

Psychological Theories

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Nature vs Nurture

- Nature vs Nurture is a theory which has been widely discussed over the ages right from when people started to look into science.
- It has been an age old debate concerning whether people's behaviour is determined due to nature or nurture.
- Nature is 100% based around character traits passed through a families genetics, this can be shown through things such as mental illnesses etc ect
- Nurture is based around the environment an individual is put in. Say if a person is stuck in an abusive situation they may be more aggressive, defensive, lash out more or even start changing who they are because of it.

Nature vs Nurture in Frankenstein

In the novel Frankenstein we see many themes of this theory through the eyes of Mary Shelley, I find she often leans towards nurture more than anything. We see The Creature and Victor get very much affected by events that happen in their lives and they let this determine a lot of their actions and reactions to things. For example...

Victor had a very healthy childhood surrounded by stable people who loved and valued him yet when left alone he lets insanity take the wheel and he creates The Creature which he immediately abandons and lets The Creature out into the world after not knowing if The Creature is dangerous in anyway.

The Creature lets his rejection and abandonment issues affect his actions and we see this when he turns to violence, at first he is not violent and he is good but he lets the abuse he faces cloud his judgment and he starts to murder innocent people to get to Victor.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Abraham Maslow created this theory he observed that lower needs must be met before a person can be motivated to achieve higher desires.
- Psychological Needs are related to the maintenance of the body and survival, e.g. having clean air, food, water being warm and getting enough sleep. This is usually found at the bottom of the hierarchy of needs pyramid.
- His hierarchy is based on this pyramid he created in which you cannot have the higher ones without first accomplishing the lower ones for example you can't have love and belonging until your safety and physiological needs have been achieved.



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in Frankenstein

In the novel Frankenstein we can look at both The Creature and Victor to see how their needs and accomplishments of the 5 needs differ...

Frankenstein at the start of the Novel when working on The Creature's body had accomplished all 5. He was provided with the first three and as his family were all well respected and considered to be "upper class" most held him in high regards. This means that his ambitions when trying to create the creature were very easily achieved although after he had accomplished his goal he very much fluctuated between the hierarchy of needs as his ambitions slowly decayed his vision of himself.

The Creature however had only accomplished the very first two, he seeks to achieve love and belonging but cannot as his appearance inspires too much fear amongst other beings. He seeks out Victor to craft him another being like himself but Victor refuses him so he can never move past the third step.



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

First 1,000 Days

It is said that how well a child is cared for and how well they are nourished in the first 1,000 days has a huge affect on how the child will be able to grow and develop. The first 1,000 days is the optimum time to develop things such as health, growth and neurodevelopment which will then set up the foundations for the rest of our lives. There have been studies done into countries that have a high poverty and malnutrition. In these countries babies during their first 1,000 days grow up with a weaker foundation meaning that later in life they are more likely to have an earlier mortality rate and a loss in neurodevelopment. This just proves that us as humans are highly influenced by our environments in the first 1,000 days then in the rest of our lives.

First 1000 Days in Frankenstein

The first 1,000 days concept has been used throughout the novel Frankenstein by Mary Shelley. In the beginning of the Creatures life we are taken through a series of events of how he learns to do things. This is his version of the 1,000 days concept. However, he is different to us due to the fact that he is a fully functional being who is only mentally developing and not physically. This means that for the Creature he is mainly developing his feelings, knowledge and survival instinct like warmth, food, shelter etc. the first 1,000 days was highly important for the Creature for it allowed him to survive and then thrive in the wild.

Freud's “ID EGO + SUPEREGO”

Freud's single most enduring and important idea was that the human psyche(personality) has more than one aspect.

Freud's personality theory saw the psyche structured into three parts, the id, ego and superego. The ID is the primitive part of the brain that contains the desires and primitive feelings the Superego is our moral conscience and Ego is where we think it balances the two and allow us to balance between the desires of both the Superego and the ID.

Imagine you get into a fight your Superego is telling you fighting is wrong and you should sit down and enjoy a nice picnic with them and watch the sunshine. Your ID is telling you to smack the douche in the head for interfering with you. Your ego balances the two out.

Freud's “ID EGO + SUPEREGO” in Frankenstein

The interesting part about Freud's theory is that it is not always your ego in control. The time you lost it at your parents that was your ID in control. The day you offered the beggar change on the street that was your superego in control.

Frankenstein is often considered a metaphor for Freud's ID EGO and SUPEREGO Theory. At the start of the book he is in control and manages to make decisions using his ego however towards the end he loses control of himself and begins to use his ID more.

