

Frankenstein

by Mary Shelley

1818 - first edition

1831 - revised



YOU
WOULDN'T
UNDERSTAND

NOTABLE FEATURES . . .



- sublime imagery
- Biblical allusions
- frame narrative



- quest structure
- Gothic elements
- Romantic ideals



- distortion of reality
- investigation of a mystery
- tragic hero

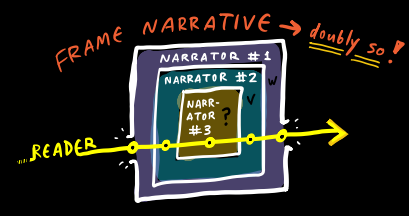
Byronic
archetype



the **SUBLIME** of **TERROR** — *sublimity*
 a mixture of **BEAUTY** & **TERROR** — *inconceivably so!*
Wow!

the LITERARY QUEST

- a questor
- an intended destination
- a stated goal/purpose
- trials and challenges on the way
- the REAL purpose (usually self-knowledge)



Biblical allusions

God ^{Creator} → **Lucifer/Satan**
Adam & Eve → ^{creation}

"tragedy"

TRAGIC FIGURES

- have a tragic flaw (hamartia)
- cause suffering for others — and most severely — for themselves

1764 - 1820 Gothic fiction

- what's spooky? *why?*
- MYSTERIOUS VIBES
 - SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS
 - GLOOMY SETTINGS
 - ATMOSPHERE OF HORROR | *the UNKNOWN*

1798 - 1832 Romanticism...

REASON	EMOTION *
SCIENCE	NATURE
ORDER	IMAGINATION
SOCIETY	INDIVIDUAL *
RULES	FREEDOM

aristocrats	<i>the COMMON PERSON!</i>
institutions	RESIST CONFORMITY!
limitations	POSSIBILITIES!
ignorance	INNOCENCE!
restraint	SPONTANEITY!
objectivity	SUBJECTIVITY!



Thematic Motifs

- ▶ the CHOICE between AMBITION & PASSIVITY
- ▶ the uncertain dichotomy of INNOCENCE & MONSTROSITY
- ▶ the EMOTIONAL fallout of INTIMACY / CONNECTEDNESS vs. ISOLATION / ALIENATION
- ▶ the Romantic, restorative SUBLIMITY of NATURE
- ▶ the potent POWER of KNOWLEDGE & SECRECY



quick run-down of the archetype...

- distaste for existing institutions and social norms
- conflicting emotions / moodiness
- highly intelligent / cunning
- critical of self
- troubled past / painful present
- self-destructive tendencies
- an outsider / loner
- "mad, bad, and dangerous to know"



I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion. Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world.

← Mary Shelley on the nightmare vision that inspired the novel

To this day, nobody has made the book, but the book became my bible, because what Mary Shelley wrote was the quintessential sense of isolation you have as a kid. It's the quintessential teenage book. 'You don't belong. You were brought to this world by people that don't care for you and you are thrown into a world of pain and suffering, and tears and hunger, and you learn to talk...! It's an amazing book written by a teenage girl. It's mind blowing.

← Guillermo Del Toro (Den of Geek interview)