

Rachel

6/4/11

English 314

Theory Based Paper

Releasing the Monster Inside

Comment [J1]: Great Title!

Making a name for herself as one of the greatest writers in British Romantic literary history, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, wrote *Frankenstein* by the age of 20. Her novel continues to influence science fiction novels and thrillers today. Through Dr. Frankenstein, Shelley ~~has given~~ gave an examination of basic human reactions and their ability to cope with their own emotions. Frankenstein's preoccupation with death causes him to sublimate his fears, which ultimately leads to his downfall. As we examine this, we can learn to better understand ourselves.

Comment [J2]: I'd reverse this sentence so it reads: "Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* at the age of twenty, making a name for herself as one of the greatest writers in British Romantic literary history." This way, we don't have to read through half the sentence to find out what and who you are talking about. Otherwise, it's a really great opening sentence!

Comment [J3]: Always write out numbers between 1-99, so you'd put "twenty" here instead.

Comment [J4]: It's always best to write in the active voice when possible rather than passive. This means avoiding "to be" verbs when you can.

Comment [J5]: Define here exactly how Frankenstein sublimate's his fears to give your paper more specific direction.

Death is a common theme throughout *Frankenstein*, continually reshaping both the plot and the characters. Interestingly enough, Victor Frankenstein was never exposed to ~~it~~ death during his childhood. He states, "In my education my father had taken the greatest precautions that my mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors;" (Shelley 37). As a boy, he ~~did~~ still have had a fascination with science, and with ancient ~~stori~~ stories of an elixir of life that could prolong one's life. However, before he could go to school, he had his first personal encounter with death. His mother passed away after a battle with Scarlet Fever. He recalled, "My mother was dead, but we still had duties which we ought to perform" (Shelley 28). Due to the pressures and expectations of the time period, Frankenstein was given very little time to grieve. Frankenstein was quickly ushered off to school, making it impossible for him to fully

Comment [J6]: Is this your thesis? If it is, you're lacking a few important elements. First, though this is a theory-based analysis paper, we've been asked to still focus on literary devices, so you'll want to list the literary devices you'll be discussing in your essay. Also, I can't tell which theory you're using to analyze this text. You don't have to actually write it out, but you should include clues throughout the introduction paragraph, as well as in the thesis, that indicate what angle you're analyzing from. I do want to say that this is a really strong and interesting idea, though, and a great direction for your paper.

Comment [J7]: Avoid using first-person narration in a formal paper. I don't know if it's a requirement for MLA or not, but I always get docked points for doing this whenever I take an English class, so it's better to stick with third-person narration throughout. This also makes your writing more consistent.

Comment [J8]: Really nice topic sentence!

Comment [J9]: This is plot summary rather than analysis. Assume that your readers already know the plot and take out anything that isn't relevant to the point you're trying to make.

Comment [J10]: What were the pressures and expectations?

comprehend death and its meaning. He claimed to believe that grief itself was merely an “indulgence” (Shelley 28), more as a way of explaining to himself why he was given inadequate time than for anyone else.

From this point on, Victor Frankenstein became dominated by his subconscious. Because he was not able to process his interaction with death, his mind became preoccupied with his desire to understand it. His classes only fed into this as he “was led to examine the progress of this decay, and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel houses,” (Shelley 37). The charnel houses, or morgues, are where he was able to collect what he needed to build his monster. His mind develops and reveals this fascination completely when he falls asleep the night of his creation. Frankenstein remembers, “As I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death... I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of her flannel” (Shelley 44). This violent dream is about his cousin, Elizabeth, whom he loves both as a future wife and mother figure.

Sigmund Freud, a distinguished psychologist, often stated his belief that our subconscious fears and desires are manifested in our dreams. ~~Frankenstein developed an unnatural fixation and fear of death.~~ Having grown up in an oppressive time period, ~~he~~ Frankenstein recognized the inappropriateness of this behavior, ~~and so-~~ ~~H~~ he attempted to sublimate his fears. ~~Sublimation is a psychoanalytical term, meaning,~~ “The appreciation or creation of ideal beauty... ~~Freud contended, [and] is~~ rooted in primitive... urges that are transfigured in culturally elevating ways” (Encyclopedia Britannica). Essentially, Frankenstein sought to channel his seemingly inappropriate tendencies into socially acceptable practices. While attempting to reenergize a deceased human body might not seem like an appropriate relief

Comment [J11]: Also plot summary. What are you trying to say here? You need to write it out for your readers plainly because, even if we can figure out what your point is, it's always best for you to tell us what you're saying rather than making us guess and assume.

Comment [J12]: All plot summary. Focus only on the main events that happen and then spend time discussing each one rather than just listing a number of events from the book. Refer back to your thesis often and write about how each quote supports the claim you make in your thesis.

Comment [J13]: I agree with my coeditor about this coming across a little random. If you incorporate psychoanalytical ideas throughout your paper, it will make more sense why you suddenly start talking about Freud here.

Comment [J14]: This just repeats everything you've already said, and what we already know you're trying to prove from your thesis, so I don't think you really need to say it again here.

Comment [J15]: How was it oppressive?

Comment [J16]: Do you have a quotation from the text that supports this statement?

Comment [J17]: I'm not sure this is cited correctly...I think you're supposed to use the name of the article when there isn't an author rather than the source you found the article in, but you should probably check that.

of psychological stresses, Frankenstein is able to justify this action by claiming it as a scientific advancement – merely a fascinating extension of his studies.

Frankenstein believed that he could create life. He ~~says~~ ~~id that~~ he hoped he “might in process of time...renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption” (Shelley 40). However, because the body ~~was~~ ~~is~~ dead, it ~~has~~ ~~d~~ no life, so it could not be renewed. As Victor ~~channel~~ ~~sed~~ his fears and strange desires into the creation of the monster, they ~~are~~ ~~were~~ also channeled into the monster himself. For the length of time leading up to the monster’s awakening, they ~~are~~ ~~were~~ one. He ~~recall~~ ~~sed~~, “I did not watch the blossom or expanding leaves – sights which before always yielded me supreme delight – so deeply was I engrossed in my occupation,” (Shelley 42). He ~~was~~ mentally ~~gives~~ ~~ing~~ up so much of himself to his creation that he ~~beco~~ ~~mes~~ sick every night, and later ~~falls~~ ~~fell~~ into a seizure.

When the monster awoke, it became its own separate entity, a moving and breathing piece of the Doctor himself. He was an active corpse and a living personification of Frankenstein’s greatest fear – death. The fact that the monster was purposefully oversized, “about eight feet in height,” (Shelley 39), suggests the immensity of Frankenstein’s fear. It was clearly too large for him to handle and had to be removed from him. He became an extension of the Doctor, a tool; for him to deal with his mental inadequacies. Freud ~~had~~ ~~often~~ ~~studied~~ ~~and~~ addressed the concept of Suppression, or “the conscious intentional exclusion from a consciousness of a thought or feeling,” (Merriam-Webster). Frankenstein had suppressed the death of his beloved ~~M~~ ~~mother~~, but as he physically broke the bonds of death, ~~he was~~ ~~and~~ ~~became~~ subject to a mental release of his emotions regarding the event. He confessed that, “Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of my room, and continued a long time transversing in my bedchamber,” (Shelley 44). This solidifies the fact that the monster

Comment [J18]: Now this is some great analysis! It would really help if you, again, had direct quotation from the text that supports this claim, but you do a really good job here referring back to your thesis and showing us why your thesis is right. Well done!

Comment [J19]: Include in your topic sentences how they relate to your thesis, what you’re going to say in your paragraph that proves your thesis is true. It will help when you reorganize your paper so you’re talking about different literary devices in your paragraphs. If you can get your topic sentences more focused, I think it will help you avoid plot summary, as is found in this paragraph also.

Comment [J20]: Always refer to events in a work in the present tense rather than past tense. I’m not exactly sure why you’re supposed to do it this way, but that’s how formal papers are written. Something about how a work of literature goes on forever in time and is always occurring in the now, or something strange like that. I fixed this paragraph, but I’ll leave it to you to change the rest of your paper.

Comment [J21]: What body? His cousin’s? His monster’s? Specify.

Comment [J22]: This is a really great idea that I think you should expound on. First, direct quotation would be good, and second, are you saying, then, that Frankenstein’s monster becomes a physical representation of his sublimation of his fears and desires? If so, that’s a really, really intriguing thought and one I think you should spend more time talking about.

Comment [J23]: Pronoun confusion: we can’t tell if you’re talking about the monster or Frankenstein until later in the sentence.

Comment [J24]: This also seems a bit randomly thrown in here. Try to integrate it a little more smoothly by including some sort of introductory tag at the beginning of the sentence.

Comment [J25]: Only capitalize nicknames and names like this when they are used in place of the person’s name rather than when used in tandem with a possessive noun or pronoun.

symbolized the transference of his fears; as he ran at the sight of him. Later, while visiting Jordine, a friend who had been convicted of the monster's crimes, he described, "I had retired to a corner of the prison room, where I could conceal the horrid anguish that possessed me," (Shelley 81). In his cowardice, he could not even stand to see the effects that his mind would have on his loved ones.

~~Psychologically speaking,~~ As the man and monster separated, the corpse became a vehicle through which the doctor would reveal his greatest thoughts and deepest desires – an exploration of death. While the monster committed the physical crimes, Victor paid for them mentally. He was forced to hide himself from his family so as not to expose his immense grief and pangs of guilt (Shelley 84). Frankenstein, depressed at the consequences he was faced with, realized, "I had turned loose into the world a depraved wretch, whose delight was in carnage and misery; had he not murdered my brother?" (Shelley 68). ~~However,~~ ~~It is interesting to note,~~ ~~however,~~ that his brother was just growing out of his awkward, sickly years. He was becoming handsome and received much attention from Elizabeth. Subconsciously, it is possible that Victor might have felt jealousy towards his progressing brother, and might have wished his threatening presence removed. In this way, the monster becomes Frankenstein's "id". In Freud's psychoanalytical approach to the human mind, he felt that the id was the part of the brain that held all unconscious desires and urges. This was controlled by the ego, or the part of the brain that adapts to what is socially acceptable.

As Frankenstein becomes so subjugated by his guilt, he quickly became the monster that he so feared. He embraced death and its mysteries throughout the rest of the novel. He first succumbs to mental death and decay. He said, "When I thought of him, I gnashed my teeth, my eyes became enflamed, and I ardently wished to extinguish that life which I had so thoughtlessly

Comment [J26]: It's unnecessary to announce this as what you say in your topic sentence should imply that you're speaking psychologically.

Comment [J27]: Why does this have a citation? You haven't included citations next to any of your other plot summary sentences. And why not use a direct quotation rather than paraphrasing, then?

Comment [J28]: This is another very, very interesting thought that really deserves more time and analysis devoted to it. It needs to be fleshed out more, for sure, and maybe supported with one or two more quotations from the text. I personally am very intrigued by this and hope you expand on this idea in your second draft.

Comment [J29]: You need some kind of concluding sentence that ties together the point you're trying to make.

bestowed” (Shelley 85). After retelling the entire story, he is able to embrace death in its entirety as he jumps from the narrator’s ship and his “borne away by the waves and lost in darkness and distance,” (Shelley 240). By suppressing his natural curiosity towards death, Frankenstein was forced to surrender to his greatest fears.

Repressing thoughts, desires, and emotions is nothing new to society. Social restrictions often require the sublimation of unacceptable fascinations in order to be accepted by the world. However, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s rendering of this struggle within the human mind gives us a new perception of the consequences of this. Frankenstein recalled that, had his father explained things to him properly, that he would have set his life on an entirely different course (Shelley 23). Shelley has expressed that by holding back those things we are taught never to reveal, we will soon become them and then will eventually be destroyed by them.

Comment [J30]: You are on the verge of having a really strong, well-done analysis here, but I feel that you need to expand on the ideas you bring up here. This paragraph should be about twice as long, really, to cover everything you bring up. Great ideas, though!

Comment [J31]: Why is this cited here? Again, either get rid of the citation, or actually quote what you’re paraphrasing.

Comment [J32]: Again, don’t use first person narration.

Comment [J33]: Specify exactly what you are referring to here

Comment [J34]: Like your introduction paragraph, there is a decided lack of psychoanalytical tone here. Once you go through and buff up the rest of your paper, though, you shouldn’t have to many problems getting your conclusion paragraph to correlate with your thesis.

Works Cited

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein*. USA: Dalmation Press, 2010.

"Sigmund Freud." *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011. Web. 01 Jun. 2011.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/219848/Sigmund-Freud>.

"Suppression." *Merriam-Webster.com*. 2011. <http://www.merriam-webster.com> (1 June 2011).

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Rachel,

Like Denae, I really liked your paper. I love Frankenstein and think you have a lot of really neat ideas on the psychoanalytical aspects of Frankenstein's character. I also think you have really strong writing. You have a consistent voice that is very engaging, and your style is easy-to-read. I really enjoyed reading your essay because of this, and because you really made me think differently about this novel.

I do have a number of pointers to add, though. First, you do a lot of plot summary. It's worst in the first 2-3 paragraphs, but it shows up consistently throughout your paper. All of that plot summary actually quite hindered your ability to analyze because you bring up so many very interesting points, but you don't spend a lot of time discussing any one of them because you were so focused on getting that plot summary in there. Just remember that you're writing for an audience who knows the text you're talking about and you only need to talk about plot points and use quotations to bring specific details to our attention to support the claims you're making in that paragraph. Also, your paper seemed a little scattered. As Denae said, it doesn't flow very well because you didn't start with a very clear, organized thesis that mapped out your entire paper. Once you go back and revamp your thesis, make sure your topic sentences all relate back to your thesis. And then make sure that everything you say in each of your paragraphs supports the claim you make in your topic sentence. If you follow that hierarchy, you should be able to get your paper very organized and clean so it's even more of a joy to read than it is now.

Those are the main points, really. Everything else I mentioned, talking about literary devices, incorporating psychoanalysis in throughout your paper, etc., go hand-in-hand with those. Your paper has a lot of really strong potential, which is one of the reasons I'm being a bit hard on you.

You seem like a very strong writer and I know that you can make this into a phenomenal paper!

I'm looking forward to reading it again after your first revision! Good luck!

~Jessica DeLand