

MAKING THE MONSTROUS:  
EXAMINING THE MONSTER WITHIN AND WITHOUT IN *MOBY-DICK* AND  
*FRANKENSTEIN*

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Introduction:

The elements of terror presented within Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* are terrors that ripple outward beyond the confines of the novels themselves. Terrifying elements are present throughout the settings and landscapes of the two novels, specifically those relating to the Edmund Burke's notion of the sublime. Such terror is further represented in the physical monsters of the texts, the Creature and the white whale, and lastly in the two chief protagonists, Ahab and Victor Frankenstein. The landscapes and setting, the Frankenstein Creature and the whale, in addition to Ahab and Dr. Frankenstein offer terror to us because they present fundamental components of the sublime experience, allowing total consumption and thereby eradication of the very things we cling to for our humanity. These elements, human or otherwise, drive beyond humanity into the realm of the supernatural and the sublime – a realm chiefly composed of a terrifying consumption of the individual's mind, body, and soul.

Initial discussions will cover the very foundations of these two novels, their environments and settings. These are the canvases upon which the characters and creatures can act, the backdrop for the actions of the novels. In *Frankenstein*, the environments change continually but there are some that are far more pervasive

and powerful regarding aspects of terror and monstrosity than others. Chief among these are of the forests, mountain and glacial regions, and iced oceans – with these three environments providing viable opportunities for situational readings and allocation of thematic elements of terror. In *Moby-Dick* fewer settings are used, but the constant presence of the sea is a continual reminder of the elemental sublime as a framework for this novel. Furthermore, the ship itself, the *Pequod*, is a microcosm of bastardized society, the realm of the monomaniacal Captain Ahab and his most unfortunate crew.

The natures of the monsters themselves, the Creature and the white whale, in the texts are much debated between various schools of thought. Issues of creative agency, action control, and human vs. monstrous reason are the common focal points for debates surrounding these texts. The work of Carl Gustav Jung informs certain aspects of my analysis throughout the course of this essay, and I will utilize his studies on archetypes, dreams, and the manifestation of evil in relation to these two great texts. Focusing upon the two actual monsters from these texts, I use Edmund Burke's study of the sublime experience, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, to examine the elements of the sublime and beautiful. I will specifically focus upon the central idea of Burke's work that the nature of the sublime "is the emotion of terror." (Monk 87) Through my examination of what makes these monsters monstrous, what characteristics of body or action defines them as inspiring of terror in both their mirrored pursuers and

readers, I aim to draw out conclusions in relation to the external reflections of fear, presented in hideous and horrific forms.

Lastly, and most crucially, I delve into the darkest aspects of the novels, the human elements, chiefly focusing upon the two protagonists of the novels – Victor Frankenstein and Captain Ahab. I believe that although the two men are terrifying characters within their respective novels, the real agency, the true source of terror and monstrosity, comes from the “barbarity of man” (Shelley 133). Jung’s thesis on the concept of the collective unconscious states that with regard to the individual unconscious, there “exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals (Jung 43). Furthermore, and in reference to the two chief protagonists of the novels, Victor and Ahab, this notion of a “collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited” (Jung 43). Therefore it is reasonable to pair the two men together, given that this notion of collective unconscious, of collective shadow, is not an individual trait but a sweeping and overarching human one. The application and ascribing of agency from character to creature is a further reason that I believe the truer monsters lie within the human players of the texts – Ahab prescribing to *Moby Dick* the entirety of responsibility for his vengeful voyage and Victor being the creator and unwilling father of the Creature. Lastly, the intentions of the two main characters provide further insight into their monstrous natures – Ahab the man who would “strike the sun if it insulted me”, and Victor for whom the “world was to me a secret, which I desired to discover” (Melville 140; Shelley 66). Ahab’s intention is but to appease his “vengeful

ghost” and slay Moby Dick, thereby striking back at the “unknown but still reasoning thing” that continually torments him (Melville 248; Melville 140). Victor’s intentions, on the other hand, lie simply in his desire to create and control new life and discovery, having always been a revealer, seeking “that passion, which afterwards ruled my destiny” from a very young age (Shelley 67). However, in the pursuit of both noble, yet foolhardy, goals – things go horribly awry.

### An Environment of Terror -

First, to the prominent settings of the two novels and how they serve not only as a continuous backdrop for the terror that unfolds within them, but also as terrifying elements of the novels on their own accord. The elements of the sublime shown in landscape and environment make a significant impact in both *Frankenstein* and *Moby-Dick*, purveying a large amount of situational and plot-based information while simultaneously complimenting the textual actions to great effect.

#### “Power is there” – Frankenstein’s Settings:

Three different environments stand out as vital in the reading of *Frankenstein*, serving as locations for crucial events to unfold. The first of these environs is the De Lacey cottage “of neat and pleasant appearance”, and an accompanying “low hovel, quite bare” with its surrounding woods, where the Creature spends his formative seasons (Shelley 132). Initially of note in this situation is the Creature’s ability to glean skills by observing and imitating, very much as a young child adopts new tools and utilities. Taken by an early fascination with fire, “overcome with delight at the warmth” he draws from it, the Creature endeavors to learn the “operation of the fire” (Shelley 130). Through trial and error, he maintains a flame and furthermore adapts his foraged foods with his newly mastered skill – showing animal survival instinct and human creativity simultaneously. The fire is his lifeline, assuming this role ironically, given that this particular utility, is so readily “left by some wandering beggars”, much like the

Creature himself (Shelley 130). The association of the Creature's survival with fire offers a strong link to the subtitle of the novel, *The Modern Prometheus*. Although the subtitle refers to Victor, his creator, in his acquisition of fire, the Creature has perhaps a stronger literal link to the Promethean myth. The novel reinterprets the myth, and a significant change is that the stealing from the gods is now to steal from man – that same species that gave rise to this incredible darkness through their own designs and desires. Man's darkest creature learns in the flickering light of his brightest creation, fire.

With further regard to his initial environments, the De Lacey cottage provides the Creature with the central location for his formative learning of human skills, such as language, the “godlike science” capable of producing “pleasure or pain, smiles or sadness, in the minds and countenances of the hearers” (Shelley 137). The Creature learns French through human contact and “great application”, ironic on multiple levels because of its dual associations with romance and the Enlightenment period of reasoned humanity (Shelley 138). Furthermore, the irony extends itself to the speaker of this language, the Creature. The Creature is an entity utterly devoid of Enlightenment concepts and romance, and therefore his speaking the French language is a bastardized usage of this otherwise most noble of human dialogues. However, the knowledge and interactions that the Creature is able to acquire at the cottage is of great benefit to him for his formative seasons, his refutation at the De Lacey house in “general tumult” provides him with recognized agony, “overcome by pain and anguish” (Shelley 160). This rejection drives him to the woods, where he

“gave vent to my anguish in fearful howlings” as “a wild beast that had broken the toils” (Shelley 160). For the Creature, the woods offer primal refuge and a place for clarification of thought.

His first place of learning is the woods, and because of this he seems to associate that locale with self-discovery and the unearthing of crucial information necessary for his survival. It is in the woods that the Creature resolves to avenge himself upon “my father, my creator” for “to whom could I apply with more fitness than to him who had given me life” (Shelley 164). The woods are, therefore, formative in many ways for the Creature – from his discovery of language at the unknowing knee of the De Lacey family, to his initial (and only) readings of “Paradise Lost, a volume of Plutarch’s Lives, and the Sorrows of Werter [*sic*]” (Shelley 152). His initial readings inspire “an infinity of new images and feelings”, and the Creature’s notion of himself is, as Sharp says, “formed in relation to the books that he reads in rudimentary fashion (Shelley 152; Sharp 79). In the woods, the Creature, correctly or otherwise, takes on the identity of the fallen and abandoned son, reading his books “like the story of his own life” completely and utterly, “unable to draw the line between himself and his books” (Sharp 81). His misreading and relatively crude interpretation of these texts to his own life touches upon the great pattern of his life, that is “to be misread” continuously (Sherwin 890). However, it remains that his decision to pursue Victor comes about as a result of two processes both begun in the wilds, in and around the isolation of the woods and the lone cottage. Now being a recognized entity to himself, even if that identity



is but “a miserable wretch”, the Creature moves out of the nurturing environ of the woods and into another landscape, “the desert mountains and dreary glaciers”, and indeed, another and more developed identity (Shelley 179; 126). Core components of the identity that the Creature takes on are the acts of injustice and mistreatment that he has suffered at the hands of humans. Everyone he has ever come into contact with, even his ‘father’ Victor, has unceremoniously and cruelly rejected him. The Creature is hell-bent upon justice and vengeance, and seeks out Victor with ruthless and unrelenting passion.

In his flight from the scene of his catastrophic creation, Victor seeks “consolation in the Alps, declaring that the Power is there, elsewhere, invested in Mont Blanc” (Sherwin 899). In seeking this solace amongst “the summits of the mountains”, Victor is willingly opening himself to the elemental sublime (Shelley 123). The grand vistas, the “tremendous and ever-moving glacier”, natural indicators and providers of sublime sensations cause in Victor “the effect of solemnizing [his] mind and causing [him] to forget” (Shelley 123). The landscape of the Swiss Alps well represents Burke’s definition of the sublime in relation to visual objects of great dimension. While perhaps too specific, it does provide the textual base for the sublime experience that Victor encounters amongst the “cracks and fissures” of the mountains and glaciers (Gigante 570). In part, Burke’s definition reads, in relation to visual objects of great dimension, as follows:

the image of one point should cause but a small tension of this membrane, another and another, and another stroke, must in their

progress cause a very great one, until it arrives at last to the highest degree; and the whole capacity of the eye, vibrating in all its parts, must approach near to the nature of what causes pain, and consequently must produce an idea of the sublime. Again, if we take it, that one point only of an object is distinguishable at once, the matter will amount nearly to the same thing, or rather it will make the origin of the sublime from greatness of dimension yet clearer. (Burke 137)

The internalizing of such “sublime and magnificent scenes” only serves to imbue Victor with a sense of elevation, removing him from “all littleness of feeling” (Shelley 122). Such language as Victor repeatedly uses to describe the glacial and mountainous surroundings touches upon the mentality of an individual who has been rendered at a relative loss for accurate language to describe his situation. The very nature of the sublime “robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning”, and thereby reduces the functionality of language to minimal and overtly vague descriptors such as “awful and majestic” or “terrifically desolate” (Burke 57; Shelley 123).

In further relation to the terrifying aspects of the mountain regions, particularly when linked to the involvement of the sublime with language, is the danger that one poses to oneself when speaking aloud in such a region. The threat of avalanches, monumental and overpowering waves of rock and snow, menace constantly the man who makes “the slightest sound, such as even speaking in a loud voice, [which] produces a concussion of air sufficient to draw destruction upon the

head of the speaker” (Shelley 123). The mountains and glaciers, then, not only diminish the linguistic capabilities of our protagonist, but also threaten him with destruction and violence should he recover his powers of speech. Central to the sublime is the notion of terror, an experience brought about only in truth by “a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling” (Burke 39). Even Victor’s previously mentioned language brings the notion of terror to the fore. Victor uses such descriptors as “terrifically desolate” to detail his intimidating surroundings, touching simultaneously upon the grandeur and dread present within this barren region (Shelley 123). This specific term combines two crucial elements of the sublime experience, terror and desolation, allowing us as readers full insight into just how mortifying such landscape can be.

When the Creature reveals himself to Victor, it is sudden and unexpected – a fracturing of his otherwise total immersion in the “icy and glittering peaks” around him, the Creature now becoming “the only presence amid this blankness” (Shelley 124; Sherwin 900). Victor’s second impression of the Creature is entirely sensory, not unlike the first impressions and experiences of the Creature itself. The Creature moves with “superhuman speed”, a “sight tremendous and abhorred!” and completely consumes Victor’s sight, mind, and all other sensory capacities (Shelley 125). This perfectly plays into Burke’s definition of the passions and astonishment caused by the experiencing of the sublime, the sensation experienced when “the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by

consequence reason on that object which employs it" (Burke 57). The sublime is transferred, then, from the surrounding landscape onto the Creature itself, and as Victor beholds him, "a mist came over my eyes, and I felt a faintness seize me" and he "trembled with rage and horror" (Shelley 125). Such is the power of Victor's experience, his hatred and horror at the sight of the Creature, that "rage and hatred had at first deprived me utterance" (Shelley 125). The truest of horrors for Victor, the all-consuming aspect of the incomprehensible sublime, is presented to him once again, and as a result he is struck temporarily dumb by the experience, physically hindered by the "sole unquiet thing" that has come upon him amidst the "sea of ice" (Sherwin 899; Shelley 124).

Turning towards the final landscape in relation to *Frankenstein*, the "vast and irregular plains of ice" that have trapped the narrator, Walton, the sea-ice of the novel's most inhospitable setting (Shelley 57). His frame of the entire diegesis, trapped aboard an ice-locked ship, provides readers with the entire narrative of Frankenstein and his Creature, as recorded in Walton's letters to his sister, Margaret. Water in all its forms is often thought to symbolize the depths of our unconscious, and Moores makes clear in his chapter on *Frankenstein* that ice, being a form of water, warrants consideration as a "shifting image with several ways of signifying" ("Too Horrible for Human Eyes" 79). However, given that the only shifting allotted to the ice is when it breaks into "large loose masses", the immovability of the frozen sea is possibly seen to be a state of consciousness that has reached stasis as well as resolution in its thinking, simultaneously stuck there as

a result of limitations, a “temporary freezing of the living waters of the unconscious” (Shelley 57; “Too Horrible for Human Eyes” 80). The sheets of frozen sea are never-ending and seem nothing more than “distant inequalities”, rendering both the pursued and the pursuer as obscure, visible only at a distance from the ship through the lenses of “telescopes, until he was lost” (Shelley 57). Such obscurity returns us to Burke’s text, which incites the notions that obscurity is, in and of itself, necessary to “make any thing very terrible” (Burke 58). According to Burke’s positing, when we “know the full extent of any danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of the apprehension vanishes” (Burke 58-59). Whilst the sea ice itself is completely visible on a surface level, the vastness of it stretches to the very horizons of our narrator’s sight, which further ties into Burke and his notions of the sublime in relation to the infinite. For the ice to inspire such terror as the sublime does, its infinite expanse is a necessary quality. Despite our awareness that the ice is not endless, it appears so, and so as Burke says “the eye not being able to perceive the bounds of many things, they seem to be infinite, and they produce the same effects” (Burke 73). Both landscapes of *Frankenstein*, the forested and mountainous regions, approach the formation and planting of terror in different ways. They both contain elements, however, directly or otherwise, of the sublime experience – and are thereby providers of the terror only bound to the sublime itself. Furthermore, the grand scope of these settings provides both Victor and the Creature with simultaneous senses of confinement and expansiveness, a disorientating and

disturbing combination that surely only serves to further engender those within such landscapes toward terror and total consumption.

Sailing upon “forbidden seas” –Moby-Dick’s Settings:

Moving onto Melville’s *Moby-Dick* and the environments presented in the novel, I shall speak further on the subject of water as an agent in providing sublime and unconscious terror, specifically to the characters born upon its surface. Furthermore, the “rare old craft” the *Pequod* provides the perpetually moving setting for the majority of the novel, and remains with us until the final moments of the novel (Melville 69). These two locations, despite being separated in analysis, share a connection throughout the entire course of the novel – purely by the physical relationship and contact that they share; the ship cannot sail without the sea.

The name of the ship itself, *Pequod*, carries with it a loaded and very relevant etymological background. She is truly a ship is “of the old-school”, with her “venerable bows...bearded”, and the name *Pequod* only serves to further deepen her ties to the region as well as her purpose (Melville 69). The name *Pequod* is either a misspelling or deliberate play on words by Melville on the name of the Pequot, a “celebrated tribe of Massachusetts Indians” (Melville 69). Initially, this link may appear negligible as Melville claims that the tribe is “now extinct as the ancient Medes.” (Melville 69). On further examination, however, the redundancy assigned to the tribal link is itself made redundant. The etymological history of the tribal name

is varied, but considerable continuity is abundant in the basic translation of the name, which Turmbull points out,

*Pequattôog*, Pequots...was the name given to the Muhhekans of eastern Connecticut by 'neighboring tribes,' and it meant meant 'destroyers,' being related to Natick *paquanau* 'he destroys (him),' Narragansett *paqúana* 'there is a slaughter,' and Cree *puckwahtayoo* 'he hates (him)' (qtd. in Heller 55).

Within this etymology of the ship's name, there is language that provides a sense of purpose to the naming of the ship. The *Pequod*, then, is named for a tribe that was labeled as being destructive. Such is the very mission and purpose of the *Pequod* that in naming her after such a tribe, Melville works across a legion of levels, dependent upon wordplay and analysis. In aligning the *Pequod*, a whaling vessel, with the nomenclature used in naming the Pequot tribe, Melville is working on two planes of analytical option. There is the use of a simple classification device, allying the destructively purposed ship with the name of a people deemed destructive by history. A subsurface reading of that name delves into the link between the tribe and the ship, a relationship that provides the vessel with an alignment to the same tribal savagery and base associations that Queequeg and the other harpooners are subject to. In short, the ship becomes associated with the savagery of "a clean, comely looking cannibal" (Melville 36). This association with things of tribal or otherwise primitive nature extends itself to the pious nature of the vessel as well. Given that the ship is not a Western-named ship it is fair to draw the conclusion that the ship is

therefore named in the language, the “still stranger guttural noises”, of a non-Christian people (Melville 35). The *Pequod*, then, is a Godless ship from the very outset of the voyage, rendering it devoid of all hope in the eyes of Western believers and Christian adherers – a group in which Ahab is *not* included. The destiny of the unfortunate crew is not a good one, as they sail upon a vessel that cannot benefit from having the watchful eye of God upon her.

The mention of Ahab brings about the next uneasy aspect of the ship’s presence in the novel. The ship is perfect, in its sense of Godlessness, as Ahab’s chosen craft. His very limbs, or substitute ones at least, are a part of the ship’s architecture and construction. Ahab’s “barbaric white leg”, a result of his being “dismasted off Japan”, directly echoes the “new and marvellous [*sic*] features” added to the *Pequod* as a result of “the wild business that for more than half a century she had followed” (Melville 109; 109; 70) Ahab’s own dismasting mirrors that of the *Pequod*, whose “masts – cut somewhere off the coast of Japan, where her original ones were lost overboard in a gale” further details the shared history of the vessel and her captain (Melville 69). Both, then, lost their masts off the coast of Japan, and both “shipped another mast without coming home for it” (Melville 109). The *Pequod* is “a thing of trophies...cannibal of a craft, tricking herself forth in the chased bones of her enemies” just as Ahab’s regained mobility lies in the “leg...fashioned from the polished bone of the sperm whale’s jaw” (Melville 70; 109). The direction of the ship is determined by the same material that provides Ahab with his own direction, the “tiller was in one mass, curiously carved from the long narrow lower jaw of her



hereditary foe” – the motion of the ship relies solely on Ahab’s discretion, with the shared bones potentially denying any other man the will or force to alter the vessel’s heading (Melville 70).

The use of smoothed and polished whalebone injects a morbid irony to the ship and her captain. Burke regarded smoothness as one of the bastions of the beautiful, writing that it was “a quality so essential to beauty, that I do not now recollect anything beautiful that is not smooth” (Burke 114). Given Burke’s concept of beauty requiring the smooth to be present, it is ironic that this same smoothness is ascribed to specific objects or parts that make up a larger, horrific entity. These minute outbursts of beauty stem from violence, and the larger objects that they make up ensure further violence. Perhaps this is Melville subversively undermining preconceived and established notions of beautiful, totally negating its existence as a result of the violence surrounding it.

The last link between the ship and Ahab is the direct physical contact that the two maintain. In order to balance upon the quarter deck of the ship, Ahab requires “an auger hole, bored about half an inch or so, into the plank” (Melville 109). Whilst it would be negligent to not make mention of the unsubtle penetrative sexual references provided by this bond, it does not serve any greater purpose than to further engender the deep-rooted relationship between Ahab and his ship. This relationship provides the novel with its background against which all characters, events, and actions occur and center. It is this relationship between ship and skipper

that gives the ship itself a sense of foreboding and ill will, as both seem characterized by a monomaniacal drive towards the slaughter of the white whale.

Leaving the analysis of Ahab for the time being, the final comment upon the terrifying backdrop of the novel comes in the repeated association of the ship with fire, flame, and destructive light. Melville's use of fire often, according to Wright, is thought to represent "excruciating trials of the spirit...[perhaps] figurative fires: they burn without consuming" (Wright 32). The transformation that the *Pequod* and certain members of her crew undergo in "The Try-Works," as well as the appearance of St. Elmo's fire in "The Candles" offer assured examples of this link, further adding to the negative energy surrounding the *Pequod* and her voyage. In "The Try-Works," through Ishmael's detailed language, we witness a demonizing process that is brought about by the activity upon the deck of the ship. After the dissection and managing of a slain whale, when the "works were in full operation", Ishmael employs descriptive and allusive language to detail the midnight scene upon deck (Melville 318). Barbarism and destruction are at the fore of this passage. The flames from beneath the try-pots take on a violent agency of their own, first described as "fierce flame, which at intervals forked forth from the sooty flues, and illuminated every lofty rope in the rigging, as with the famed Greek fire" (Melville 326). This allusion to the "famed Greek fire" refers to the weapon of the ancient Greeks – a liquid incendiary weapon that is thought to have been able to burn even on water (Melville 326). Such formidable characteristics of this weapon bring the impact of that weapon being related to the try-pot flames to the forefront of relevance, making

clear that while human hands light the fires beneath the pots, they are not controlled by them – they are inherently and permanently dangerous.

These same flames give life to the animalization of “the whale-ship’s stokers”, men who load “hissing masses of blubber” into the pots, all while the “snaky flames” dance below them (Melville 327). Such descriptions are befitting of the most hellish of scenarios, and this trying-out scene exemplifies that perfectly. Not only is the ship changed into a flaming vessel tossing upon the “blackness of darkness”, but also the men surrounding the try-pots are transfigured into beasts (Melville 327). The remaining souls upon the deck are the night watchmen, men solely described as having “tawny features, now all begrimed with smoke and sweat, their matted beards, and the contrasting barbaric brilliancy of their teeth” (Melville 327). They are transformed by the “capricious emblazonings [*sic*] of the works” into devils; demonic figures whose “uncivilized laughter forked upwards out of them” (Melville 327). Everything is snake-like, aggressively forked, with the try-pots and the men who operate them, perhaps becoming even emblematic of the treacherous snake in the Garden of Eden. The transformations seem ritualized, progressions that could only take place in total darkness, and even their movements have become barbarized and violent, “wildly gesticulated with their huge pronged forks” (Melville 327). What remains crucial is that the ship is the sole vessel for this transfiguration, furthermore adding to the terror that she seems to perpetually provide her crew. These horrific and barbaric processes are solely limited to the *Pequod*, where “her

sailors are contained and isolated” alone on the “unshored, harborless immensities” of the sea (Glenn 168; Melville 115).

In “The Candles,” the crew and Ahab bear witness to a weather phenomenon known as St. Elmo’s fire, or “the corpusants!” (Melville 381) This incident is greeted with suspicion and a certain sense of relief by various crewmembers including Stubb and Ahab, their reactions spanning from “have mercy on us all!” to “the white flame but lights the way to the White Whale!” (Melville 381; 382) The flames themselves, as well as their location on the yardarms, the crossbeam of the mast from which the sails are hung, offers itself for specifically detailed readings. Flames and the *Pequod* are coupled together frequently, as in “The Try-Works.” These flames, the “pallid fire” of the corpusants, are otherworldly flames – neither made nor controlled in any fashion by the crew of the *Pequod* (Melville 381).

Throughout *Moby-Dick* Melville uses certain reiterations to hammer home conceptual notions of character and situation, and the fervent repeating of the number three, in the sense of three objects of significance, carries great weight with regard to this particular scene in the text. The idea of thirds, threes, and tri-based things is demonstrated in the following description of the corpusants – “touched at each tri-pointed lightning-rod-end with three tapering flames, each of the three tall masts burning in that sulphurous [*sic*] air, like three gigantic wax tapers before an alter” (Melville 381). This use of the number three brings a somewhat ironic religious connotation into play, particularly when taking into account the distinctly non-Christian background of the *Pequod*. The three flames on the triple pointed rods

on the three masts smacks of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The obvious irony comes in that the ship so disassociated from the Christian faith should play host to the ultimate representation of the three central figures of Christianity, and yet the fact that the flames are classified as a phenomena only further serves to create a deeper association with the ship and religiosity. For a damned vessel to be touched by “God’s burning finger” smacks of a counterbalance between the Christian faith and the naming origins surrounding the ship and her crew (Melville 381). Moreover, mysterious facets brought about by the presence of the Holy Trinity aboard the ship bring in ideas of the sublime and the infinite, presenting notions of terror and unknowable forces to both the crew and the reader. Religion, or at least its associations with the *Pequod*, then, is a concept based in terror and continued misinterpretation.

The association with fire is different here than it was in “The Try-Works,” because these flames feature in nautical tradition as a symbol of good luck, being named after Saint Erasmus of Formiae, recognized as the patron saint of sailors. In “The Try-Works,” the flames beneath the pots were vicious and aggressive, transforming the ship and her crew into a damned vessel sailing on in the pitch-black darkness. St. Elmo’s fire presents the very opposite of the trying-out fires, for it is thought to be a lucky flame, that “clear spirit of clear fire”, that accordingly bestows positivity upon a voyage (Melville 382). Ahab reads this, of course, as indicative of his quest for Moby Dick, claiming that the flaming corpusants “lights the way to the White Whale” (Melville 382). Based on Ahab’s exclamations, the more

ominous nature of the lights comes from that fact that they are apparently in league with him, and given their overwhelming relationship with the Christian faith, this is aligning the will of God with that of Ahab – a truly terrifying prospect given to us through this one image. More horrific still in relation to Ahab and the flames is that he seems to have control over them. Unlike the fires beneath the try-pots, Ahab “with one blast of his breath” is able to “extinguished the flame” (Melville 383; 1335). His arrival on the quarterdeck with “Old Thunder!” signals the introduction of the corpusants, almost as if they arrived at his beck and call (Melville 380). He brings the lights into existence with his presence, then, and also takes them out of existence with his “one blast” of breath – a reference to the power of Ahab and his words (Melville 383). Finally on this particular relation between fire and ship, the etymology of the word “corpusants” allows a truer and additionally terrifying facet to these ethereal flames (Melville 381). The word itself is a modern resultant of the Portuguese *corpo-santo*, in turn taken from its Latin roots *corpus sanctum*, and translates as ‘holy body.’ Given the cross-like imagery of the ship’s masts, three of them, there once again is brought to our attention a religious connotation to the voyage and the ship herself. The ‘holy body’ the translation speaks to could quite easily be Christ upon the cross, but perhaps it is more fitting that this ‘holy body’ be linked with Ahab. Given that Ahab is crippled, and requires a leg fashioned from whalebone to walk, he is then a man without his whole self, without a completed body. Furthermore, his monomaniacal drive aboard his strictly non-Christian ship is a quest for the something beyond, to reach out and strike at the face of God, and is

therefore an unholy quest taken up by the most unholy of men with an incomplete, holed, body.

Finally in the discussions of the settings as being backgrounds of horror and terror themselves, we come at last to the sea in *Moby-Dick*. The sea in *Moby-Dick*, as bodies of any state of water do in *Frankenstein*, represents what Moores notes to be the “vast unconsciousness” of the human psyche (“Moby-Dick, the Inscrutable White Phallus” 64). The sea represents insecurity, the untamable depths of our otherness, a part of ourselves as remote to us as the “forbidden seas” and “barbarous coasts” that Ishmael loves to sail amongst (Melville 22; 800). The sea is a place where “truth is to be sought in the solitary wilderness”, allowing us the space and scope for true reflection upon the self and the nature of things (Wright 48). The sea places within our souls and minds an “everlasting itch for things remote”; to seek the “ungraspable phantom of life” that is “the key to it all” (Melville 22; 20). When venturing out to sea, more specifically to encounter the “phenomenon of engulfment”, we are then confronting the darkest trenches of our capabilities, our limitations, and ourselves (Adams 171). It is for this reason that Ishmael is so “fed up with civilized, Christian America” and chooses to indulge his desire to “sail about a little and see the watery part of the world” (“Moby-Dick, the Inscrutable White Phallus” 58; Melville 18). He wants to “experience denied, lost, or unknown aspects of the total Self”, confronting his own darkness by surrounding himself with the perpetually darkest depths of the oceans (“Moby-Dick, the Inscrutable White Phallus” 59). Of course, the fearful notions that come with the sea are similar to

those that come with our confronting of mountain ranges, gorges or anything else of nature's making that "will never submit to humankind and its reason, despite scientific [*sic*] and biblical hubris" ("Moby-Dick, the Inscrutable White Phallus" 66). They are based in the definitions of terror, greatness, vastness, and infinity that punctuate our experiencing of the sublime in natural environments.

In "The Pacific", Ishmael reflects on the ocean of the same name, pondering the "sweet mystery about this sea, whose gently awful stirrings seems to speak of some hidden soul beneath" (Melville 367). The sublime of the sea, and indeed of grand nature too, is that "all the signposts that might demarcate...are disappearing" – we are left with no frame of reference and it fills our vision and minds to the point of totality and consumption, the very phraseology that Burke utilizes in detailing his terms (Deines 271). Further example of this total consumption, resulting in madness and complete terror, comes from Pip's experiences of the sea in "The Castaway". Pip descends among the "strange shapes of the unwarped primal world", and the cost of seeing what he sees, without knowing it through his "passive eyes" is his mind (Melville 321). The total consumption of his mind by the sublime, the infinity of it, with his "eye not being able to perceive the bounds of many things" results in his going mad (Burke 73). Pip experiences first a "closure of horizontality in general", a removal of his own always-perceived visual horizons, only to sink into the "most intense isolation and loneliness" that only a descent into the "oceanic void" can offer (Deines 271). Pip's experience of sinking below the surface, of both the ocean and himself, is based in the realm of the "vast disorder, terrible,



irresistibly powerful and obscure” (Glenn 167). In his seeing the “multitudinous, God-omnipresent...God’s foot upon the treadle of the loom”, Pip glimpses what we in normal walks of life cannot, and as a result of his having “immersed himself in the sacred natural ocean” (Melville 322; “Moby-Dick, the Inscrutable White Phallus” 67). He has, in fact, “gone to the other side of the wall”, the very same wall that Ahab seeks to “knock down with his will” (“Moby-Dick, the Inscrutable White Phallus” 67). He has reached the terrifyingly real and yet completely unreal place of a “cosmic consciousness” (“Moby-Dick, the Inscrutable White Phallus” 67).

One thing of note during Pip’s submersion is the use of the word “firmament” (Melville 321). I raise this point because traditionally the word refers to a vault or expanse of the sky. While this definition of the word is not the one utilized by Melville, there is a good reason for his having chosen to use this word. In the Bible, specifically in Genesis, is written that God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters” (King James Bible, Genesis 1.6). This division within the waters of the firmament would seem to denote that Pip, while his soul has sunk below the waves, is in a intermediary place or state – totally removed from everything traditionally “real” around him.

All men, save perhaps for Pip, actively seek themselves in the sea, despite the fact that the sea makes them into nothing more than “fragments of a boundless creation, undistinguished otherwise in the hands of its creator” (Wright 174). Pip’s discovery was perhaps not so much of self as of the other, of the “nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing...cozening, hidden lord and master, and cruel,

remorseless emperor” that drives the world onward (Melville 406). Even Ahab, the self-characterized “cannibal old me”, looks for himself in the water,

Ahab leaned over the side, and watched how his shadow in the water sank and sank to his gaze, the more and more that he strove to pierce the profundity (Melville 406; 405).

Ahab rages, temporarily utterly distraught with the world and his sordid lot in it, against the thing he cannot come to but through questioning, “What is it...?” he asks in “The Symphony” (Melville 406). It is the other, the force behind the wall that he cannot reach but through his own means of self-defeating action, by doing what “in my own proper, natural heart, I durst not” (Melville 406). This is what Ahab finds in the sea, what makes him cry out, “God! God! God! – crack my heart! – stave my brain! – mockery! mockery! bitter, biting mockery” – he is truly a man torn asunder within himself – he cannot but focus upon what he cannot understand, and this terror drives him to his own end (Melville 406).

Lastly, the conversation circles back to the terrifying sea and what it represents to those journeying upon its fathomless surface. The fears and terrors that lie beneath the waves of the ocean are perhaps no greater than the fears that lie atop the highest mountains of the world. The sea is a realm of unparalleled depth and home to unknowable multitudes. In the sea we see ourselves, and yet we can only see so far into the profundities that lie below us. The sea plays host to our desire for an escape, but in our running away from ourselves we often stumble into

something far greater and more terrifying than anything we can imagine. It is host to

millions of mixed shades and shadows, drowned dreams, somnambulisms, reveries; all that we call lives and souls, lie dreaming, dreaming, still; tossing like slumberers in their beds; the ever-rolling waves but made so by their restlessness. (Melville 367)

The sea, then, holds everything – and it is this immensity, the unfathomable depths and ways of this immensity, more so than any elemental creature or leviathan within its great blue, that is awful and terrifying to comprehend.

## All Creatures Great

### The Thing That Should Not Be – Frankenstein’s Creature:

Such is the resonance, power, and horror of Victor Frankenstein’s creation, the Creature that he actively takes over the novel. The horrific nature of the Creature, from conception to obliteration, is played out time and time again for us during the course of *Frankenstein*. What is it, though, that makes this Creature as terrifyingly haunting as it is? This section examines crucial aspects of the Creature’s monstrosity – the physical construction of the Creature, the representation of the Other within the Creature, and his horribly fiendish acts of murder and torment.

The appearance of the Creature is the commonly mentioned feature of his terror, and for good reason. He is horrific, truly a monster for anyone who happens to glimpse him. Whilst the Creature is not an entity of evil at birth, there is horror in his creation process. Hideous to all eyes that see him, the Creature is from his very outset as an animated form “ensnared by one of the deepest predispositions of our biological inheritance – our aversion toward seriously malformed individuals” (Gould 23). Whilst this predisposition against individuals deemed malformed or ugly may be biological at its root, the impact that this aversion has upon the making of the Creature into a monster is palpable. First, though, an examining of the conception of this creation, for in the quite literal piecing together of this monster there lies horror raw and real.

As a child, Victor became fascinated by “the works of Cornelius Agrippa”, a German scientist and, more importantly, alchemist of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Shelley 67).

Agrippa's study of the science of alchemy, as a man who "acquired new and almost unlimited powers", combined with Victor's fervent longing to "penetrate into the recesses of nature" would appear to form a spark and urgent thirst for knowledge and exploration (Shelley 76). Always the revealer and explorer, Victor's work was well intentioned from the outset. Sadly for him, his ultimate creation, one that he had hoped would enlighten and renew the world of science, is a creation not of light but of total darkness; born and existing totally in death and the blackness of night. His method of work, however, is where the horrific comes into play. Victor's Creature is born out of death, and it is the "catastrophic nature of this birth" that provides readers with the true horror of the Creature (Sherwin 892). Victor's methodology is disturbing in several ways. The fact that he raids, under cover of darkness, the "unhallowed damp of the grave" and selects the components of his creation from "charnel-houses" and graveyards, smacks of an immoral disturbing of those who have died (Shelley 82; 79). Whilst there is an argument to be made for the medical science potentially gleaned from such work, the fear lingering around the subject of death and the dead adds an eerie overtone to the process of creating this monstrous being. Even more alarming, perhaps, is that to the sheltered Victor; graveyards are not sacred places in the slightest, but merely "the receptacle of bodies deprived of life...food for the worm" (Shelley 79). He compiles his creature, "disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame" (Shelley 82). The Creature is an individual reborn of multiple entities, born about via the "change, transmutation, or transformation of one's being" (Jung 114). Jung's

specific types of rebirth include resurrection, which in the case of the Creature “may be a carnal body” or “in a body which is differently constituted” than the previous non-existing whole form of the Creature (Jung 114). The process of resurrecting the dead, which is exactly what Victor is doing in his sickening compilation creation, can “no longer be understood in a gross material sense” and instead must be read as something far weightier and threatening as a result of the bastardized conception and resurrection (Jung 114). A subcategory of Jung’s theory on rebirth concerns technical transformation, being the transformation of an entity through means of science and technology versus the magical procedures or religious miracles of more prominent Western myths. The Creature is born via Victor’s debased genius, through “elaborations of the originally natural processes of transformation” when “natural or spontaneous transformations that occurred earlier...were thus replaced by techniques designed to induce the transformation” (Jung 129). Victor’s work is not natural work, the reformation and reanimation of pieces of the dead – who have already experienced and gone through the aforementioned natural transformation that is dying.

Victor’s intentions with his project were hinged around the fact that he had “selected his features as beautiful”, and thus hoping to create some sort of übermensch (Shelley 85). However, the creation process itself is one born of darkness, with Victor delving through graves and bone houses, lacerating and desecrating corpses. This compilation creature, upon the re-animation of the newly stitched whole, transfigures itself from “the beauty of the dream” into something, in

Victor's eyes, of "horror and disgust" (Shelley 85). Victor's dream evaporates and in its place there is an obvious "imbalance between the beautiful parts and the ugly gigantic whole", brought about by the "great bungle of creation" (Nishiyama 629; 633). Reflecting upon the purely visceral and physical makeup of the Creature for a moment, specifically at the moment of animation and impression, Victor's reaction is one of repulsed horror at his once fantastic creation:

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavored to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! -- Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion and straight black lips. (Shelley 85)

Interesting here is the claim of proportions present within the Creature, yet localized only to the limbs. According to Burke's discussions of beauty, ugliness, deformity and proportion, "*deformity* is opposed, not to beauty, but to the *complete* [sic], *common form*" (Burke 102). It makes perfect sense, then, why Victor (and indeed, anyone else) is so repulsed by the deformed and ghastly nature of the Creature – while his limbs may be in proportion to his height and size, the rest of his body (perhaps neck, head, hands/feet, torso) and visage is definitely not. As Victor

makes obvious to us, his “skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath” a creature, then, of “cracks and fissures...in the representation” and not a whole form (Shelley 85; Gigante 570). As Gigante does well to point out, “individual features...radically disrupt aesthetic representation...the combined form cannot aesthetically contain its own existence” (Gigante 570). Supporting the inherent ugliness of the Creature is Burke, once again, whose reflections on continuity and smoothness come into play with regard to the Creature’s sutured appearance, “give it a broken and rugged surface; and however well formed it may be in other respects, it pleases no longer” (Burke 114).

It is not far-fetched to speak of the Creature, then, in the same terms of sublime and terror that we use for often far greater objects or concepts. Such is his ugliness, his otherness and yet simultaneous humanity in certain aspects that his presence in the novel acts as a bastardized doppelgänger to Victor, who stands firm in his “denial and repudiation” of any fatherly notions he may have previously desired to harbor (Moore’s “Too Horrible for Human Eyes”). Burke’s language when defining the ugly in relation to the sublime seems adept and flexible enough to include the Creature within its possibilities, and he defines these concepts in accordance to each other, “Ugliness I imagine likewise to be consistent enough with an idea of the sublime. But I would by no means insinuate that ugliness of itself is a sublime idea, unless united with such qualities as excite a strong terror” (Burke 119). Such strong terror that Burke speaks of is obviously incited by the Creature in



all those he encounters, and thereby the ugliness he bears can be classed as part of a whole, sublime and terrifying entity.

Entirely baby-like, the Creature's initial attempts to communicate with his creator are equally terrifying. Under the "yellow light of the moon", the Creature "forced its way through the window shutters...his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds" (Shelley 85; 86). Such an introduction to the newly animate Creature is horrific; the pale and sheened skin of a corpse stitched together in a "being of gigantic stature", in moonlight, grinning down with "one hand...out, seemingly to detain me" (Shelley 81; 86) Such physicality is intimidating by itself, and the fact that the Creature recognizes this also speaks to his vast difference and outcast nature – "...how was I terrified when I viewed myself in a transparent pool! At first I starred back, unable to believe that it was indeed I who was reflected in the mirror; and when I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am" (Shelley 139). The true horror of the Creature and his creation comes not from the gore or "phantasmal body parts and buried wishes", but through the fact that the creation and animation itself went so horribly wrong (Sherwin 885). Had it been done in other ways, perhaps, Victor would have been thought the creator of a "new species [that] would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me" (Shelley 82). Sadly for Victor, his ultimate creation, one that he had hoped would enlighten and renew the world of science, is a creation not of light but of total darkness; born and existing totally in death and the blackness of night.

Something so bastardized, however, as the resulting creation of this awfully misinformed experiment, is the fault of one man's obsession with his "future destiny" and desire in "discovering the cause of generation and life; nay, more" (Shelley 77; 80).

#### The White Whale:

The monster of true weight in *Moby-Dick* is Ahab, but for the purpose of this section we shall examine the white whale, his tasked nemesis Moby Dick, in details of terror and the sublime. The whale is "a wonderful monster", a leviathan of a bygone era, pursued by the monomaniacal and hell-bent Captain Ahab (Kaplan 140). While Ahab completely misreads and wrongly applies the white whale's intentions, the fear factor surrounding the revered leviathan remains. This is, as is the similar case with the admittedly far smaller Creature in *Frankenstein*, because of the elements of the sublime that the whale totally and utterly embodies. Excusing the more base concerns surrounding the physical power and danger that such a creature poses to a small whaling craft is his sheer size in relation to the nature of sublimity. The color of the whale also plays into the particular brand of sublimity that the whale occupies in the hearts and minds of the crew of the *Pequod*. We can derive the sublime essence of Moby Dick from the notion that the whale represents a "symbol of all that remains inaccessible to the human mind", the very importance of which lies in the definition of the sublime representing which cannot be represented in a rational sense, consuming the mind and soul completely (Becker 215). This consumption renders one utterly without comprehension as to the nature

of their terror, so the true agency and affect of the sublime (as in *Moby Dick*) “lies in its ability to disclose what cannot be explained rationally” (Becker 216).

Of initial interest is the language used to describe the whale, specifically in his namesake chapter “*Moby Dick*.” Ishmael relates to us the “qualities and profound magnitude”, but does so in a way that places greater emphasis on the obscure nature of the whale, rather than his immediate threat or presence (Becker 218). He speaks to the fact that “outblown rumors” and “half-formed foetal suggestions of supernatural agencies” transformed themselves into “all manner of morbid hints”, constructing completely “new terrors unborrowed from anything that visibly appears” (Melville 153). Such is the overemphasis, this “quality of excess” as Becker puts it, that the encounters with the whale himself pale in comparison to the rumors that were circulating, or even deliberately prescribed in the case of Ahab, about the whale itself (Becker 218). Ishmael heaps praises upon whales, acclaiming them as universal and eternal creatures, naturally a “source of astonishment, awe, and reverence, to all men at all times” (Glenn 168). The chief terror of whales in general is that “they dwell in solitude, in the inaccessible, unspeakable obscurity of the depths”, reaching “out of the bottomless profundities” (Glenn 168; Melville 295). Ismael verbalizes this as best he can in “*The Whiteness of the Whale*”, when he is reduced to “despair of putting it in a comprehensible form” (Melville 159). The sublime nature of the whale removes his ability with language, he is dumbstruck and all words rendered useless; true consumption by the sublime. Burke’s reflections on power incorporate biblical references to leviathans. Specifically

referenced is the perhaps futile struggle for power with such a beast, “Canst thou draw a leviathan with a hook?” (King James Bible, Job 41.1-2)

However, it is perhaps the color of the whale, his “whiteness wrapped in darkness” that terrifies further still (Glenn 169). He is an island of the white sublime, the culmination of all color as opposed to the complete absorption of it. In that sense, the whale can be seen as a creature with the ability to radiate every color possible in the visible spectrum – far too much for one mere mortal eyeball and mind to process. Ishmael reflects upon the impact of contrasting the seen and unseen when he says, “Though in many of its aspects this visible world seems formed in love, the invisible spheres were formed in fright” (Melville 164). While blackness and darkness, the unknowable immensity, is easily equitable to the sublime, there is an argument to be made that blinding, all-consuming light also can be terrifyingly sublime as well, “a colorless, all-color” (Melville 165). As Burke argues, “extreme light obliterates all objects” and therefore expands to a vastness that is “uncertain, confused, terrible, and sublime to the last degree” (qtd. in Glenn 170; Burke 59). It is not simply the color of a whale, then, but the color upon *that* specific whale that seems to,

awaken in any man’s soul some alarm...nameless horror concerning him, which at times by its intensity completely overpowered all the rest...so mystical and well nigh ineffable was it. (Melville 159)

Indeed, there is also a link with Frankenstein’s Creature in that whiteness, “the supernaturalism of this hue”, is interpreted by Ishmael as a link to the “one visible

quality in the aspect of the dead which most appalls the gazer...the marble pallor lingering there...that pallor of the dead" (Melville 162). Another reason for the terror that the whiteness of the whale brings is that in whiteness there is contained all manner of associations with divinity and spirituality. These associations enshroud the whale, by the nature of our assumptions and preconditioning about whiteness and its implications, in that which is thought divine, the very same divine that "though commanding worship, at the same time enforces a certain nameless terror" (Melville 161).

## Fallen Men –

### Victor Frankenstein:

Victor Frankenstein's Creature is born out of Victor's developed opinions on life and death, which "appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world" (Shelley 81-2). The Creature is born, for Mary Shelley, into "a society where every new invention tended to be connected with impiety and radicalism...ruled by strongly conservative politics and morality" (Nishiyama 625). At the heart of the novel there is an external reflection upon the societal ideas of the Enlightenment, the "doctrines of the 'new man'" and the notion that society could be perfected "through reason" (Moore's "Too Horrible for Human Eyes"). The novel, then, negatively responds to these optimistic ideas of the time, offering a stern warning against the "happy progress of humanity through scientific development" (Nishiyama 625). In the eyes of Mary Shelley, as represented by her catastrophic creation story, these ideals are fruitless and highly volatile. Although Shelley casts Victor in the role of "a blessed creator...becoming a cursed destroyed", he descends not totally into madness, as Ahab does, but into himself – specifically his external self, represented by that "living image of death" that is the Creature (Nishiyama 635; Sherwin 897). Victor's agency in his birthing of the external monstrosity operates as his separation from other villainous or monstrous characters. Unlike Ahab, whose monomaniacal drive is founded upon self-questioning that has been somewhat thrust upon him by his profession, Victor's motivations, "a need, perhaps a compulsion, to return things to an originative,

determining source” are purely self-indulgent and horribly carried out (Sherwin 890). The causality of his eventually disastrous experiments is that, he “might in the process of time...renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption” (Shelley 82). He seeks to play God, as it were. However, he is not ready, nor even able, to accept and understand correctly the “projection of man’s self” that emerges from his horrific *modus operandi* (Nishiyama 626). He refuses, in short, to “guard ourselves [himself] critically from obedience to any suggestion from within that our conscious reason could not fully justify” and therefore cannot hear the “inner voice condemning moral lapses, that [in] an earlier age [was] interpreted as the voice of God” (Bodkin 181). Important also is a reminder that the Creature is *his* creation, not an evolutionary missing link or divine addition to the world – he is the one responsible for bringing such instability of otherness into the world, for bringing the darkness out of itself. Victor’s act of creation is catastrophic in and of itself, and it places him “at the centre [*sic*] of the universe” in the sense that he has now assumed the role of God, the creator, the father from his “solitary chamber, or rather cell...workshop of filthy creation” (Nishiyama 626; Shelley 82).

Interestingly linking the Creature with his creator is the apportioning of blame and acceptance of it by Victor. His “sense of culpability for crimes not committed”, alarms us and yet does not surprise us (Moore’s “Too Horrible for Human Eyes”). It should serve to endear him further to the reader for his accepting of responsibility not *to* his Creature, but *for* its existence. Instead, it only provokes us to a warier reading of Victor’s creative actions, and the murders of William,

Justine and Henry serve as further indictment to the utterly dark and negative results of his misguided creative energies. Upon reading of William's death, Victor travels at once home to Switzerland. Nearing his home, he "resolved to visit the spot where my poor William had been murdered" (Shelley 102). In the midst of a raging storm, a "noble war in the sky", Victor has a moment of utmost release, screaming at the heavens, "William, dear angel! this is thy funeral, this thy dirge!" – whereupon the Creature emerges from the darkness, "its gigantic stature, and the deformity more hideous than belongs to humanity, instantly informed me that it was the wretch, the filthy daemon, to whom I had given life" (Shelley 103). In this mourning service of sorts, however ethereal and dramatic, the phrasing that Victor uses upon sighting the Creature denotes his own deeply rooted regret at his actions. In describing the Creature as the "filthy daemon" Victor is being remarkably accurate and appropriate for the situation and link between himself and his creation, as a daemon is defined as a "marginal or boundary being...a powerful representation of our uncertain lot" (Shelley 103; Sherwin 891). Victor experiences, as in the mountains, a sense of "shuddering horror...at the immediate felt activity of the daemon" (Bodkin 229). Furthermore, this brief sequence of events transpires into what is Victor's moment of realization, of apportioning blame upon himself, thereby transfiguring himself into a Creature-like being – made all the more monstrous by his creative agency. Victor claims his creation, at last, having spent so long fleeing from it, angry and hurt though he may be, "Alas! I had turned loose into the world a depraved wretch, whose delight was in carnage and misery" (Shelley 103). Victor's



taking up of the blame does not stop with the murder of William, but continues as the Creature further rampages and kills all those closest to him – including Justine, Henry, and Elizabeth, those he describes as “hapless victims of my unhallowed arts” (Shelley Appendix F 336). Such admittances on Victor’s part do little to endear his grief to us, for he is a victim of his own self-made misery, “the true murderer” as he terms himself in the wake of Justine being accused of William’s murder (Shelley 115).

It is this suffering of his own making that brings in the second facet of his unintentional monstrosity; he is a tragic and awful father figure. Victor, as “the [maker of] father-images may bear little relationship to the real father”, striking nothing but distance and disdain for his bastardized son when he should have engaged “predominant psychological motives” and raised the Creature fairly (Philip 64). He should have, in the nature of responsible parenting, “behaved as a creator to his creature” – that is to say, he should have loved and protected the Creature just as he had been his parents’ “plaything and their idol” (Nishiyama 629; Shelley Appendix F 321). The Creature is, upon animation, described as “innocent and helpless” in the same way that all human babies are upon being born (Shelley Appendix F 321). With that in mind, the act of fleeing one’s offspring, even such a “befouled version of the son” as the Creature is, is reprehensible in any occasion (Sherwin 885). As the Creature recounts his tale, he makes continued references to his abandonment – reading into Milton’s *Paradise Lost* his role as a pseudo-Satan, “the fitter emblem of my condition...when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the

bitter gall of envy rose within me” (Shelley 154). The Creature seeks “that justice which I vainly attempted to gain from any other being” but had been repeatedly denied (Shelley 164). The Creature, then, was “born unreasonably as a fallen creature into this world through no fault of his own” – and only through the repeated unkindness’s and rejections of humanity does he become the murderous wretch that he had been prescribed as being from the outset (Nishiyama 631). It is Victor’s abandonment of his product, his reluctant son, that lends the Creature his malice and “no sentiment but that of hatred” (Shelley 164). Victor is a monster, a greater one as the creator of two, in that he abandons his own creation out of terror – only to transform into an equally irreprehensible monster himself in his avenging the murderous vengeance of that same abandoned creation. As he continually reminds himself, out of guilt, he “had been the author of unalterable evils” and “committed deeds of mischief beyond description horrible” (Shelley 119; 117). Furthermore, in his admittances and associations with this guilt of creation, Victor transforms himself further into a monster of sorts as well. When thinking upon his creation, he becomes crazed and manic, a man whose appearance is jarred apart by his monstrous countenances. He tells us how “When I thought of him, I gnashed my teeth, my eyes became inflamed”, and that he “wandered like an evil spirit” (Shelley 119; 117). These physical transformations of grief and fear, self-loathing and radiated hatred, they link back into the physicality of his creation process, back into not only his own physical condition, when his “cheek had grown pale with study” and “my person had become emaciated with confinement”, but also the probing of

unholy places and of the “intricacies of fibers, muscles, and veins” in his search for the components of his creature (Shelley 82; 82; 81).

Enter Ahab:

*Moby-Dick's* Captain Ahab, the monomaniacal leader and “demonic grand god” of the whaling ship *Pequod*, is truly a monster of human willpower and relentlessly driven force (Glenn 179). From his physical deformities and imposing figure, to virtually every aspect of his presented character, Ahab is the ultimate schemer and self-avenger, a man who gladly “deserts the actual, or intellectual, truth of life only to express more powerfully its reality” (Bodkin 239). His obsession with Moby Dick, the famed white whale, is compelled by “irresistible force...his terrible purpose”, and is shown in his body as well as his affecting actions (Glenn 171). He operates on a seeming other plain to the mere mortals he commands, and “dominates Melville’s characterization” completely (Glenn 172). Described repeatedly in terms of royalty, as Burke’s deemed sublime “dread majesty”, Ahab radiates power and authority (Burke 67). Ahab’s radiated power is based upon his monomaniacal driven personality, and Jung’s commentary upon the psychology of the trickster-figure befits Ahab’s manipulative power, claiming that he is “a forerunner of the savior, and, like him, God, man, animal at once” (Jung 263). Furthermore, and so very aptly descriptive of Ahab, the manipulative trickster is “both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and divine being, whose chief and most alarming characteristic is his unconscious” (Jung 263).

His monstrosity is initially presented to us in his physical representation. Before that is touched upon, however, Ishmael introduces Ahab upon the quarterdeck of the Pequod. His introductory sentence, “Reality outran apprehension; Captain Ahab stood upon his quarter-deck [*sic*]”, as a physical character in the text is one that defies the limitations of human comprehension (Melville 108). Ahab’s presence brings a new element into the equation of reality – he redefines his world the moment he enters it, leaving all others out of sync and unable to understand the presence that has come amongst them. Ahab is, then, a sublime figure – a link he shares with the very creature he seeks so desperately, Moby Dick. Ahab is well-described by what Bodkin details in her chapter “Satan as Promethean Hero” as the “mortal warrior...felt to gain some significance from scars of human combat” with his reputation as a man wielding the “daemonic [*sic*] power of the superhuman leader” always enhanced through his physicality, by an “association with the tower, the pine, that bear the marks of the elements’ fury” (Bodkin 238). One sublime thing is hunting another and Captain Ahab, he who “stands alone among the millions of the peopled earth”, shall be so utterly consumed by his own “monomaniacal intensity” that it shall be the death of him, and all those who accompany him (Melville 413; Glenn 171). With Ahab, like the ocean he sails upon, there are depths unfathomable and undiscovered, and in “touching all Ahab's deeper part, every revelation partook more of significant darkness than of explanatory light” (Melville 355). Harkening back to his physical representation, Melville describes Ahab as being “like a man cut from the stake, when the fire has

overrunningly [*sic*] wasted all the limbs without consuming them” – denoting a tough, charred, perhaps much-suffered appearance to the captain (Melville 108). He is made of far sterner stuff, “shaped in an unalterable mould [*sic*]”, his body initially aligned with fire and metal – two vital components in creating the weapon of any whaling ship, the barbed harpoons that are thrown at the whales (Melville 108). He is equated with powerful forces of nature; his “slender, rod-like” scar, surrounded in preternatural mystery, seems made by “the upper lightning” that tears apart a tree whilst leaving it “still greenly alive, but branded” (Melville 108; 109; 109). He is a man who has been torn asunder, ripped in half by “an elemental strife at sea”, and such is the length and prominence of the scar that it can only be imagined as some sort of violent tear that splits his very person into two (Melville 109). He is not complete, then – or if indeed he is complete, he has been remade in the image of an imperfection. The debate as to Ahab’s completeness, his totality of self, is wrestled with continually throughout the text, but from a purely physical standpoint it is impossible for him to become whole again unless he recovers the impossible.

Ahab’s impression upon Ishmael is similar to that of a sublime temporary, “So powerfully did the whole grim aspect of Ahab affect me”, that he fails to comprehend perhaps the most sublime-related element of Ahab’s physical nature (Melville 109). His “barbaric white leg” is carved out of a polished sperm whale’s jaw (Melville 109). Ahab has taken into himself, sought to complete his torn and unwholesome body, with the very aspect of the same creature he desires so greatly to destroy. He is part whale, he relies upon that whale for his physical motion of two

kinds; the literal movement of his body, and secondly the movement of his ship – spurred on by his obsession for the white whale, who shall remain hunted until the very end. His terrifying visage is godlike, and it is fitting that his nickname is strikes of the same reverence and power as the man to which it is applied – Old Thunder. On the subject of Ahab’s religiosity, he is the God who wars against God. Ahab rages against everything, even the very “highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God” (Melville 97). He operates as the commander and captain, but also the bastardized cleric of the *Pequod*, his language carrying such religious vehemence that it engenders the crew unto his task:

All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event-in the living act, the undoubted deed-there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike though the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. (Melville 140)

He seeks “the sublime quest”, to encounter and conquer – or test himself at least – against that which he cannot see, control, or command (Glenn 178). Ahab’s voyage, it is worth mentioning, initially a “profitable whale hunt”, becomes disastrous only once Ahab “becomes involved in the unequivocal pursuit of a supernatural truth” (Wright 63). Ahab’s will is that “machinery of the Devil” that seeks to challenge that

which cannot be challenged, he simply has to know (Glenn 178). Ahab's motivations are such that "the evil power is conceived to be working as a unit it [they] will be made personal in a devil" – Ahab's motivations, stemming from deeply within himself, transfigure him into the monomaniacal and devilish protagonist that we see in *Moby-Dick* (Philip 65). Ahab knows not if anything at all lies beyond that wall, but he simply must destroy it. Continuing to an exemplary aspect of Ahab's terrifying nature, his association and obvious alignment with the Devil is another facet of his bottomless character. Ahab tempers the barbs of his own harpoon in blood, the hunt for Moby Dick is dedicated to the Devil, "No, no – no water for that; I want it of a true death-temper" (Melville 371). The ritualistic use of blood smacks of a religious duality, as on both sides of the eternal coin there is bloodshed and bloodletting for all manner of trials and temperings. Ahab's own harpoon is baptized in blood that boils at the touch of the scalding metal, that is itself a part of Ahab utilized and refined for its killing purpose. Ahab howls wickedly at the process, screaming "Ego non baptizo te in nomine patris, sed in nomine diaboli!" or as it is translated, "I baptize you not in the name of the father, but in the name of the devil!" (Melville 372) His weapon of choice, indeed his entire persona, is a Godless and fearless being; he is consumed utterly and completely by the "demonic sublime"(Glenn 178).

Ahab's obsession with the whale manifests itself in total consumption, and he is completely unable to adopt any attitude to the contrary, such as Captain Boomer of the *Samuel Enderby*, the reverse mirror of Ahab with his whale bone arm, does, "I've lowered for him once, and that has satisfied me...he's best left alone; don't you

think so, Captain?" (Melville 340) Ahab's response to this question defines his persistence, and his monstrous obsession that shall ensnare and ensure doom of his crew, "He is. But he will still be hunted, for all that. What is best let alone, that accursed thing is not always what least allures. He's all a magnet!" (Melville 340) Pursuant Ahab's language here denotes the same irresistible force that has driven him towards the white whale; Moby Dick is a magnet for Ahab. Further exploring the perhaps overly analytical scientific readings of the magnet phrase, if Ahab is continually drawn to Moby Dick by a magnetic force, then it would mean that Ahab possesses the opposite polar charge to Moby Dick – thereby attracting the both of them indefinitely to each other. As Philip's states well in his section regarding Satan and Jung's concepts of evil, "If something exists, then all types of psychological motives can, and probably will, exist in relation to it" (Philip 64). So, they are opposites and yet also determined by the laws of science, as well as Ahab's devilry, to come together and merge into something greater than the two individual entities. Ahab is the only character in the novel that can do this, for he is on a sublime quest seeking what lies beyond and within the "mysterious totality" ("Moby-Dick, the Inscrutable White Phallus" 65). Ahab's terror is not purely manifest by himself for himself, but it stems at its heart from the uncertainty that the same "ungraspable phantom of life" that spurs Ishmael and all men to go to sea (Melville 20).

Ahab's monstrosity is linked, as well, to his rejection of any deeply significant human contact, specifically from those aboard the *Pequod* who could help and heal him. Whilst Starbuck sees it as his Christian duty that Ahab be cured of a malaise,



Pip simply presents in his submersion and resulting madness what Ahab cannot do. Where Ahab wants to destroy the mystery beyond the wall, acting “completely ignorant of some of the main currents of our [his] being”, Pip “embraces it nonrationally and revels” in his wonder (Philip 183; “Moby-Dick, the Inscrutable White Phallus” 68). Ironically, Pip is the lowest ranking member of the crew, and the only one who could potentially pull Ahab back from his brink, for he has gone where Ahab desires and emerged not unscathed but seeming enlightened. The chief differences between the two characters are their approaches to that same unknown. Ahab seeks to destroy what he cannot understand while Pip, who did not choose to pursue the unknown in the “wondrous depths”, wished only to escape one terror and not exchange it for another (“Moby-Dick, the Inscrutable White Phallus” 68). Ahab, as Philip says, refuses to “gain knowledge from our [his] shadows and sin”, instead only steeling himself for further battle and engagement with his inwardly manifested and outwardly projected demons (Philip 123). Ahab makes mention of Pip’s transformation, likening him with the aforementioned dreaded white, “poor little Pop, whose drowned bones now show white” – Pip is transfigured into a being likened in color to that same sublime whiteness, the whale, that drives Ahab onward (Melville 399). Thus, in representing Pip with the whiteness so in contrast to the “blackness of his living skin”, Ahab forms Pip into the mold of simultaneous savior and motivator (Melville 399). What makes Ahab’s rejection of human contact and assistance all the more monster-like is that he recognizes and swiftly ignores Pip’s ability to heal him as the now “divine child” (“Moby-Dick, the Inscrutable White

Phallus" 68). It is the awareness and resulting shunning that makes Ahab monstrous to us – he neither seeks nor desires any assistance, his soul does not seem to want to be saved. In Pip, Ahab sees “that in thee, poor lad, which I feel too curing to my malady” (Melville 399). Pip protests, asking Ahab to “but use poor me for your one lost leg; only tread on me, sir; I ask no more, so I remain a part of ye” (Melville 399). Pip seeks to complete Ahab, to make him whole again, a notion that given the link already established between Ahab’s motivations, *Moby Dick*, and their shared bone structure is impossible.

Ahab has, despite all evidence to dissuade him, to engage “his inquiring mind...[with] knowledge of the mysteries that determine lived experience” (Becker 217). Whilst this quest by itself is not a terrifying one, and “conjures sympathy from any reader who has questioned their place in a seemingly unjust universe”, the true horror of Ahab lies in his resolute defiance and manic obsession – he takes things to the end, principled as he may be, and meets his demise as a result (Becker 223). Further engendering him to monstrosity is his lack of humanity and consideration for others, the rest of the crew (save Ishmael, somehow) surviving the sinking of the *Pequod*, and so also of Ahab’s desired discoveries.

### Conclusions:

The continued legacies of these two magnificent texts allows for continually renewed and fresh interpretation. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* are certainly both novels of their particular times and places, operating under very different conceptions and readings throughout their varied editions and histories. Of constant familiarity to readers, however, are the facets of terror and the monstrous that inhabit practically every page of these brilliant works. These notions of terror are formative of aspects of the sublime throughout all branches of philosophy, theology, and psychology. Perhaps none, however, is more brutally instructive in the terrors of the soul than literature, and the novels examined throughout the course of this essay are living, breathing testimonies to such horrors.

Environments and settings offer perhaps the best demonstrations of what is capable of bringing on the sublime terror and, thereby, the monstrous-making consumption of obsession and focus that grips both Victor Frankenstein and Captain Ahab so completely. The frames of the two novels make for interesting and terrifying reading in and of themselves. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* begins with a sublime frame for the diegesis, entirely trapped amidst the sublime landscape of the polar ice flows of the Northwest Passage. Melville's *Moby-Dick* in its entirety upon the open waters of the ocean, yet another natural body that is emblematic of the terrifying dark sublime, containing multitudes of untamed and unknown wonders. Furthermore, and in more direct relation to the monstrous, are the two creatures –

the “true” monsters – of the novels: the Creature and Moby Dick. Sub-environments in these novels also take on aspects of terror and sublimity, and the mountains of *Frankenstein* and the *Pequod* of *Moby-Dick* both offer crucial and perhaps closer reminders of the terror that literally lies right beneath our feet.

The two actual monstrosities project similar feelings of sublime consumption, drawing the chief human protagonists of the novels toward them by some unknown yet irresistible gravitas - the sublime quest. Whilst the horrific nature of the Creature stems from his created aspects - the compiled massive structure, the barely stitched skin, the superhuman abilities; the white whale is horrific because of the very notion of something sublime immersed within the sublime – that is, the white whale inhabits the fathomless and unknowable depths of the ocean. Discoloration, or indeed a totality of color, also incorporates elements of terror into these two monsters. The dead-toned flesh of the Creature is repulsive, and just as otherworldly as the massive and complete whiteness, into which many readings of sublimity and incomprehension are possible, of Moby Dick himself.

The two human elements inspire the most monstrous of the terrors simply because they are human. The nature of human fright and terror towards another is that we are privy to something we would perhaps rather not see – the darker side of ourselves, the mirrored and bastardized other. Both Victor and Ahab engage these facets, and suppress beyond reason and logic all feelings of humanity and remorse for their actions. If, in Victor’s case, they do show such feelings, it is far too late to alter the unfolding events. Whilst Victor seeks vengeance upon his own mistreated

creation, Ahab seeks beyond the plausible for the impossible. The process of discovering the darker self has begun, and even when presented with opportunities to alleviate their suffering – indeed, perhaps to resolve their incomplete natures – they completely reject the chance. Saving the self, as shown in Ahab by his interaction with Pip and Victor in his refusing to complete a partner for the Creature, is not the thing that drives these two men. What drives them is the pursuit of what cannot be pursued, what is perpetually beyond grasp and yet so greatly desired. I cannot name it, can only describe the conceptualization of what it seems to be – but for me these men are reaching out, or in Ahab’s case striking out, for God and that supreme power, if indeed anything exists.

In having their settings and characters (monsters or human) speak to the nature of denoted monstrosity, these two novels are actually speaking to the all-consuming power and terror of the sublime. The two journeys chronicled in *Frankenstein* and *Moby-Dick* are representative of “the sublime quest, undertaken by man’s own powers in the world of nature”, journeys made with the culminating goal of stripping back the self for the desire of the sought-after other (Glenn 178). However, as Glenn makes clear in her article, this same quest takes place in a Godless realm, lacking in the hereditary social constructs of Western theological doctrine. Nature is a world without Christ, and a quest for the sublime, for God, in such a world will always come to a conclusion of “failure, in isolation in a universe of death” (Glenn 178). The sublime quest, the quest for the beyond – for God, if you like – takes place in the very environment in which God finds exemplification, but is not

present. The Christian God may well have created the natural realm of sublime wonder and infinite depth, but the reality and harshness of that same realm speaks to the absence of such an overarching, sometimes benevolent, presence. The seeking God in a Godless world is the ultimate symbol of humankind's hopelessness, of our fallen selves reflected back upon us, and a continuous reminder of just how very powerless we *actually* are. These are the true horrors, the true monstrosities, of these two bastion texts. They show us our limited power, our repetitive misguidedness in seeking knowledge and control beyond our means, and terrify us in our inability to grasp our own inability. If nothing else, we are monsters chained to our own desires, and we are, despite having the Promethean fire, condemned forever to be "lost in darkness and distance" (Shelley 244).

## Annotated Bibliography

### Primary Sources –

Melville, Herman. *Moby-Dick*. Ed. Hershel Parker and Harrison Hayford. New York: Norton, 2002. Print.

Narrated by the sole survivor of the doomed voyage of the sunken and destroyed whaling ship *Pequod*, Ishmael, *Moby-Dick* touches upon all manner of dense and dark themes within literature. The most prominent of these is vengeance and the all-too-human shadows that emerge from the execution of vengeful idea into ruthless deed. *Moby-Dick* provides constant affirmation of the inherent flaws within man, with Melville going to great lengths to demonstrate this through his characters and their actions. A novel without a hero, *Moby-Dick* utilizes Ahab as a monomaniacal leader of men, driven to a selfish end. The omnipresent white whale, Moby-Dick, is the ultimate representation for misreadings of intentionality. The notions of the monstrous and the terrifying within the novel is layered and convoluted, but the chief representations lie in the leviathan and within Ahab. As the first of my primary texts for this thesis essay, *Moby-Dick* shall provide me with the bulk of my analytical material from which I draw – with the essay itself returning continually to the text of the novel.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein; Or, The Modern Prometheus*. Ed. David Lorne Macdonald and Kathleen Dorothy Scherf. Peterborough, Ont., Canada: Broadview, 2001. Print.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is an astoundingly haunting novel that tells the tragic tale of Victor Frankenstein and his harshly abandoned project, the Creature. The notion of scientific creativity and limitation is the initial seed of Victor's ambition, with the resulting abomination drawing ire and disgust from the very man who brought it into existence. A selfish birthing, the Creature's ensuing experiences of human kindness and cruelty lead him to the unfortunately violent means with which he devotes his character. The roles of the creator and the created are of paramount importance in this text, as is the repulsive nature of the Creature and his crimes. His monstrosity, and indeed Victor's, is of great interest and relevance to my thesis – and I shall focus upon the monstrosity of the creation itself, as well as the monstrous actions that result out of the creator neglecting his creation.

### **Secondary Sources –**

Adams, Michael Vannoy. "Ahab's Jonah-and-the-Whale Complex: The Fish Archetype in *Moby-Dick*." *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 28.3 (1982): 167-82. Print.

Providing a summary of Jung's Jonah-and-the-Whale complex in reference to *Moby-Dick*, chiefly regarding Captain Ahab, Adams' article provides a very solid foundation reading and application of the theory in relation to the novel's text. Discussing initially the concept of the whale as a mother figure, the "Terrible Mother" (Adams 169), Adams relates the taking of Ahab's legs as indicators of a partial devouring of the person, "the phenomenon of engulfment" (Adams 171). Within this complex is the sought reunion of a completed body, a rebirth out of violence and sin similarly



described in the literature of carnival, and this for Adams forms the basis of Ahab's quest – not vengeance, but a desired unity of himself that can never truly be.

---. "Madness and Right Reason, Extremes of One: The Shadow Archetype in Moby-Dick." *Bucknell Review* 31.2 (1988): 97-109. Print.

Jung's shadow archetype is, as Adams summarizes, "the individual's dark side or evil side, which is denied, repressed, and projected" (Adams 97). Examined in this article are those darkest of inner projections in relation to Ahab and Moby-Dick. Whilst the relationship is one of conflicting readings, Adams makes the well-reasoned point that Ahab contents his dismemberment was not accidental, as reason would dictate, but a deliberate and malicious attack with the intent to kill. Ahab's resulting vengeful quest becomes a personal endeavor, and yet not, as Adams makes the point that Ahab strikes active distance between himself and the evil ramifications of his actions. In application to this thesis, Adams' essay provides a unique and internally minded reading of character's motivations and misreading's, two crucial aspects of the Jungian archetype construction and application.

Becker, John. "The Inscrutable Sublime and Whiteness of Moby-Dick." *The Sublime*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York, NY: Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2010. 215-25. Print.

Discussing the varied definitions of the sublime, Becker attributes to *Moby-Dick* the dialogue on the nature and quality of color within the novel, particularly in reference to the White Whale itself. Becker makes detailed observations about the narratives utilized by the two focal characters of the novel, and predominantly utilizing Burke's definitions of the sublime, Becker draws from the text that Ahab

“strives to master the White Whale” (Becker 218) and Ishmael only “desires understanding” of the whale’s sublimity. In further relation to the nature of color and its role in the sublime, Becker’s assertion that it is the simultaneous absence of all color and the “the aggregate of all colors” (Becker 219) shown by the whale that stands as the most disconcerting implication of the sublime, the “balanced disposition” (Becker 221) of the thing itself.

Bodkin, Maud. *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*. London: Oxford UP, 1948. Print.

Bodkin’s most prominent work places its academic emphasis upon a variety of social and societal applications of Jung’s study of archetype construction and inhabitation. She examines everything from religious issues to notions of the female body in this text, and her specific readings of the super-ego, horror, anti-hero, and Satan all allow for deeper analysis of my two chosen texts. Whilst Bodkin’s work may be considered by some to be a very esoteric analytical piece, her work seeks to bring the field of Jung’s psychiatric work into alignment with literary analysis. It is this crux of her work that I hope to find the most useful throughout the course of my thesis essay, specifically given my studying of the constructions of horror and terror.

Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Ed. J. T. Boulton. London: Routledge and Paul, 1958. Print.

Burke’s treatise on the aesthetical complexities of the sublime and the beautiful provided the Romantic generation of poets with their terms of work. The application of Burke’s work towards the relatively more modern works of *Frankenstein* and *Moby-Dick* is both necessary and wonderfully rewarding,

specifically when examining the terror brought about by the experiencing of the sublime. Burke's work touches upon a varietal of situational impacts that the sublime and the beautiful have, specifically upon individuals, and details them with precise descriptions and informative categorizations. Furthermore, his investigations into the aforementioned notions of terror caused by the sublime experience offer fantastic material for such an essay as mine, and I plan on using that material to the fullest extent possible.

Deines, Tim. "Re-marking the Ultratranscendental in *Moby-Dick*." *Symplokē* 18.1-2 (2010): 261-77. *Project MUSE*. Web. 10 Oct. 2011.

<<https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/symploke/v018/18.1-2.deines.html>>.

Deines' article brings into focus a different aspect of the sublime in the examination of the seascape and environment as being sublime, offering a "sense of spatial and temporal dimension" (Deines 271) otherwise lacking from the novel. Drawing further still away from the traditional examination of both Ishmael and Ahab is a focus placed upon Pip's experiences in "The Castaway", and his sinking into madness and experiencing of the sublime through his isolation upon the sea. Deines also makes use of Derridean and Freudian philosophy in examining Pip's vocalizing of his new perspectives and experiences as a being labeled as "other", that in expressing his madness he is demonstrating his differences to those around him.

Gould, Stephen Jay. "The Monster's Human Nature." *Kaleidoscope* 30 (1995): 19-24. Print.

Gould's essay touches upon the issues of morality and idealism in respect the both Victor Frankenstein and the Creature. Gould examines both the novel itself as well

as film adaptations of the text, specifically 1931's classic *Frankenstein*. In his discussion of the text, specifically The Creature, Gould makes interesting points about the state of the Creature's "inherent constitution" (Gould 21) at the time of his birthing. Of interesting note is the concept that Gould highlights, stating that whilst the monster is "born capable of goodness, even with an inclination toward kindness" (Gould 22), that it is the circumstances of his initial moments as well as latter experiences that direct him toward his horrible actions. Gould claims that, as is similarly linked with Ahab and the White Whale, humans are actually the ones to blame for the monstrosity that emerges via the Creature because of their treatment and reactions to him; not the character of the Creature being intrinsically evil.

Gigante, Denise. "Facing the Ugly: The Case of "Frankenstein"" ELH 67.2 (2000): 565-87. JSTOR. Web. 12 Oct. 2011. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30031925>>.

Gigante's essay speaks, as Lancaster's does, to the "exceedingly ugly" (Gigante 565) nature of the Creature. Utilizing much of Burke's definitions for the beautiful and the ugly, Gigante describes the Creature in terms of its composition as a summation of Victor's "selecting disparate parts for their beauty rather than choosing an entire body to reanimate" (Gigante 569), thereby focusing upon the fractured element within what should otherwise be a beautiful object and work of science. Burke's definition of beauty implies smoothness and continuity, not the broken and piecemeal nature of Victor's creation. This fractured nature of the Creature's appearance lends itself to readings of the Creature as representational of man himself, as something broken and fallen – with no real chance of redemption –

despite the initial birth of the Creature bringing to light only a being that sought the care and companionship of a paternal figure.

Glenn, Barbara. "Melville and the Sublime in *Moby-Dick*." *American Literature* 48.2 (1976): 165-82. JSTOR. Web. 11 Oct. 2011. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2925070>>.

Barbara Glenn addresses the subject of the sublime and Melville's usage of it in *Moby-Dick*. Drawing upon Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Glenn focuses upon elements of scope and perspective that only serve to increase the terror for readers, from the sea as "a level plain" (Glenn 167) to the length and majesty of the great leviathans of the deep. Further touched upon in Glenn's essay are the uses of color, as well as the application of the sublime in relation to the maddened voyage upon which the *Pequod* embarks. Such a wide examination of the elements of the sublime present within *Moby-Dick* offers a brilliant platform to base research and further examination of this topic.

Heller, Louis G. "Two Pequot Names in American Literature." *American Speech* 36.1 (1961): 54-57. JSTOR. Web. 8 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3090555>>.

Providing the etymological history of the Pequot tribe, specifically in relation to the naming of Ahab's ill-fated vessel, the *Pequod*. Heller's detailed analysis of the tribe's history, one specific to the same region famed for the whaling culture that *Moby-Dick* exists in, provides an entirely new and very interesting interpretation of the named vessel. The tribe was known as a highly violent and warlike people,

Jung, Carl G. *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung - The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. 2nd ed. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1968. Print.

Despite the majority of Jung's work being drafted in essay form, this massive collection of his work reads very much as an organized scientific novel sectionalized by topic or approach. Jung's work looms large over any study concerning the construction of archetypes and examinations of the collective unconscious, and given the nature of this thesis essay it is very fitting that I incorporate some of his study into my textual analysis. His thoughts on the different types of individual rebirth, the trickster archetype, and collective unconscious inform my readings greatly, and add deeper and more beneficial planes of analytical option.

Kaplan, Carter. "Jules Verne, Herman Melville, and the 'Question of the Monster'" *Extrapolation: A Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy* 39.2 (1998): 139-47. Academic Search Premier. Web. 13 Oct. 2011.

Whilst focusing upon two great authors and their monsters, Kaplan's reflections upon *Moby-Dick* offer particular insight into the agency provided to characters in terms of them being the makers of their own monsters. Also of note is Kaplan's emphasis upon the inward focus of *Moby-Dick*, and how perhaps the greatest made monsters of all lie without our readily available selves. Interestingly, Kaplan also briefly touches upon the creature in *Frankenstein*, but only in the context of the Lockean notion that the fire of the mind being brought to earth by the "modern Prometheus" (Kaplan 145) and then transported across the Atlantic to find refinement and focus in American literature. Kaplan's essay touches upon issues of

agency and cultural relevancy that both enlighten and further inform my reading of *Moby-Dick*, and I shall utilize his ideas within my readings of character misreading's throughout the novel.

Moore, D. J. "Too Horrible for Human Eyes": Frankenstein and the Monstrous Other." *The Dark Enlightenment - Jung, Romanticism, and the Repressed Other*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2010. 71-83. Print.

In this chapter of his book, *The Dark Enlightenment*, Moore makes examinations of the relationship between creator and creation, as well as diverse readings of situational allusions or motifs utilized throughout the course of the novel. Examining the relationship between Victor and the Creature through the lens of Jung and his "collective shadow" (Moore 72), Moore states the Victor's apportionment of blame upon himself for the murderous actions of the Creature. Furthermore, Moore makes the descriptive mention of the Victor's reactions to the Creature's physical nature – denoting that he as well perhaps becomes likened to a monster himself, ravaged and crazed with fear and horror. Of crucial worth in this chapter is the association Moore provides for the Creature and the moon, connecting the Creature with characteristics of madness and lunacy, as well as with a specific hue and color of light. Such emphasis placed upon this specific color and hue likens the lunar connection to the whiteness of Moby Dick, a link I plan to examine in detail throughout the course of the essay.

---. "Moby-Dick, the Inscrutable White Phallus." *The Dark Enlightenment - Jung, Romanticism, and the Repressed Other*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2010. 53-70. Print.

This chapter of Moore's book focuses upon critiquing various theoretical schools and interpretations of the text of *Moby-Dick*. Seeking to avoid using Jung or other theorists as "a way into literary criticism" (Moore 54), Moore chooses to examine the novel from a different framework, seeking to delve into the antagonism central to the novel – Ahab's hostility towards the white whale. Examining certain repeated tropes in the novel, Moore looks at the novel's "half-veiled celebration of sexuality" (Moore 60) in relation to how the somewhat obvious symbolism of the white whale serves to further undermine and threaten Ahab, the man with one leg and a scar running desperately close to his groin. Lastly, and more in the vein of psychoanalytical work, Moore examines the two featured environments of the novel – the sea, and the land. Asserting that the whale represents the part of a psyche denied by our own consciousness, therefore the sea is the vast and unexplored unconscious – the terrifyingly great and unknowable; contrasted directly to the land that represents the security of the known sense of self (perhaps illusory) that tries to master and conceal the darker and deeper fathoms of our psyches.

Nishiyama, Kiyoshi. "Plunging into Self: An Estranged Creature of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*." *Centre and Circumference - Essays in English Romanticism*. By Kiriwara Shoten. Tokyo: Association of English Romanticism in Japan, 1995. 623-37. Print.



Nishiyama's chapter focuses upon the selfhood that Victor Frankenstein imbibes into his eventually barbaric and monstrous creation. Nishiyama argues that the Creature is not simply an entity unto itself, but that "germ of the theme" (Nishiyama 633) of the text is Victor actually seeking to destroy his other self, his bastardized doppelgänger. An interesting point that Nishiyama raises is that the drama depicted in the text of the novel is not the decay and fall of Victor Frankenstein, but of the Creature. Likening the Creature to Rousseau's natural man, Nishiyama makes the often overemphasized claim that the Creature begins as "harmless and innocent" (Nishiyama 631) and only through the rejection of affections and companionship by humans does he fall into the darkness of murder and plot. Despite the overstated nature of this argument, it is worth noting the dramatic track of the novel following the Creature's descent rather than Victor's. Such newly positioned agency offers a different and useful reading of the text.

Phillip, Howard Littleton. *Jung and The Problem of Evil*. London: Rockliff, 1958. Print.

Once again reflecting upon Jung's work in relation to societal and religious concepts, Phillip's text provides a unique approach to issues that are truly relevant to my chosen texts. With specific examinations of Biblical figures, of sin, sinning, and the shadow, Phillip's work offers sweeping yet very focused study of the darker side of us. Jung's study of archetype constructions and usage highlights both positive and negative shades of the human self, and Phillip's work hones into the minutest degree upon the latter, offering insightful and informative commentary upon the nature of our manifested evils. The human concept of evil is applied and reinvigorated

throughout the course of the two chief texts of my essay, and so Phillip's work is a crucial and vital component of my character analysis.

Sharp, Michelle Turner. "If It Be a Monster Birth: Reading and Literary Property in Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein"" *South Atlantic Review* 66.4 (2001): 70-93. JSTOR. Web. 12 Oct. 2011. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3202061>>.

Sharp's essay takes into account a drastically different examination of how the Creature comes to exhibit and embody aspects of the monstrous and the grievously scorned. Sharp looks at the impact and role that readership plays in the novel, specifically critiquing the poor and shallow readership of the Creature upon his discovering of a selection of highly significant and multifaceted texts. Sharp makes the claim that "readers come of age and fall from grace when they come to books" (Sharp 79), and such is the case claimed for the Creature – whose impressions of a fallen angel and abandoned son are based solely upon his simultaneously inaccurate and yet applicable readings of the texts he finds.

Sherwin, Paul. "Frankenstein: Creation as Catastrophe." *PMLA* 96.5 (1981): 883-903. JSTOR. Web. 11 Oct. 2011. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/462130>>.

In this article, Sherwin focuses on the act that Victor subscribes to, the act of creating and birthing "a shadow of his own casting" (Sherwin 888). Delving into Victor's reactionary behavior and gross misreading's of the Creature's intentions, Sherwin labels him an "overreacting, moralizing misreader" (Sherwin 888), citing examples including his accusatory assumptions pertaining towards several of the murders the Creature commits – grossly failing to grasp the notion that he has

abandoned his “daemon”, a spirit of both mortal and natural godly realms, the perfect term for such a creation. Furthermore, Sherwin examines the nature of Frankenstein’s quest to track and destroy his creation, looking at how it is Victor who becomes trapped in the sublime of the environs and the tirelessly pursued Creature.

Wright, Nathalia. *Melville's Use of the Bible*. 2nd ed. New York: Octagon, 1974. Print.

Herman Melville was a voracious reader, and whilst several dozen academic texts are devoted to his library records and reading habits, few focus so excellently upon his specific use of his reading knowledge as Wright’s work, *Melville’s Use of the Bible*. The Bible is *the* text of the Western literary world, informing virtually everything written in the Christian-informed societies that we inhabit. While this text covers all of Melville’s major works, the focus upon *Moby-Dick* is constant and entirely justified. Chiefly drawing upon her examinations of Ahab’s motivations and character inspirations, I hope to incorporate Wright’s excellent work into the analytical framework of my essay.