

FRANKENSTEIN

Launching herself into the canon of Western literature, Mary Shelley's gothic horror '*Frankenstein*' warns against a devotion to rational thought and scientific progress in the early nineteenth century, suggesting that this single-minded Enlightened approach comes at the loss of a valuable exchange of human emotions. Centrally, Shelley advocates for an equilibrium to be sought between the philosophies of the Enlightenment and Romanticism to ensure detrimental are minimised. Throughout her text, Shelley contends that a balanced life is one that is intrinsically beneficial and that lacks a pursuit of humanity's extremities. She argues that one's pursuit of unnatural glory eventuates to a dangerous isolation. The author further purports that the lonesome education of the involuntarily marginalised is catastrophic in its fatal results. Similarly, Shelley remains vehement in expressing the horrors of the mistreatment of the feminine in a forthright and Enlightened manner.

In her portrayal of an unchecked acquirement of knowledge, Shelley posits that it is one's consequential isolation that embodies the dangers of seeking extremities. Her scathing critique of this overly rational driven outlook serves to warn her readers of following the path of her flawed Enlightened characters. Whilst in Ingolstadt, Victor "[pays] no visit to Geneva" but instead resides in his "solitary apartment" whilst conducting his studies in a "solitary chamber" and "cell." Shelley's recurring use of this adjective 'solitary,' emphasises Victor's willing decision to distance himself from his family and pursue his studies to its limit. By presenting this in tandem with a semantic field connoting imprisonment, Shelley is successful in associating the harmful consequences of incarceration with Victor's own desire for education. Thus, this exhibition of an extreme approach to study resulting in a toxic loss of compassion and feeling that "company was irksome," Shelley maintains that this lack of Romantic love through companions is severely detrimental to one's way of life. The author, therefore, continues her condemnation of an all-consuming want for knowledge whilst simultaneously championing the adoption of relationships. In a comparable light, Shelley presents Robert Walton as a similar hubristic man, through her employment of the frame narrative. Walton's volition to "fix [his] intellectual eye" by discovering the frontiers of the Arctic, render him as following a path to extreme glory. It is because of "[his] ardent curiosity" that he removes himself from his crew who value their survival over fame. The consequential "fears ... of mutiny" that plague Walton serve to embody the dangers of neglecting fellow humans. Hence, Shelley promotes the opposing actions undertaken by her symbolic male characters; to balance a passion for nature with passionate human love.

By presenting the terrors of an education without parental guidance, Shelley remains emphatic in opposing to the marginalisation of individuals, in fear of the dangers which it precedes. The flawed expectations of civilised society often harm those who believe it as truth, due to their lack of guidance. Not only do Shelley's frequent intertextual allusions firmly entrench her in the canon of gothic literature, they serve to embody the thoughts and actions of her contemporary society. The Creature's reading of Goethe's '*The Sorrows of Young Werther*' provide the rejected being with the story of an unloved man who subsequently kills himself. Due to his similar renounced state, the Creature believes Werther to be "the most" noble of "human creatures [he] had ever beheld," whilst also being "[inclined towards] ... the hero." Shelley's depiction of the Creature's idolisation of this sorrow soul, allows a heightened emotional response from her reading audience when observing the Creature "[ascending his] funeral" and "exulting in the agony ... of the flames." Thus Shelley supports an inclusion of the education of the marginalised to ensure a similar misguided suicide does not occur at the hands of unwilling and extremely isolated study. Comparably, the Creature's "high thoughts" gained from '*Plutarch's Lives*' allow him to expect and value the justice and peacefulness of society. Paradoxically; however, he is met with the labels of "catastrophe" and "wretch" throughout the entirety of his life. The lonely demise that accompanies the Creature allows for Shelley to highlight the damages and "unspeakable torments" that occur

when a lack of Romantic ideals are applied to the rejected. Thus, it remains evident that Shelley opposes a lonesome education because of the horrific and fatal consequences. Ultimately, Shelley postulates that the extreme objectification of the passive women by the domineering men precipitates with the unjust and dangerous neglects of the feminine. By drawing on her proto-feminist beliefs, Shelley exposes the gender imbalances in her world and successfully pushes forward the notion of an equally fair society for both genders. Elizabeth's onset characterisation as "of different stock," coupled with the angelic contextualisation of "cherub" proposes her as being emblematic of humanity's purity. Contrastingly, Victor's exclamation that she was to be "mine only" restricts her of the just right to experience a fulfilled life because of Victor's extreme sense of entitlement. Moreover, Victor's incorrect interpretation of the Creature's threat of "I will be with you on your wedding night," as a "[signing of his] death-warrant" eventuates with the "shrill and loud scream" as Victor's gross lack of agency kills her. Shelley thus condemns the submissiveness of women that is held as common opinion but instead promotes for Romantic and sensual relationships. Furthermore, the role of Margaret Saville as the audience to her brother's letters, poises her as being the most necessary character in the text, whilst also appearing to be the most distant. This ironic dichotomy that Shelley creates only embodies her whole-hearted and justified early feminist agenda, accentuating the dangers of extreme subjugation. Therefore, Shelley's demonstration of the maximum neglect of women and the proceeding ignorance enables her to portray her contention to love emphatically. Fundamentally, Shelley remains unequivocal in promoting an equilibrium to be sought between the Enlightened pursuit of knowledge and the Romantic necessity to love; favouring the latter. It is how Shelley remains relevant in the modern era, pushing forwards the need for love – a personal attribute which transcends time.