

# Good argumentative essay on mary shelley's frankenstein

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



It is a well-known fact that Mary Shelley's family relationships were beset by difficulties, and she somehow ended up reflecting on them in her novel, *Frankenstein*. There are quite a few essays that prove the point that Mary Shelly expressed her own life into her fictional novel. However, an underlying subject in the novel has somehow evaded the critical eyes of critics, until Susan Coulter wrote about it in her essay "' *Frankenstein*' – a cautionary tale of bad parenting," which is posted on Mary Shelley's website. Through her essay, *Frankenstein*' – a cautionary tale of bad parenting" and despite the use of limited out references, Susan Coulter manages to accurately bring to light the fact that an underlying subject in Shelley's novel is the inability of human beings to be good parents.

Susan Coulter's is insightful but simple enough to locate her thesis. Coulter is apparently attempting to add substance to the notion that in her novel, Mary Shelley is "telling [her readers] about parenting, child development, and education" through the experiences of Victor Frankenstein and the monster, the two main characters Coulter examines in her essay. It can be assumed that what led Coulter to come up with such a thesis was probably her realization that when Shelly writes in the novel's preface that "the amiableness of domestic [or parental] affection" is her primary concern, she is actually more concerned about the absence of it, and how this absence may compromise or hinder a person's ability to be virtuous.

Based on the above alone, Susan Coulter's thesis is agreeable enough.

Domesticity and virtue are indeed two primary concerns in Shelley's novel, which is something that many readers agree upon. However, the manner in which Shelley emphasizes on these two can definitely be perceived as

Shelley's attempt to distract potential critics, so that they may not straightforwardly criticize that the various implications in the novel are actually stemming from "bad parenting." Of course, as intentional as this may have been, it did not stop readers or a critic like Susan Coulter shedding light on this underlying subject in Shelley's novel. Moreover, in "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein: Tracing the Myth," Christopher Small mentions Shelley's mother's death soon after giving birth to her and Shelley's father's negative attitude towards infants, regarding them "as mere parcels" (Small) is reflected in Victor's own attitude towards the monster, all of which is covered in Coulter's essay.

It is true that Susan Coulter's thesis makes a strong case, a case that is not too foreign, but it is also true that her essay mainly relies upon Mary Shelley's novel itself to add this strength to her thesis, along with referring to Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" at one point. However, despite this lack of a decent number of outside references, it is arguable that her essay/thesis is not pointless, and the examples and references from Shelley's novel that she presents are valid.

Love for one's family is an important theme in Mary Shelley's novel and the from the very beginning of her essay, when Coulter recounts Victor's feelings towards his father and mother, she is pointing out that the love that Victor is certainly exaggerating the love that he apparently had for his parents, which suggests that Victor's familial life was not very adequate, and thus, Victor has a problem with attachment. In other words, the picture of a happy home that Victor attempts to paint is nothing but a myth, as Kate Ellis writes in "The Endurance of Frankenstein." Indeed, Susan Coulter mentions how Victor

“ tells Walton that his mother and father felt that they, “ owed” something to him because they had given him life,” which is something that good parents would not feel about their children.

Even if it is true that Victor’s parents did love him, it cannot be denied that they were indifferent towards him, which Susan Coulter refers to as a lack of guidance “ discipline and guidance,” thus, his childhood may as well have been more of a nightmare, and he brings it to life by creating the monster (Bettelheim). By referring to Maslow’s “ Hierarchy of Needs,” Susan Coulter emphasizes the fact that just like Victor’s parents were not able to fulfill his needs, in a similar manner, Victor was not able to fulfill the creature’s needs, since Victor was somewhat of a parent to the monster. If Victor was taking out the anger that he felt at his parents for their lack of guidance, the monster too takes out his anger on Victor, for his lack of guidance, by killing people.

Thus, based on Mary Shelley’s familial background, the preface of her novel, Victor’s familial background, his relationship with the monster, the monster’s actions, and the above mentioned supporting evidence, Susan Coulter’s thesis and the whole of her essay makes quite sense. One of Susan Coulter’s statements that is a bit contradictory is that she claims that Victor lacked “ true sense of responsibility for his actions.” Although that was initially true, he ultimately admits that “[He] was the true murderer” (Shelley), referring to the monster’s murders. In a sense, Victor’s confession sums up the fact that lack of guidance from his parents that led Victor to creating the monster was passed on by him, and the results were certainly not positive.

## Works Cited

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