

Romantic Writings week 11

Also see the handout

Influences

- The sublime as an element in Shelley's novel, the image of Mont Blanc
- Humphrey Davies' writings on science
- Stylistically influenced by letters, journal entries
- 'Pygmalion and Galatea' – creating life from a statue, about change, education
- Tabula rasa – not born good or evil, you absorb what you have

Structure

- Gothic novels often have a frame narrative. Like an onion, layers and layers, letters at the start are used to set you off balance and begin this structure

Genre

- Is it a sci fi? Is it a gothic novel?

Characters

- Walton as an 'over-reacher'
- Frankenstein and Walton are quite similar in that they both wish to push the bounds of knowledge, links to the 'over-reacher' ideas.

Links to other texts

- Links to Dr. Faustus, man trying to play God.
- Quotation from paradise lost at the start. Adam asks the same questions as the creature. All people suffer, it is part of the human condition that none of us know the reason we are here.

Close analysis of the text

- Frankenstein shows naked ambition in chapter 3
- Chapter four shows that Shelley abdicates science but says even this early on that you must be careful about which you choose
 - o She also shows a very male Victor through his ambition and arrogance, another example of overreaching
 - o Can look at the difference between Elizabeth's upbringing and Frankenstein's to evidence this
- Victor becomes someone that he himself hates because of the disgusting things he is doing to create his monster.
 - o 'often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation,'¹

¹ Shelley, Mary, *Frankenstein* pp. 106