

## **Assignments for *Frankenstein***

### **Expectations:**

First, and most importantly, I expect there to be thoughtful, pertinent conversation about the readings daily. In order to help this process along, I will provide you with several questions to think about as you read every evening that we will discuss in class the next day. If you think about the topics as you read, then you will be prepared to contribute to the conversation.

Every evening you will record your questions, observations, and ruminations on the assigned reading in a dual-entry journal. A dual-entry journal entry will consist of a page divided into two columns: one for jotting down a passage from the text, complete with page numbers, and the other for responding to the passage. Read the questions before reading the chapter. This will help focus your reading and help you find good quotes for your journal. You do not have to answer each of the questions, they are there to guide you. Feel free to use them as prompts for your journal if you like.

### **In-Class Writing Assignments**

At the beginning of each class you will have five minutes to construct a response to a question on the board. The question will pertain to the previous night's reading and will fulfill many different roles—test your comprehension, exercise your critical thinking, practice your essay skills, and provide a jumping-off point for discussion.

Since you have five minutes to construct and complete a response, this will not be a formal essay, will not be critical of spelling, and will not focus on “right answers” to the extent a formal essay would. Instead, what will be included in a well-written in-class assignment are three elements: a claim (thesis), evidence from the text that supports your claim, and an explanation of how the evidence you've chosen supports your claim.

### **Assessment:**

Your grade for this unit will be based on portfolios consisting of the following:

- A selection of your in-class writing assignments (pick the ones you like the most)
- A selection of your dual journal entries
- An essay (topics will be discussed later)
- Class participation

### **Essential Questions:**

These are the questions that the text raises and that we will go revisit as we read the text:

- What does it mean to be human?
- Where do the benefits of education and technology end?
- What role does society and/ or family play in the creation of a human?

## Guiding Questions

Use the following questions to guide your reading, your thinking, and your journaling as you read the text.

### Letters 1-4

How did you feel reading it? What do you think was the mood of the novel? (look at the first sentence!)

The setting is not limited to just the geography or location of the novel, but it can also include the occupations of the main characters, the period in which the story takes place, and the mental and emotional conditions of the characters. Based on all of that, what is the setting of Frankenstein?

--geographical—

--occupational—

--time period—

--mental and emotional conditions—

--How do you feel the setting effects the tone?

Who is telling this story? (Walton!) Does it make a difference? It made a difference to Shelley—could she have started the novel with chapter 1?

Be on the lookout for similarities between Victor and Walton. What did you find?

Why is having a friend so important to Walton, what did he say about friendship before Victor arrived?

How does Walton, who is at the beginning of his quest, view the quest for knowledge/technology?

How does Victor view his quest for knowledge/technology at the beginning of his quest?

Are they similar? How does Victor view his quest at the end?

### Volume 1 Chapters 1-3

Even though Victor is narrating the story, keep in mind that this entire story is being told in letters by Walton to his sister.

Think about the “Telephone Game”. What does the telephone game tell us about trusting someone else to accurately convey another person’s words? This ambiguity is raised by the insertion of a frame narrative into the novel.

How does Walton view Victor? How might Walton’s view of Victor influence his “remembering” of what Victor says?

How do *you* view Victor? Why?

How does Victor describe his family? What is the effect of his mother’s death?

How does Victor view learning and education? How does Walton, who is at the beginning of his quest, view the quest for knowledge/technology? How does Victor view his quest for knowledge/technology at the beginning of his quest? Are they similar? How does Victor view his quest at the end?

## **Chapters 4-5**

As you read the account of the creation, look for words or ideas that are repeated, emphasized, contrasted, etc.

Consider labor to mean not only “work” but is also related to childbirth. Are there any similarities between what Victor is doing and what occurs at childbirth? Are there any differences?

What do you make of Victor’s dream?

## **Chapters 6-7**

In Elizabeth’s letter there is a discussion of Republics versus Monarchies. Why? What does it say about the two, how does she compare them. Consider what we talked about in our discussion of Romanticism. How would a Romantic view Elizabeth’s Republic? What would a Romantic say about the Frankenstein family’s treatment of Justine?

--What effect does Elizabeth’s letter have on Victor? Why?

How does the setting reflect Victor’s mood?

Notice the change in setting from pg. 74-75. Why is there this change? What does it signal to you as a reader? What happens immediately after the change in weather?

--Victor knows the truth about his brother’s murderer. Who does everyone else think murdered William? Why? Victor knows the truth, why doesn’t he explain and clear Justine’s name?

--Consider what Elizabeth said about Justine in her letter and Justine’s relationship to the family. Why is it so easy for the family to believe she is guilty?

Shelley is commenting on the Justice of Elizabeth’s Republic through Justine

If Elizabeth’s view of the Republic and Victor’s father’s comment at the very end of the chapter are true, what do you think will happen to Justine?

## **Volume 1 Chapter 8—Volume 2 Chapter 1**

What is the Creature’s demeanor when he approaches Victor?

How is this different than what you expected?

## **Chapters 2-4**

What is the Creature’s demeanor when he approaches Victor?

How is this different than what you expected?

--How does the Creature describe himself and his situation how does this relate to the themes of isolation and justice?

--Victor calls the Creature his enemy. Why?

--Why does the Creature say Victor should have compassion and listen to his story?

Does he deserve Victor's compassion?  
Who does Victor represent to the Creature?  
Do you have compassion for the Creature?  
Why or why not?

--What are the Creature's first experiences? What do they remind you of?  
Is Victor even mentioned? Why not?

--How do people react to the Creature when they see him? Can you blame them? Are they right?

--Why does the Creature steal? He has broken the law, does he deserve to be punished?

--How does the Creature view the people? Is he right? Can you blame him?

--What causes all of the Creature's difficulties?  
What are some of the things he experiences?

--Judging from the text, what do you think Shelley believes is the cause of crime? How does this fit with the Romantic ideal?

## **Chapters 5- 7**

How does the Creature get anything he has? Does he think this is wrong? Do you? Do you see any alternatives for him? He does stop stealing on page 114. Why?

How does the Creature's reformation relate to the theme of isolation?

--The Creature learns morals from the cottagers, what else does he learn?  
Why is learning to speak important to the Creature?

--How does the Creature feel towards the cottagers? Why?  
What does this say about the Creature?

--Let's talk about the Creature's education. How does the Creature learn to read?  
Is this similar to your education? What does this say about the Creature?  
How does he learn about human society?

--At the end of the chapter, how does the Creature view the world, the De Lacey's and himself? What does he try to do? What do you think about his plan? Why did it fail? What would you have done differently?  
Do you think there could have been a different outcome?

## **Chapters 8-9**

What is the Creature's reaction to the rejection of the De Lacey's?

How does he feel toward all humanity now?

Was this his final decision?

What happened to his idea?

How did this event effect the Creature? Why? What does Shelley say happens and why?

--What does the Creature decide to do & Why?

Is the Creature evil?

What is his reward when he attempts good?

--When he meets William, what happens?

Did he intend to kill William?

How does he feel after William is dead? Why?

Is the Creature justified?

--Why does the Creature plant the evidence on Justine?

What does the Creature say about his reasoning?

What is going on and what is Shelley trying to say is the root of the Creature's evil?

--What does the Creature ask for and why?

What is Victor's response?

What are the Creature's arguments and what does Victor finally say? Why?

### **Volume 3 Chapters 1-2**

Compare and contrast the two creation processes described in the novel examining the theme of isolation, the effects of setting/nature, childbirth, and the health of Victor.

### **Chapters 3-4**

Explain the similarities between Pandora and Victor's fears if he created a female companion for the Creature?

--Do you think Victor did the right thing? Do you think Shelley thinks Victor did the right thing?

--The enraged Creature murders Clerval and Victor is accused of the murder. Consider the evidence stacked against Victor and the evidence used against Justine. Using your expertise in these two cases, and presuming you had to find one guilty based only on the evidence presented to the court, which one would you as a member of the jury find guilty? Why is Victor acquitted?

Do you think Victor's status had anything to do with his acquittal? What further comment on justice does Shelley make here?

### **Chapters 5-6**

Find Victor's descriptions of himself throughout the 2 chapters.

Based on this list, what is Shelley comparing Victor to? Why? Who is the real monster?

--Throughout the novel, Victor has been evolving into the monster. Consider the language used when he reaches the Irish shore describing how the villagers greet him.

Consider the description of Victor's father's death, who does it say caused it?

Compare Victor's experience at the police station with the Creature's experience demanding a consort on the mountain.

--Why do you think Shelley links Victor and the Creature so closely? Since Victor is the man of science and technology, do you think Shelley is commenting on technology? If so, what?

## **Chapter 7**

Why does Victor spend the rest of his life chasing the Creature? What effect does this quest have on Victor? How does Victor die? Is he happy or at peace? How does he see himself?

--Why does the Creature allow Victor to follow him and protect him when it is very clear that he could easily escape Victor at any time?

How does the Creature die? Is he happy or at peace?

How does he see himself?

--The novel ends as it begins: with Walton writing letters to his sister. How far can we trust the story, how accurate is it?

By comparing the Creature at the end of the novel—seen only through the eyes of Walton—and the Creature throughout the rest of the novel—seen through Victor's eyes who is in turn view through Walton's eyes—we can get an idea of the narrator(s) reliability. Do the two depictions match up?

--Who do you think the hero of the novel is? Why do you feel that way? Do you feel the frame narrative has shaped your opinion of the characters? How so?

# Prometheus and Pandora

## Taken from Bullfinch's Mythology

<http://www.webcom.com/shownet/medea/bulfinch/bull2.html>

THE creation of the world is a problem naturally fitted to excite the liveliest interest of man, its inhabitant. The ancient pagans, not having the information on the subject which we derive from the pages of Scripture, had their own way of telling the story, which is as follows:

Before earth and sea and heaven were created, all things wore one aspect, to which we give the name of Chaos - a confused and shapeless mass, nothing but dead weight, in which, however, slumbered the seeds of things. Earth, sea, and air were all mixed up together; so the earth was not solid, the sea was not fluid, and the air was not transparent. God and Nature at last interposed, and put an end to this discord, separating earth from sea, and heaven from both. The fiery part, being the lightest, sprang up, and formed the skies; the air was next in weight and place. The earth, being heavier, sank below; and the water took the lowest place, and buoyed up the earth.

Here some god - it is not known which - gave his good offices in arranging and disposing the earth. He appointed rivers and bays their places, raised mountains, scooped out valleys, distributed woods, fountains, fertile fields. and stony plains. The air being cleared, the stars began to appear, fishes took possession of the sea, birds of the air, and four-footed beasts of the land.

But a nobler animal was wanted, and Man was made. It is not known whether the creator made him of divine materials, or whether in the earth, so lately separated from heaven, there lurked still some heavenly seeds. Prometheus took some of this earth, and kneading it up with water, made man in the image of the gods. He gave him an upright stature, so that while all other animals turn their faces downward, and look to the earth, he raises his to heaven, and gazes on the stars.

Prometheus was one of the Titans, a gigantic race, who inhabited the earth before the creation of man. To him and his brother Epimetheus was committed the office of making man, and providing him and all other animals with the faculties necessary for their preservation. Epimetheus undertook to do this, and Prometheus was to overlook his work, when it was done. Epimetheus accordingly proceeded to bestow upon the different animals the various gifts of courage, strength, swiftness, sagacity; wings to one, claws to another, a shelly covering to a third, etc. But when man came to be provided for, who was to be superior to all other animals, Epimetheus had been so prodigal of his resources that he had nothing left to bestow upon him. In his perplexity he resorted to his brother Prometheus, who, with the aid of Minerva (Athena), went up to heaven, and lighted his torch at the chariot of the sun. and brought down fire to man. With this gift man was more than a match for all other animals. It enabled him to make weapons wherewith to subdue them; tools with which to cultivate the earth; to warm his dwelling, so as to be comparatively independent of climate; and finally to introduce the arts and to coin money, the means of trade and commerce. [Prometheus' gift put him at odds with Zeus though. Zeus had declared that man was not to have fire, for fear that man would equal the gods.]

Woman was not yet made. The story (absurd enough!) is that Jupiter (Zeus) made her, and sent her to Prometheus and his brother, to punish them for their presumption in stealing fire from heaven; and man, for accepting the gift. The first woman was named Pandora. She was made in heaven, every god contributing something to perfect her. Venus gave her beauty, Mercury persuasion, Apollo music, etc. Thus equipped, she was conveyed to earth, and presented to Epimetheus, who gladly accepted her, though cautioned by his brother to beware of Jupiter and his gifts. Epimetheus had in his house a jar, in which were kept certain noxious articles for which, in fitting man for his new abode, he had had no occasion.

Pandora was seized with an eager curiosity to know what this jar contained; and one day she slipped off the cover and looked in. [image:28K (J.W. Waterhouse)] Forthwith there escaped a multitude of plagues for hapless man,- such as gout, rheumatism, and colic for his body, and envy, spite, and revenge for his mind,- and scattered themselves far and wide. Pandora hastened to replace the lid! but, alas! the whole contents of the jar had escaped, one thing only excepted, which lay at the bottom, and that was hope. So we see at this day, whatever evils are abroad, hope never entirely leaves us; and while we have that, no amount of other ills can make us completely wretched.

[see also: Hesiod's *Works and Days*]

[see also: Hesiod's *Theogony*]

The comparison of Eve to Pandora is too obvious to have escaped Milton, who introduces it in Book IV. of "Paradise Lost":

"More lovely than Pandora, whom the gods  
Endowed with all their gifts; and O, too like  
In sad event, when to the unwiser son  
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she insnared  
Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged  
On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire."

Prometheus and Epimetheus were sons of Iapetus, which Milton changes to Japhet.

Prometheus has been a favorite subject with the poets. He is represented as the friend of mankind, who interposed in their behalf when Jove was incensed against them, and who taught them civilization and the arts. But as, in so doing, he transgressed the will of Jupiter, he drew down on himself the anger of the ruler of gods and men. Jupiter had him chained to a rock on Mount Caucasus, where a vulture preyed on his liver, which was renewed as fast as devoured. This state of torment might have been brought to an end at any time by Prometheus, if he had been willing, to submit to his oppressor; for he possessed a secret which involved the stability of Jove's throne, and if he would have revealed it, he might have been at once taken into favor. But that he disdained to do. He has therefore become the symbol of magnanimous endurance of unmerited suffering, and strength of will resisting oppression.



# **PARADISE LOST ~ A BRIEF SUMMARY**

## **Taken from the “Paradise Lost Study guide**

**<http://www.paradiselost.org/>**

© 1999 . New Arts Library . All rights reserved

The following summary is copyright protected. It may be quoted in part or whole, so long as the source is credited, which is NEW ARTS LIBRARY.

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Paradise Lost is about Adam and Eve--how they came to be created and how they came to lose their place in the Garden of Eden, also called Paradise. It's the same story you find in the first pages of Genesis, expanded by Milton into a very long, detailed, narrative poem. It also includes the story of the origin of Satan. Originally, he was called Lucifer, an angel in heaven who led his followers in a war against God, and was ultimately sent with them to hell. Thirst for revenge led him to cause man's downfall by turning into a serpent and tempting Eve to eat the forbidden fruit.

---

### **SUMMARY**

The story opens in hell, where Satan and his followers are recovering from defeat in a war they waged against God. They build a palace, called Pandemonium, where they hold council to determine whether or not to return to battle. Instead they decide to explore a new world prophesied to be created, where a safer course of revenge can be planned. Satan undertakes the mission alone. At the gate of hell, he meets his offspring, Sin and Death, who unbar the gates for him. He journeys across chaos till he sees the new universe floating near the larger globe which is heaven. God sees Satan flying towards this world and foretells the fall of man. His Son, who sits at his right hand, offers to sacrifice himself for man's salvation. Meanwhile, Satan enters the new universe. He flies to the sun, where he tricks an angel, Uriel, into showing him the way to man's home.

Satan gains entrance into the Garden of Eden, where he finds Adam and Eve and becomes jealous of them. He overhears them speak of God's commandment that they should not eat the forbidden fruit. Uriel warns Gabriel and his angels, who are guarding the gate of Paradise, of Satan's presence. Satan is apprehended by them and banished from Eden. God sends Raphael to warn Adam and Eve about Satan. Raphael recounts to them how jealousy against the Son of God led a once favored angel to wage war against God in heaven, and how the Son, Messiah, cast him and his followers into hell. He relates how the world was created so mankind could one day replace the fallen angels in heaven.

Satan returns to earth, and enters a serpent. Finding Eve alone he induces her to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. Adam, resigned to join in her fate, eats also. Their innocence is lost and they become aware of their nakedness. In shame and despair, they become hostile to each other. The Son of God descends to earth to judge the sinners, mercifully delaying their sentence of death. Sin and Death, sensing Satan's success, build a highway to earth, their new home. Upon his return to hell, instead of a celebration of victory, Satan and his crew are turned into serpents as punishment. Adam reconciles with Eve. God sends Michael to expel the pair from Paradise, but first to reveal to Adam future events resulting from his sin. Adam is saddened by these visions, but ultimately revived by revelations of the future coming of the Savior of mankind. In sadness, mitigated with hope, Adam and Eve are sent away from the Garden of Paradise.

## The Epigraph

An epigraph is a quotation set at the beginning of a literary work or one of its divisions to suggest its theme. *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley, begins with an epigraphs. Take 5 minutes to examine the epigraph and write down your thoughts, impressions, and what themes it might suggest. When you are finished, discuss your impressions with others in a small group (3-4 people).

Consider the following:

- What are your impressions of the speaker (Adam)?
- What are the circumstances surrounding the comment?
- What do you think would be an appropriate response?
- How is it related to other allusions we have discussed? How is it different?
- The epigraph to *Frankenstein* is from *Paradise Lost*. Based on your reading last night, who do you think said that? (Adam). The Creature in the novel is going to identify with both Adam and with Satan. The Adam reference makes sense, but why do you think he will identify with Satan?
- The writers of the Romantic period read *Paradise Lost* and thought that Satan was a hero in the book—he was fighting against oppression and trying to give the gift of knowledge to humanity, which the Romantics saw as being withheld unfairly by God. Sounds a little like Prometheus.
- Given that Shelley was a Romantic and included both of these literary references, what do you think will be her attitude toward Victor Frankenstein, the main character in the novel?

Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay

To mould me man? Did I solicit thee

From darkness to promote me?

— *Paradise Lost*, X, 743-45

After you have completed your discussion, what do you think the epigraph suggests about themes in *Frankenstein*?