirst for vengeance". If Frankenstein displayed love for the creature, then his situation may have been averted altogether, as the creature declares that he would return the "emotions of benevolence" with "a hundred and a hundredfold". Without it, however, the creature's belief in humanity is destroyed and he kills Frankenstein.

Frankenstein's self-doubt distorts his thoughts and actions which intensify his suffering. Although he speaks Romantically of himself, he fails to confront the true reality of his character with absent self-esteem. This heightens his despair, but he also attributes the fault of his actions on others, and fails to resolve his issues. Frankenstein views himself as a man who "aspires to become greater than his nature will allow". Clearly his great ego distorts his view of himself, and this prevents him from realising the underlying cause of his downfall. He consistently speaks of his "inexorable fate" as opposed to assuming responsibility for his creation. Shelley relates Frankenstein's inability to embrace his flaws with her society, advocating that people need to take responsibility for their actions. Considering the social context in Shelley's life, the rapidly advancing technologies posed a

threat on living and working conditions, as well as the morals that individuals and society shared. Shelley's warning of a lack of self-awareness relates to Frankenstein's dismissal of responsibility, causing him to despair as opposed to taking action. Thus, Frankenstein's inability to love his true self eliminates his desire to address the adversities that he has caused.

Frankenstein's Gothic elements prove to be plentiful, with the death of several characters in the novel. The significant downfall that Frankenstein suffers comes mostly from his inability to love. His affection for his family is inadequate in taming the ardour he possesses to pursuit science. His rejection of the creature provokes him to inflict emotional and psychological pain upon Frankenstein. Without a love and acceptance for his own flaws, Frankenstein is unable to take responsibility and feels helpless. It is for these reasons that Frankenstein's inability to love is a major factor in his downfall.

