

Analyze symbols throughout literature

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



In Foster's Chapter, *Is That a Symbol?*, he implies that symbols are used through literature and are frequently used in several pieces of literature. Symbols are used everywhere and typically can have multiple meanings or a more complex concept to grasp. Being able to identify a symbol is the simple part but being able to find its deeper meaning in a piece of literature is the more complex part.

Foster also says that allegories can be mistaken as symbols; symbols could have several different meanings. Symbols can mean something different to everyone depending on their walk in life and depending on the different pieces of literature they have read using that specific symbol. According to

Foster, in order to analyze symbols throughout literature, they have to use questions, experience, and preexisting knowledge. Symbols are not only limited to objects but they can even be events and actions. Symbols are not always going to be easy to comprehend but one must find a way to use context clues and connect the themes in a piece of literature to further understand a symbol. In *Frankenstein*, one of the most common symbols is lightning. In the beginning, main character, Victor Frankenstein witnessed a tree being struck by lightning. Victor states that, I never behold anything so utterly destroyed (Shelley 26).

With this being said, it shows a lot of irony because the lightning blasted the tree's life, but it is also used to show how the lightning struck the monster to life. So ultimately, the lightning eliminated life but also sparked up a new one in the process. The word blasted, which was used to describe how the tree's life was eliminated, it got repeated by Victor towards the end of

Frankenstein. He stated, I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed (Shelley 193). The use of the word blasted again refers to lightning as well and it shows how Victor felt so connected with the tree, so he felt as if he failed at saving life, and he felt like a part of him was dead too. So ultimately, the lightning killing off the tree made Victor symbolically dead since he lacks human interaction.

In Foster's Chapter, Don't Read with Your Eyes, he suggests that every reader must grasp the concept of having a blind spot, but he says the best way to overcome blind spots is by putting one's self in the time period by understanding the historical, political, and cultural background of the text. Frankenstein was written during the time of the Industrial Revolution, which was very important during the 1800s. Shelley had opposing views about the Industrial Revolution so she created Frankenstein as a warning and to show the dangers of this revolution.

When Shelley made Frankenstein, she was trying to show how she did not want the human race to end because people were taking matters into their own hands by trying to advance scientific knowledge, which is very hard to advance, let alone control, and she felt like that's exactly what the Industrial Revolution was doing. In Frankenstein, the monster is used as a warning to society especially during his final speech when he says, And if yet, in some mode unknown to me, thou hadst not ceased to think and feel, thou wouldst not desire against me a vengeance greater than which I feel (Shelley 198).

The monster is exemplifying how Victor was so caught up in trying to evolve science, that he ended up losing his emotions that make him human and he

faced consequences for creating this monster, which ultimately began to ruin his life. This was related to the Industrial Revolution by showing the danger effects of humans trying to take control of science and advance it because it disrupts the natural way of life. Ultimately, this is why it was important that Shelley wrote Frankenstein during this time because she was trying to send a warning to the people.