**Themes**

*Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.*

**Dangerous Knowledge**

The pursuit of knowledge is at the heart of *Frankenstein,*as Victor attempts to surge beyond accepted human limits and access the secret of life. Likewise, Robert Walton attempts to surpass previous human explorations by endeavoring to reach the North Pole. This ruthless pursuit of knowledge proves dangerous, as Victor’s act of creation eventually results in the destruction of everyone dear to him, and Walton finds himself perilously trapped between sheets of ice. Whereas Victor’s obsessive hatred of the monster drives him to his death, Walton ultimately pulls back from his treacherous mission, having learned from Victor’s example how destructive the thirst for knowledge can be.

**Sublime Nature**

The sublime natural world, embraced by Romanticism (late eighteenth century to mid-nineteenth century) as a source of unrestrained emotional experience for the individual, initially offers characters the possibility of spiritual renewal. Mired in depression and remorse after the deaths of William and Justine, for which he feels responsible, Victor heads to the mountains to lift his spirits.

Likewise, after a hellish winter of cold and abandonment, the monster feels his heart lighten as spring arrives. The influence of nature on mood is evident throughout the novel, but for Victor, the natural world’s power to console him wanes when he realizes that the monster will haunt him no matter where he goes. At the end of the story, as Victor chases the monster obsessively, nature, in the form of the Arctic desert, functions simply as the symbolic backdrop for his primal struggle against the monster. In a way we can say that this last landscape is as bleak as Victor´s ultimate destiny.

**Monstrosity**

Obviously, this theme pervades the entire novel as the monster lies at the centre of the action. Eight feet tall and hideously ugly, the monster is rejected by society. However, its monstrosity results not only from his grotesque appearance but also from the unnatural manner of its creation, which involves the secretive animation of a mix of stolen body parts and strange chemicals and electricity. He is a product not of collaborative scientific effort but of dark, supernatural workings and the sole limitless ambition of a scientist to play God.

The monster is only the most literal of a number of monstrous entities in the novel, including the knowledge that Victor used to create the monster. One can argue that Victor himself is a kind of monster, as his ambition, secrecy, and selfishness alienate him from human society. Ordinary on the outside, he may be the true “monster” inside, as he is eventually consumed by an obsessive hatred of his creation.

**Secrecy**

Victor conceives of science as a mystery to be probed; its secrets, once discovered, must be jealously guarded. Victor’s entire obsession with creating life is shrouded in secrecy, and his obsession with destroying the monster remains equally secret until Walton hears his tale.

Whereas Victor continues in his secrecy out of shame and guilt, the monster is forced into seclusion by his grotesque appearance. Walton serves as the final confessor for both, and their tragic relationship becomes immortalized in Walton’s letters. In confessing all just before he dies, Victor escapes the stifling secrecy that has ruined his life. Likewise, the monster takes advantage of Walton’s presence to forge a human connection, hoping desperately that at last someone will understand, and empathize with his miserable existence.

**Theme of Parental responsibility and Nurture**

The theme e of parental neglect and their responsibilities to nurture their children. What is Victor’s crime? He has usurped the role of God and has created a Being in complete violation of natural laws. But as some critics feel that his more heinous crime is his abandoning his creation. Normally when children are born, they are looked after, their parents take full responsibility of rearing and nurturing them till they become fully familiar with the world they are brought into. But what does Victor do? He animates dead matter and creates a Being (though ugly in shape) and in complete horror abandons him in the world of which he has no idea and where he is totally alien. But when he observes the Being, he is so horrified that he at once rushes out of his workshop, ignoring his responsibility to nurture him. The Being educates by himself through his direct experiences with nature and the villagers he comes across, feeding himself on roots, figs and nuts, and he learns the use of language by constantly listening to the blind man´s family. It is during the Frankenstein family’s visit to the valley of Chamounix that Victor has an encounter with the monster as he goes alone to the summit of Montanvert. At first there is an exchange of harsh words, but the monster over-powers Victor with the eloquent use of the language and forces him to listen to him. Victor was still furious, but the monster’s rhetoric’s compelled him to listen to his tale. And after having listened to the monster’s reasoned arguments, Victor understood his big mistake- his lack of parental responsibility.

The monster then related all his tale from the time of his creation to the present. His account was the tale of self-education, his suffering at the hands of the people whom he had done no harm. The monster reveals how the injustices he suffered made him violent. The monster made Victor understand that only creating is not sufficient, but nurturing is important - which the doctor certainly failed to do. And the result is the monster’s violent form.

to nurture› to take [care](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/care) of, [feed](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/feed), and [protect](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/protect) someone or something, [especially](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/especially) [young](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/young) [children](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/children) or [plants](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/plant), and [help](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/help) him, her, or it to [develop](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/develop):

She [wants](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/wants) to [stay](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/stay) at [home](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/home) and nurture her [children](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/children).

a [carefully](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/carefully) nurtured [garden](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/garden)