

Student's Name

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Subject

Date



FRANKENSTEIN

Where do we come from? How did the life develop? If God created the universe, what created God? These eternal questions have always excited human imagination. Through centuries, countless people have tried to provide their answers, but they have never exhausted the area of possible responses. A vast number of literary works, films, and pieces of art were created in attempt to resolve the eternal problems. Mary Shelley and her legendary *novel Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* was no exception. She explored the dangers and ethics of creating 'human' life and many others pressing matters in her work of fiction. James Whale, Ridley Scott, and Philip Dick were inspired by the genius novel and innovative ideas of Mary Shelley. They addressed similar topics but were also able to provide their own interpretation and vision.

In 1818, English writer Mary Shelley created a masterpiece *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. The novel became a sensation and brought its author international fame (although Shelley initially published it anonymously, and only a few years later confirmed her authorship). Mary Shelley dedicated her work to two related topics: condemnation of human pride and playing God on the one hand, and abandonment of



responsibility for their creations on the other. Victor Frankenstein, who was created by the writer, remained a man of science from the start; he was not interested in enthusiastic admirers of his talent. It was a story about a brilliant intellect and youthful passion with a hunting instinct, where boring arguments of prudence ceased to have any meaning or importance. The scientist decided to defy the gods by creating a living creature, made of different pieces of dead people with the help of an advanced technology, household electricity. There is no need to be a prophet to predict the sad result of this naughty plan, but in fairness, it must be said that many of God's creation, normal people born without any evil science, were maniacs or serial killers.

Victor Frankenstein was brave enough to create a life; however, he did not possess the courage to face his creation. The monster was powerful and intelligent but suffered from loneliness, rejection, and cruelty of the world. The evil in his heart was initiated by his creator who left him alone in the laboratory. It evolved when the monster suffered the disgust directed at him by people. Victor Frankenstein paid a horrible price for it: the lives of his family and friends were taken by his own creation. Mary Shelley explores the issue in terms of family responsibility and connection to nature. The creature was a monster from the outside but the vulnerable child inside. No one taught him love or affection; he received only pain and fear; so, he gave it back. Mary Shelley showed how cruel society is towards those who are different: "I, the miserable and the abandoned, am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on" (Shelley 343).

The author addressed the issue of responsibility for creating a life. We see Victor who is incapable to face his fears, understand that he is a reason for his own sufferings. He chased his own creation, but he was afraid of it. Victor wanted a revenge for the lives of his family; however, he caused their deaths himself. The words of the monster showcase the injustice of human society and his creator particularly: "Listen to me, Frankenstein. You accuse me of murder; and yet you would, with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature. Oh, praise the eternal justice of man!" (Shelley 115)

The story evolved into the film *Frankenstein* by James Whale, which was one of the first full-length horror films in the history of cinematography and became classic of the genre. The movie is not a detailed version of the novel; it is an interpretation of the director's vision of the plot. Screenwriters and director wanted to create their own story, and they have done so. The whole drama of Shelley's novel is about a monster who is capable of kind actions, but the society turns away from him because of his appearance. Her creature is intelligent and smart. In the film, there is a reason for monster's cruelty, a brain of a mad criminal. The director consciously draws attention away from Shelley's book, even by changing the name of the main character. Dr. Henry Frankenstein is presented as a fanatical scientist whose theory about the revival of dead matter had turned into obsession. There is a father, a charming bride, a loyal friend, and a mentor waiting for him, but Henry is one step away from the dream. There is more religious emphasis in the movie, where the scientist is obsessed with the idea to compete, to become God himself.

In the movie, Frankenstein's monster is not just a villain eager to murder. He is a naive creature but very strong and powerful. The scene with a girl who plays with a monster proves it. The latter was convinced that a girl would float like flowers, so he throws her into the water since he sees it as a game and fun. In the book, the monster is portrayed as smart and able to learn and adapt to his surroundings quickly. In the movie, on the other hand, the monster is not very intelligent but much funnier. He is not even given a voice: he cannot speak or express himself clearly. We can only see his attempts to discover the unknown world.

The idea is that science is not evil; however, it is harmful in the hands of obsessed scientists. Frankenstein's Promethean impulse does not seem too bad in itself, but his irresponsible behavior is truly evil.

James Whale takes his story further. The movie *Bride of Frankenstein* is not as much a horror film as a deep and dramatic story about loneliness and the line between life and death, despite all the comedy moments in it.

Blade Runner, based on a novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Philip K. Dick, shows us a dark future of mankind, where replicants were invented for labor activity. Replicants who did not want to tolerate their role became rebels and ran to the Earth. The Frankenstein's motive is obvious in this story: the creatures devised by man are free from their creators. Why were the Blade Runner group, who were responsible for racial purity, given the right to decide who deserves to live at all? Who gave them the right to create the life and then take it away? *Blade Runner*

touches upon a subject of the creation of artificial intelligence. It is suggested that androids can be more human and like life more than ordinary people. It takes the problem of Frankenstein to the more technologically advanced level, but the idea remains the same. It is argued that scientists' attempts to create life will cause great harm to humanity since the creation of life will lead to a decrease of human life value. If technology becomes too powerful, the chances and consequences of it being mishandled are much greater.

I suppose that it is an arguable question whether people have the right to create life with the help of science. I agree with Mary Shelley that there is a huge responsibility lying on the shoulders of a creator. One must be ready to accept all of the difficulties and try to overcome them. However, if the scientist is not obsessed with the idea to surpass God, creating a living creature can be very beneficial for mankind. It will be possible to create healthy body parts for other people or, maybe, even to make the life last longer. Furthermore, it will be important to maintain a healthy balance and not to overuse the creatures that we would be able to create. However, this question has many hidden rocks which people must take into consideration.

The story about Frankenstein has many different levels. Being interpreted in various ways, it questions the human nature, science, and the responsibility of the creators. It touches the subject of family relations and the connection between God and people. Moreover, it shows the real face of human society and its possible impact.