

Frankenstein

Sample Analytical Paper Topics

TOPIC #1

Discuss the true nature and personality of the creature in Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Outline

I. Thesis Statement: *Although the creature behaves viciously and murders several people, he is not inherently evil or malicious.*

II. Creation of the creature

A. The creature as a product of Victor Frankenstein:

1. Construction of creature from body parts
2. Victor brings the creature to life
3. Rejection of the creature by Frankenstein
4. Confusion and pain of rejection
5. Experience of physical senses
6. Emotional response

B. The creature as a lost innocent:

1. Wanders in the woods, alone and confused
2. Discovery of food and fire
3. Seeking shelter from natural elements

III. The creature in society

A. Second rejection by humans:

1. The peasant flees from the creature
2. He is isolated from society

B. Creature understands he is repulsive to humans:

1. Prefers to hide in the forest, away from people
2. The creature realizes he is ugly

C. The benevolent nature of the creature:

1. Admiration of the De Lacey family
2. Anonymous acts of kindness towards the family
3. Appreciation of music and literature
4. Attempt to communicate with M. De Lacey
 - a. Seeks companionship from the father
 - b. Experiences sadness instead of anger at Felix's attack
5. Burns down cottage after De Laceys move out
 - a. First violent act in response to rejection

- D. The creature attempts to save the drowning girl:
 - 1. Attacked by girl's father
 - 2. Further rejection by society

IV. Creature's relationship with Frankenstein

- A. Rejection and abandonment by "father"
- B. Creature discovers identity of his creator:
 - 1. Creature experiences true rage
- C. Creature demands a mate from Frankenstein:
 - 1. Only wants to be left alone with a companion
 - 2. Promises not to harm anyone
- D. Creature's last hope destroyed by his creator:
 - 1. Frankenstein tears apart the mate
 - 2. Creature vows revenge
 - 3. Kills Henry and Elizabeth
- E. Frankenstein becomes as miserable as his creature:
 - 1. His loved ones are dead
 - 2. He feels responsible and guilty over their deaths

V. The creature's true nature and desires

- A. Love and acceptance by society
- B. Companionship
- C. An end to his lonely isolation
- D. Final desire: a fiery, anonymous death
 - 1. Creature understands he can never find peace or happiness in human society
- E. The creature as a product of society:
 - 1. Prejudice and behavior of humans

VI. Conclusion

TOPIC #2

Illustrate Mary Shelley's use of Romantic concepts in *Frankenstein*.

Outline

- I.** Thesis Statement: *Frankenstein is a classic example of literature written in the Romantic tradition.*

II. Romanticism

- A. History of romanticism in literature and the arts:
 - 1. Examples
- B. Characteristics of Romantic literature:
 - 1. Feelings and emotionalism vs. intellect
 - 2. Emotional response of characters
 - 3. Nonrealistic portrayal of characters

4. Dramatic settings
 - a. Mountain landscapes
 - b. Germany and the Rhine
 - c. Scotland
 5. Bizarre stories and events
- C. Major Romantic writers:
1. Mary Shelley
 2. Percy Bysshe Shelley
 3. Lord George Gordon Byron
 4. William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge
 5. Sir Walter Scott and Jane Austen
 6. Edgar Allan Poe and the American movement

III. Romantic elements in Frankenstein

- A. Bizarre story of monster and creation:
1. Unexplained events
 2. Strange creature
- B. Characters driven by emotional need:
1. Creature
 - a. Need for love and acceptance
 - b. Loneliness and desire for revenge
 2. Victor Frankenstein
 - a. Love of friends and family
 - b. Despair and shock
 - c. Revenge against creature
 3. Elizabeth Lavenza
 - a. Love of Victor and family
 - b. Belief in Justine's innocence
 - c. Self-sacrifice for Victor
 4. Robert Walton
 - a. Desire for close, loving friend
 5. Henry Clerval
 - a. Close, loyal friend and companion
- C. Romantic settings:
1. Switzerland and the Alps
 2. Ingolstadt
 3. Scotland and Orkney Islands
 4. The Arctic
- D. Emotional events:
1. Death of Caroline Beaufort
 2. Adoption of children by Frankensteins
 3. Death of William Frankenstein

4. Trial of Justine Moritz
 5. Death of Henry Clerval
 6. Marriage of Victor and Elizabeth
 7. Murder of Elizabeth
 8. Death of Victor Frankenstein
- E. Creature as a natural man
1. Idea of the “Noble Savage”

IV. Conclusion

TOPIC #3

Victor’s driving, obsessive ambition ruined his life and led to his own death and the murder of his loved ones. Illustrate how ambition affects not only Victor and Robert Walton, but also the creature in *Frankenstein*.

Outline

- I. Thesis Statement: *Ambition and the quest for knowledge is a fatal flaw in the characters of Victor Frankenstein, Robert Walton, and the creature.*

II. Victor Frankenstein’s obsession

- A. Curiosity and desire for knowledge:
 1. As a boy, sees lightning strike tree
 2. Study of Agrippa and Paracelsus
- B. Attends University of Ingolstadt:
 1. Influence of M. Waldman
 2. Intensive study and experimentation
 3. Loses contact with family and friends
- C. Creation of a monster:
 1. Ambition blinds him to reality of creation
 - a. Thinks creature will be beautiful
 2. Confronted with living creature
 3. Horrified at what he has created
- D. Life destroyed by his creation:
 1. Family and friends killed
 2. No hope for future
 3. Sinks into black hole of anger and revenge

III. The creature’s quest for knowledge

- A. Creature as a blank innocent:
 1. Is benevolent, but knows nothing
 2. Wants to be accepted
- B. Is exposed to world of knowledge:
 1. Observation of De Lacey family
 2. Books, music, and loving relationships
 3. Learns to read and write

- C. Desires knowledge and understanding of world:
 - 1. Reads *Paradise Lost* and other works
 - 2. Reads Victor's journal
- D. Acquires a terrible knowledge:
 - 1. Understands who he is and how he was created
 - 2. Realizes he is doomed to lifelong misery
- E. Becomes obsessed with notion of revenge:
 - 1. Murders innocent people
 - 2. Devotes life to torment of Victor
 - 3. Seeks release in fiery death

IV. Walton's expedition

- A. Walton's obsessive quest:
 - 1. Like Victor, spends years pursuing dream
- B. Confronted with reality of hardship and pain:
 - 1. Could destroy crew and himself
- C. Learns from Victor and ultimately abandons quest

V. Conclusion