Man Vs. God Essay, Research Paper

MAN VS. GOD Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein sheds light on not only historical events, coinciding with her time, but the events and problems of current times.Victor Frankenstein is trying to attain the knowledge of the Gods. He is wanting to enter into the world of the creator rather then respect the fact that he has been created. “The novel reflects a climate in which literary worship of the divine was to an extent forsaken in favor of the awe-inspiring wonder of Nature; the concept of the sublime was, in itself, a reaction to the rationalism of the Enlightenment.” (Quote from Ruth Bushi) The Romantic Movement was well occupied with superstition and imagination. Science fiction and “dream lands” along with unknown gothic characters were often seen in the text and art of the Romantics. Nature and fantasy was the romantic’s speciality. Frankenstein has an usability to appreciate the wonder of Nature, but instead wants to playNature. “The world was to me a secret which I desired to discover; to her it was a vacancy which sought to people with imaginations of her own.” (Frankenstein 30) Now this says, in all its power, how Shelley was relating her story to the Romantics point of view and the views of nationalism. One that wants to figure the world out and one that wants to live in the world but use their imaginations, those are the views that created an uproar in the 19th century. Romantics believed that humans had a soul, feelings and emotions. They believed each individual to have a creative nature about them. “One’s individual soul mediated the sense experiences available to all, so that each person’s response highly subjective, unique and creative.” (Lerner 814) On the flip side of that there were the beliefs that Man could create what ever he wished. That Man was God, feelings and emotions did not matter, only the brain. There was also the belief that if man felt enough power he could control beings that had already been created. For example; The relationship between workers and employers. With the power that the employers felt, they believed or acted out in a way that portrayed, that their workers lives and conditions in which they lived lie in their hands. “I have seen the overlooker go to the top end of the room, where the little girls hug the can to the backminders; he has taken a strap, and a whistle in his mouth and sometime he has got a chain and chained them, and strapped them all down the room.”(Carey pg 296) This behavior leads up to this powerful feeling of controlling a human. Which, in turn, leads to creating a human. With that view Frankenstein believed he was a creator. This was the war of Man vs. God. Was this defiance of God? Was this biblical? Some say this was wrong, this belief that you are the “Almighty”. Victor was charmed by natural science, but eventually succumbs to Waldman’s lectures and soon becomes not just his student, but his disciple. But my eyes were insensible to the charms of nature. (Frankenstein 50)

The Romantics had strong opinionated personalities, in this era they had too. Romantics knew if they didn’t feel so strongly, they too, would be sucked into the unthinkable beliefs of their surrounding peers. “Such a simple soul inevitably became the catspaw of more selfish and less idealistic fractions.” (Hughes page 83) Frankenstein is passionate about creating the monster in his own image. Therefore ask yourself, “Who is the real monster?” The answer to this question is found in the monster’s story. Victor creates the monster which turns on him. Thus showing that Victor feels that God turned on him, but in all actuality it was Man that turned on God. “Oh truly I am grateful to thee creator for the gift of life, which was but pain, and thy tender mercy which deserted me on life’s threshold to suffer.” (Frankenstein 14) During the period Shelley wrote Frankenstein the new understanding of chemistry, physics, mathematics and etc. were seen as contributing to a future in which increasing knowledge would give increased power over nature and consequently increasing wealth. Shelley warns us of the dangerous division of power-seeking practices of science and the concerns of humanists with moral responsibility, emotional communion and spiritual values. Everything Mary Shelly is portraying in her writing; Man vs. God, Human vs. Machine and Knowledge vs. Technology, was happening in the 19th century. Everything Shelly was portraying pertains to what is happening in the 20th century today. As we sit here now all of the Man vs. God, Human vs. Machine and Knowledge vs. Technology, all of these battles are happening today. Technological advances of modern science have brought to the light, the opportunity to manipulate life forms. There is also probable cause to believe that DNA replication can be made possible. Wether they are happening in laboratories, under microscopes, in test tubes, in our own backyards, or the very thing I am staring into now……….computers, it is happening. Our utilization of computers has led us to neglect the need for our coexistence with nature. Mary Shelly has, in some ways, opened the curtain and looked into the future. Her portrayals of the destruction of man by man has followed true. The question now, just as it was in the 19thcentury, is whether science and technology are really going to improve the world or make it more difficult? Will our lives become better? As the human race we need to take the responsibility to find the answers to these questions before we self-destruct.