



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2012 Volume II: Storytelling: Fictional Narratives, Imaginary People, and the Reader's Real Life

Empathy Through The Eyes of A Creature: A Journey Into Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

Curriculum Unit 12.02.09, published September 2012

by Harriet J. Garcia

Introduction

Are we, as human beings, formed by "nature" or "nurture" or both? I ask this question at the beginning of our *Frankenstein* unit in order to get my students thinking about our roles in this world and our accountability (or lack thereof) for our actions and the resulting consequences. With high school seniors, these questions are even more imperative since these young folks are on the brink of graduating and exiting the routine, expected, predictable lives of adolescence to be thrust into the "real" world of the unknown and the uncertain.

The common response my students have to our unit on *Frankenstein* comes directly from cultural references: "Frankenstein is the green monster right?" "We're gonna be reading about the guy who is ginormous with bolts in his neck!" "Oh yeah...I've had Frankenberry cereal!" My students are soon informed that "Frankenstein" is actually the name of the creator/scientist, and his creation remains nameless, being referred to only as "creature" and "demon," although there are quite a few parallels between the creator and the created. It is this very question of identity that will drive this unit in attempting to show students the harmful and dangerous impact that assumptions and prejudice can have on students who are seen as the "other," the "unknown," or the "different." While students initially view the "creature" as some grotesque, raging, violent, deranged killer, their assumption is shattered once they begin to discover the circumstances of the creature's "birth" and its first exposure to the world. This "newborn" experience is a far cry from what my students are accustomed to when thinking about Victor Frankenstein's "creature."

To set the stage for Shelley's novel, I introduce my students to the life into which Mary Shelley was born, her personal struggles, her difficulties with her relationships, and her longstanding shadow of pain and suffering. While the novel may be written at a time and in a style foreign to modern day teenagers, the plight of the creature/creator is all too familiar to them. While we don't have this fictional eight-foot tall, grotesque, incomprehensible creature roaming in our society today, we do have individuals who step onto our high school campus (and society) feeling this disowned, this displaced, and this ostracized because they are somehow "different."

Rationale

Ostracism gets to the heart of the matter when it comes to why this unit is valid for my students. At Independence High School, our 2011-student body count was at 3,409 students. Our diverse student population consists of: 37.6% Asian, 34.6% Hispanic/Latino, 19.6% Filipino, 3.5% Black/African-American, 3.4% White, .7% native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and .3% American Indian/Alaskan native, and .1% biracial ¹ . Our students speak a range of languages from Spanish and Filipino to Vietnamese and Mandarin. Our school has the luxury of being one of the most culturally, linguistically, demographically diverse schools in the state, if not the nation. Yet, this luxury can also be a detriment. After maneuvering through nine years of schooling, it comes as no surprise that by the time a child reaches high school he wants nothing more than to mix in, be accepted, assimilate, and be "like" everyone else. What does this "fitting in" look like? The same clothes, the same taste in music, food, and language? These are the daily markers of normalcy to a teenager, but the inevitable questions soon arise: "What if I don't fit in? What if I can't fit in? Why am I being singled out? Am I a loner? What do I have to do to be a part of this gigantic puzzle known as adolescence?" In our *Frankenstein* unit, this question of acceptance will be our focus as we delve into the parallel experience of the creature wanting to be accepted, to gain the trust of others, and to do everything in his power not to be alone.

More importantly, we will also face the reality of how prejudice, racism, and ostracism impact an individual who is already struggling with his or her place in society. Much like the creature, our students are often seen as "different," outsiders, loners, and creatures to disassociate with. Why do we prejudge someone who looks, speaks, and acts, in a way different than we do? What assumptions are made based on someone's outer appearance? We will explore the ways in which society impacts an individual using the creature's interactions with his "society": the Delacey's, the villagers, Victor, and numerous other characters.

As my students consider this idea of prejudice, especially in their own environment, I ask the students if prejudice is the same today as it was in the past. Most of my students will respond with the typical "We've come a long way since the days of segregation", a sign of progress that I do acknowledge. However, I ask them to think deeper into how different the forms of prejudice and intolerance have truly gotten. I ask my students to join in completing my sentence: "sticks and stones may break my bones but ...names will never hurt me". This adage has always proven to be a faulty concept. As we know through various psychological studies, while a physical bruise may heal in time, an emotional scar is lasting. The same lasting impact can be seen with social media outlets as the instantaneous yet permanent power of technology allows these emotional words to spread quickly and to reach a wider audience. Such technological social outlets as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, tumblr, and YouTube are perfect examples of the far-reaching and immediate impact of our words and attitudes. While the social media might have been a lightning rod for the Egyptian revolution, it takes on a different purpose when used as a form of bullying and hatred. Twitter and Facebook may have been the catalysts for freedom and social protest, but with cyber-bullying what is created is social oppression.

Cyber-bullying has become a vital issue in regards to the kinds of cruelty and discrimination our young people face today. Whereas in the past a student might verbally spew hateful attitudes by word of mouth, today those words are released into the world with the swift touch of a button. Students have their personal accounts hacked, being the victims of "identity theft" as others publicly release embarrassing, shameful, harmful pictures and/or messages. There have also been accounts of young people who have been victims of hateful on-line campaigns to ostracize and shun them all in the name of cruel fun and hatred. Some examples

of the fatal impact of cyber-bullying include: the suicide of fifteen year old Phoebe Prince of Massachusetts who was taunted as the new girl from Ireland and the suicide of seventeen year old Alexis Pilkington from Long Island, New York who endured relentless taunts on the internet which continued after her death. ² Another extreme example that is brought to mind is that of Rutgers University freshmen John Clementi whose gay tryst was secretly videotaped by a fellow classmate Dhrun Rhavi. This violation of privacy is compounded when the facts were revealed that the "videographer" invited fellow classmates to secretly join in on the filming of these encounters, as if being treated to an entertaining show. Even more disturbing is that Dhrun Rhavi publicly urged his friends and Twitter followers to watch an upcoming encounter via his webcam. The result: eighteen-year-old Tyler jumped to his death from the George Washington Bridge. ³

Our unit's emphasis on ostracism and how we recognize our own prejudices and assumptions will benefit my students in various ways. The most obvious benefit will come in the form of students recognizing how human beings form their own prejudices based on race, language, appearance, or any outside, superficial category. Students will become aware of how these prejudices impact others, specifically noting the power of words and labels and stereotypes. In addition, this unit will help students from the other end of the spectrum of prejudice, as individuals who have been or might be prejudged, and to reflect on how those experiences of humiliation or ostracism have impacted their lives.

Objectives

The end result, it is my hope, will be a group of young people who leave my classroom with a bit more empathy for those "others" on our campus and in our society who might have been viewed as invisible and unheard and irrelevant by the rest of the world. Of course students will come away with a better understanding of character perspectives, and the relationship between reader and audience; but the ultimate goal is for these lessons to transcend from the Mary Shelley's novel on their desk, to their personal day-to-day interactions with their peers. My students can relate on numerous levels to the plight of the creature in the novel, and as such will hopefully understand the impact, power, and cruelty of our prejudicial words, our stereotypical attitudes, and our closed minded visions.

Timing of the Unit

This unit will be delivered to a 12th Grade World Literature class. Preceding this unit, students will have covered the traits of Romantic literature, the structure of epistolary narration, as well as the various points of view a writer, such as Mary Shelley, employs in order to offer the reader a glimpse through the eyes of different characters. By using various narrators, the students are able to get a more genuine, reliable story. The recurring question that will begin with this unit and will continue through the rest of the semester—with such works as Dante's *Inferno* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*—is: How do ethics play a role in an individual's actions? This question will of course be applied to the likes of Victor, the Creature, the sinful religious figures of Dante's time, and the infamous Macbeth. More importantly, students will pose this question to themselves in order to consider the bigger picture of what these pieces of literature, these characters, these authors aim

to show us about ourselves as human beings.

While the assigned readings can be overwhelming and dense for my students, I supplement the unit with audio readings of the novel, and with film clips to aid students in their understanding of characterization and the differences between a Hollywood rendition of literature and the integrity of the original novel. More importantly, the film adaptations allow the students to be aware of the same short sightedness that Victor (like countless other characters) has when only using his sight as a means to view the creature.

Students will also cover specific segments in order to make their reading smoother and easier to digest: namely-chapter vocabulary, sentence structure, diction, architectonic chapter outline, metaphors /analogies, family tree, conceptual handouts, geographical map, and the structure of the novel (epistolary narration, first[-]person retrospective point of view, aporia as literary device.)

Structure in Frankenstein

As mentioned above, students will have had exposure to epistolary narration in order to become familiar with Mary Shelley's format of *Frankenstein*. Once my students have familiarized themselves with the various narrators (from Walton to Victor to the Creature), the question arises: "So, who do we believe— the first person who speaks? Victor because he is an educated scientist? Walton because he begins and ends the story? Victor, even though he's a monster?" To get my students to understand the reliability of a narrator, I ask them to think of times in their lives when two individuals may have experienced the same event but have two very different perspectives. Sometimes they have a favorite childhood memory, but their recall is much different from that of their sibling. I briefly model for them the telephone game where I tell person X a fact, person X whispers to person Y what they heard, person Y whispers their fact to person Z, and so on. Inevitably, the original detail is distorted as the words pass through various ears and various mouths. This is the very process the students experience in Mary Shelley's novel. Through the first-person retrospective narrative, and using the epistolary form of narration via letters, Mary Shelley presents the reader with a balanced view of what could easily be a biased story.

To begin to frame the story for the students, they will need to understand what the epistolary format is and why authors use it. The epistolary format in a frame narrative allows for a narrator, typically an outsider independent of the initial action, to become a reliable representative of the author's views. The story unfolds as a series of letters in which this outside narrator relates the story he has been told by another character to a third person, in this case Walton's sister. The story actually begins at the conclusion of Victor's quest, as he is chasing the creature in this cat and mouse game. This story within a story allows the reader the luxury of seeing a moving timeline of emotional and moral development, as the Creature is allowed to take over the narration midway. Readers can judge the Creature in terms of his internal thoughts and merits rather than the external appearance. Shelley's epistolary format also allows Walton to set up, for his sister and the readers, the idea of Victor as a mad scientist whose obsession for creating life ultimately is destroyed by the very thing he created, the creature, and the very thing he maintained, his obsession. ⁴

Since the various shifts in narration allow for the reader to get differing perspectives, students are brought to the realization that there is a contrast with how Victor perceives the chain of events versus how the Creature perceives those same events. To analyze the kind of narration Victor gives is to begin with the straightforward

details he offers us, seemingly leaving out any kind of emotional backdrop. For example, as a student of chemistry, Victor includes specific ideas and descriptions of what he has studied and read and done, but he leaves out the very thing as a narrator that he leaves out as a character—any emotional description. He admits to Walton that his "studies interfered with the tranquility of his domestic affections", admitting that his priorities in family emotional connection was not a priority in comparison with his pursuit of knowledge. ⁵

Through the Creature's narration, the perception of Victor's actions takes quite a different turn. His supposed marvelous deeds are now revealed as crimes as well as his unreliable judgment of the creature. Students will be asked to reread specific passages where Victor's observations can be deemed as doubtful. For example, before Victor destroys the female mate he promised the Creature, he describes looking out at the window to see the Creature looking in at him with a "ghastly grin wrinkled his lips". ⁶ It is important to ask students at this point where they feel the most connected, alongside Victor in the laboratory or alongside the Creature from the outside looking in.

Because they will have reread quite a few passages that raise doubts about Victor's credibility, students may begin to see themselves alongside the Creature. This kind of shift from the protagonist (Victor) to the antagonist (Creature) can begin to be explained through the literary term, *aporia* as an "ideal state of mind...as the perfect suspension of judgment that presents either complete faith or doubt." Once the Creature's narration unfolds, the reader begins to realize the contradiction that Victor has so far established. The sympathy that some students might have felt for Victor is now replaced by suspicion. ⁷ Regardless of Victor's determined rants against the Creature as "monster", "fiend", "devil", "vile insect", and even after the various crimes committed by the Creature, students may rein in their extreme hatred for the Creature, and allow some kind of understanding to color their view of the Creature. After all, the Creature's narration is dominated by his feelings and emotional journey, whereas Victor's narration is usually observational and lacking in emotion.

Perception: Then (18th Century) and Now (21st Century)

We jump into the labs of 18th Century scientists Gall and Spurzheim by analyzing their Phrenological Chart. I will have the class join me in physically analyzing our own skulls to determine our specific moral strengths and weaknesses. After feeling for skull formations for violence, compassion, dishonesty, and various other supposed markers of behavior, my students will probably sneer and joke about the absurdity of this chart. I expect some laughter at the incredible theory that society believed in during the 18th Century. While students will find this chart nonsensical, they will be reminded soon enough that they themselves have used such "nonsensical" criteria to do the exact same thing—judge a person's inner being and their moral character based on what their eyes show them, rather than what their ears can tell them. I will use a PowerPoint presentation of various images—a few of Diane Arbus' photographs, famed astrophysicist Stephen Hawking, rapper and businessman David Banner, Olympic Weightlifter Tommy Kono, among others—to elicit their own assumptions and reactions to the what they think they see and know through their vision. Students will see that even they, in this day and age, base their own judgments of others based on the superficiality of what their eyes can see, once again noting that while we have come a long way in terms of legal segregation and prejudice, the issue of individual perception and judgment continues to exist.

These preconceived notions of an individual, or group, are directly tied to the way an individual views himself. For example, students are questioned about their identity in various ways: Who are you? [Priscilla Garcia]. What are you? [Mexican. Mexican-American. A girl. A student.] Where do you come from? [Juarez, Mexico. Checkers apartments across the street. San Jose]. These questions of origin and identity are important as we begin to see how individuals recognized themselves and others in the 18th Century, given the two opposing theories of human origin. I must remind the students that while some of these theories might seem fantastical and ridiculous today, they were developed with the knowledge and assumptions available at the time. The Polygenic Theory claimed that the missing link between human beings and apes was black Africans who originated from a distinct and different species. The opposing theory is the Christian Doctrine, which argued that all humans came from the first original couple of Adam and Eve, and attributed the differences in skin color, hair color, skull shape, and anatomy to environmental conditions and changes. ⁸

In addition to the understanding of both theories of origin, my students will also analyze the race through Freiderich Blumenback's 1775 classifications. He categorized specific subgroups within the human species into groups using the traits of skin color, hair, skull formation, and physical anatomy. In addition, students will be exposed to Camper's theory that the inner soul and moral character produce the outer appearance of an individual, as well as the Phrenology chart which uses the contours of the skull to determine the characteristics and morality of an individual. Victor and many of the other characters support these theories that claim that an individual's outer appearance is a valid measure of a person's inner nature and automatic behavior. ⁹

Why is all of this background on origin significant to my students? My students understand stereotypes very well, especially given their personal histories and observations of prejudice. Some common racial stereotypes that they reveal include: "All blacks are thugs and steal", "All Mexican girls get pregnant and drop out of high school", "All Asians are stingy and selfish." While these assumptions might seem laughable to my students, they are the actual basis for how individuals perceived race and ethics during the 18th Century. Lawrence gave a list of intellectual and emotional qualities identified with each race, specifically noting that "the white race held a preeminence in moral feelings and mental endowments." ¹⁰ Would my students of Asian descent be comfortable with the idea that their ancestors could have strong moral fibers, but because of their inherent laziness they will remain inferior and destructive like Genghis Khan? Their Asian "gene" has already determined that they, and their children, and their children's children will remain inferior to the white race?

If the creature were to be asked the same questions I posed to my students—"Who are you?" "What are you?" "Where do you come from?"—he would be hard pressed for an answer. However, there are certain subtle clues in the text to point to the Creature possibly being of the Mongolian/Asian race using the 18th Century descriptions of man. UCLA professor Anne K. Mellor points to the Creature's Mongolian race by noting that at the beginning of the novel, Walton and his men have set off on their voyage to China by way of the North Pole. Mellor points to the Creature as an inhabitant of "an island North of the wilds of Tartary and Russia whence Victor has pursued him, North of Archangel, the northernmost city in western Asia from which Walton has set sail." Mary Shelley describes this newborn giant as having yellow skin, black and flowing hair, the "dun white" or light grey-brown of both irises of his eyes and sockets. The Creature does not have white skin, blond hair, or blue eyes, and is definitely not Caucasian, nor is he the same race as his maker. Even Walton notices the difference in appearance between Victor and the traveller preceding him, as he notes Victor was "not as the other traveller seemed to be, a savage inhabitant of some undisclosed island, but an European". ¹¹

The Burdens We Carry: Biographical Backgrounds

To begin to understand the connection between author and work, my students first need to recognize the complexity of Mary Shelley's personal background. Given the obvious parallels between Mary Shelley and the situations depicted in her novel, it is extremely beneficial for my students to see how the realities of an author can have the same validity and purpose as told in a fictional account, using a fictional character as opposed to a non-fiction piece of literature. More importantly, my students have their own valid experiences and stories when it comes to the connection (or disconnection) between their own family background and dynamics and the formation of their own personalities and identities. This is not to suggest (as my students are quick to point out) that who their parents are will guarantee who they themselves will become in the future. Family background is just one factor we may use in order to understand our own values, concepts, and attitudes of the world and of those around us.

Mary Shelley had the luxury (and burden) of being the offspring of two very prominent and established writers, Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin. Mary's own parental bonding was short-lived, as her mother died eleven days after giving birth to her. Before her death, Mary Wollstonecraft recognized that "before there can be an interplay of love between father and child, the father has to fulfill his duties", a statement Mary was familiar with from her mother's literary work.¹² For various reasons, Godwin did not fulfill his duties as a father, remaining a distant parent after Mary Wollstonecraft's death. In addition, Mary's relationship to his second wife was not without its problems. In essence, Mary became familiar with rejection as her mother's death signaled a type of "desertion" and "abandonment" by the one who gave her life.¹³ Mary's sense of abandonment continued as her elopement with an already-married Percy earned her the scorn, and disownment, from her father, someone who embodied her "God" and whom she had a strong attachment to.

As if Mary didn't have enough sorrow in her life, she continued to face loss and suffering. Death seemed to be a constant and complex theme in Mary's life, as she may have felt indirectly guilty for each individual's demise. As already noted, Mary's mother died as a result of complications in giving birth to her. Secondly, Mary encountered death by means of the infant deaths of three of her four children. Interestingly enough, her first daughter died at eleven days old, the same age Mary was when her own mother died. Next, her half-sister, Fanny Imlay, committed suicide six weeks into Mary's beginning her drafting of *Frankenstein*. Also, Harriet Shelley (Percy's wife) committed suicide two and a half months after Mary began her novel. The death of her friend Lord Byron also had an impact on her. To complete her string of sorrow, Percy died in a boating accident, after which her closest friends, Jane Williams and Thomas Jefferson Hogg, betrayed her in publicly labeling her as an unloving wife. Her ongoing struggle with depression has been evidenced through her journals spanning the 1820's.¹⁴

These themes of abandonment and death are at the forefront of *Frankenstein*, thus bridging the life of the author with the lives in the book. As a stark example of this connection, we need only view Victor's visions and dreams of resurrecting life with a page from Mary Shelley's journals detailing her dream of reviving her dead child. Mary's journal noted, "Dream that my little baby came to life again- that it had only been cold and that we rubbed it before the fire and it lived".¹⁵ While Mary was still grieving for the loss of her child, her father continued in his insensitive advice and warning not to grieve too much for her dead child or else risk losing the love and affection of those around her, which mirrors Alphonse's ultimate advice to Victor after his mother dies of the Scarlet fever.¹⁶

Child Psychology: Substitute "Parents"

While it is helpful for students to recognize Mary Shelley's personal history, and the struggles and suffering she endured both as a child and as a parent, it is time for my students to revisit the idea of the lack of a parent, a guide who will be the vital supporter so that the child can maneuver through this complex world. Many of my students grow up in low income, single parent homes, or they are raised by a grandparent or by an extended family member. Sometimes the students may come from a two-parent home, but that is by no means a guarantee of a healthy, happy environment. Those students who are lucky are raised in a strong, supportive home with parents who realize their main purpose in life is to care, guide, and love their sons and daughters. The question then becomes who or what actually takes the role of a "parent" in those homes where there is an absentee or neglectful parent? For my students, I've seen the role of parent take on the shape of peers (whether in the positive, traditional peer sense or in the negative "family" of gang life), extracurricular clubs, sports, and church. I used to think that many of my students who spent endless hours after school, immersed in multiple activities such as sports or band practice or club meetings, were just overachievers. While some students indeed dedicate themselves to extracurricular activities, others are involved because this "school" life is much more stable, safe, and functional than the lives that await them when they get home. In the case of the Creature, education becomes Victor's parent and serves as his only sign of stability, safety, and functionality.

Where Victor fails to fulfill his role as a parent, books are the only things that can fill the void and serve as the creature's guide into love, knowledge, and sorrow. The books the Creature discovers while hiding in the hovel behind the DeLacey's cottage serve as his "mother" and "father", nurturing him but also showing him the painful reality of love and sacrifice. While some of my students are familiar with their parent's lecture about the danger of temptations, the Creature gains this lesson from John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In terms of love and sacrifice, my students gain their insight from their parents' stories and warnings (or unfortunately what they glean from reality dating shows) while the Creature takes the lessons of love from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Werther*. Lastly, the moral virtues and weaknesses of man may be revealed to my students by family members, friends, and role models, yet the Creature must settle for Plutarch's *Lives* to instruct him in this area of leadership. These three condensed readings—Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther*, and Plutarch's *Lives*— will be the basis for this jigsaw activity for my students. My students will not only identify the lessons the Creature learns from these texts, but will also stand in the actual role of Creature as they, like he, learn these concepts and literature for the first time.

As my students uncover the lessons of temptation, sacrifice, and leadership, I will ask them if there could be any substitute for a parent. In the Creature's case, all he has are the books he finds. What about the kinds of modern day substitutes that may fill the gap of an absentee parent, or the time and affection a parent cannot or will not provide? We have already discussed the various outside influences on a young person such as a gang, a "family" of sorts to supposedly "accept", "protect", and "guide" a young child. Students might also point to the materialistic items that some parents use as a symbol of affection and love, such as extravagant gifts in the form of the latest designer purse, the latest version of the iPhone, the cutting edge basketball sneakers. Can there be continued loyalty from child to parent— from the Creature to Victor—even if that parent has caused unheard of pain and suffering?

This debatable question centers on a few important aspects of child psychology. After all, the creature, despite his gargantuan size, begins as a child, newly formed and easily influenced. As a class, we discuss the

old adage, "It takes a village to raise a child". In the creature's case, "It takes a village to ruin a child." According to psychologist Selma Fraiberg, the unloved child has the capacity to grow into the unusual adult, the deviant who seeks to compensate for his overwhelming displacement, his "nothingness" by inflicting pain on others—a form of announcing to the world, "I exist, I am".¹⁷ By viewing the creature through Fraiberg's lens, we are able to see that it is not the creature's nature that makes him vengeful (as Victor deludes himself into thinking) but rather his magnified isolation and despair at the lack of human connections that Victor should have provided. As is the case with many (if not all) youth, there is an incredible yearning to win the approval of one's parents, as we have seen with Mary Shelley and her own parents. As a class, we discuss the current dynamics of this kind of parental stamp of approval, which in the best cases can lead to a child's excellence, and in the worst cases can lead to the dangerous extremes in which a child sets incredible and unattainable goals at the expense of everything else in life.

Valid questions are also swirling in a young child's brain when it comes to his or her place in society, specifically dealing with the protectors in his/her life. As a class, we move from Fraiberg's theory of displacement to child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim's approach to child identity. He notes:

The child asks himself: "Who am I?" "Where did I come from?" ... He worries not whether there is justice for individual man, but whether he will be treated justly. He wonders who and what projects him into adversity, and what can prevent this from happening to him. Are there benevolent powers in addition to his parents? Are his parents benevolent powers? How should he form himself, and why? Is there hope for him though he may have done wrong? Why has all of this happened to him?¹⁸

All of these questions can be directly applied to the creature as a child. At one point or another, it is probable that my students have come across at least one of these questions in regard to their home life and parental figures. By recognizing Bettelheim's approach, students will be prepared to view the creature through the most basic question of identity—Who is the Creature really?

The impact of absentee parents is apparent in Shelley's construction of Victor and the Creature's relationship, if it can be called that. My students will begin to formulate their own opinions regarding Victor and the Creature as moral or immoral characters, but will first consider the kinds of ostracism that impact an individual. It is one thing to be cruelly shunned by society, but quite another when his own parent rejects him. As evidenced by the Creature's existence, man can thrive and live through communion and relationship with others, as isolation and solitude essentially represent man's death. My students are aware of various types of isolation, from extremely introverted students who walk solitarily on campus with eyes fixated on the ground to the hidden student in the back of the class who hardly says a word or makes eye contact with the teacher or his peers.

Dysfunctional Relationships

While the most obvious dysfunctional relationship is Victor's and the Creature's, it is by no means the only one in the novel. Students need to analyze the various other parental relationships with great scrutiny. In order for the students to understand the different dysfunctions in a home, they must allow themselves to see different family structures that exist in the novel. After all, students might not immediately recognize the term

"dysfunctional" but they certainly can recognize unhealthy markers in relationships, whether at home or in school.

To begin with, students must first direct their attention to Victor's childhood upbringing. While Victor paints his childhood as ideal (causing the reader to question his reliability), evidence suggests that through his narrative he places a forced, unnatural emphasis on happiness and the love in his family. Students can discuss the various reasons why an individual might put up a "front" by portraying a home life in a doubtful manner versus giving a realistic view of what their family is truly like. Why do students, like Victor, seem to rely on a fantasy when talking about reality? Is a student's family life too painful or shameful to reveal to the public? Maybe relaying a façade is much safer and more comfortable for students to recount than the harsh reality of what they go home to each day.

Dysfunction continues with Victor as he begins to grow into a college student. While students might only view the problems Victor encountered as a child, they need to follow Victor as the kinds of problems change from home life to academic pursuits. Indirectly, Victor's father, Alphonse, can be held accountable for the creation of the monster (and the subsequent murders) based on his lack of attention to Victor's passion in science. Once again, students can relate to this family dynamic of pursuing the exact thing that your family rejects or dismisses. While it may seem unfair to directly blame Alphonse for the deaths, it is quite a scary idea to realize that had Alphonse taken some interest in his son's studies, then maybe things would have turned out differently. These "What If's..." are timely for my seniors since they will be able to reflect on the last three years of their high school careers, and what role their parents played in where they are right now, both academically and socially.

Is there only one kind of dysfunctional family? Are we to consider Victor and the Creature's relationship the only unhealthy representation of family? There are many different kinds of families who have dysfunction, with no magic potion to make everyone have a happy ending. The DeLacey's are seemingly settled and healthy but their stability soon turns into chaos. As old man De Lacey is on the cusp of giving the creature a chance at human connection, his children burst into the room and rob the creature of this miracle. Ironically, it is when Felix enables his father to see through his eyes that old man De Lacey actually loses his visionary powers. The blinded ones are actually the children who might have literal sight, but are completely in the dark when it comes to compassion and open mindedness. Even for students who have a seemingly perfect and stable family life, looks can be deceiving as is established with the DeLacey's. Once again, students are brought back to the idea that things (and people) aren't always what they seem to be, a fact that they are accustomed to in their own interactions with their peers.

A Parent's License

"How can anyone reject their own flesh and blood?" is the ultimate question many of my students ask as they become more comfortable with viewing Victor and the Creature not as "creator" and "created", but more personally as "parent" and "child". We begin to answer this question with less of the "how" and more of the "why" parents would reject their children. In a perfect world, of course parents would earn an "A+" on a parent report card. Parents would always know what to say and what to do in every possible situation when it comes to their child. As students' frustration with Victor's neglect begins to build, some of my students express the need for people to apply for having a child, much as individuals apply for a driver's license. My students'

rationale for this application is that people should meet the basic requirements in order to have children, nurture their children, and love their children as opposed to being the careless, irresponsible Victor who leaves an innocent to fend for itself. As some of my students may point out, even interested pet owners must fill out forms, participate in orientations, and prove to the animal shelter that they can care for and maintain a pet in a loving, safe home. Why is there less screening when it comes to parents? This question might also be especially topical when students consider teen pregnancies and teen parents.

While my students have almost daily moments of immaturity, which sometimes drives my patience to a breaking point, I am always amazed and proud of the kind of insight they have when it comes to relevant concepts that they are honest enough to discuss. A prime example is our discussion about the responsibilities of a parent to a child and of a child to a parent. After listing the expected duties of parent to child (shelter, safety, food, guidance, and most importantly love) we shift to how this list compares to Victor's desire to create life. It doesn't take too long for my students to see that Victor should have never gotten his "parent's license" given his motivation for becoming a creator. After all, Victor "expects that "a new species would bless me as its creator and source...no father would claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs." ¹⁹ Victor is not shy about stating his need to be praised, adored, placed on a pedestal of acclaim, all the while forgetting to acknowledge his duty to this new, delicate, vulnerable being. This parent's license to have a child echoes Mary Shelley's own views that "a right always includes a duty, and I think it may likewise fairly be inferred that they forfeit the right who do not fulfill the duty." ²⁰

From this idea of parental duty, my students will move into the discussion of expectation versus reality when it comes to children. Victor, in a sense, customizes his child in that he chooses every body part, every physical characteristic, and every physical detail of the creature. He is able to purposefully and knowingly make his child, and has literal control over this process. Students will usually be dumfounded by the confusion of Victor's revulsion at his creation. He did know exactly what his creature would look like throughout the entire process, so why is he horrified at something he's looked at every day for a year? At this point, I have them keep track of the verbal exchanges between Victor and the Creature, noting especially the various labels Victor assigns the Creature: "demoniacal corpse", "mummy", "hideous", "wretch", "a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived." Pointing back to the impact on the psyche of the child, we discuss the impact these words would have (and do have) on a child, especially coming from the parent.

While it is important for students to follow Victor's irresponsible and cruel treatment of the Creature, I find it even more important for students to find examples of Victor's possible compassion for the Creature. It is through these few instances that students need to realize that it is very possible for Victor to take ownership of his actions. He has the ability, the will, and the capacity to reverse his decisions. In a fleeting moment Victor does emit a tinge of compassion to his child as he recalls looking at the Creature's face and stating, "his countenance bespoke bitter anguish but its unearthly ugliness rendered it almost too horrible for human eyes." ²¹ Another brief moment of responsibility comes when he encounters the Creature and hears the details of his existence. Victor realizes, "I ought to [have rendered] him happy before I complained of his wickedness" and also notes, "his tale and the feelings he now expressed proved him to be a creature of fine sensations; and did I not as his maker, owe him, all the position of happiness that it was in my power to bestow him?" ²² "Yes" would be the resounding answer, but unfortunately for the Creature, Victor never fully allows himself to develop this responsibility.

Images of Propaganda?

Since the basis of our *Frankenstein* unit revolves around what our eyes can see, versus what our ears can hear, I plan to spend some time showing my class the only surviving picture of the Creature as depicted in the Frontispiece to the 1831 revised edition. Students will actually begin by creating their own visual image of the Creature using only Victor's narrative to guide them. The students will then compare their image with the 1831 Frontispiece picture, noting the differences in appearance. While the Frontispiece image does show a large head and gigantic body proportions, students will actually discover that the Creature's body is a perfect embodiment of strength and masculinity as opposed to the grotesque image that Victor offers us. The Creature has a large but well proportioned body with only the head and Mongoloid features which appear awkwardly connected to the body.²³ Once again, I will bring my students back to our "Into" lesson about what our minds understand by what our eyes can see, and quick way we can easily fall into this tricky and deceptive trap of assumption and prejudice.

One can make the case that Victor uses his words as propaganda against the monster in trying to somehow align the reader with his demonic view of his creation. This leap from propaganda using race/stereotypes fits smoothly with my students' understanding of manipulation throughout history. My students will become aware that prejudice and racism aren't limited to an individual's ideas, but can be widespread using the various forms of media to paint a specific group as threatening and evil as was done in WWII.

My students, as mentioned above, are familiar with the power of social media. Yet, it is important for students to remember that the newspaper and print ads were the "social media" of the late 1800's. Through various propaganda pamphlets, my aim is to show the students how powerful and successful it is to prey on people's fears, however irrational or incredible. Some of my examples will center around the "Yellow Peril" of the late 1800's and early 1900's targeting the Chinese wave of immigrants in San Francisco, California who worked on the railroads, vineyards, laundries, and restaurants. These immigrants were depicted as a monopolizing, greedy threat that was on a quest to bring their fellow opium-addicted brethren to infiltrate the country. I will also use some examples of the anti-Chinese and anti-Japanese propaganda used to portray the Asian individual as a demonic Dr. FuManchu, as British author Arthur Henry Sarsfield Ward did in his posters.²⁴ In these depictions, the Asian man is shown as tall, leaning forward in an almost cat-like pose, with a face resembling the high arch of a Satanic brow, and with the cruel cunning look of an entire Eastern race. In other images, the Asian man was stereotyped as a gigantic, bloodthirsty warrior who was very similar to an ape. Once again, I will remind my students of Professor Mellor's theory that the Creature, based on racial features and geographical location, could have been of Asian descent.

To shift gears into a more modern connection for my students I will show them recent advertising images that prey on stereotypes to sell a product. Some examples of these ads include Intel, Dove, and Sony among others. By just these visual representations of a specific race, students will uncover the subtle (and not so subtle) messages the advertisers are sending to the public.

Nature vs. Nurture?

What is the final verdict in terms of the Creature's good or evil identity? This is a question my students struggle with, especially since they don't want to let go of the fact that at some point, the Creature stops being a child, and becomes an individual responsible for his actions. By looking at Rousseau's theory of natural man, my students get a fuller and more complex view of the Creature as a being who makes his own decisions.

We begin our understanding of nature vs. nurture by analyzing Rousseau's philosophy of natural man. According to Rousseau's claim, the Creature aligns to a "natural man" because he has a balanced set of defects and virtues. This "natural man" may begin lacking the ability to speak and reason, but is stronger and survives unbelievable circumstances, as the Creature did in surviving the unforgiving societal and environmental challenges he faced. In contrast, the average human being may have the ability to speak and reason, but placed in the same challenging situations would not survive. Rousseau's theory would also point to the Creature's independence and natural sense of pity, a trait that he is not afforded by society. Ultimately, students will understand the Creature's monstrosity is in part a social construction, not an innate part of him but placed upon him by society without his choice.²⁵ The Creature explains his behavior by stating, "My vices are the children of forced solitude that I abhor; and my virtues will necessarily arise when I live in communion with an equal."²⁶ Yet, when does man (or creature) take responsibility for his actions? My students need to discuss this idea of accountability, and at what point does age and inexperience stop becoming an excuse for immoral behavior?

At this point, I would like to present to my students local questions in our community, such as the juvenile justice law in California that allows for a fourteen year old to be tried as an adult in serious cases of gang crimes, sexual offenses, and murder. Does a fourteen year old truly belong in a prison alongside hardened criminals? Will this fourteen-year-old leave prison worse than when he went in? Should this fourteen year old be given a more adequate sentence with a better chance at rehabilitation? The debate will ultimately center on how to address this issue of justice and punishment given that this fourteen year old "child" would have the knowledge that when you hold a gun in your hand, you point it at someone, you place your forefinger on the trigger and squeeze, a bullet will dislodge and will pierce through flesh and tissue, and what will be left is a dead body on the floor. Once again, the discussion will move towards the question of when the Creature can be held accountable for his actions, when he knew right from wrong.

While some students may continue in their sympathy with the Creature, others may align themselves with Victor by noting that the Creature can be nothing but evil given his actions. Victor looks at his creature, and exclaims, "Abhorred monster! Fiend that thou art! Tortures of hell are too mild a vengeance for thy crimes wretched devil!"²⁷ At this point, students who have taken the view that the Creature is evil remain steadfast in their belief that the Creature, regardless of his emotional turmoil, must be held accountable for the lives he has taken: William, Justine, Henry Clerval, and ultimately Victor. The students who find the Creature fully responsible for these deaths align themselves with Dante Alighieri's assertion that man is full of free will and choice. Dante supports the concept that while God is all knowing, all good, and all-powerful, man falls extremely short of acquiring any sense of innate goodness as he is inherently evil and will falter through his own choice. The Creature may perceive his evil to come from society's cruel treatment of him rather than some innate predilection for evil. In contrast, Dante would argue that evil actions result from the free will and choice of man and that knowledge brings salvation and redemption, something the Creature never reaches.²⁸

Before moving into the structure of the novel, I compare the two editions of *Frankenstein* to offer my students yet another interpretation of the novel. Mary Shelley's 1818 edition presents, although subtly, Victor as having the ability to make decision regarding the Creature. This edition displays Victor as having the free will to make meaningful and ethical choices at the critical points in the novel. Victor could have abandoned his quest for the source of life, he could have cared for his creature, and he could have protected Elizabeth. In contrast, Shelley's 1831-revised edition portrayed Victor in a less capable role. Rather, the emphasis is placed on destiny, thereby allowing Victor to not have the moral choices placed in front of him. Many of his decisions are really not his "free will" but activated by fate. His academic passion of the sciences is "attributed to chance—or rather the evil influence; the Angel of Destruction, which asserted omnipotent sway over me." ²⁹ Justine and William's death are not the result of Victor's silence, but rather a curse imposed by "inexorable fate." Victor, Justine, and Elizabeth each poignantly attribute their fates to "immutable laws" or an "omnipotent "will" to which mankind must "learn...to submit in patience." ³⁰

Loyalty To The End

Mary Shelley imbues this Creature with a generous amount of empathy, which aligns her with the British empirical philosophers such as John Locke and David Hartley, who placed emphasis on sympathy as a marker of moral behavior. ³¹ The fact that society fails in its ability to sympathize with the creature is evidence enough of the absence of morality and common decency. As a result, the creature is a prime example of isolation. Essentially, the Creature does not begin as the cruel and monstrous murderer, but rather is a product of the lack of sympathy from society, and more importantly from his creator, Victor. Even being the source of the Creature's misery, a dying Victor earns his "child's" loyalty as the Creature drapes himself over his dying "father" and exclaims, "Oh, Frankenstein! Generous and self devoted being! I...destroyed thee by destroying all thou lovedst". ³² As if facing the reality he has painfully known all along, the Creature beholds his dead father and states, "Alas! He is cold, he cannot answer me". ³³ Regardless of whom the students side with—Victor or Creature—my expectation is that they close the cover of Shelley's novel with an expanded understanding of the power of man—through words and actions—to empathize and lift up his fellow man, or to aid in the destruction of one who seeks some minimal type of compassion. Hopefully my students will choose the former with which to lead their lives.

Teaching Strategies

Critical Thinking Questions

In order for students to reaffirm their reading and understanding of the novel, students will use a variety of assessments. One of these assessments will be the creation of their own critical thinking questions, as well as answering assigned questions. As students begin their readings for the first eight or so chapters, they will answer the assigned questions both in pairs in class, and slowly transitioning into their independent responses as homework. I suggest this slow transition in order to give students confidence in their ability with Mary Shelley's somewhat difficult sentence structure and diction, and also so that students can interact with the

text and with each other. As students are weaned away from working with their partners, and they have a stronger grasp of the plot and the rhythm of the sentences, I will have the students create their own questions modeling the "Question Tree" taken from the Literacy Solution handbook which uses on the surface questions (which have factual, textual answers) and under the surface questions (which have opinion based, inferential answers) to further enable students to use their own critically thinking skills. ³⁴

Unit Assessment

After completing the novel, students come back to where we began: Does nature or environment determine an individual's morality (or lack thereof)? What impact does prejudice, cruelty, and ostracism have on an individual? How can superficial markers prevent man from destroying civilization? How do we begin to empathize with this "other" being with a better understanding of multiple perspectives, rather than just one? Once again, students are brought back to the benefits of multiple narrators in order to get a balanced view of the novel. Even Walton's narrative is able to give the reader a more reliable sense of the Creature's nature. Students are asked to recall the fact that Walton does not immediately reject the Creature based on his first visual impression. This kind of delay may be due to the fact that Victor has already been exposed to the Creature via Victor's words. At Victor's deathbed, watching the Creature hover over the dead man, Walton is indeed disgusted, amazed that he had never seen such a grotesque figure as the Creature. Nevertheless, once Walton shuts his eyes, and is temporarily in the dark, he asks the Creature to stay, as an almost sympathetic offering to this maltreated figure. This kind of empathy and willingness to suspend assumptions is the same core purpose for the Unit Assessment that my students will complete: "Frankenstein's Archive of Letters".

Students will be paired up and asked to choose either Victor or the Creature (both can be aptly addressed as "Frankenstein" since there is such a strong correlation between the two characters) and take on their persona in their collection of letters. Students will write five letters to the other character (1 page in length, handwritten, single spaced) regarding five specific incidents. While the Creature is still alive at the end of the novel (although there is some doubt when comparing Mary's original statement that Walton "lost sight of the creature in the distance" and Percy's edited statement that the Creature "was lost in the distance") and can have an obvious voice in the letters, the same cannot be said about Victor since he is dead by the end of the book. He is entirely mute for the last section of the novel, and therefore the reader never truly knows if he had any remorse or any acknowledgement of the Creature. Because of this muted situation, I will have the students who take on the persona of Victor assume that Victor's "spirit" is reawakened and has the epiphany of taking some responsibility for the creature, and more importantly having the much desired empathy that his child has so desperately needed and wanted.

Students will be given a list of specific events from which they will choose five. Students will be required to use textual evidence, letter writing structure, and stylistic techniques/diction familiar to their character. Generally, students' letters should sound like their specific character, not like the students themselves. Students will relay a sense of empathy through their words, especially since they will present their specific letters centering on the same event to read aloud in class. Students will stand opposite their partner, and will read these letters to each other, finally giving voice and "empathy" through the eyes of both Creature and Creator.

Lesson Plans

The following are three key lesson plans that are spread throughout our unit; lesson one serves as an "introduction" into our curriculum unit, lesson two will come as a "through" activity as students are in the midst of the novel, and lesson three will be our "beyond" activity that will complete our unit as students create their final projects.

Lesson Plan One: Introduction Part I

While this lesson is detailed as one activity, it will take two days for students to complete their tasks. It is important to allow some time from the 18th Century use of the Phrenological Chart and the modern day PowerPoint presentation so that students can catch themselves in making the same assumptions of appearance today, in 2012, as the scientists made in the 18th Century.

Objectives:

Students will be able to...

- Identify Gall and Spurzheim's Phrenological Chart
- Analyze the theory of 18th Century scientists that a person's physical appearance is a marker of morality
- Infer the reaction this theory might have had on individuals in the 18th Century
- Apply the Phrenological Chart as they study their own skulls
- Predict how modern day individuals would react if this theory were still used today
- Discuss various issues of prejudice, nature vs. nurture, and human nature to transition into our unit of study.

Materials:

- Phrenological Chart handout
- Sabbatini's Phrenological online image (projected on the screen)
- Paper/pen

Set:

I will begin by having the students agree or disagree (in 2-3 complete sentences) with the following anticipation guide statements in preparation for today's lesson. I will remind students that while their responses will remain private, they will be expected to share one idea (even if vague) with their partner and with the class:

- a) Human beings are born free of any malice, hatred, or anger.
- b) Seeing is believing.
- c) Individuals associate with those who are most like them in terms of physical appearance (race, age, etc).
- d) Discrimination and prejudice are issues of the past that are no longer relevant in today's world.

Procedure:

1. Students will respond to the anticipation guide statements for 10-15 minutes.
2. Students will complete their responses, and spend a few minutes pair sharing their ideas with their partners. At this point, I will roam the class picking up bits and pieces of conversation, and getting a feel for where my students stand on these issues. I will also listen for insightful comments or questions that might spur on our class conversation.
3. Once students are done pair sharing, I will ask the class to come back to a whole group discussion and will review briefly what I had heard as I was roaming the class. I will point out the few comments that I find fitting, and I will ask for a few volunteers to share their ideas for each of the statements.
4. Once our whole group discussion is done, maybe after 10-15 minutes, I will hand out the Phrenological Chart and will have the students tell me what they think this head formation with various boxed titles is.
5. After varied responses, I will briefly inform my students that the discussion they just had is in direct contrast with Gall and Spurzheim's Phrenological Chart. I will briefly explain the theory of skull formation and traits of morality (and immorality) as we begin to understand 18th Century theories of man.
6. After my students have somewhat of a grasp on this theory, I will have them do their own skull examination to see where they fit in terms of morality. As students find different parts of their skull, I will use the online chart on the projector screen to specifically click on to the traits to show students the specifics of what that trait means. For example, I would click on the "destructiveness" segment above the earlobe, and students would see the specific behaviors that someone with this measured fragment would have.
7. After students have had some fun with this chart, and after hearing their jokes and laughter on such a ridiculous chart, I will have them answer the following question on their anticipation guide paper:

"In 5-6 sentences, describe this "skull experiment". What did you find out about yourself based on this Phrenological Chart? How would you feel if this chart were still in use today? How would your family and friends feel if this chart was used to determine whether they were good or bad people?"

Evaluation:

After students are done writing their reaction to the day's experiment, I will have students pair share and then group share, in addition to tying in their original responses to the anticipation guide questions of prejudice and appearance.

Lesson Plan Two: Introduction Part II

Objective:

Students will be able to...

- Use only their sense of vision to make assumptions about individuals
- Relate to being judged by superficial markers (such as appearance)
- Connect the absurdity of their own modern day prejudices with the theories of the 18th Century which they had deemed as ridiculous the day before
- Identify the dangers in supporting stereotypes and making quick assumptions versus taking the time to get

to know an individual

- Discuss the impact of these stereotypes on an individual and the ostracism that follows

Materials Needed:

- "Don't Judge a Book By Its Cover" PowerPoint

- pen/paper

Set:

I will begin by having students make a t-chart on their paper and labeling it as follows:

“Don’t Judge a Book By Its Cover”

What I see...

What I assume about this individual’s...

...life, job, abilities,
family, education

How I would feel if I saw this person...

...in my neighborhood, at the
mall, at a party, in school.

What I missed....

What I didn’t realize....

How my sense of vision
limited my knowledge of
the truth,

I will instruct students that for each image I show them, they will write 4-5 bullet points/notes on the left hand side. I will let students know that I want their honest responses to the pictures I am about to show them. If it helps certain students, I will have them think about how society would view these individuals. Again, I don't want my students to write what they think I want to see, but rather their honest reactions and predictions about these individuals. This is a completely silent activity so students are not influenced by other students' reactions. As with the previous day's activity, I will let students know that their responses are private, but they should be prepared to share at least one idea or insight into the activity.

For each picture, I will give students 2-3 minutes to write.

The pictures will be:

- a) Astrophysicist Stephen Hawking
- b) Rapper/businessman David Banner
- c) Olympian Weightlifter Tommy Kono

1. Once students are done with each picture, I will remind them that as we look at each picture one at a time, I would like honest responses from the class in terms of the specific questions posed on the T-chart. I will try to put the students at ease by stating that these responses might not be their true beliefs but rather what they know society as a whole might believe when taking a look at these pictures.

2. I will begin with having a few volunteers for each picture. Once students have given me their reactions, I will reveal the truth about these individuals, thus revealing my students' "ridiculous" assumptions based on the superficiality of physical appearance, and will remind them of the previous day's lessons and their view of

the "ridiculous" phrenology skull experiment.

The Truth for each picture:

a) Some responses to this awkward looking man in a wheelchair, half slumped, head lopsided, may include: he's disabled, his mentally retarded, he is a vegetable, I'd feel uncomfortable around him because I wouldn't know what to do, he's probably in a nursing home with around the clock care for feeding and bathing and the basic functions for a handicapped person.

The Truth: Stephen Hawking contracted a motor neuron disease as a young child, he is completely paralyzed and communicates through a speech generating device, yet these limitations are only physical; he is a world renowned theoretical physicist, he's a published author, his work on black holes emitting radiation earned the theory to be named after him ("Hawking Radiation"), he was awarded the 2009 Presidential Medal of Freedom—the highest civilian award in the U.S., he has been married twice, and has three children, and he was a Math professor at the University of Cambridge from 1979-2009.

b)Some responses to this African American male staring up with an angry look on his face, in a black skull cap, with a gold chain around his neck, may include: he's

a rapper, he is threatening, he looks like he's in a ghetto part of town, and he might be dealing drugs, he's probably looking for trouble, he's a dropout, he's violent, he's uneducated.

The Truth: David Banner is a rapper, record producer, and actor, he graduated from Southern University in Louisiana, he served as the President of the Student Government Association and received a degree in business, he pursued a masters degree in education at the University of Maryland, he was awarded a Visionary Award by the National Black Caucus of the State Legislature for his work after Hurricane Katrina, and in 2007 he testified before Congress about racism and misogyny in hip-hop music.

c)Some responses to this young Asian American male in a suit and tie may include:

he's a smart Asian guy, he works in an office, he's cute, he's the president of some company, he seems like a pushover, his grin gives away his weakness, he doesn't seem like he has a backbone, he's too "nice", he's had an easy life.

The Truth: Tommy Kono was an Olympic weightlifter in the 1950's and 60's, he's the only Olympic weightlifter to have set world records in four different weight classes, he is a Japanese-American from Sacramento California who had to relocate to an internment camp with his family during WWII, he began as a

sickly child, but endured challenges and gained the Mr. Iron Man World title in

1954, inspiring Arnold Schwarzenegger's own career in the sport.

Evaluation:

After reviewing these pictures, and discussing the assumptions vs. the realities, I will have the students add one more response on their t-chart, answering the following question:

"In 4-5 sentences, describe a time when you or someone you know was misjudged based on your appearance. What were the circumstances? How old were you? How did you feel? What was your reaction at the time?"

Since this question has much more personal content, I will tell the students that this paper will be handed to me on their way out of class as an "exit" slip. I will read them privately, comment on their responses, and hand them back the next day.

Lesson Plan Three: Getting "Through" the Text

As students are immersed in the reading of Shelley's *Frankenstein*, I will use the *Jigsaw Cooperative Learning groups* to allow students an insight into what and how the Creature is learning.

Objective:

Students will be able to...

- Read summaries of the major works of literature the Creature finds
- Collaborate as a team to present their expert knowledge on their assigned reading
- Identify the main ideas and concepts in their assigned reading, as well as create questions regarding the reading

Materials Needed:

- Pen/paper
- Summary handouts of *Paradise Lost*, *Sorrows of Werther*, *Plutarch's Lives*

Set:

I will begin class by telling the students they will have a break from their reading of the novel as we stop at the point when the Creature discovers the bag of books as he hides in the hovel behind the DeLacey's cottage. Instead, they will step into the shoes of the Creature and will be reading the same three works that the Creature was exposed to.

At this time, I will divide the class into three sections: 1-*Paradise Lost*. 2-*Sorrows of Werther*. 3-*Plutarch's Lives*.

Procedure:

1. Since these three groups will be very large, about 10-11 students per group, I will remind students that

within their teams they will be divided into subgroups.

2. While all the students will read their assigned section, students will be subdivided into the following: Summarizers (3 students will take notes on the main ideas of the reading, and will present these ideas to the class), Questioners (3 students will create under-the-surface questions (why how could should would...answers are inferences rather than textual) to be used in a brief discussion during the presentation), Illustrators (3 students will represent their section visually on a poster board, including an original title, 3 significant quotations from the reading, and a brief explanation as to why these are significant).

3. I will pass out the summaries and will remind them that since these works are very dense and time consuming, they will read these summaries to get the gist of the literature the Creature was introduced to.

4. Once students are done with their tasks, each group presents their section to the class. Students will take notes on each presentation (other than their own, of course).

Evaluation:

Once students have completed their presentations, we will have a brief discussion about these three books that Mary Shelley chose to have the Creature discover. I will ask my class what books they would substitute? Which books would they give the Creature especially since he is at this point alone, rejected, scared, and confused.

Endnotes

1. Ed-Data, "Fiscal, Demographic, and Performance Data on California's k-12 Schools."
2. "Cyber bullying Continues After Teen's Death."
3. Anne-Marie Dorning, "Tyler Clementi: Rutgers Cyberbullying Case Reaches partial Conclusion", May 6, 201, <http://www.abcnews.go.com/us/rutgers-cyberbullying-case-defendant/>.
4. Michael J. Cummings, "Frankenstein Study Guide", 2005, <http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/guides6/Frankenstein.html>.
5. Stephen C. Behrendt, ed., *Approaches to Teaching Shelley's Frankenstein* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1990), 65.
6. Ibid. 66.
7. Ibid., 63.
8. Anne K. Mellor, "Frankenstein, Racial Science, and the Yellow Peril," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 23, no.1 (2001), 4.
9. Esther Schor, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley* (Princeton University: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 20.
10. Mellor, "Frankenstein, Racial Science", 8.
11. Ibid., 2.
12. Laura P. Claridge, "PARENT -CHILD TENSIONS IN FRANKENSTEIN: THE SEARCH FOR COMMUNION", *Studies In The Novel* 17, no.1 (1985), 1.
13. Behrendt, "Approaches to Teaching", 74.
14. Schor, "The Cambridge Companion", 16.
15. Behrendt, "Approaches to Teaching", 70.
16. Claridge, "PARENT—CHILD TENSIONS", 18.
17. Ibid., 21.
18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., 18.
20. Ibid., 20.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Mellor, "Frankenstein, Racial Science", 22.
24. Ibid., 14.
25. Behrendt, "Approaches to Teaching", 128.
26. Ibid., 99.
27. Ibid.
28. Behrendt, "Approaches to Teaching", 140.
29. Schor, "The Cambridge Companion", 17.
30. Ibid.
31. Behrendt, "Approaches to Teaching", 65.
32. Claridge, "PARENT-CHILD TENSIONS", 22.
33. Ibid.
34. www.readthinkwrite.org

Research Bibliography

Behrendt, Stephen C. *Approaches to Teaching Shelley's Frankenstein*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1990. A collection of essays by college professors dealing with strategies for teaching *Frankenstein*.

Cervo, Nathan . "Shelley's *Frankenstein*." *Explicator* 46, no. 2 (1988): 14.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=7207564&site=ehost-live> (accessed May 5, 2012). An online article focusing on the ethical issues in *Frankenstein*.

Claridge, Laura P. "Parent-Child Tensions In *Frankenstein*: The Search for Communion." *Studies in the Novel* 17, no. 1 (1985): 14.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=7115754&site=ehost-live> (accessed May 5, 2012). An analysis of the parent-child dynamic in *Frankenstein*.

Dorning, Anne Marie. "Rutgers Cyberbullying Case: Defendant Molly Wei Cooperates With Prosecutors on Suicide of Tyler Clementi - ABC News." ABCNews.com - Breaking News, Latest News & Top Video News - ABC News.

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/rutgers-cyberbullying-case-defendant-molly-wei-cooperates-prosecutors/story?id=13546931#.UCnzP0TmaUc> (accessed July 31, 2012). News report surrounding the Tyler Clementi cyber-bullying case.

McCurdy, Howard E. "Vision and Leadership." *Public Integrity* 8, no. 3 (2006): 257.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=21646812&site=ehost-live> (accessed May 5, 2012). An online article focusing on the scientific approach to analyzing *Frankenstein*.

Mellor, Anne K. "*Frankenstein*, Racial Science, and the Yellow Peril". *Nineteenth Century Contexts* 23, no. 1 (2001): 1.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=5459235&site=ehost-live> (accessed May 5, 2012). An online article centering on the racial evidence in *Frankenstein* and the connection to anti-Asian propaganda in WWII.

"School Reports." Ed Data. <http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us> (accessed July 31, 2012). An accessible website which offers updated

information about k-12 education in California.

Schor, Esther H. *The Cambridge companion to Mary Shelley*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003. A collection of analytical essays regarding the various themes in *Frankenstein*.

cbs news. "Cyberbullying Continued After Teen's Death - CBS News." Breaking News Headlines: Business, Entertainment & World News - CBS News. http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-500202_162-6343077.html (accessed July 31, 2012). News report surrounding the extent to which cyber-bullying has impacted teenagers.

Teacher and Student Resources

Gianluigi, Guido. "Lavater's Physiognomy: A Taxonomy For Endorsers in Print Advertisements by Gianluigi Guido." Association for Consumer Research. <http://www.acrwebsite.org/search/view-conference-proceedings.aspx?id=11085> (accessed August 1, 2012). An excellent online article that follows John Lavater's Physiognomy theory, reviewing physiognomical traits that Lavater specified.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "The Sorrows of Young Werther Summary | GradeSaver." Study Guides & Essay Editing | GradeSaver. <http://www.gradesaver.com/the-sorrows-of-young-werther/study-guide/short-summary/> (accessed August 1, 2012). A brief summary of Goethe's story of a young man in the depths of love, despair, and sacrifice.

McGoodwin, Michael. "Milton (John) Paradise Lost Summary." McGoodwin Family Website Home Page. http://www.mcgoodwin.net/Pages/otherbooks/jm_paradiselost.html (accessed August 1, 2012). A detailed summary of Milton's twelve books surrounding the battle of heaven and hell and the casting away of man from God's heavenly paradise.

Sabbatini, Renato. "The Phrenological Chart." "Brain & Mind" Magazine - WWW Home Page. <http://cerebromente.org.br/n01/frenolog/frenmap.htm> (accessed August 1, 2012). A detailed explanation of the phrenology chart and the supposed mental/moral sections of the skull.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. 1818. Reprint, New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2003. The Gothic story of a scientist who pushes the limits of science and morality in his quest to create life.

Weston, W.H.. "The Baldwin Project: Plutarch's Lives for Boys and Girls by W.H. Weston." The Baldwin Online Children's Literature Project. Bringing Yesterday's Classics to Today's Children. http://www.mainlesson.com/display.php?author=weston&book=plutarch&story=_contents (accessed August 1, 2012). An online summary of selected Greek and Roman figures from Plutarch's *Lives*, including historical context for each figure.

Appendix

Implementing District Standards/ Common Core Standards:

Reading Standards 11th -12th Grades:

Key Ideas and Details

2. Determine two or more themes of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text.

Craft and Structure

5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text contribute to its overall structure and meaning and aesthetic impact

Speaking and Listening Standards

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Initiate and participate effectively in collaborative discussions with diverse partners, building ideas and expressing their own clearly

3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use