

Beyond Monsters: Humanity in Frankenstein's Creature and Milton's Satan

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Abstract

Within the annals of literature, certain characters emerge as timeless enigmas, their narratives echoing through the ages. Among these, Frankenstein's Creature and Milton's Satan stand as towering figures, both haunting and captivating in their complexity. The purpose of this study is to untangle the intricate layers that surround each individual's identity. By examining Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, we traverse a tumultuous landscape of creation, rebellion, and the unending desire to be embraced. While both the creature and Satan bear the burden of societal rejection, their paths diverge, revealing profound contrasts in their motivations and ultimate fates. The creature, born of Victor Frankenstein's ambition, yearns desperately for companionship, his innocence warped into malevolence by the cruelty of humanity. In contrast, Milton's Satan embodies defiance and hubris, his rebellion against divine authority driven by a thirst for supremacy. Yet, amidst these differences lies a profound connection—their shared humanity. Despite their monstrous visages, both characters evoke empathy and introspection, compelling readers to confront the complexities of human nature and the societal forces that shape our destinies. This paper brings about the new outlooks of both these iconic characters and becomes a necessary commentary on the timeless themes that pervade human souls. Delving into Frankenstein's Creature and Milton's Satan, we come face to face with our quest for acceptance, wild dreams, and a relentless effort to find meaning amid life. The riddle of these well-known characters doesn't involve supernatural beings, but rather their own imperfect, complex, and undeniably human nature.

Keywords: frankenstein's creature, paradise lost, tragic figure, acceptance, rebellion

Introduction

While *Frankenstein's* creature indeed finds a voice in the torment akin to Lucifer (commonly referred to as Satan), he cannot be associated with the fallen angel for his malevolence is far from being intrinsic, I would rather classify it as a malignant transformation foisted upon him by humanity's rejection. Sequences in Mary Shelley's novel conjure a deep empathy for the creature, illuminating his innate benevolence and yearning for acceptance—a stark contrast to the cunning and self-serving wiles of Milton's Satan. Therefore, the creature's lament is not rooted in a willful transgression against the divine, but in the pained recognition of his imposed outcast state. In the extensive intertextuality between the two literary works, Shelley's narrative reorients the Miltonic paradigm: *Frankenstein's* monster is a forlorn figure, symbolizing the

consequences of irresponsible creation and societal condemnation, rather than embodying a deliberate rebellion against a cosmic order.

In literature, the narratives of *Frankenstein's* monster and Milton's Serpent captivate readers, challenging them to explore creation, rebellion, and the search for identity. Diving into their stories uncovers reflections of their creators' fears and aspirations alongside a mirror of our own humanity, which is deeply marked by the eternal struggle between acceptance and alienation.

These works remind us that the search for knowledge and understanding of the world around us can lead to both great discoveries and unforeseen consequences.

Materials and Methods: Upon examining *Frankenstein's* creation, it is undeniable that the monster's reflective anguish bears a striking resemblance to the

tragic descent of Satan in Milton's "*Paradise Lost*," which undoubtedly engendered a vengeful spirit. Yet, a meticulous dissection of their inner workings unveils critical dissimilarities that prevent the creature from embodying a fallen angel akin to Satan. Both entities grapple with the biting sting of ostracization—piercing their existences with an undying thirst for retribution. The monster's pursuit stems from a profound yearning for companionship. His actions are a response to the acute pang of forced solitude, created by Victor Frankenstein. All in all, in the case of the monster, it is rather the loneliness and the monster's desperate attempts to interact with his creator to be loved, and the heartbreak he experiences when he is rejected. In contrast, this is what drives the monster to do inhumane things. If we analogically compare him to a little child searching for his father's love, he just desperately wants the love and is ready to do anything for it. Still, once again he just constantly gets rejected and left alone. In Satan's case, in contrast, he is not tragic, but pathetic, his will for revenge is driven by the hatred, a desire to rule, not by the need. Hubris basically makes Satan feel that he is entitled to be above God, and he, therefore, rebels against him.

His passion for overtaking and controlling makes him lie to and persuade others and he ends up destroying himself. This desire does not only influence Satan, but his hubris underlines inner agony, pushing him towards revenge and a victory over creation. Satan's hubris remains a cautionary demonstration of how one's ego controls the mind. In the end, even the wisest and most potent creatures can be consumed with delusions of grandeur and indifference to the implications of their actions. Then it remains that the monster's pitiable plight is stamped with an unintentionally human aura, as Satan's is celestial. This fact serves as a reminder that the monster will always remain human and will always differ from the fallen ones.

The inception of the monster's journey in "*Frankenstein*" markedly contrasts with the narrative of Satan as depicted in "*Paradise Lost*." Bereft of the inherent malice that fuels Satan's rebellion against God, the creature born of Frankenstein's hubris is imbued with a poignant yearning for companionship and love (Shelley, 1818). Misunderstood and met with relentless repudiation,

it is this crucible of rejection and abandonment that eventually distorts the monster's innate longing into bitter hostility.

For instance, consider this example from the novel. Chapter 11, "I was a poor, helpless, miserable wretch; I knew, and could distinguish nothing; but feeling pain invade me on all sides, I sat down and wept" While searching for food, the monster stumbles upon a hut and decides to enter it. When he goes inside his presence causes an elderly man inside to run away in fear. The monster also goes to a village, where he crosses paths with more people causing them to flee at the side of him. He decides to stay away from humans because of how much they fear him.

Such transformation from ostracized innocent to vengeful outcast delineates a crucial disparity from Milton's Satan, whose intents are rooted in defiance and the perversion of good from the very onset. The creature's evolution from a desire for good to the perpetration of evil, engendered not from within but by societal abhorrence, precludes his classification as a fallen angel, for his hostility is a tragic consequence rather than a seminal trait. This quote from *Paradise Lost*, "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven," captures the essence of Milton's portrayal of Satan's character and his rebellion against God. This profound statement reflects Satan's ambition and pride, choosing power and autonomy in Hell over subordination in Heaven.

On the other hand, The Monster expresses his desperation for acceptance, realizing his appearance only incites fear.

"If I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear!"

Rejected by society and abandoned by his creator, he seeks either love or fear. This statement reflects his profound loneliness and the extremes he considers to find a connection.

In the gothic narrative of *Frankenstein*, the creature's harrowing journey—a mosaic of suffering and reaction—unfolds as a testament to the tragic consequences of societal ostracization rather than the machinations of a malevolent will. His heinous deeds, albeit monstrous, emerge as desperate cries of an abandoned being, forced into malefaction by the relentless scourge of human neglect. In stark contrast, the legendary Satan of *Paradise*

Lost orchestrates his rebellion from a profound lust for supremacy and retribution, an unfurling of strategic spite against divine authority. This pivotal distinction in agency serves to underscore the incompatibility of likening Shelley's misunderstood creation to a fallen angel; for while Satan acts with clear intent, the monster's hand is swayed by the crushing weight of his existential plight—free will tinged by external coercion, detracting from any semblance of angelic descent.

In "*Frankenstein*," the tragic figure spawned by Victor Frankenstein's overreaching ambition diverges profoundly from the malevolence inherent in Milton's Satan. Unlike the archfiend whose wickedness is self-chosen, "Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace. With suppliant knee, and deify his power". To give up all hope and submit to his command. Without hesitation, fall in reverence before him. To worship and tremble in fear is what Satan desires from God. Satan's actions in "*Paradise Lost*" are driven primarily by his free will and desire to become equal to God. It is as if Satan is trying to usurp the throne of God by posing as an equal and attempting to manipulate and control God. His ultimate goal is to convince Adam and Eve to join him in his rebellion against God. He seeks to gain control over them and manipulate them to become his loyal followers. He will do anything to achieve his goal, even if it means deceiving and manipulating others. In contrast, Frankenstein's creature is a tragic figure whose monstrous nature is not self-chosen but rather a result of his creator's reckless actions. Abandoned and rejected by society, the creature's tragic plight lies in his inherent desire for companionship and acceptance, which is constantly thwarted by his own grotesque appearance. His tragic nature lies in his futile search for love and acceptance in a world that fears and despises him.

Frankenstein's creature is molded by the cruelty he endures. "He was soon borne away by the waves, and lost in darkness and distance." —a blank slate transformed by societal scorn. His emerging consciousness and the subsequent wrath are not rooted in a primordial penchant for evil, but rather in the brutal denial of compassion by those he encounters. This creature, then, cannot be likened to a fallen angel, as his descent into darkness is not born of his own nature but is a sorrowful consequence of nurture—or the lack thereof—delineating a chasm

between the two beings (Shelley, 1818). This creature is like a plant without sunlight, deprived of sustenance and unable to blossom. He is a victim of circumstance, rather than a product of nature. This creature was not born of evil but was merely a victim of an environment that did not allow him to develop and grow. He was deprived of sunlight, nourishment, and love, which are essential for any creature to thrive. As a result, he became stunted in his development, unable to reach his full potential.

Findings and Results

The poignant soliloquies of *Frankenstein's* creation, casting him amidst the throes of intense desolation and anguish, mirror the quintessential human quest for acceptance and the pain of ostracism. His cries are not the grandiose declarations of a being steeped in rebellion and malice, but rather the heartfelt pleas of one yearning for compassion—innately human longing.

In Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, the monster has a strong desire to learn language for various reasons. He wants to be recognized and loved by others and hopes to become part of the community. He is the monster who is eager to learn language and communicate with others to be accepted in society. The monster, like humans, starts by listening to and imitating those around him. He focuses on the DeLacey family, his closest neighbors, as his source of language education, and eavesdrops on their conversations to learn the nuances of the language. In addition, he discovers books such as *Paradise Lost* and *The Sorrows of Werter*, which he uses to teach himself how to read.

Despite his efforts, the monster's physical appearance and inability to communicate effectively lead to rejection and isolation from society. These experiences leave the monster feeling hostile towards people and struggling with a negative self-concept. The monster is unable to connect with humans, and his constant rejection drives him to acts of violence, leading to him being viewed as a monster.

In stark contrast to Milton's Satan, whose essence embodies evil, the monster's story of sorrow and desire for understanding evokes empathy. It is this very capacity for eliciting empathy, for possessing a depth of emotion and suffering akin to our own, that unequivocally separates *Frankenstein's* progeny from the character of a fallen angel

like Satan. The creature's narrative serves not as a testament to inherent wickedness, but as a mirror to the trials and tribulations inherent in the fabric of human existence, underscoring the chasm between him and the irrevocable damnation of *Paradise Lost's* chief antagonist. We have even seen how the monster was never really named throughout the novel. The creature in question refrains from adopting a name for itself due to an inherent sense of distinction from the human race, leading to a lack of relatability with the said species. Being rejected by his creator and excluded from society, he does not have anyone who would care for him to give him a name. Despite the evidence that Victor is the true monster, the novel continues to refer to the creature as "the monster" throughout. This begs the question: is the monster really even a monster? Or is he simply a misunderstood being who is reacting to the cruelty and rejection he has faced from humans?

It is important to consider the creature's perspective and experiences before labeling him as a monster. Throughout the novel, he expresses a desire for companionship and acceptance but is met with fear and violence. His violent actions can be seen as a response to the mistreatment he has faced, rather than inherent evil.

I would also take it as further as saying that the monster was Victor himself hence, the monster was never really the monster. This "monster" is the supposed murderer of several characters throughout the book and is presumably the main antagonist. The evidence strongly indicates that Victor Frankenstein is, in reality, the true monster. His actions reveal a profound lack of empathy and responsibility, leading to disastrous consequences for both himself and those around him. It is clear that Victor's arrogance and reckless pursuit of scientific discovery blinded him to the inherent dangers of his creation, ultimately resulting in untold suffering. The monster, on the other hand, is merely a tragic victim of Victor's hubris and folly actions.

Ultimately, the question of whether the monster is truly a monster or not is left up to interpretation. However, it is clear that the novel raises important questions about the dangers of unchecked ambition and the consequences of rejecting those who are different from us. We will move

forward with our original argument of- 'how repelling the creature and satan are'.

Conclusion

The monster in "*Frankenstein*" may bear resemblances to Satan in "*Paradise Lost*," but his unique motivations, actions, and experiences set him apart from the conventional portrayal of a fallen angel. Unlike Milton's Satan, who revels in his dissent and whose malevolence is driven by spite against divine order, Shelley's creation is driven by a yearning for acceptance and companionship—a lament borne out of nurturing turned neglect. The nuanced agony of the monster, a byproduct of existential bewilderment and social ostracism, underscores his distinct narrative, one that veers sharply from that of a fallen angel. His existence pivots not on rebellion but on the profound ramifications of his creator's disregard, thereby placing him in a realm entirely separate from the archetype embodied by Milton's Satan. The creature's struggles serve as a poignant reflection of our own inner turmoil and the societal pressures that shape our actions and choices, making it a compelling and multifaceted figure that transcends the traditional depiction of a monstrous being.

Gupta

The research on *Frankenstein's* creature has shed light on its complexity as a character beyond the shadow of Satan. A comparative analysis of Satan in "*Paradise Lost*" shows that while there are parallels, the creature's motivations, actions, and experiences distinguish it from the traditional depiction of Satan.

Discovering the subtleties of how the creature is portrayed has never been more crucial. It has uncovered valuable insights that can help us better understand the nuances within its representation. These findings can be used to create more accurate and captivating depictions of this fascinating creature, offering a deeper understanding of themes such as ambition, loneliness, and the search for identity in literature. The creature serves as a powerful reflection of human nature and society. It clearly demonstrates the disastrous outcomes that result from unchecked ambition and the pressures of society which influence one's choices and actions. The story is an

important reminder to us all about the consequences of our choices and actions in life.

The study has shed light on the creature's exceptional qualities as a symbol of ambition and individuality, surpassing the traditional perception of a frightening monster. Overall, the research provides a valuable contribution to the understanding of the creature's significance in popular culture.

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