

Frankengay: the monster of repressed homosexuality assignment

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However, beyond serving rely as a representation of the proverbial other, careful observation of Victor's actions and relationships, as well as those of the monster, reveals the monster to be a manifestation specifically of Victor's repressed homosexual self; and the monster, in its physical form, does not actually exist. Queer theory is a critical lens, through which literature is viewed without the restraints of socially normative conception (especially with regards to sexuality and gender) and in doing so seeks to discover hidden layers of queer themes (Goldberg).

We perceived a low carriage, fixed on a sledge and drawn by dogs, pass on awards the north, at the distance of half a mile: a being which had the shape of man, but apparently of gigantic stature, sat in the sledge, and guided the dogs. In the morning, however, [I] found all the sailors busy on one side of the vessel, apparently talking to some one in the sea. It was, in fact, a sledge, like that we had seen before Only one dog remained alive; but there was a human being within it He was not, as the other traveler seemed to be, a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island, but an European (13).

Shelley introductions of the monster and Victor bear an eerie semblance?? signifying that the two are closely connected. However, Shelley choice of words, writing that only one dog " remained" alive, gives the specific impression that the sled Victor is discovered in is the same one that the monster had been spotted in the night before?? thus opening room for the interpretation that Victor and the monster themselves are one and the same. As well, this quote introduces the theme of social acceptability by

contrasting the image of a " savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island,"

I. . . , someone disconnected from Western culture and society, with that of a
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European," Shelley contemporary epitome of social acceptance and normative. This forms a direct " binary opposition," or opposition between two equal, yet socially opposite things (Tompkins, and Breeze), between the creature as a representation of what Victor wishes he was not and Victor's suppression of his " monstrous" desires?? as well as forming a direct comparison of Victor's homosexuality to social isolation and Victor's repression of his sexuality to social acceptance. Chance?? or rather the evil influence asserted omnipotent sway over me from the moment turned my reluctant steps from my father's door" (240). Victor's interest in science, the thing which leads to the monster's creation, develops in his early teenage years. However, it is not until?? upon leaving his childhood behind?? he meets a handsome professor, Mr. Walden, that he receives the resources and materials to actually create it. Victor describes Mr.

Walden thus: " His person was short, but remarkably erect; and his voice was the sweetest I had ever heard" (42), much preferring this professor to Mr. Krimmer whom he describes as " a little squat man, with a gruff voice and a repulsive countenance" (41 lectures he refuses to even attend. In this way, science presents Victor's sexuality; he begins to explore when he hits puberty, and is eventually able to figure out his sexuality as a result of his attraction to Mr. Walden. But even before the monster's genesis, Victor's life is steeped in queer relationships.

On the evening previous to [Elizabethan] being brought to my home, my mother had said have a pretty present for my Victor [... J. " And when, on the morrow, she presented Elizabeth to me as her promised gift, I, with childish

seriousness, interpreted her words literally, and looked upon Elizabeth as mine a possession of my own. We called each other familiarly by the name of cousin. No word, no expression could body forth the kind of relation in which she stood to me—my more than sister, since till death she was to be mine only (25).

From his confusing sister/friend/cousin/possession/fiance?? relationship with Elizabeth, to his parents' trans-generational relationship, by the time he is confronted with his homosexuality, Victor is already well acquainted with relationships that could be considered outside of the " Charmed Circle"?? a term coined by Galley Rubin that refers to sexual relationships considered to be socially normative (I. E. Heterosexual, monogamous, homo-generational) (Rubin, deed. Abalone, Bearable, and Haltering).

However, while he is well acquainted with experiencing such relationships, he has very little experience with actually addressing them. Since his parents ignore Victor's confusion about Elizabeth?? his mother even being the instigator of the confusion?? Victor learns to ignore that which is confusing and abnormal. This may be largely responsible for his inability to handle his sexuality, having not learned properly as a child how to face that which is abnormal and confusing, yet having been highly exposed to it. L [am] a miserable wretch, haunted by a curse that shut up every avenue to enjoyment" (133). In addition, Victor's relationship with Elizabeth more directly causes his violent repression of his sexuality by causing him to experience internalized homophobia. Internalized homophobia is a form of self hatred experienced by certain homosexuals who are afraid of their own

sexualities due to social pressure and a resulting desire to conform (Tompkins, and Breeze). In Victor's case, he specifically feels pressure from the rest of his family who expect him to love Elizabeth a fiance??.

As such, Victor's lack of attraction to Elizabeth that conflicts with his desire to love her is a lining that he is compelled to repress, resulting in a grotesque, threatening psychological manifestation. It is not until after Elizabeth is dead that Victor is able to face his sexuality, and begins tracking the monster down. But then, if Victor and the monster are one and the same, why would Victor murder his own wife? According to Sigmund Freud, repressed desires lead to mental illness and a build up of emotions which intensify over time, eventually seeping suddenly into the conscious mind and causing reckless action (Carline, and White).

This proposes a potential source for the creature?? s occasionally violent nature. If Victor's homosexuality is in fact "with [h[him]n [h[his]edding night" (1 53), as the monster vows to be, then his frustration at his inability to function properly in a heterosexual marriage may lead to one such burst Of pent up emotion, in which Victor perceives Elizabeth to be the source of his problem?? as she is the woman he finds himself underrated to?? and, in a fit of reckless violence, seeks to eliminate the problem. A similar event may be the cause of Henry Cleaver's murder.

Given his close, loving relationship with Clerical since childhood, whom he regards as 'the most noble of human creatures" (17) with a "form so divinely rough, and beaming with beauty' (1 57), in conjunction with his profuse proclamations of love and affection towards the man, Victor is likely

attracted to him. As such, there are multiple potential causes for Victor to experience an overflow of emotion in the presence of Clerical. Most likely, however, is Victor feeling resentful towards Clerical for his attraction to him.

Again, in a lapse in logical thought, Victor may perceive Clerical as the source of his problem?? this time for being the man that he is attracted to?? and seek to eliminate the problem by attacking the imagined source.

Perhaps the least obviously motivated murder is that of Victor's younger brother, William. However, when viewed as a murder without need for motivation, a viable reason emerges. " I saw the image of my former self; he was inquisitive, and anxious to gain experience and instruction" (163).

Victor blames the monster?? his homosexuality?? for the loss of his innocence and purity. If, like the creature, William does not physically exist, then his murder can be interpreted as a manifestation of the conviction that Victor's homosexuality was the death of his innocence?? William simply existing as a presentation of Victor's younger self. Furthermore, the girl, Justine Morris, who is held responsible (and consequently executed) for William's death can be viewed as a representation of Victor's relationship with Elizabeth.

Everyone believes that Victor will lose his sexual innocence to Elizabeth, she being his implied fiance?? since childhood, yet, in reality, Victor's monster will end both of these things?? and this makes Victor feel extremely guilty. So, then, the question stands: is Victor perceiving these events incorrectly or merely recounting them so? One potential answer is, neither; "

I have resolved very night, when I am not imperatively occupied by my

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duties, to record, as nearly as possible in his own words, what he has related during the day.

If I should be engaged, I will at least make notes" (19). While it is true that we are hearing Victor's story, what we are actually reading is Walton's transcription of the story, which he himself admits is not word-for-word what Victor told him. But then, knowing that Walton is an inherently unreliable narrator, who's to say Victor Frankenstein even exists? Shall I commit my thoughts to paper, it is true; but that is a poor medium for the communication of feeling.

I desire the company of a man who could sympathize with me; whose eyes would reply to mine [and who would possess] affection enough for me to endeavor to regulate my mind (7). Perhaps, lost in his intense homosexual desires?? desire for social interaction with members of the same sex, often thought of in queer theory as the result of repressed homosexual desires (Butler, de la Abalone, Bearable, and Halting)?? and sexual confusion, Walton fabricated himself a friend who was dealing with similar issues, as a method of exploring and better understanding himself.

Walton's obsession with the idea of finding a world yet unknown to Man, unparalleled in beauty makes his expedition into the north sound more like an attempt to escape reality than an attempt at glory. However, once Victor's story is finished, Walton resolves to abandon his trip, at which point he is personally confronted with the monster. This bears a remarkable resemblance to the queer theory theme of the "Glass Closet," a term coined

by Jodie Foster referring to the social constraints placed on individuals with queer sexualities.

The glass closet is what lies beyond the initial “ closet,” out of which one comes when openly proclaiming his or her sexuality. It is naively assumed that this action is liberating, however upon coming out, many individuals find themselves inside another, glass closet, representational of the idea that no freedoms are granted by publicly announcing your sexuality?? the only difference is that now people can see who you are. In Wallow’s case, he is convinced that if he runs far enough away, he can escape his unpleasant reality and experience something better and freer.

However, at the end of Victor’s story, he hits a glass wall and realizes that he can’t run away from who he is. It is at this point that he himself is confronted with the grotesque manifestation of repressed homosexuality. However, after their conversation, the monster claims he will erase himself from existence, symbolizing Wallow’s resolve to stop repressing his homosexuality, his interaction with Victor having constituted a successful self-exploration.

So we establish that the monster is a manifestation of repressed homosexuality, either that of Victor or of Walton, and that, regardless, Mary Shelley Frankincense is a novel well imbued with themes of queerness, repression, and sexuality. This being the case, why then might Shelley have shrouded these themes in the more reverent and directly recognizable theme of the dangers of science and technology? Perhaps Shelley was attempting to appeal to a broader contemporary audience by focusing on a

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more contemporaries socially relevant theme?? or perhaps she was making a statement.

By veiling themes of queerness held taboo by her sex negative contemporary society, which she perhaps considered socially relevant, in a theme that her contemporaries considered socially relevant and a valuable topic of discussion, Shelley demonstrated the dynamic of society in which that which is considered socially unacceptable exists constantly yet ignored under the surface of that which receives privileged recognition.