

High

The Psychological Development of Frankenstein's Monster

Sigmund Freud is responsible for the theory of each living creature having three psychic zones: the id, the ego, and the superego. In Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein*, the evolution of the monster's mind and psychic zones are seen as he experiences several new sensations and emotions. At different stages of the book, the monster is more influenced by certain zones than others. Throughout the book as a whole, however, his id is most prevalent in impacting his desires, and thus his actions.

When the monster first comes to life after his creation, he does not have much of a conscience, he is just simply being. His libidinous id is the first to develop and make an appearance as he experiences hunger, thirst, and the desire for warmth. The id is essentially what one wants to do -- his or her personal desires and drives for pleasure or self-satisfaction. As the monster ventures out on his own, he begins to feel "tormented by hunger and thirst...[with a] sensation of cold" (87). He learns to solve these problems by finding some berries to eat, a brook to drink from, and some clothes to cover himself with. A little further along on his journey, he comes into contact with some humans. He recalls, "some fled, some attacked me, until,

grievously bruised...I escaped to the open country, and fearfully took refuge in a low hovel" (90). Here, the monster's ego begins to form. The ego is what one *can* do -- what is socially acceptable. The monster learns from experience that he is not a creature that is accepted by society, and thus must be cautious when traveling. He explains, "I saw the figure of a man at a distance, and I remembered too well my treatment the night before to trust myself in his power" (90). He begins to gain an understanding of what is justified and what is unacceptable. At this point in the book, the monster's ego has a big influence on his actions as he learns from experiences and becomes fearful of past consequences. This fearful nature allows him to make generally reasonable decisions and gradually become more worthy of being socially accepted.

While seeking safety in the hovel, the monster observes a family, and his libidinous id makes another appearance. He ardently desires companionship, particularly with this family, and so decides to "fit [himself] for an interview with them which would decide [his] fate" (111). The monster finds different ways to help the family, and stops performing certain actions that inflict pain upon them. His wish to be one with the cottagers drives him to take upon himself the family's chores, and also to quit stealing their food. The monster grows very fond of this family, and takes care to only do certain tasks that would benefit them, and make him more likely to be accepted. His libidinous id continues to show forth as he spends many months in this hovel, all the while watching this family. The monster explains, "The more I saw of them, the greater became my desire to claim their protection and kindness; my heart yearned to be known and loved by these amiable creatures" (112). He so wishes to be part of this family, and to be accepted by humankind. He begins to devise a plan in which he can present himself to the cottagers. His ego causes him to target the blind man of the family, as he knows that he is the one member who will not be able to directly judge him by his looks and retaliate. When this plan of

his backfires, his aggressive id comes into play, as he has feelings of “rage and revenge” and thus sets fire to the cottage and curses his creator. The monster is not all bad, however, as there are a few moments throughout the book in which his actions are strictly driven by the desire to do good. As he travels in search of his creator, he stumbles upon a girl who is drowning. He states, “I rushed from my hiding place; and...dragged her to shore. I endeavored by every means in my power to restore animation” (120). The monster’s superego has now developed, as he earnestly strives to revive this girl. The superego is what one *should* do -- it essentially censors one’s actions, allowing him or her to perform that which is morally good. The monster does not attempt to save her by means of gaining glory and fame, but simply out of the kindness of his heart, to do something good. At this section of the book, it is the monster’s id that is most influential, as many of his actions are driven on impulse, and serve himself and his desires.

Later on in the novel, the same pattern of ego and aggressive id occurs. While the monster is traveling, he passes through several towns, and so desires to be socially accepted. At one point as he is hiding, a young boy passes by, and the monster immediately thinks how “this little creature was unprejudiced, and had lived too short a time to have imbibed a horror of deformity” (121). In other words, the monster thinks of how the boy is still young and impressionable, so if he can just befriend him, he can be accepted into society. When this plan also does not go as planned, he once again becomes aggressive. The monster explains, “I grasped his throat to silence him, and in a moment he lay dead at my feet” (122). When the monster’s plans do not work out the way he wishes, he retaliates and acts violently to suffice the desires of his aggressive id. This happens yet a third time in the novel, but this time as a result of his libidinous id. The monster desperately seeks companionship, and so approaches Frankenstein with a proposition: that he will leave society alone altogether, if he could just have a female mate

to spend his life with. He states, "I am alone, and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me" (123). The monster pleads with Frankenstein to grant his need for a social relationship. When the doctor agrees, the monster is filled with joy, however, Frankenstein does not get very far before deciding to destroy the second creation, and thus infuriating the first. The monster then seeks revenge, and satisfies this by killing the doctor's best friend and wife. Once again, the monster's aggressive id is seen as it consumes him and causes him to lash out and act impetuously. It is clear that the sole drive of nearly all the actions of the monster at this part of the story is his id, as he takes several steps that he finds necessary for him to obtain his desires.

At the end of the story, the monster's superego makes one final occurrence. Frankenstein has passed away, and the monster is making some final remarks regarding his life. He confesses all the guilt he has felt, and claims that he suffered more than any other character in the book. He states, "No guilt, no mischief, no malignity, no misery, can be found comparable to mine...blasted as thou wert, my agony was still superior to thine" (184, 186). The monster does what is right and takes credit for the many bad deeds he has done, admits his guilt and remorse, and explains the pain that his decisions and actions have brought him. He then closes his speech by saying, "I shall die, and what I now feel be no longer felt" (186). The monster knows that by dying, he will be doing a good deed by ridding the world of a wretch. He will stop inflicting pain on others, and therefore end the grief he is suffering from.

Throughout the book, the reader is able to see the evolution of the monster's psyche, with the most prevalent psychic zone being the id - both libidinous and aggressive. The monster's id is the ultimate drive for several of his actions. His multiple desires, whether they be life-giving or destructive, are often the basis of his ego and superego. The monster's id has a major influence

on his course of action all throughout the story, as he strives to fulfill his many wants and self-satisfactions. When figuring out ways to obtain these wishes, he pulls from his ego and superego, however, his most dominant zone remains constant -- his id.

Rationale for *Frankenstein* argument essay: 12th grade 1st semester

High

This essay received an overall score of 4. The ideas are developed fully with key examples and supporting evidence from the text. All elements of the prompt are addressed, although the introduction could have used more development. Despite a simplistic thesis, the analysis is logically organized, thoroughly supported, and clearly communicated. The vocabulary is academic and the sentence structure and variety are indicative of a writer who has clear command of language and grammar conventions. Ideas presented are generally insightful and the textual evidence is blended fluidly into the writer's own discussion.

12th grade Frankenstein 1st semester

Common Core All-Subject Writing Rubric					
Writing Type(circle one): <u>Argumentative</u> Informative/Explanatory Narrative (ELA only)					
CONTENT X4	The writing has a sharp focus and clarity of purpose. The ideas are developed with examples and specific details including textual evidence and are thoroughly elaborated. All elements of the prompt are addressed.	The writing has a clear central idea and a clear focus. Ideas are developed with textual evidence, even though the development may be uneven. Information is relevant. Most elements of the prompt are addressed.	The writing has a vague central idea; there are shifts in focus or digressions. Ideas are listed, information may be incomplete or irrelevant, textual evidence may be lacking, and there is little development. Some elements of the prompt are <u>not</u> addressed.	The writing has unclear or confusing ideas. The ideas are missing relevant information, there is not enough information, or there is little or no development, and little textual evidence. Significant elements of the prompt are <u>not</u> addressed.	X4
ORGANIZATION	There is a beginning, middle, and end in the writing with strong transitions between ideas. Ideas are presented in a logical order and there is a sense of completion about the writing.	There is a beginning, middle, and end in the writing with simple transitions between ideas. Ideas are presented in a logical order and the writing may have a weak ending.	There is a weak beginning, middle, and end with gaps in ideas. Ideas are presented in random order, there may be significant repetition, and the writing may have no ending.	There is no beginning or end with severe gaps in ideas. Ideas are presented in a random or repetitive order. There may be too little information to demonstrate organization.	
SPELLING & GRAMMAR (Conventions)	The writing exhibits superior control over grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. If there are errors present, they do not appear to be part of a pattern of errors.	The writing exhibits proper control over grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. If there are errors present, they do not appear to be a part of a pattern of errors.	The writing exhibits weak control over grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. The errors minimally affect the meaning of the writing.	The writing exhibits little to no control over grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. The errors greatly affect the meaning of the writing.	
Teacher Feedback:			{{Student Reflection on Back}}		Total Points Earned
					Score