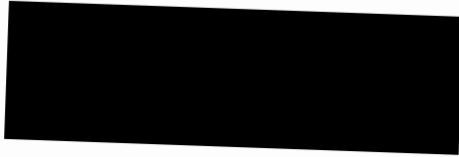


NAME



PRAXIS EXAM

ESSAY

165

CONTENT

182



ranking

*Outstanding*

GPA IN MAJOR

3.86

*Outstanding*

*Outstanding*



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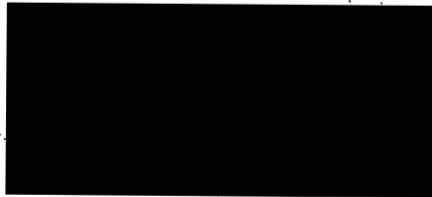
Examinee's Name: [REDACTED]  
 Candidate ID Number: 04700067 Social Security Number: [REDACTED] Sex: F Date of Birth: 09/13/1971

**EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION**

College Where Relevant Training Was Received: RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE  
 Undergraduate Major: ENGLISH EDUCATION  
 Graduate Major: (I)  
 Educational Level: SENIOR (FOURTH YEAR)  
 GPA: 3.5 - 4.0

**SCORE RECIPIENT(S) REQUESTED**

Code #	Recipient Name



**HIGHEST SCORE AS OF 04/23/2010**

Test Date	Test Code	Test Name	Your Highest Score	Possible Score Range	Score Recipient Code(s)					
11/14/2009	0041	ENG LANG LIT COMP CONTENT KNOWLEDGE	182	100 - 200						
01/09/2010	0042	ENG LANG LIT COMP ESSAYS	165	100 - 200						
11/14/2009	0524	PRINCIPLES LEARNING & TEACHING 7-12	173	100 - 200						
12/15/2008	5710	C-PPST: READING	185	150 - 190						
12/15/2008	5720	C-PPST: WRITING	175	150 - 190						
12/15/2008	5730	C-PPST: MATHEMATICS	177	150 - 190						

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Examinee's Name: [REDACTED] Candidate ID Number: 04700067  
 Social Security Number: [REDACTED] Sex: F Date of Birth: 09/13/1975

**EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION**

College Where Relevant Training Was Received: RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE  
 Undergraduate Major: ENGLISH EDUCATION  
 Graduate Major: (I)  
 Educational Level: SENIOR (FOURTH YEAR)  
 GPA: 3.5 - 4.0

**SCORE RECIPIENT(S) REQUESTED**

Code #	Recipient Name	Code #	Recipient Name
R3724	RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE	R8077(A)	RHODE ISLAND STATE DEPT EDUC

CURRENT TEST DATE: 11/14/2009		Your Score	Possible Score Range	Average Performance Range**	Score Recipient Code(s) from Current Administration				
Test Code	Test Name				R3724	R8077			
0041	ENG LANG LIT COMP CONTENT KNOWLEDGE	182	100-200	166-187	Y	N			
<i>See reverse for essay exam info.</i>									

HIGHEST SCORE AS OF: 12/04/2009		Your Highest Score	Possible Score Range	Score Recipient Code(s)					
Test Date	Test Code	Test Name			R3724	R8077			
11/14/2009	0041	ENG LANG LIT COMP CONTENT KNOWLEDGE	182	100-200	Y	N			
12/15/2008	5710	C-PPST: READING	185	150-190	Y	N			
12/15/2008	5720	C-PPST: WRITING	175	150-190	Y	N			
12/15/2008	5730	C-PPST: MATHEMATICS	177	150-190	Y	N			
<i>→ exam 0042</i>									

ETS will retain your score for ten years for reporting purposes.  
 \*\* For more details on Average Performance Range refer to footnote on last page of this score report.  
 Message Codes: I = INFORMATION NOT PROVIDED OR INCORRECTLY GRIDDED.  
 A = SCORE AUTOMATICALLY REPORTED TO STATE LICENSING AGENCY.  
 Y = SCORE REPORTED TO RECIPIENT LISTED.  
 N = TEST NOT REQUIRED BY DI SCORE NOT REPORTED.



**TEST TAKER:** WARING, TRACY L

**PASSED/NOT PASSED INFORMATION BASED ON HIGHEST SCORES EARNED AS OF:** 12/04/2009

Passed/not passed status provided in this report is based on the passing score in effect on the test date or on the date reported (as indicated next to each score recipient's name). Agencies reserve the right to accept the reporting of scores but not necessarily the passed/not passed status.

RHODE ISLAND STATE DEPT EDUC			+	Your Highest Score	Required Minimum Score	Minimum Score Met/ Not Met	Required Passing Score	Passed/ Not Passed Status
Test Date	Test Code	Test Name						
RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE			3724					
11/14/2009	0041	ENG LANG LIT COMP CONTENT KNOWLEDGE		182				
12/15/2008	5710	C-PPST: READING		185				
12/15/2008	5720	C-PPST: WRITING		175				
12/15/2008	5730	C-PPST: MATHEMATICS		177				
RHODE ISLAND STATE DEPT EDUC			8077	+				
Test Date	Test Code	Test Name		Your Highest Score	Required Minimum Score	Minimum Score Met/ Not Met	Required Passing Score	Passed/ Not Passed Status

For more information on interpreting your scores, please refer to "Understanding Your Praxis Scores" available at [www.ets.org/praxis](http://www.ets.org/praxis). Further information on state requirements is also available online. Passed/Not Passed information not provided if more than one qualifying score is used for a test, or qualifying score is not available.

\*THIS INFORMATION IS PROVIDED TO THE EXAMINEE ONLY.

+PASSED/NOT PASSED INFORMATION NOT PROVIDED BECAUSE TEST(S) TAKEN IS/ARE NOT USED BY THIS AGENCY.



**DETAILED INFORMATION FOR: 11/14/2009 TEST DATE**

TEST CATEGORY*	Raw Points Earned	Raw Points Available	Average Performance Range **
<b>ENGLISH LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND COMPOSITION: CONTENT KNOWLEDGE</b> I. LITERATURE AND UNDERSTANDING TEXT II. LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS III. COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC	57 13 26	66 18 36	43- 55 11- 15 21- 31

\* Category-level information indicates the number of test questions answered correctly for relatively small subsets of the questions. Because they are based on small numbers of questions, category scores are less reliable than the official scaled scores, which are based on the full set of questions. Furthermore, the questions in a category may vary in difficulty from one test form to another. Therefore, the category scores of individuals who have taken different forms of the test are not necessarily comparable. For these reasons, category scores should not be considered a precise reflection of a candidate's level of knowledge in that category and ETS recommends that category information not be used to inform any decisions affecting candidates without careful consideration of such inherent lack of precision.

\*\* The range of scores earned by the middle 50% of a group of examinees who took this form of the test at the most recent national administration or other comparable time period. N/C means that this range was not computed because fewer than 30 examinees took this form of the test or because there were fewer than 8 questions in the category or, for a constructed-response module, fewer than 8 points to be awarded by the raters. N/A indicates that this test section was not taken and, therefore, the information is not applicable.

April 23, 2010

Dear Dr. Reddy and Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read and evaluate my Content Portfolio. You will see that it demonstrates my superb abilities in all of the areas being evaluated.

My first paper, “The Development of Richard Wright’s Vision in *Uncle Tom’s Children*,” demonstrates my ability to insightfully analyze a text within a significant historical and cultural context, while also identifying the important literary elements that are relevant to my analysis. In this paper, I clearly state and achieve my purpose in a well-organized, coherent, and focused argument.

In the Wright paper I analyze the collection of short stories through the lens of Wright’s 1937 essay, “Blueprint of Negro Writing,” in which he lays out his political and social vision for how writers can “[mould] the lives and consciousness of [the Negro] masses toward new goals.” I show how *Uncle Tom’s Children* (originally published in 1940) can be read as a realization of this vision. I show how the collection can be interpreted as a step-by-step progression, with each piece having a specific purpose toward developing Wright’s blueprint as the reader proceeds through the book. I show how specific literary and generic elements contribute to my analysis by examining the overall structure and ordering of the stories within the collection, the use of language and how it progresses according to the function of the story, and the juxtaposition of action driven stories in the beginning with a story that is focused on character development by the end. My essay is consistently clear, coherent, and well-organized, as Dr. Scott’s comment will corroborate: “You are in control of the pace and focus of this paper throughout—your purpose is to read the collection of stories in light of Wright’s essay—you do that quite well.”

My second paper, “Interpreting *Frankenstein*: Negotiating Contexts,” demonstrates my ability to incorporate secondary sources and my understanding of MLA format. I use the theoretical ideas laid out by Jeffrey Nealon and Susan Searls Giroux in *The Theory Toolbox* as a framework for the argument in my paper. I also apply the critical ideas of Fred Botting and Warren Montag to my analysis of the novel. I use the secondary sources in a way that is relevant and strengthens the logic of my argument.

In regard to MLA format, you will notice several points of growth between my Wright paper (written in October of 2008) and my *Frankenstein* paper (written two months later). In the *Frankenstein* paper I have corrected several MLA errors. I corrected the spacing of the heading, eliminated extra space between paragraphs, and left the page number off of the first page. I also corrected formatting errors with book titles. In the “Wright” paper, I use quotation marks for the book title within my essay title and italics later in the paper. In the *Frankenstein* paper, I use underlining for the book titles (as was the rule for book titles in 2008—although it has since been changed to italics). I correctly use quotation marks for the essays, articles, and stories in both

papers. Lastly, I include a works cited page for my *Frankenstein* paper, which I left off of the Wright paper.

Even with all of my MLA improvements over those two months, I did not achieve a perfect paper. I made two rather embarrassing mistakes! First, I left a source off of the "Works Cited" page. In an attempt to rectify my error and give credit where credit is due, please enjoy this belated citation (in proper MLA format for both 2008 and 2010):

### 2008

Nealon, Jeffrey T., and Susan Searls Giroux. The Theory Toolbox: Critical Concepts for the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, Incorporated, 2003.

### 2010

Nealon, Jeffrey T., and Susan Searls Giroux. *The Theory Toolbox: Critical Concepts for the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, Incorporated, 2003. Print.

I would also like to assure you that I now know (and will never forget) that Mary Shelley's name does in fact have two "e's" in it. I have learned that lesson the hard way; I turned in a paper to the Chair of the English Department in which I consistently misspelled the author's last name. (Did I mention it also happened to be one of the aforementioned professor's favorite authors?) Be confident that, at this point in my English career, I do not misspell the name of an author who is the subject of my writing; and, that I go to great lengths to proofread for such careless and embarrassing errors.

I have also corrected several usage errors. It was imminent in my growth as a student of English that I would learn the difference between "verses" versus "versus," "between" versus "among," and "eminent" versus "imminent," which I have now accomplished!

You will see that my portfolio reflects the growth that has lead to my outstanding abilities in all of the areas being evaluated. Once again, thank you for taking the time to read and evaluate my Content Portfolio.

Sincerely,



Dr. Daniel M. Scott III

English 326

27 October 2008

needs more specificity — I know you don't mean "vision" — what physical/optical vision do you mean?

The Development of Richard Wright's Vision in "Uncle Tom's Children"

In Richard Wright's 1937 essay "Blueprint for Negro Writing," he argues that "...a new role is developing upon the Negro writer. He is being called upon to do no less than create values by which his race is to struggle, live and die" (49). Wright argues that the previous role of Negro writing had been to either mark "achievement" or to serve as the voice of the educated

Negro in pleading the case of justice to white America (45). Wright argues that, just as the minority workers "forge organizational forms of struggle to better their lot," (46) so must writers be "moulding the lives and consciousness of [the Negro] masses toward new goals" (47).

he makes an analogy between writing + labor.

Uncle Tom's Children by Richard Wright seems to have as its goal the kind of molding of mass consciousness that Wright outlines in "Blueprint." There is a development in Wright's

political vision as the reader proceeds through the book. The book is set up in a way that makes the vision clear to the reader by the end. Each section or story seems to serve a purpose or

function that moves the vision forward. I will examine the epigraph, "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow," "Big Boy Leaves Home," "Long Black Song," "Fire and Cloud," and "Bright and

NLA — use underlining in book titles — not italics

Morning Star" to illustrate how each functions to develop Wright's political vision. By doing so, I hope to make clear Wright's vision for the book as a whole.

The book opens with an epigraph that reads:

prologue or preface

epigraph is a short quotation at the beginning of a book — you might be thinking of an epilogue which follows a section of text but this is a prob

might you be covering too many stories?

this is the Communist perspective in this essay — but up a thesis statement.



“The post Civil War household word among Negro’s—‘He’s an Uncle Tom!’—which denoted reluctant toleration for the cringing type who knew his place before white folk, has been supplanted by a new word from another generation which says:—‘Uncle Tom is dead!’”

The function of this epigraph is arguably to establish a theme under which to blanket the rest of the text: We will not be submissive to the oppressive constraints of white society any longer! In “Blueprint” Wright writes that “theme will emerge in Negro writing when Negro writers try to fix this story about some pole of meaning” (51). Wright argues that theme, for Negro writers, will come from an understanding of the meaning of the history of their race and all of its implications—social, political, economic, and emotional (51). The theme expressed in the epigraph—that of abandoning the old “Uncle Tom” acceptance of inferior status in American society—is one which necessarily demands an understanding of history and of its implications. *of activism of rejecting inferiority*  
This theme is the centerpiece of Wright’s vision. It is wrapped around the entire text as an underlying heartbeat to trim the focus for the reader, in order that they may see the rest of the text through that lens.

*well read skated*

*NICE, make*

The next section in the text, “The Ethics of Living Jim Crow,” is an autobiographical account of several incidences in Wright’s life—from childhood to young adulthood—when he experienced racism and oppression. With each incident, he learned and eventually internalized the expected response—hide, submit, give the white man what he wants, accept your powerlessness. This political system of segregation, known as Jim Crow, used fear as the means of preventing resistance amongst black people. In this section Wright describes the brutal, violent, and potentially fatal consequences of going against the “ethics of Jim Crow.”

*Wright is being very humorous*

*of course Jim Crow is not at all ethical...*

The function of "Ethics" is to establish a perspective and a context from which Wright is writing. In "Blueprint" Wright defines perspective as "a pre-conscious assumption, something which a writer takes for granted, something which he wins through his living" (50). Wright speaks of perspective as "living in the heights of one's time" (50). The vision that Wright creates for the rest of the text must be interpreted through the context in which Wright is writing. Wright's authority to tell these stories is established in "ethics." This is a perspective that he has won through "his living." Perspective in the case of the Negro writer, according to Wright, necessitates an understanding of the connection between the oppressor and the oppressed. He argues that perspective "will come for the Negro writer when they have looked and brooded so hard and long upon the harsh lot of their race and compared it with the hopes and struggles of minority peoples everywhere that the cold facts have begun to tell them something" (51). The Wright who is described in "Ethics" is not the Wright who authors "Uncle Tom's Children." His perspective has formed in retrospect and the rest of the book is penned from that perspective.

The first story in the collection is "Big Boy Leaves Home." In this story Big Boy and some of his friends encounter a white woman while skinny-dipping at the creek. They attempt to grab their cloths<sup>s</sup> and leave, but the women starts screaming. A white man who is with her starts shooting at the boys and has the gun aimed for Big Boy's friend Bobo. Big Boy lunges for the gun, gets it, and ends up shooting the white man. Knowing that they will be killed once they are found out, Big Boy and Bobo try to get out of town. Big Boy eventually gets away, but not before having to silently witness the lynching and burning of his friend Bobo.

*Yes*  
/ *me*  
This story functions to establish the dynamic of random and unpredictable violence towards black people: Danger could be anywhere at any time. The brutality in the story functions also to anger the reader towards revolution. The language in the story is very spare.

The language moves the action of the story forward and allows the reader to focus on the brutality of the story rather than on the writing itself. As a result, the reader can focus on the remain on the horrific realities that the story describes. Big Boy acts in this story by leaving home and hiding all night from the mob, even as the mob murders his friend. He is alone and has no power to change anything. He acts not from a revolutionary standpoint, but rather out of a desire to survive. The primary function of this story is to move the reader towards a desire for drastic and revolutionary change.

The story "Long Black Song" functions to establish a link between anger and action. This is the story of Silas and Sarah. While Silas is away, his wife Sarah has relations with a white salesman who comes to her house selling clocks. The text is left ambiguous as to whether the relations are consensual or not; regardless, the story's focus is on how Silas reacts to the discovery. When the salesman returns to the house, Silas shoots him. When the police come to seize Silas, he engages in a standoff with them, killing as many as he can before he is killed.

This story defines for the reader the source of Silas's anger:

'The white folks ain never gimme a chance! They ain never give no black man a chance! There ain nothing in yo whole life yuh kin keep from em! They take yo lan! They take yo freedom! They take yo women! N then they take yo life' (152)

Silas's reaction to this anger is not to submit to it but rather to act on it:

'Ahm gonna make em *feel* it! But, Lawd Ah don wanna be this way! In don mean nothing! Yuh die ef yuh fight! Yuh die ef yuh don fight! Either way yuh die n it don mean nothing...' (153)

The link between anger and action is established here by Silas, but the heroic ability to impose his reality onto the world—however briefly—still does not solve anything. Silas is still acting in isolation, just like Big Boy. He is isolated even from his own wife. This story does some important work towards realizing Wright’s vision by casting aside the willingness to submit to white brutality or oppression, but the problem of acting in isolation is not yet resolved.

well seen...  
good

The story “Fire and Cloud” functions to set up an alternative to acting in isolation. It also addresses the idea of incompatibility between revolution and a Christian faith. In this story, Reverend Taylor, who is a devout Christian, struggles between two courses of action—embracing “the reds” and their desire to demonstrate and demand help from the city OR relying on faith to provide food for his hungry and impoverished parish. The “reds” are trying to get the Reverend to endorse their march knowing that if the Reverend is on board then the whole congregation will march. The Mayor and his people want the Reverend to forbid his congregation to march. The Mayor is accustomed to the Reverend doing what he is being asked to do. When the Reverend refuses to forbid his congregation to march (he also refuses to sign his endorsement on the march flyers) he is kidnapped and severely beaten. In the morning he makes his way home and brings to his congregation a new alternative. “Fire and Cloud” is the first story that seems to accomplish some real change.

we have a book about the growth of consciousness political consciousness  
this story is central to the history

This story explores the problematic nature that faith has at times played in keeping black people from revolting against oppression. Wright argues in “Blueprint” that religion has often “serve[d] as an antidote for suffering and denial” (47). According to Wright, the Negro people often looked to religion as the only way to relate to society and man and to provide personal dignity (47). Acting outside of faith could be seen as giving up on God. The Reverend’s struggle comes to an epiphany after he is beaten by the city leaders:

‘Sistahs n brothers, ah *know* now! Ah done seen the *sign*! Wes gotta git together. Ah know whut yo life is! Ah done felt it! Its *fire*! Its like the fire that burned me las night! Its sufferin! Its hell! Ah can’t bear this fire erlone! Ah know now whut t do! Wes gotta git close t one ernother! Gawds done spoke! Gawds done sent His sign. Now its fer us t ack...’

*close his pale stone* (218)

In this epiphany, the Reverend is expressing a need for the people to unite in order to act as a powerful entity. This unity is not just to be amongst the congregation, but also with the poor white citizens, who were also hungry and desperate. Most importantly, the Reverend is acknowledging the need to ACT in order to force change. He does this not by abandoning his faith, but by embracing the idea that faith alone is not the exclusive answer. Reverend Taylor embraces the compatibility of faith and action. At the end of the story, all of the demonstrators—black and white—march into the city causing the Mayor to take them seriously. Reverend Taylor is moved as he fully embraces this new revolutionary vision: “This is the way! Gawd ain no lie! He ain no lie” (220). Wright’s vision is furthered in this story by moving from isolated heroism and action, like in “Long Black Song,” to action that is unified. The unity of the action makes it so much more powerful and able to produce meaningful change.

*You are right to focus on this story more*

The last story in the book, “Bright and Morning Star,” is the most passionate and full version of Wright’s political vision for changing the lives of black people. This story has for a protagonist Aunt Sue. The story explores her evolution from a wife and mother with a Christian vision for her family into a supporter and ultimately a hero of the communist vision of her sons.

Her son, Johnny-boy, is captured and tortured by the sheriff and his gang. They want him to give up the names of the other members of the party but he will not. Aunt Sue, in a moment of weakness, trusts a new member of the party with the names of all of the members in order that he might warn them not to attend a meeting that has been breached. When she finds out that he is not loyal, but rather is planning to tell the sheriff all of the names, she decides to put herself in a position which will probably lead to her own death. She kills him just as he is about to tell the sheriff the names. She pays for this heroic action with her life.

This story stands out from the others for several different reasons. The language in this story is far less spare than in all of the previous pieces. The poetic language of this story compared to the others changes the tone of the story from pure brutality to poignancy. The text is far more insightful and not completely action driven. The language of the story allows for the insights of Aunt Sue, and the insights of the story itself, to be the primary focus.

good

The protagonist of the story is, for the first time, a woman. The roles of women in the previous stories have been either background roles, or served to complicate the plots. This story completely breaks from that pattern. The use of Aunt Sue as a true hero (in that she sacrifices everything—her Christian vision, her boys, and even her own life—to save the lives of others and preserve the work of her sons' vision) serves to enforce the importance of unity amongst the oppressed in the communist vision.

The evolution of Aunt Sue from her Christian vision to the communist vision of her sons is explored in great detail. This exploration builds on and progresses from the work started in the previous story: Finding a way to lay aside the old notion that religion is central as a means to overcome suffering:

Long hours of scrubbing floors for a few cents a day had taught her who Jesus was, what a great boon it was to cling to Him, to be like him and suffer without mumbling a word. (224)

As long as religion and faith function in this way, there cannot be uprising and revolution. This function of religion is deeply rooted in black American history and relates directly back to Wright's idea that black Americans must understand the meaning and implications of their history. The revision of this role of religion in the lives of black people is absolutely necessary, according to Wright, in order to move forward with his revolutionary vision. In this story, Aunt Sue describes the temptation that the "cold white mountain" (white oppression) presented her as she began learning about the inequalities of the world. Then, when her grown sons began to "boast of the strength shed by a new and terrible vision," she—reluctantly at first—began to become open to their vision:

But she had loved them, even as she loved them now; bleeding, her heart had followed them. She could have done no less, being an old woman in a strange world. And day by day her sons had ripped from her startled eyes her old vision, and image by image had given her a new one, different, but great and strong enough to fling her into the light of another grace. The wrongs and sufferings of black men had taken the place of Him nailed to the Cross; the meager beginnings of the party had become another Resurrection; and the hate of those who would destroy her new faith had quickened in her a hunger to feel how deeply her new strength went. (225)

The exploration of this evolution is so important in this story because it gives the reader insight into the process by which Aunt Sue was able to change. It also reinforces the unity of her with her boys and their vision, which is representative of the unity necessary for Wright's vision—communist revolution as a means to win equality for the poor and minority segments of the population—to be realized

All of these changes allow this story to function to inspire the reader and to give the reader the opportunity to focus on the ideology of the communist vision rather than to focus primarily on the brutality of the story. "Bright and Morning Star" then functions to display a full portrait of how Wright envisions the black race can "move toward new goals." In "Blueprint" Wright argues that "anyone destitute of a theory about the meaning, structure and direction of modern society is a lost victim in a world he cannot understand or control" (50). This story gives the people a theory, which in turn gives them opportunity to understand and control their world.

The structure of the book as a whole builds one section on top of the other in order to gradually establish Wright's vision for moving his people forward. He sets up theme and perspective in the beginning with the epigraph and "Ethics." He incites feelings of anger and shock at the random brutality faced by black people in "Big Boy." He explores deeper dynamics of oppression and connects anger with action in "Long Black Song." He explores the beginnings of merging faith and action and shows the importance of unity over isolation in "Fire and Clouds." Finally, he lays out his full and insightfully portrayed vision in "Bright and Mourning Star." Interpreting the book in this way can be seen as Wright trying to write with the purpose of "creat[ing] values by which his race is to struggle, live and die" (49).

contrast  
examine  
measure  
analyze

11 Blueprint

1



~~of~~



A

You are in control of the  
pace and focus of this paper  
throughout — your purpose is to  
read the collection of stories  
in light of Wright's essay —  
you do that quite well.

You really give life and  
dimension to the ideas  
of the essay — the book is  
a realization of these  
ideas — as you show.

ENGL 202

Dr. Reddy

16 December, 2008

Interpreting Frankenstein: Negotiating Contexts

In The Theory Toolbox Jeffrey Nealon and Susan Searls Giroux define reading as “a process in which one must take into consideration the various contexts in which a situation or a piece of writing is produced, read, circulated, and evaluated” (Nealon and Giroux 28). Nealon and Searls Giroux specify that meaning is being negotiated between contexts and is therefore always “open ended, future oriented, and changeable”(Nealon and Giroux 28). Mary Shelly's novel, Frankenstein, is one that has been critiqued from many different contexts of readership. [ *couldn't that be said about any text?* ] No two readers interpret the novel in exactly the same way.] The importance of interpretation is a fundamental concept within the text, as illustrated through the unique narrative structure of the novel. The power of interpretation and negotiation between contexts is important to keep in mind when considering the possible readings of the theme of science <sup>verses</sup> nature in Frankenstein. *check dictionary for distinction of 2 words (verses, verses)*

In the article, “Reflections of Excess: *Frankenstein*, the French Revolution and Monstrosity,” Fred Botting explores the idea that by using the narrative structure of Walton's telling Victor Frankenstein's story, which then includes the monster's story, <sup>the</sup> a novel is created “in which different speakers and writers also occupy the position of readers and listeners” (Botting 445). Because of the “refusal of a dominant, authorial overview,” the novel cannot be said to have a definite position from which interpretive conclusions can be drawn, creating a “surplus of meanings” within which “reading positions might multiply and challenge the terms

and patterns prescribed in textual representation to interrogate and reactivate issues of difference and power" (Botting 448). The idea of multiple positions of interpretation can be applied to the theme of science verses nature in Frankenstein. ✓

provides (a character cannot be a "framework" - reason)  
 Walton is the framework of the narrative structure of the novel. In the beginning, he is writing a letter home to his sister. He tells of his mission to sail northward in order to "discover the wondrous power which attracts the needle," which he believes holds the secret of life (Shelly 28). Everything in the middle section of the novel is filtered through the person of Walton. <sup>actually, on the entire novel</sup>  
 Victor is found floating on the ice, is brought aboard, is revived, and commences to tell his cautionary tale. Walton writes it down to send to his sister. It is this record that makes up the narration of Frankenstein. The woe of Victor, and his renunciation of scientific discovery, is disregarded in the end by the unwillingness of Walton to give up his quest to find the "secret" of sustaining/creating life. The end of the novel thus leaves questionable the idea Warren Montag argues for in "The 'Workshop of Filthy Creation': A Marxist Reading of *Frankenstein*":

*Frankenstein*...rejects one of the most fundamental myths of the Enlightenment, the notion that scientific and economic progress will continually improve the condition of humankind, the idea that once the barriers to knowledge are pushed aside, the conditions for perpetual peace and a universal harmony will have been established.  
 (Montag 391)

While I argue that the rejection of the notion specified in the above passage is a large part of the work done in Frankenstein (represented by Victor), I also argue that the work of the novel is more accurately described as reflecting the conversation of discourses that were/are going on regarding the advancement of science/technology/economics verses nature. The narrative

consistently misspelling author's name undermines your reader's confidence in you!

good!

structure, with Walton and his point of view, make<sup>s</sup> the novel more of a conversation between opposing views than a rejection or affirmation of any *one* position. Differing views on scientific discovery and advancement are represented by Walton, Frankenstein, and the monster. The framework of the novel illuminates each viewpoint and creates a conversation <sup>among</sup> ~~between~~ them. (between = two only)

The main voice in the novel, although filtered through Walton, is Victor Frankenstein's. Frankenstein's tale outlines how, from a young age, Victor had an unquenchable desire for discovery. He becomes obsessed with finding the means to instill life into an inanimate human body. He studies in isolation and becomes completely consumed by his task. He eventually succeeds in giving the creature life, but is immediately fearful of it. He abandons his creature. Although he was numb to reality while he was in the research stage of his project, once the creature is alive, he immediately becomes aware of the magnitude of what he had<sup>s</sup> created. Victor represents the viewpoint of the dangers of scientific discovery, especially any discovery that allows you to act as a substitute for God. Victor's story is evidence that the only thing that gives true pleasure in life is the beauty and sublimity of nature and the company of loved ones. Victor's narration is full of lengthy and detailed descriptions of natural surroundings and he explicitly states that it is that natural beauty that provides the only comfort in his misery. He also attributes <sup>to</sup> the beauty of nature for the happiness of several other characters, including Elizabeth and Clerval. <sup>where? cite the specific page</sup> Montag comments on the absence of description when it comes to the urban settings that are part of the text:

Although Frankenstein is reared in Geneva and educated in Ingolstadt, although he and Clerval visit London, Oxford, and Edinburgh, there are no significant descriptions of the urban world, none certainly to match the frequent portraits of natural vistas and

improved clause

rural scenes. London, at the time of explosive growth and development..., is not described at all although he and Clerval passed "some months" there. (Montag 394)

Montag claims that the absence of these details is significant because it allows for a more drastic juxtaposition of the monster (representative of the product of Frankenstein's labor in the Montag article) and the natural environment. I would argue that the monster is representative of the dangers of scientific advancement into areas previously considered sacred, such as the creation of life. The explanation for the absence of urban description can be awkwardly put applied for the same purpose in my argument. The other significant absence which Montag points out to be "utterly absent from the narrative," are the details surrounding the process by which Frankenstein creates the monster. Montag argues that this absence is significant because it illustrates <sup>that</sup> "technology and science, so central to the novel... only in their effects; their truth becomes visible only in the face of their hideous progeny and is written in the tragic lives of those who serve them" (Montag 392). Victor's story is clearly meant as a cautionary tale of the dangers of the aftermath of science when left unregulated by ethical restrictions. The creation of life is being reaffirmed by Frankenstein as sacred.

Walton, ~~as pointed out before~~, is receiving this tale orally from Victor and recording it for him. This is significant because it mandates a filter on Victor's experience. It makes the simple conclusion that Frankenstein condemns the advancement of scientific discovery problematic. Walton sees Victor as a hero. Even after hearing all that Victor had done, Walton sees him as blameless. In his letters to his sister, he refers to Victor as an "admirable being" who would "sympathies with me and love me" (Shelly 180). The idea that Victor would condemn Walton's continued efforts to seek the means to restore life does not seem to occur to Walton. The

recording of his tale (meant to be proof of the misery that science has brought to the lives of Victor and all those he loved) is lost on Walton. He seems only to become more motivated to discover the “secret of the magnet” which he believes will provide the means to restore life. The proof of this is when Walton refuses to turn towards home, thus abandoning his mission, even though he and his crew <sup>imminent > again, check dictionary for distinction.</sup> face eminent danger. Although he does eventually turn back, it is only because the crew mutinies against him, leaving Walton no option. The narrative choice, on Mary Shelley’s part, of framing Victor’s cautionary tale within Walton’s zealous quest for discovery, is a confirmation that the debate over the advancement of science is real and undecided. The monster becomes the manifestation of this indecision.

The monster both abhors science and its effects (himself) and is dependent on it—both for his existence, and for the possibility of the creation of a like female mate. Although the monster affirms his own hideousness, he still considers himself deserving of companionship and happiness. He seeks to befriend the DeLucy family, whom he had been observing secretly for several months. When he is rejected by them, he begins to seek revenge on his creator. After killing Frankenstein’s brother William and framing Justine (an adopted member of the family) for the murder, the monster appeals to Frankenstein to create for him a female companion “as hideous as myself” (Shelley 129). The monster promises to end his destruction if he is afforded this one pleasure. When the monster realizes that Victor has destroyed the creation he had at first decided to create, the killing resumes. The message of the monster (in my argument representative of the product of science) is made clear in the end of the novel. The monster also tells his story through the narrative filter of not only Victor, but of Walton as well. At the end of the novel, the monster is aboard the ship with Victor (who dies) and Walton. The monster has, by this point in the narration, come to see himself as wretched: ?

do you mean wretched?

I have murdered the lovely and the helpless; I have strangled the innocent as they slept, and grasped to the death the throat who never injured me or any other living thing... You hate me, but even your abhorrence cannot equal that with which I regard myself. (Shelly 188)

The monster states his intentions to destroy himself and the last scene of the novel depicts him "borne away by the waves, and lost in darkness and distance" (Shelly 189). The ending is ambiguous. It leaves the reader to wonder if the monster will really be destroyed, and even if destruction is a possibility. The monster (representing science unleashed) may not be able to be destroyed once put into motion. This open ended conclusion is further evidence the Frankenstein serves more as a dialogue about the advancement of science than a definite comment for or against it.

Frankenstein was written in 1816 and 1817, and published in 1818. The idea of scientists finding the means to produce or restore life may seem like pure science fiction, but this was something that was actually being researched by some scientists at the time. Mary Shelly was aware of the ongoing debate about the subject, and it would follow that she would reflect that debate in her novel. I think that one of the reasons that Frankenstein has enjoyed such success and longevity is that it provides debate on a topic that is still relevant today. What once seemed like pure science fiction has become a possible future reality. Shelly could not have predicted that as her novel was being read almost two hundred years after it was written, that it would call to mind for its readers the real possibility of scientist's "creating" human life. I am referring to the modern scientific discovery of human cloning. This endeavor is a parallel to Victor's experiments in many ways. The debate surrounding the ethics of human cloning in our time can be reflected in the types of questions surrounding the monster in Frankenstein: Are they really

human? Who are their parents? What will they be used for? Will they have the same rights as other human<sup>s</sup>? The cloning debate can be seen as very relevant to a modern reading of Frankenstein as defined by Nealon and Searls Giroux. In the ever<sup>(-)</sup>changing contexts of readership, meaning is “open ended, future oriented, and changeable” (Nealon and Giroux 28).

hyperate  
congruous  
adjectives

The text can still be seen as a relevant dialogue about the possible dangers and/or benefits of the advancement of science. Depending on the reader—be they a “Frankenstein,” a “Walton,” or a “monster,”—they have the authority to interpret for themselves.

Mary Shelly's Frankenstein is a clear illustration of the theoretical concept of the collaboration of reader and writer as co-authors/interpreters of texts. The narrative structure of the novel features the embodiment of this joint role in the filtering of the Victor's story through Walton, and the monster's story through Victor and Walton. This structure helps to illustrate the concept that “what a text means...has everything to do with the contexts in which they are produced and read” (Nealon and Giroux 23). Walton is both reader/listener and writer. The modern addition of the issue of cloning furthers the theory presented by Nealon and Giroux by demonstrating the negotiation of an almost two-hundred year old text into the modern context of ideas relevant to 2008.

You do a really fine job of examining the significance of context both within the novel and without it. The one serious problem here is your failure to deal with Victor's not learning his own lesson. Remember, at the end he urges Walton not to turn back, but to push on, which seems counter to your claims about his role in this dialogue on science. Dealing with that issue would further strengthen this already strong essay. A-



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See M&A for  
how to cross-reference.  
Repetition of details is not an  
error, per se, but you could  
save yourself some typing.