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Final Portfolio

Cover Letter

To be frank, I never quite fancied English classes as much as I have enjoyed other classes. I think it was because of every English teacher's obsession with traditional and classic literature, which were like anesthesia to me. I remember reading through eight hundred and odd pages of Anna Karenina just to find out that one half of the novel was about the protagonist being adulterous and the other half was about Levin in the hayfield. It was unfathomable why we chose to study works from centuries ago when there are equally great modern literature that offers equally profound and arguably more relatable education to its readers. Naturally, when I heard that the general education requirement demands freshmen to take a first year writing course, the news was all but pleasing to me. I chose English 181, writing about Science Fiction Literature and Film specifically because I thought the nature of science fiction would separate me from all the boring classic works and expose me to modern literature.

Outcome 1: I learnt that one of the true beauty of literature is that the median through which the writer conveys his or her opinion can dramatically change the depth of the argument and often force

writers to take a different style of presentation. Our first assignment in this class, the Literary Response Letter on the novel *Super Sad True Love Story*, surely taught me that a writer must consider the constraints and purpose of a particular writing style.

“The beauty of an epistolary novel is that the medium through which the character communicates with the reader can drastically change the depth of our understanding of the character” (Literary Response Letter).

My consideration of the constraints and the merits of a writing style throughout my works. For example, for my Pecha Kucha presentation, I had to turn from a traditional, academic style of writing to a more colloquial and conversational style.

“Who here is familiar with any one of these phrases? ‘2+2=5’ ‘War is peace’ ‘Ignorance is strength’ ‘slavery is freedom’ ‘Big-brother’ ‘All art is propaganda’. If you recognise any of these words you’ve probably read *1984* by George Orwell. But even if you haven’t, I’m pretty sure the word Big Brother still rings a bell” (Pecha Kucha)

I understood that the presentation, like all forms of writing had to capture the audience’s attention. I figured the best way to achieve this for an oral presentation was by engaging the audience by asking questions. The two examples above clearly exhibit my consideration of the nature different writing styles as I adjusted my language and tone to match the style and the audience.

Outcome 2:

Possibly the most emphasized part of the class was the implementation of “They say, I say” structure. Our instructor highlighted the fact over and over that the consideration of other’s opinion before presenting our own argument is advisable not only because it cuts room for rebuttal but also because it makes our argument less narrow minded and well considered. Upon learning this in our first class, I immediately implemented the strategy in my blog post. Our instructor requested that we present our opinions on the podcast “Eye in the Sky”. While I strongly was for the idea of a surveillance system, I considered and acknowledged what others may say of this issue.

“This of course, isn’t to belittle the significance of implementing a security system like Angelfire. It offers many immediate solutions to current issues for the few latent problems it may cause. Also, the biggest concern the public had with the implementation of this technology was the breach of their privacy.”(Blog post 1)

By acknowledging opposite views, I believe I have successfully implemented the “They say, I say” structure and strengthened my argument as it evidently shows that I have considered the threats of a surveillance system but still choose to advocate it. The embodiment of “They say, I say” structure can also be found in my Final Research paper. Being a research based paper, I was required to add scholarly citations throughout the paper and display my knowledge of incorporating other’s opinion to strengthen my own. While trying to explain the source of Frankenstein’s creation’s monstrosity, I came across a scholarly paper that claimed “it is quite apparent that the monster holds a great amount of anger and bitterness, but he was not ‘born’ with those qualities” (Marklund 8)”. Here, I explained her take on the issue and used it as a foundation to build my own argument. “While the creature’s barbaric actions evidently suggest it is inherently savage, it still is an undeniable fact that society’s mistreatment towards

the monster has brought to surface the creature's latency for monstrosity" (Final Research Paper). I believe I have displayed here an effective use of using other scholar's argument as a basis to develop my own. In doing so, I have shown that the opinion I hold is share amongst other scholars and thereby increasing the credibility of my argument.

Outcome 3:

Every student should be familiar with the feeling when they suddenly remember the answer to a question they were scratching their heads over the moment they walk out of a test. I believe the same applies for a piece of writing. Upon completing one always thinks of a new and sometimes better way of wording and structuring their argument. This was certainly the case for me when writing my Researched Paper. On my first draft of the paper I made a blunt conclusion that "Through the presentation of the antithetical features of Frankenstein and the creature, the disturbing truth that monstrosity stems from the creator is starkly evident" (Researched Paper Rough Draft). Upon reconsideration, I thought that my rather concrete conclusion did not hold true to the ambiguous nature of monstrosity in *Frankenstein*. Thus I revised my conclusion to match the ambiguity presented in the novel. "Just as Frankenstein was at fault for rejecting his creation and paternal responsibilities, the society was at equal fault for condemning the creature to a life of solitude. Similarly, the creature had its part in sinning by displaying barbaric behaviors and deceitful language to win compassion" (Final Researched Paper). Consequently I had to revise much of my entire essay to match this conclusion including my thesis statement. However, by including the element of ambiguity, I believe I have opened my thesis statement for further discussion as people can choose for themselves, based on the evidence, who the monster is in *Frankenstein*.

Literary Response Letter.

Dear Diary.

I don't really like writing to my diary but I think my life is such a mess and I need this retrospection to sort things out. My relationship just crashed and burned to crisp and my future seems abysmal. So if anyone ever reads this, please don't judge me.

A lot happened past couple of days. Ben, the cutest guy and quite possibly the love of my life, just flat out rejected me when I called him back to tell him I wanted to go to Lucca with him. I met him at Rome through Giovanna. I swore to myself I would love Giovanna for the rest of my life for setting me up with this guy. He's smart, nice, hot AND he makes a lot of money. He was caressing my butt a little but I didn't really mind. Anyways, I should probably try and forget about him because it's his loss. But what truly depresses me is that the next guy that appeared in my life had to be this gross, ugly, old, nerdy, over-persistent guy. Oh, fun fact diary! Out of the question is apparently a newly coined term that only the youth of this generation uses. OUT OF THE QUESTION MEANS OUT OF THE QUESTION. Why is he even writing to me? Does he legitimately think he has a chance? Oh this is actually making me sad. Maybe I should not have played hard to get on Ben... Diary, why do bad things happen to good people?

Oh yeah, I also got a letter from my mum. Haven't talked to her in a while so I was kinda happy when I saw her letter. Her English is so cute but frankly she should just write to me in Korean because it really is hard to understand what on earth she's trying to say. But I think I get the general idea. Asian parent, high expectations and I just don't live up to it. I mean honestly, I don't need her to remind me

that 158 is a low score. If she knows I'm a big girl and she can't push me to do stuff anymore, why not just leave me alone? It's not like I didn't even study for the test and took it for the sake of taking it. I tried, I really did. Maybe that score is reflective of my ability and my limits. Does she think I'm not sad and depressed about my score? Couldn't she have just said something like "it was not my best test and better luck next time"? Ethel, who spent a fortune going to prep classes scored lower than I did. Why can't she see the bright side of the problem?

Diary, I know I'm being childish and immature again. I know what my mum is saying is probably correct. But it's just not what I need at this point. I just sometimes wish my mum understands my feeling from time to time and comforts me when I need comforting. I mean, I just lost THE man of my life and got hit on by an ugly old Leonard. My mum telling me that I'm a disappointment is the last thing I need in my life right now. I was really tempted to write back to her about my problems but I know how hard her life is with dad the way he is. I feel like such a selfish brat. I'm here trying to make something out of my life at the expense of Sally and Mummy's. The way Sally stubbornly ignores my advice saddens me to the point that I get mad at her from time to time. I've been telling her to go to Barnard dorm and get a paid internship or a job in a store. I even told her I'll help out too if things don't work out. Does she enjoy living in that abusive environment? Why won't she listen to me? I know I don't have much credibility when it comes to giving life advice but I bet anyone who cares even the slightest about themselves would have come to the same conclusion as I did.

Well, that's all my current life problems. At least the ones that are bothering me. Oh, one more thing. I heard this song on the radio the other day. I don't know what it was called but I remember some of the lyrics. It was pretty much my life in a nutshell. So I'm just going to write them down here because I know I'm ditsy and I'll probably forget them.

I'm just a little bit caught in the middle

Life is a maze and love is a riddle

I don't know where to go I can't do it alone I've tried

And I don't know why

Diary, I just wish good people get the good things they deserve.

Rationale:

“Every man has his secret sorrows which the world knows not; and often times we call a man cold when he is only sad.” It is against man’s nature to be completely candid about their feelings to another person. The beauty of an epistolary novel is that the medium through which the character communicates with the reader can drastically change the depth of our understanding of the character. Eunice’s original letters to her friend and her mother only shows her emotions and thoughts at a superficial level. In fact, the Eunice presented in her letter to “grillbitch” seems so pretentious that it’s as if she’s developing an insincere character for the sake of adhering to the conventional way of writing letters to friends. In this response letter I transformed a portion of an email to a personal diary. In doing so, the character Eunice Park becomes more forthright with her problems which she was unable to express and discuss in her letter to her friend and parents. After being exposed to Eunice’s true self, the audience will come understand that Eunice’s seemingly immature and rather judgmental character is in actuality a mask to disguise her emotional pains and unsettling thoughts.

Researched Paper Proposal

The true monster in 'Frankenstein'

Mary Shelly is often praised as the pioneer of the science fiction genre due to her celebrated work "Frankenstein" published in 1831. While it may appear nonsensical to question who the beast is in the novel, an analysis beyond the monster's grotesque physique reveals the inconvenient truth that the monstrous qualities are actually indicative in humans. Upon realizing this, readers are forced to question, is the deformed freak the true monstrous being, or is it those who ostracized and formed extreme misconceptions about the creature that are the wicked ones? While Victor's creation appears physically detestable, it desired human companionship more than Victor, who was content in solitude. Unlike his creator who rejects his creation immediately, the monster shares without any reciprocal acts of kindness. Who is the real monster in 'Frankenstein'? The investigation will be conducted by analyzing Shelly's definition of a 'monster' and how she portrayed it in her novel. The investigation will also be accompanied by reading Jeffrey Berman's and other's⁽¹⁾ critical texts on "Frankenstein" and using them to further broaden my knowledge on Shelley's notion of 'monster' and how it was illustrated in the novel. Furthermore, I will be delving into her biography⁽²⁾ to determine whether any social paradigm or phenomenon during her era had any impact on her writing and her view on monstrous creatures. In scrutinizing Shelley's presentation of monstrosity in 'Frankenstein' I hope to remind the readers that those capable of creating such monsters have equal latency for monstrosity.

- (1) Berman, "Frankenstein; or, the Modern Narcissus", 27 October, 2006.
- (2) "Brooks, "What Is a Monster?"" Brooks, "What Is a Monster?" N.p., n.d. Web. 27 Oct. 2015.
- (3) Rosenberger, Veronica. "What Makes a Monster and What Makes a Man?" N.p., 2013. Web.

The above articles explicitly articulates Shelley's definition of a 'monster' in Frankenstein. In addition to this, what is interesting about these articles is that they portray Victor Frankenstein, the creator of the beast as the truly monstrous being as he isolates himself from companionship and rejects responsibility for his creation until the very end.

- (4) "P B Shelley Biography." - *P. B. Shelley Childhood, Life & Timeline*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 Oct. 2015.
- (5) *Mary Shelley*. Wikipedia, n.d. Web. 27 Oct. 2015.

Mary Shelley's childhood must have been largely shaped by the industrial boom that took place in the early 19th century. With a social paradigm shift of this magnitude, it is hard to deny that the industrial revolution played a significant role in shaping her perspective on technology. Thus it is only sensible to delve into her bibliography to grasp a sound understanding of her stance on technology and hopefully on what she deems a 'monster'

Researched Paper Rough Draft

When the topic of science-fiction is raised, Mary Shelley is often praised as the pioneer of the genre due to her celebrated work Frankenstein. Shelley's experiences in the dynamic industrial revolution had a profound effect on her first novel, Frankenstein, as the social movement revealed to her the extent to which man can push beyond the technological boundaries.

With such swift shifts in the social paradigm, Shelley sought to produce works which would allow readers to delve into the true nature of technology to examine the qualities that would be found. With the world currently experiencing heightened moral conflicts regarding technological advancement, we are reminded on a daily basis of the complexity of the world we have created. At such time, texts such as Frankenstein can act as a window into the nature of scientific progress which offer some enlightenment into whether it is the products of our yearning for knowledge or the creator himself that holds propensity for evil.

Thus this led me to investigate the research question:

Who is the true monster in Frankenstein?

In providing the reader with an explicit representation of a physically deformed character, Shelley presented a seemingly incontrovertible image of what we would deem 'monstrous'. However, what is truly intriguing to see in Frankenstein is that the interpretation of the monster is completely open to subjectivity. The character with the disfigured and grotesque physique displays compassion and benevolence that is absent in many characters in the novel. Contrastingly, the creator, Victor Frankenstein, despite his normal appearance, lacks the humanity that one would expect from a learned man. The antithetical characterization and the juxtaposition of two seemingly incompatible characters

effectively creates the ambiguity of the monster's true identity. **The unanticipated compassion the creature displayed for its creator at the end of the novel conveys Shelley's belief that what we should truly be wary of is not man's creation but his limitless capacity to aspire past his place in nature and push the boundaries of technology to concoct inventions that are beyond his control.**

"Breathless horror and disgust." This is Victor Frankenstein's stark presentation of his own creation. Literary critic, Veronica Rosenberger claims "something meant to be so beautiful produced instead a horrid wretch". This is an undeniable truth and a unique feature of Frankenstein's creation as the readers are introduced to an eight-foot tall, grotesque monster with pearly white teeth, toned and flexing muscles, and long black hair that culminates in shaping what Frankenstein deems "a catastrophe". While the aesthetically revolting creature that spawned as a result of Frankenstein's unquenchable thirst for knowledge may appear as the apparent 'monster' that Shelley wishes to present in the novel, a closer investigation of the origin of its being reveals the often overlooked, but fundamental fact that man holds the responsibility for creation of the monster both inside and out. It is said that "What I cannot create, I do not understand". It is a logical fallacy to think that man is capable of "infusing life into an inanimate body" without a sound understanding of the mechanism behind the creation and the product's design. The fact that Victor Frankenstein was even able to imagine into reality a being "such as even Dante could not have conceived" elucidates the latency for monstrosity dormant within every man. This is further supported in Waldman's encounter with Frankenstein's creation. Waldman was arguably the only character in the entire novel that displayed even a glimpse of compassion towards the daemon. Despite its "uncouth and distorted in its proportions" and "the duty of obeying the dying request of my friend in destroying his enemy", Waldman sought to acquaint the monster by hearing out its repentance and remorse at having lost his creator. What is truly interesting about this is that the only person who attempted to understand from the monster's perspective was the

only one who openly admitted “Never did I behold a vision so horrible as his face... I shut my eyes involuntarily”. The fact that Waldman, who went beyond the physical appearance as a criteria to assess the monster’s qualities, could not envision such monstrosity effectively substantiates the idea that the creature is actually a representation of man’s capacity for atrocity as it was those who ostracized, misjudged and assailed the creature based on its physique that shaped it into the monster that they believed it to be.

Contrastingly, the doomed protagonist of Frankenstein was “By birth a Genovese” whose “family is one of the most distinguished of that republic.” Victor Frankenstein admits to his fortune growing up from parents “of kindness and indulgence” by mentioning “No human being could have passed a happier childhood than myself.” Given his childhood, one can assert that nothing in Victor’s life is especially dark or evil. While not kept from experiencing the realities of tragedies, Victor was sheltered from much of the evil in the world because of his societal status and loving family. It is precisely his normal or arguably privileged childhood that baffles the audience more by Victor’s inhumanity to his own creation. As the paternal figure to the monster, Frankenstein displays no will to assume such responsibility as he outright denounces the creature he animated. When he finds out the monster had fled it is not the burden of responsibility or fear of trouble to come that reigns his emotions but ecstatic “joy that possessed him”. This attitude towards a grave situation compels the audience to question the nature of his character as they struggle to find any sense of morality in his selfish heart. The fact that Frankenstein is incapable of assuming paternal responsibility despite having received unparalleled parental love further puts his humanity at question. In addition, Victor’s tendency to be content in solitude is an odd trait that deprives him of his human qualities. Victor displays a tendency to call other man “creatures” which completely alienates himself from the rest of humanity. This is apparent as he obsessively delves into scientific research at the expense of his social wellbeing and holds

companionship with Elizabeth until he had no choice but to honour his mother's death wish. The fact that Victor is able to find content in isolation from companionship deprives him of the fundamental human qualities found in men and presents him to the audience as the embodiment of monstrosity as his behaviours show no reminiscence of human qualities.

Shelley's true representation of a monstrous being can be better understood once an analysis beyond the physical appearance of the character is undertaken. As literary critic Veronica Rosenberger so explicitly articulates, "The creation's true natures and physical appearances go much deeper than the monstrous sensationalism that has been causing audiences to gasp and scream for the last century". Despite its staggeringly unattractive visual and its occasional outburst of violence, Frankenstein's creation was unique in that it displays the quintessential human qualities that were absent in many of the characters in the novel. It constantly craved for human companionship unlike his creator who was content in isolation and always sought to offer generosity without expecting reciprocal acts of kindness. For example, upon realizing it was "inflicting pain on the cottagers", it immediately abstains from taking food for consumption and finds ways such as "collecting woods" to assist the cottagers. Near the end of the novel in the creature's catharsis, it exclaims so remorsefully "I was forever barred... No sympathy may I ever find". At this point, it becomes clear to the audience that the few monstrous acts the creature displayed in the novel is a product of incessant mental agony and isolation. This also sheds light on the fact that the bane of the creature's suffering stems back to its creator, Victor Frankenstein. Overcome by disgust and horror, Frankenstein refused to give his creation a name, one of the most rudimentary elements of communal interaction. The deprivation of the creature's nominal rights as the father of the creation was an inconsiderate act that bound the creature forever to a life of solitude. Furthermore, Frankenstein chose to make the creature huge in order to raise the possibility of reanimation success. However, what is truly questionable about his character is that at no point in the story does he ever

seem to reason what his being would realistically look like. An eight-foot-tall creature in a setting where the average height of a grown man was less than six feet would pose its own sets of problems even if the creature were to have the most lovable personality. Percy Shelley mentioned in the introduction of *Frankenstein* "Treat a person ill and he will become wicked". While the creation wasn't as Victor imagined, it was his abnormal design and the subsequent undeserved mistreatment from Victor and others that planted the seed of monstrosity in the creature. This shines light upon the fact that it was not Victor's creation that led him to his demise but the manner in which he mistreated the creature that became the bane of his tragic end.

The investigation of the characters Victor Frankenstein and his creation in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, has effectively led us to the realisation of what the true embodiment of evil is in Shelley's novel. Through the presentation of the antithetical features of Frankenstein and the creature, the disturbing truth that monstrosity stems from the creator is starkly evident. As made lucid throughout the novel, Shelley presents her belief that while technology may appear immoral or wicked on the surface, what is truly frightening is man's capacity to concoct such evil. Just as the industrial revolution proved to her, mankind cannot simply overcome the primal urge for discovery and scientific advancement and may one day, like the image of the Greek Ouroboros, may be consumed by our own desires to push beyond the limits of technology and evolve beyond our position in nature.

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What do you think is the strongest element of your paper? What is the weakest?

The strongest element of my paper is that I have a robust overarching argument and tackle the research question in a logical manner. I also made attempts to incorporate historical context and societal influences that may have affected Shelley's writing and her novel Frankenstein. In doing so, I was able to provide multiple reasons and evidences to support my claims and thus made my argument stronger. A weak point I could identify with my paper is probably the flow of the paper and the coherency. While it tried to make each paragraph flow onto one another, I think I have not done a good job in doing this. I will try and work on this before the final submission. Also, I feel I lack secondary research in my paper. While I tried to include the works of other literary critics in my paper, it's quite insignificant. I will do extensive research in order to incorporate the opinion of other literary critics in my work. Finally, after reading over the entire essay, perhaps a paragraph on the background information or significant history that may have affected Shelley as a writer would help better understand her work.

Final Researched Paper

Who is the true monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*?

When the topic of science-fiction is raised, Mary Shelley is often praised as the pioneer of the genre due to her celebrated work *Frankenstein*. Shelley's experiences in the dynamic industrial revolution had a profound effect on her first novel, *Frankenstein*, as the social shift revealed to her the extent to which man can push beyond the technological boundaries. With such swift shifts in the social paradigm, Shelley sought to produce works which would allow readers to delve into the true nature of technology to examine the qualities that would be found. With the world currently experiencing heightened moral conflicts regarding scientific advancement, we are reminded on a daily basis of the complexity of the world we have created. At such time, texts such as *Frankenstein* can act as a window into the nature of scientific progress which offer some enlightenment into whether it is the products of our yearning for knowledge or the creator himself that holds propensity for evil. Thus, this led me to investigate the research question:

Who is the true monster in Frankenstein?

In providing the reader with an explicit representation of a physically deformed character, Shelley presents a seemingly incontrovertible image of what we would deem monstrous. However, what is truly intriguing to see in *Frankenstein* is that the interpretation of the monster is completely open to

subjectivity. The character with the disfigured and grotesque physique displays compassion and benevolence that is absent in many characters in the novel. Contrastingly, the creator, Victor Frankenstein, despite his normal appearance, lacks the humanity that one would expect from a learned man. The antithetical characterization and the juxtaposition of two seemingly incompatible characters and their interaction with society effectively creates the ambiguity of the monster's true identity. **The analysis of the creator, his creation and the society throughout the novel reveals Shelley's belief that what we should truly be wary of is his limitless capacity to aspire past his place in nature and push the boundaries of technology to concoct inventions that are beyond his control.**

The creature's debut in the novel could not have been any more miserable. Victor Frankenstein's stark presentation of his own creation as "Breathless horror and disgust" immediately establishes it as a hostile creature in which no signs of civilisation can be found (Shelley 59). Literary critic, Veronica Rosenberger claims "something meant to be so beautiful produced instead a horrid wretch" (Rosenberger 23). This is an undeniable truth and a unique feature of Frankenstein's creation as the readers are introduced to an eight-foot tall, grotesque monster with pearly white teeth, toned and flexing muscles, and long black hair that culminates in shaping what Frankenstein deems "a catastrophe" (Shelley 58). While the aesthetically revolting creature that spawned as a result of Frankenstein's unquenchable thirst for knowledge may appear as the apparent 'monster' that Shelley wishes to present in the novel, a closer investigation of the origin of its being reveals the often overlooked, but fundamental fact that man holds the responsibility for creation of the monster both inside and out. Upon their re-encounter after the first parting, the monster, in such a beseeching manner, pleads "I am thy creature, and I will be even mild and docile to my natural lord and king if thou wilt also perform thy part, the which thou owest me" (Shelley 114). At this point, it becomes clear to the audience that despite its hostile appearance, the creature is actually benign at heart and seeks

confirmation from his master. Even upon realizing the creature's true character Frankenstein is overcome by the fear of difference and cries "Abhorred monster! Fiend that thou art" (Shelley 114). The fact that Frankenstein is blinded towards his creation's true motives and refuses to embrace his responsibilities as a father clearly shows the making of a true monster through alienation. Percy Shelley mentioned in the introduction of *Frankenstein* "Treat a person ill and he will become wicked" and this becomes apparent as the repeated rejection from his creator culminates in the creature proclaiming "All men hate the wretched" (Shelley 113). Through this Shelley reveals the fact that 'monster' is nothing but a term coined by men to classify those who deviate from their standard of norm. What is truly monstrous is Frankenstein and the society's stubbornness to continuously reject difference and nurture the seed of hatred growing within the creature.

This, however, is not to say that the troubles Frankenstein's creation suffered was undeserved. Some of its malicious and immoral acts clearly called for the notoriety. After leaving Frankenstein, the creature crosses path with William Frankenstein. Although it had no intentions for harm, upon discovering the boy's identity, the creature, dictated by its raging emotions, commits a murder. The fact that he declares Frankenstein as an enemy "towards whom I have sworn eternal revenge" (Shelley 171) even before having the chance to converse with his master clearly displays barbarism that is to be found in lesser creatures. The "exultation and hellish triumph" it feels gazing down at his deceased victim further emphasizes its diabolic character and makes the label 'monster' seem like a euphemism (Shelley 171). The lack humanity to be found in Frankenstein's creature, to an extent, justifies Frankenstein's abhor towards his own creation and the consequential rejection of his paternal responsibilities. Furthermore, the creature's eloquent tongue and manipulation of language is reminiscent of the biblical serpent. Frankenstein admits to this attribute as he claims "His words had even power on my heart" (Shelley 259). When the creature pleads for companionship from his master, it uses emotional

manipulation by questioning Frankenstein's right to fiddle with life as it claims "how dare you sport thus with life" (Shelley 113). The readers, however, realizing the emotional claim regarding life is coming from a murder, discovers that just as the biblical serpent uses language to disguise its evil, the creature, too, uses shameless manipulation of words to disguise its sins. Shelley's bestowment of the serpent's character on the creature clearly questions the audience that perhaps Frankenstein's creation was inherently evil and the suffering through solitude and social condemnation was merely a scapegoat to unleash its bestial nature.

While the creature certainly displays monstrous qualities, the doomed protagonist of *Frankenstein* displays behaviours that truly puts his humanity at question. Victor Frankenstein admits to his fortune growing up from parents "of kindness and indulgence" by mentioning "No human being could have passed a happier childhood than myself" (Shelley 32). Given his childhood, one can assert that nothing in Victor's life is especially dark or evil. What is truly perplexing is that despite his privileged childhood and a sound understanding of the joys of human companionship, Frankenstein seeks to find solitude. Frankenstein throughout the novel calls other man "creatures" which completely alienates himself from the rest of humanity (Shelley 16). This is apparent as he obsessively delves into scientific research at the expense of his social wellbeing and postpones companionship with Elizabeth until he had no choice but to honour his mother's death wish. The fact that Victor is able to find content in isolation from companionship deprives him of the fundamental human qualities found in men and presents him to the audience as the embodiment of monstrosity as his behaviours show no reminiscence of human qualities. It further baffles the readers that Frankenstein failed to adopt the responsibility his parents displayed to him as a child. When he finds out the monster had fled it is not the burden of responsibility or fear of troubles to come that reigns his emotions but ecstatic "joy that possessed him" (Shelley 63). This attitude towards a grave situation compels the audience to question the nature of his character as

they struggle to find any sense of morality in his selfish heart. Frankenstein's lack of humanity can be further delved into through an analysis into his creation's physique. Frankenstein chose to make the creature huge in order to raise the possibility of reanimation success. However, what is truly questionable about his character is that at no point in the story does he ever seem to reason what his being would realistically look like. Critique Rosenberg notes in her work

“Victor believed in something, set out to make it happen, and did in fact make it happen. Once the creation is complete, however, Frankenstein instantly subtracts himself from the equation by becoming appalled at his creation with total disconnection from the process. Victor never stops to think of how monstrous the whole science of reanimation is; rather he mourns how his dream could go so unexpectedly awry.” (Rosenberg 23)

This successfully highlights on the irresponsibility exhibited by Victor as he detaches himself from the process by becoming a disconnected observer who becomes appalled at his own creation. While this effectively presents Frankenstein's sins what is truly at fault is not the process of animation but what he animated. An eight-foot-tall creature in a setting where the average height of a grown man was less than six feet would pose its own sets of problems even if the creature were to have the most lovable personality. While the creation wasn't as Victor imagined, it was his abnormal design and the subsequent undeserved mistreatment from Victor and others that planted the seed of monstrosity in the creature. This shines light upon the fact that it was not Victor's creation that led him to his demise but the manner in which he designed and mistreated the creature that became the bane of his tragic end.

As much as Frankenstein was at fault for the creation of a monster, the society had an equally large contribution in deforming the creature into a monstrous being. Literary critic Sara Marklund makes the argument that “it is quite apparent that the monster holds a great amount of anger and bitterness, but he was not ‘born’ with those qualities” (Marklund 8). She extensively reasons that it was the creature’s unfortunate experiences with human that teaches the creature there is no point in being good. While the creature’s barbaric actions evidently suggest it is inherently savage, it still is an undeniable fact that society’s mistreatment towards the monster has brought to surface the creature’s latency for monstrosity. Despite its staggeringly unattractive visual and its occasional outburst of violence, Frankenstein’s creation was unique in that it displays the quintessential human qualities that were absent in many of the characters in the novel. It always sought to offer generosity without expecting reciprocal acts of kindness. For example, when seeing a girl drowning, the creature, without hesitation, “endeavoured by every means in my power to restore animation” (Shelley 168). However, the creature was so heartlessly betrayed by the people as the man who claimed the girl mercilessly shot the creature. This display of the epitome of inhumanity forces the words “This was then the reward of my benevolence!” from the creature as it sincerely questions goodness within mankind (Shelley 169). At this point it becomes clear to the readers that “hellish rage and gnashing of teeth” the creature felt was entirely a product of the society’s cruelty towards the creature’s goodwill (Shelley 169). Furthermore, while it is true that Frankenstein holds responsibility for the creature’s solitude, society had equal opportunities to embrace the abandoned creature; all of which they cold heartedly chased the creature away. When the creature implores the old man and his family “You and your family are the friends whom I seek” the family respond by fainting, running away and “striking me violently with a stick” (Shelley 161). This clearly shows that the rest of society had equal opportunity as Frankenstein to welcome the creature only they chose to drive it away. Therefore, near the end of the novel in the creature’s catharsis, when it exclaims so remorsefully “I was forever barred... No sympathy may I ever

find” it becomes clear to the audience that the monstrous acts the creature displayed in the novel is a product of incessant mental agony from isolation and sheds lights on the fact that the bane of the creature’s suffering stems back to the society (Shelley 273).

The investigation of Victor Frankenstein, his creation and society’s mistreatment towards the creature in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* has given a better understanding of what the true embodiment of monstrosity is in Shelley’s novel. However, the subjective nature of the question hinders one from arriving at a concrete conclusion. Just as Frankenstein was at fault for rejecting his creation and paternal responsibilities, the society was at equal fault for condemning the creature to a life of solitude. Similarly, the creature had its part in sinning by displaying barbaric behaviours and deceitful language to win compassion. Through the ambiguity of the true nature of the monster, Shelley presents her ultimate belief that the argument of monstrosity between the creator, the creation or even the society in the context of technology is a null argument. What is truly to be concerned is the grim premonition as man continues to quench his thirst for knowledge. Just as Shelley presented in the novel through the death of both the creation and the creator, mankind cannot simply overcome the primal urge for discovery and scientific advancement and may one day, like the image of the Greek Ouroboros, be consumed by our own desires to push beyond the limits of technology and evolve beyond our position in nature. What is truly frightening about *Frankenstein* is that Shelley used her personal exposure to vast advancement of technology during the industrial revolution as the basis of her literary work. With scientific findings today allowing mankind to step into the realm of omnipotence, *Frankenstein* serves as a reminder for us to be wary of our accomplishment as they may lead us to our demise.

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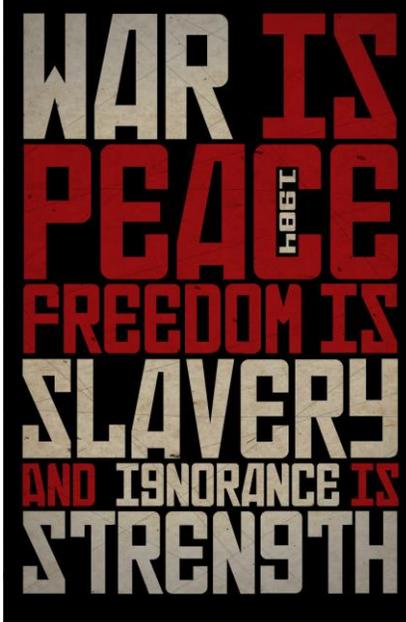
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Reflection

In class we had a lengthy discussion on the nature of thesis statements and of the reoccurring point was that an exemplary thesis statement should be arguable. My previous thesis statement, while arguable, only offered one dimensional debate where it was either Victor or the creature that became the monster. With the revised version, I emphasised the ambiguity of the identity of the monster by clearly expressing Victor's, the creature's and the society's contribution in creating a monster. In doing so, I believe I have added a level of complexity in the argument that would result from the paper as the emphasised subjectivity would bring about diverse opinions. I also believe that it better conveys Shelley's stance on the topic of technological advancement and her concern for man's curiosity may lead to his demise. Furthermore, through the uses of scholarly resources, I believe I have displayed effective use of the "They say, I say" structure that has been emphasised so strongly in class. By noting a scholar's claim and presenting my own opinion on the topic, I have shown consideration of different views which displays depth in my arguments. Finally, I made effort to display the creature's monstrosity not only through his barbarism but also through his eloquent speech. While many may argue that its articulateness is one of its few human-like qualities, I saw the trait as something that highlighted its cunning and servile character. In doing so I believe I have contributed towards creating ambiguity as evidence for monstrosity points towards all directions to the extent that the only seemingly logical conclusion is that Frankenstein, creature and society are all embodiment of monstrosity.

Pecha Kucha

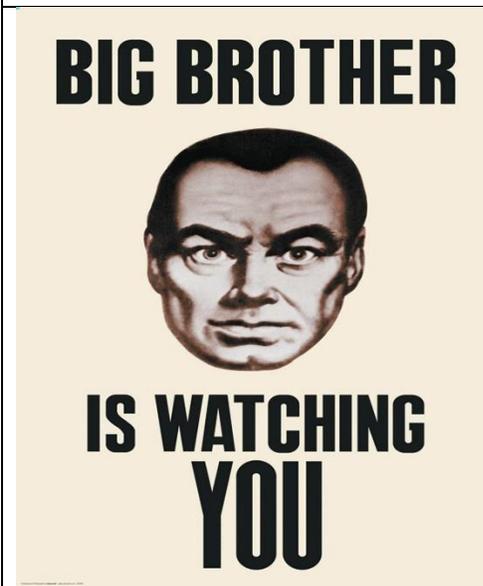


WAR IS
PEACE
FREEDOM IS
SLAVERY
AND IGNORANCE IS
STRENGTH

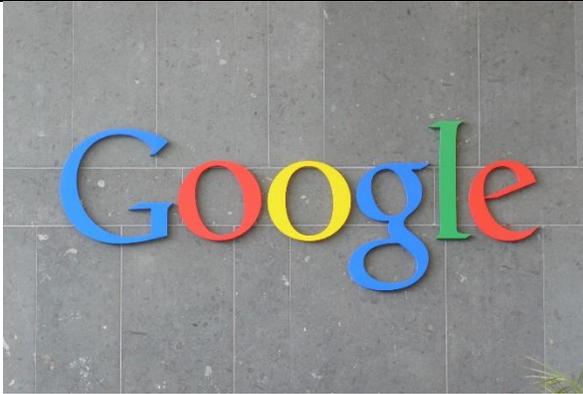
Who here is familiar with any one of these phrases? “2+2=5” “War is peace” “Ignorance is strength” “slavery is freedom” “Big-brother” “All art is propaganda”. If you recognise any of these words you’ve probably read 1984 by George Orwell. But even if you haven’t, I’m pretty sure the word Big Brother still rings a bell.



This is the artifact that I will be discussing today. The man staring at us is indeed the iconic Big Brother from 1984. But why is Big Brother staring at us through the eyes of Google? Is the author here is trying to convey his belief that the introduction of the internet has perhaps pushed our society a step closer to the dystopian world presented in 1984?



Let us first analyze the visual aspect of this poster. The original version of the poster is the famous big brother is watching you intended to scare and remind the outer party of the authority of big brother. Many of us belittle the significance of the message behind this poster because it's fictitious poster from a fiction.



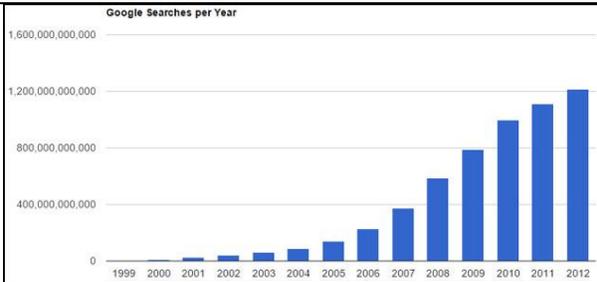
But when a familiar logo like google comes into the picture, it stirs emotional responses and invites pathos from the audience as the message behind the poster is immediately relatable. The seemingly improbably reality of a totalitarian society the original poster was suggesting has suddenly become a grim premonition.



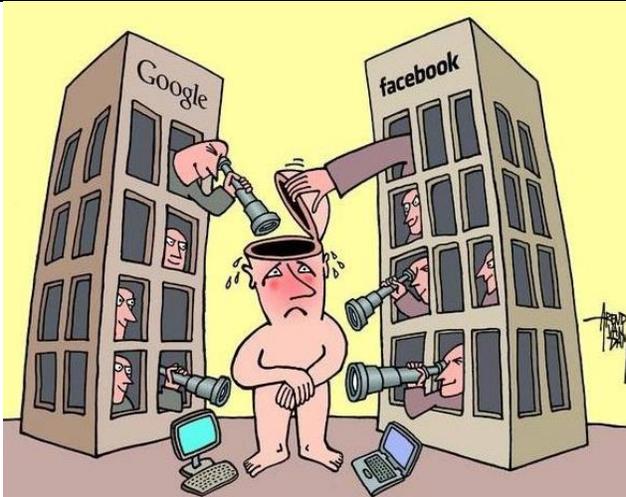
A term coined by Orwell in his novel 1984, Big Brother is now commonly used to describe a person or an organization exercising total control over people's lives. In his novel, Big Brother practices absolute surveillance over the population and brainwashes outliers into submitting to the organization. Pretty much the exemplary totalitarian society.



So lets start drawing similarities Google and creating a totalitarian society. Of all the prevalent websites why did the author use Google in particular? The answer lies in our overreliance on Google. During the period of this presentation there has been three million five hundred and fifty five thousand six hundred and fifty new searches.



Noam Chomsky said “He who controls the media control the mind of the public” . Google has become the largest medium through which we can obtain information. We ask more than 1.2 trillion questions to Google each year. If the authorities were to manipulate the search results on Google they could effectively censor and filter information that reaches the public.



So does the introduction of internet bring Big Brother into existence? Well the answer is both yes and no. It is undeniable that the government and conglomerates are undertaking the role of Big Brother. By monitoring our activities on the internet, large organisations are able to exercise targeted advertising, recommend searches and show what to watch next on youtube.

How Google Flu Trends Works



In fact, Google can spy upon your life to the point where they know when and where you caught a flu. In February 2010, the Center for Disease Control identified influenza cases spiking in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. However, Google's data of search queries about flu symptoms was able to show that same spike two weeks prior to the CDC report being released.



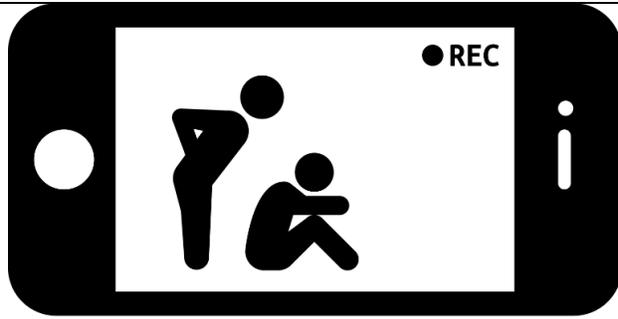
Although this is an example where spying on what we do on the internet was used for the common good, it still shows to what detail the government and Google and know about our daily lives. But let's look at a different example. A lot of you might be familiar with the Madrid Bombing of 2004.



This man here, Brandon Mayfield was arrested and held for 2 weeks by the FBI as the culprit for this catastrophic event. The FBI identified a fingerprint at the scene that matched that of Brandon Mayfield's. But that wasn't enough evidence so they searched his Google history.

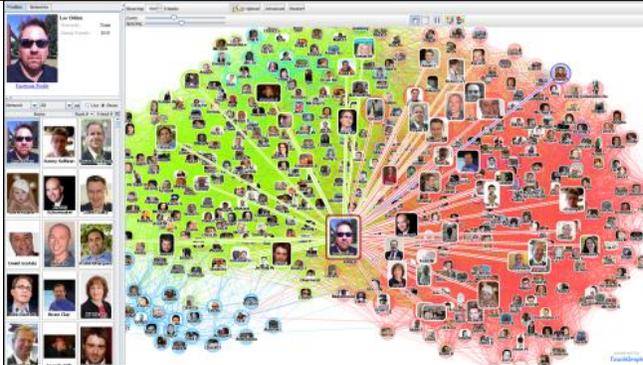


And they found that he searched how to get to Spain. This was sufficient evidence for them to frame him as the culprit despite the fact that Brandon's passport expired 15 years ago and never left America ever since. Google has become this authority that can put an innocent man behind the bar.

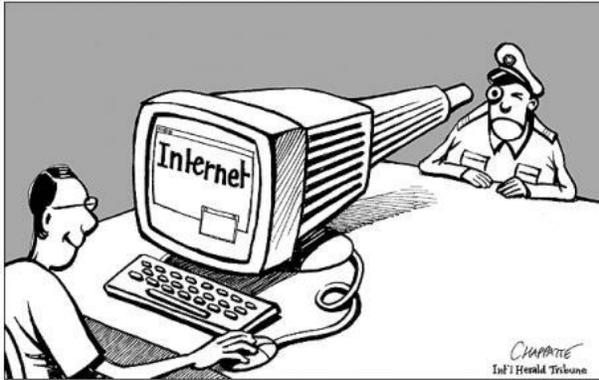


Little Brother is watching you.

But the internet poses another equally big threat. Little Brother. Yes, government spying on our lives is a pressing issue but what is more concerning is ordinary citizens spying on other citizens. As the internet proves every day, it isn't some monolithic Big Brother that we have to worry about, but Little Brothers who are loyal to no organized authority.



Think of it like this. The average American college student has 649 friends on Facebook. If your facebook privacy setting is set on default, anything you post should be visible to your friends and their friends. That means, if we exclude mutual friends, roughly 100,000 people can see what pictures you post, what you had for dinner and who you're in a relationship with.



Doesn't sound so serious does it? But if you think about the fact that Emory can track which website you've visited, what emails you've sent out and what you've downloaded it starts getting a little bit creepy. In fact, when you get a job there a 75% chance that you will be constantly monitored to ensure you are being productive.



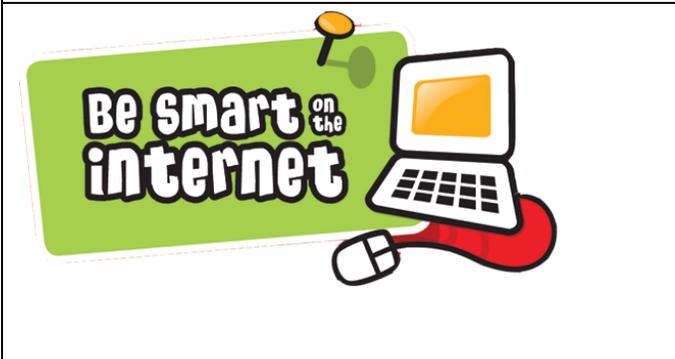
There are softwares like Spector and Staffcop that literally records every website you log into and categorize them into productive and non-productive websites and personal and work-related emails. Whether Little brother is a bigger privacy threat than big brother is a subjective question but its undeniable that both are pressing issues.



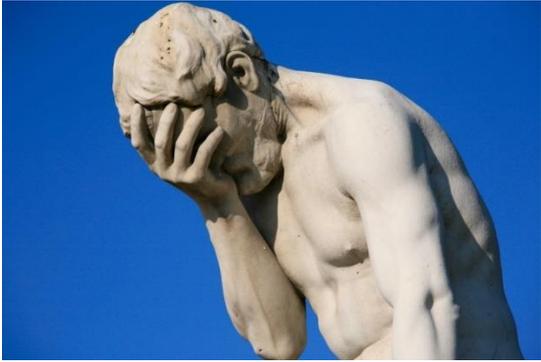
Now we know that Google is a metaphor for the bigger network of internet where both big and little brother can infiltrate your privacy. But so what? What are we supposed to do to prevent 1984 from being used as an instruction manual?



Should we, collectively stop using the internet? The internet has become such an indispensable part of our lives that we just simply cannot live without it. As a person who attempted life without internet and failed miserably I bet half of you here won't last few days without access to the internet.



What we can and should be doing is being aware of the fact that whatever we post on the internet stays there, even if you delete it, for little and big brother to see. Don't be that guy who calls in sick and gets fired

	<p>because he posted pictures of him partying at the beach that day.</p>
	<p>What you should do is, log on to your facebook and go to your wall. Scroll all the way down and start reading up. It'll probably be embarrassing and your palm will be on your face half the time thinking 'WHY DID I SAY THAT' but it should teach you to think twice before you reveal your private self to little and Big brother.</p>

Blog Posts

Blog post #1

The podcast “Eye in the Sky” talks in detail about project Angelfire concocted by Dr Ross McNutt and his students. Project Angelfire is a persistent surveillance scheme wherein a plane equipped with a high resolution camera takes a photo of a city every second. The issue with such a powerful technology is that it is always vulnerable to abuse. Regardless of the purpose of its introduction, those in authority are bound to misuse the technology to spy on the daily lives of people and conglomerates will crave for this information for the most effective form of advertising yet. This project may also backfire as intelligent criminals can infiltrate the system to acquire data on their targets and commit crimes that may be seemingly impossible to crack.

This of course, isn't to belittle the significance of implementing a security system like Angelfire. It offers many immediate solutions to current issues for the few latent problems it may cause. Also, the biggest concern the public had with the implementation of this technology was the breach of their privacy. The dispute of people's right to their 'privacy', however seemingly convincing it may be, is in actuality a null argument. Even with today's tools, government can, if they're willing to, spy the movement of an individual through monitoring one's credit card usage, internet access, mobile phone, public transport usage, 'speed cameras' installed at various junctions and the list goes on. Privacy is a term that is no longer relevant in the 21st century and those who believe their daily lives are concealed from others ought to be disillusioned. So in effect, Angelfire will not be breaching people's privacy any more than other technologies have been doing so far but instead will be offering a more effective solution to crime rates and traffic issues.

Blog Post #4

Pg 8-9

It only makes sense that a notable characteristic of a dystopian society is introduced at the beginning of the novel when the setting is being introduced. Upon his return to America, Lenny is confronted by an otter that questions him regarding his activities abroad. What is particularly reflective of a dystopian society here is that everything has to and will be reported to the overarching government. When the otter was asking Lenny intimate questions such as accounts of sexual intercourse, it became clear to me that the world of SSTLS is an exemplary anti-Utopian society in which the government surveils the lives of the citizens to the point where the word privacy essentially becomes a null term. Furthermore, the way in which the otter tries to promote patriotism is characteristic of a totalitarian society in which the public is brainwashed to serve the nation for the "collective good".



The picture I chose is very self-explanatory. It shows, perhaps in an exaggerated way, how in the world of SSTLS, the lives on people are often spied upon by the government. I found it interesting the way Lenny was passive-aggressively questioned about his daily life and the way patriotism is promoted but not enforced. This to me is an indication of the world heading towards the path of a totalitarian society and it sheds grim premonitions about the future events that are to unfold in this novel due to a seemingly dystopian setting the audience is introduced to.

Blog Post #6

In her paper, Jessica Hale makes a notable argument that women in Shelly's novel Frankenstein have been objectified to become man's possession to embody domestic perfection. This is critically reflective of the social structure of the Victorian Era in which 'both natural and divine law endowed the father with patriarchal authority as 'head' of a household'. She goes further to mention that the acquisition of women as means of building the ideal family has made homosocial relationships even more outstanding in the novel as people crave for relationships more profound than that of 'gendered inequality'

She finds effective evidence of her claims in the novel. By noticing the tragic death of all female characters in the novel, Hale makes the claim that the untimely death of the female characters in actuality represents importance of ensuring the "tranquility of domestic affections" to be as riddled with internal tensions and conflicts as the nineteenth century family itself.

Hale also makes use of secondary sources to further strengthen her argument. By quoting another scholar not only does she convince the audience of the reliability of her claim but also gives depth to her paper by developing upon other's claims. When she mentioned "As Schoene-Harwood notes, "Alphonse's fatherly protection effects his wife's domestic imprisonment within the framework of enduring female indebtedness and gratitude"" and goes further to say "It does this and more." she is effectively using other's perspective as the foundation of her thesis.

Racialized sexual fear was one of the terms that baffled me. Frankly I still don't know the exact definitions but my guess is that it means ostracizing someone as a sexual criminal because of their race.

Blog Post #9

Working Title: The True Monster in Frankenstein

In my introduction I will try and explore what Shelly's definition of "a monster" is and how perhaps her experience with the dynamic shift in her era's social structure has shaped her definition of a "monster". Here I will briefly mention the monster characteristics reminiscent in both Frankenstein and his creation.

In my main body, I will go in length to describe and compare the characteristics of Frankenstein and his creation. On my first paragraph I will describe the physique of Frankenstein and on the following paragraph juxtapose this by describing the physique of the monster. If we look from the physical appearance, the Victor's creation, with its grotesque presence is the monster. However, when the juxtaposition is done with the characteristics of both characters, it is Victor, who is content in isolation and outright rejects his own creation without a chance, that is truly the monster. I will also include any possible social changes and especially highlight on the industrial revolution to obtain in-depth knowledge on how the social movement shaped her perspectives of technology and thereby Victor's creation.

In conclusion, I will summarize my arguments in a concise fashion. While it was Victor who appears human he in actuality lacks the qualities to be classified as one while the monster, despite his abnormal appearance has the kindness that is essential to all mankind

Blog Post #10

It is essential to present the subject matter of the writing in the introduction. In my introductions I try to logically display the points of argument that I will be discussing further on in the writing. I try to do this in a succinct manner so as not to make the introduction too lengthy. Upon introducing the subject matter, it is also important to have an apparent and direct thesis statement. The thesis statement should be a summary of what the subject is and what my stance on the topic is.

The conclusion is very similar to the introduction in that the whole idea of a conclusion is to summarize the entire essay in one paragraph. Here, I try to recapitulate the arguments made thus far. It is also important to try not to bring up new points of arguments in the conclusion. The conclusion should be strictly for summarizing the essay so people can get the general comprehension of the essay.

This is the introduction of a psychology paper I had to read for my psychology seminar class

Imagine it is Friday, and you have plans to meet up with a small group of friends for what would normally be an enjoyable evening. However, tonight it feels like the gathering will be more draining than pleasurable, and you would much prefer to stay in by yourself. In fact, over the last few weeks, you have been less interested in most social activities as well as most of your hobbies. It is not that you have had less time or fewer opportunities, but you were unmotivated to pursue them; and even when you did, you ended up feeling bored and checking your watch the whole time. Distressed by this, you might wonder whether there was a name for what you were feeling, at which point you would likely discover that you were experiencing what clinical psychologists and psychiatrists call anhedonia, which is a common symptom in patients with major depression or schizophrenia

Here the introduction lacks the formal tone one would expect from an academic paper. However starting off the paper with an anecdote that many people can relate to immediately seizes the attention of many readers. In that sense this is a rather successful introduction as it captivates the mind of the audience.

As for the conclusion...

In sum, we have articulated the potential value of translational neuroscience in providing diagnostic clarity to the study of reward-related symptoms in psychopathology. Given recent advances in basic science and translational validation, we are now poised to leverage these approaches to better understand and even potentially reclassify these symptoms in terms of biologically derived constructs and measures.

The conclusion here summarizes the points mentioned in the paper in a very succinct manner. Despite lacking the minute details, the conclusion is still effective in recapitulating the focal arguments of the paper so that even those who haven't read the paper with care can still understand the general arguments made.