

WALTON'S STORY:  
VIEWING FRANKENSTEIN'S NARRATIVE FROM THE OUTER FRAME

—  
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Walton's Story: Viewing *Frankenstein's* Narrative from the Outer Frame

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The College of Graduate Studies

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Masters of Arts

Stuart Arkovitz

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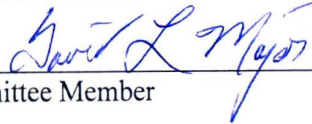
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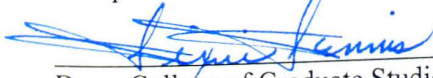


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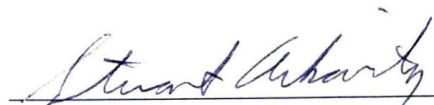


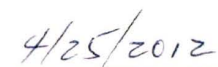
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STUART ARKOVITZ. Walton's Story: Viewing *Frankenstein's* Narrative from the Outer Frame (under the direction of DR. KENNETH CERVELLI.)

Critical Purpose: A close scrutiny of Walton's letters to Margaret in the outer narrative frame of *Frankenstein* reveals a persona so similar to both Victor and the Creature, it cannot be coincidental. Indeed, Walton retains a presence throughout the novel.

My conviction of Walton's significance, both as the narrator and as a character in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* resulted from two successive readings in the first two semesters of my graduate studies: first in a Romantic Studies survey course, where I read the 1818 edition. Then I read the 1831 edition, assigned in a Critical Theory course. Besides noting the textual differences that were more remarkable than I had anticipated, I also determined that the discussion time allocated for the combined readings could never satiate my growing hunger to entertain the overflowing cauldron of analytical possibility the novel provokes.

My fascination with Walton was ignited after the second reading when Dr. David Guest opened the discussion with what seemed a simple question at the time: *How might Walton, Victor, and the Creature be alike?* We started pointing out some similarities, like their singular educations, child-like impulsiveness, and inability to take responsibility for their actions. As the momentum increased, so did the list, to such a degree, that the three almost seemed the same. Holding on to this notion, and knowing that Walton ultimately speaks on behalf of the two more popular characters, I determined to get as familiar with him as the text would allow. After repeated readings of Walton's letters, I also noted how Letters I-III reveal the better part of Walton's background and character, just as Chapters I-III of Volume I reveal Victor's.

In trying to conceive the structure of *Frankenstein's* three part narrative frame with Walton as the external narrator, a linear, box-like structure would not be sufficient to illustrate how he might retain a perpetual influence on Victor and the Creature's narratives. For Walton to remain integral and not get eclipsed once Victor's story commences, the outer frame, or Walton's story, should surround and thus *contain* the other two narrations, as opposed to merely serving as bookends; hence, the frame should be concentric. I was both pleased and relieved to find that many critics take a like view of the narrative frame.

I next considered what possible psychology this concentric view might support the theory that the three characters might be one and the same. If they comprise a single consciousness, within which Walton is the ego, then Victor and the Creature would be aspects of his consciousness, made manifest out of some kind of necessity. And given Walton's desperation for an empathetic friend just like himself—only (in his eyes) better—Victor could be the alter ego Walton projects, out of necessity, to help him “amend [his] plans.”

My speculations were further supported by the undeniable fact that, with any certainty, only Walton personally encounters both Victor and The Creature yet—interestingly—not concurrently. Furthermore, Walton encounters them in the remote and unknown Arctic, where sensory deprivations could readily give way to all-consuming “anxious thoughts.” Therefore, if Walton projects Victor (as a deprived child might an invisible friend) then The Creature comes in to play as a force—and a monstrous one at that—to counter the destructive force of the alter ego.



Jung suggests that his “shadow archetype,” the dark, repressed side of the individual unconscious, can appear quite monstrous once recognized, especially in the case of an unhealthy ego—like Walton’s. So long as the shadow goes unrecognized, it remains healthy but, when recognized, the unhealthy ego might begin to heal. Thus the Creature, as the Jungian Shadow, was more palpable to me than Freud’s Id or Superego. R. Levin’s “schizophrenic superego” is virtually the same as the Jungian shadow archetype, and also complies with the reading, but this could cause more confusion than clarity. I also assessed—though admittedly subjectively—that both Shelleys would have had a more ‘Jungian’ than ‘Freudian’ approach to their views of human psychology.

The more I considered Walton’s persona in this view from the outer narrative frame, the clearer the reading became. I thus read the novel again, completely from Walton’s point of view, and found no inconsistencies that could easily dispel this reading. In fact, this outer frame view even proffers explanations to certain questions in the plot that were previously more difficult to explain. Examples especially abound in the concluding narrative, “Walton, in continuation...” when he encounters the Creature just moments after Victor dies. With Walton as the protagonist, the narrative as concentric, and Victor and the Creature as forces within Walton’s unconscious, a reading of *Frankenstein* becomes accessible that both intrigues and amuses.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

...and when I gaze on thee  
 I seem as in a trance sublime and strange  
 To muse on my own separate fantasy,  
 My own, my human mind...

--Percy Bysshe Shelley, "*Mont Blanc*," 1817

Trapped in ice at the outer margins of the world, the dispirited twenty-eight year old Captain Walton encounters the first major problem of his inaugural command at sea. His mission by now is a familiar one in the public eye, with all previous attempts by rookie and veteran explorers alike ending, often horrifically, in failure: to discover the Northwest Passage. Immeasurably optimistic of his mission's success during the early stages of the voyage, his confidence begins to wane. He should be resolute, take charge, and reassure the crew; but he loses his nerve and, ignoring his duties altogether, breaks from his surroundings and retreats into himself. Whether from an increasing sense of isolation, or a psychic disruption, the opening letters in *Frankenstein's* outer narrative frame indicate his loss of composure and disinclination to command. And to make matters worse, his crew is threatening mutiny. Unable to decide what to do, he panics.

Robert Walton's timely meeting with Victor in the novel's expansive, frozen Arctic setting is thus no coincidence. For over four months Walton has yearned for a friend he knows he will not find among his disgruntled crew. As in his childhood, he has kept mostly to himself on the ship in the warmth of his cabin, composing letters to what

seems to be his only source of human empathy—his sister Margaret. However, as his anxiety crests, so does his desperation for a friend whom, by now, he will have at any cost. And if he really is unfit to be captain right now, perhaps such a friend can help him decide what to do.

Fearing the crew's mounting impatience, Walton's mental decline ensues as his "own mind began to grow watchful with anxious thoughts" as a large, male "apparition" on the ice sleds by. (56) Just a few hours later, after a nap, he again approaches the main deck, but this time the crew is excitedly beckoning him to attend a stranger's approach to the ship, floating—from what seems out of nowhere—"on a large fragment of ice." Although they are "busy on one side of the vessel," possibly breaking residual ice from the hull, Walton envisions them trying to convince the stranded survivor to come aboard, with the deck master announcing (in a rare quote from a crewman), in affectionate deference to their captain: "'Here is our captain, and he will not allow you to perish on the open sea'" (57). This show of respect from a crew conspiring mutiny may seem odd, but there are many instances when Walton might misreport facts as a means to conceal his inadequacies from Margaret, the reader, and himself.

The new friend Walton meets is indeed a lot like him, but Victor Frankenstein is wiser, more intelligent, and more accomplished. Victor also had the love and support of an ideal family, a friend from childhood with boundless devotion, and an infinitely patient and loving sister figure for a fiancé—most of the things Walton wants, but does not have. And, just as Walton has hoped for, Victor is almost cloyingly empathetic,



which means Victor can “endeavour to regulate [his] mind” (53). He can also now empathize with Victor, feel his feelings, and experience his experiences.

Without hesitation, he loves Victor unreservedly, like a brother, and embraces his new duties as Victor’s bedside nurse and, soon, as his sole audience and fastidious scribe for the fantastic tale of unprecedented discovery, achievement, and failure that Victor will soon relate. Victor will help him forget the shame of his impending failure to reach the Passage. Victor will also distract him from his duties, and from addressing the crew’s growing concerns.

Just a few pages into Victor’s narrative and many readers forget about Walton, or discount the fact that he is still the narrator. Mary Shelley seems to make this occur naturally, and perhaps not only through anticipation of the novel’s namesake—Victor’s—narration just ahead. But Walton, ever residing in the surrounding outer frame, retains his influence throughout the novel, even when he is no longer the apparent speaker. Some basic facts are worth a reminder: 1) Walton ministers the sole interpretive voice for both Victor and the Creature; 2) Only Walton actually meets and speaks directly to the other two; 3) All three characters behave similarly. By keeping these facts in mind during Victor’s narrative, readers keep Walton more in mind, and thus start to notice more of Walton’s personality reflected in Victor and the Creature, than vice versa.

Recognizing Walton as the story’s sole protagonist enables readers to apprehend him as the singular voice, psyche, and *ego* of *Frankenstein*. His ego surrounds and encompasses the ‘psyches’ of both Victor and the Creature, who are now manifestations of Walton’s own ego—Victor as the *alter ego* Walton projects to keep the shadow

repressed in his unconscious and thus avoid his need to recognize it; the Creature as the Jungian *shadow*, or the dark, monstrous side of Walton's unconscious that, if recognized, can counter the alter ego's destructive tendency. Walton could then consider the welfare of the crew enough to do what is rational—return home. Thus when viewed from the narrative's outer frame, or from Walton's point of view, *Frankenstein* is Walton's story.



## CHAPTER II

## Where's Walton?

However his reliability in recounting the inner frame narratives is assessed, Walton merits more critical attention than commonly afforded him. Even since the 1950's, when modern literary critics rescued the text from its often laughable but highly influential status as a monster archetype and cultural icon, the Creature and his creator judiciously retain center stage, with Walton quietly consigned to the periphery, or even backstage. And though criticism addressing Walton's persona and narrative position is abundant, with frequent connections made between him and Victor and, secondarily, the Creature, it is the *limited amount* of focused criticism on Walton and his letters that is puzzling. Even today, Walton seems mostly spied from afar, which naturally occurs when either Victor or the Creature are the protagonists.

Just five years after the initial 1818 publication, Shelley's allowance for dramatic stage adaptations of the novel initiated the popular *Frankenstein* myth we know today—the tale of a monster. Even the earliest playwrights were swift in edging Walton off the stage and, later, the screen, as Steven Forry asserts: “The[y]...abandoned the doppelgänger theme in favor of a simplified Byronic hero-villain (Frankenstein) tormented by a dumb show-villain hero (the Creature), and simplified the plot by removing Walton [who] never appears in any pre-Karloffian dramatization” (Forry x-xi). In short, as O'Flynn relates in his culturally oriented work addressing Peggy Webling's 1927 stage rendering (most notable for shifting the cultural reference of the name *Frankenstein* from its creator to the Creature, and inspired James Whale's 1931 film that

crystallized today's popular association): "[t]he point about the Walton story is a simple one: it's gone. It's not there in the immediate source of the movie, namely Peggy Webling's play, where its disappearance is partly prompted by the need to cram a novel into the average duration of a play." This omission essentially launched the popular myth: "Remove [Walton's] narrative and the work collapses into Frankenstein's experience alone which can then be presented as a universal model, replete with the sort of reactionary moralizing about the dangers of meddling with the unknown..." (Schoene-Harwood 160).

With time and popular culture's pervasive force, even today's informed readers readily conjure a far different image than the novel indicates when the name is mentioned: An expressionless golem, lumbering gait, arms extended forward, saw tooth haircut, car battery neck posts, leaden boots, killer of innocents, and eventually, killer of his "Doctor" creator. Baldick notes that: "The myth...carries a skeleton story which requires only two sentences: (a) Frankenstein makes a living creature out of bits of corpses. (b) The creature turns against him and runs amok" (Baldick 3). Berhhold Schoene-Harwood clarifies how the myth impacted *Frankenstein's* popular reception by what "was purely the story's captivating appeal" nearly a decade prior to the release of what became Shelley's more popular 1831 edition:

...Shelley's tale had begun to advance from a mere figment of the imagination ...to the status of modernity's perhaps most compelling and ominous myth...[W]hile the fable of the monster and its maker prospered in the popular imagination, the actual text of the novel, its remarkable

conceptual complexity and elaborate intertextual architechtonics, fell more and more into oblivion. (Schoene-Harwood 21)

After nearly two centuries of seemingly unrestricted creative license taken on a novel with a now central character like the Creature (and secondarily his creator), it has become all too easy to regard Walton as a secondary, even expendable, character.

Another historical influence contributing to Walton's critical neglect is the quest for The Northwest Passage. In the early nineteenth century, English society (and P.B. Shelley) was passionately interested in the implications of a pending discovery. Britain's parliament even made a formal offer of five thousand pounds to the first crew to reach 89 degrees N (Graf 81) and, shortly after *Frankenstein's* publication in spring and summer 1818, four vessels sailed for the Arctic. Though the farthest point reached was only 80 degrees 37' N, the new feat continued to inspire future voyages (Graf 82). One commander who gained prominence from these latest voyages was John Franklin, whose 1845 Arctic expedition turned travesty when, according to his journal, his crew went mad from lead poisoning (the lead used to solder tinned foods leached into the food) and eventually resorted to cannibalism to fend off starvation. Having finally succumbed to starvation, hypothermia, tuberculosis, lead poisoning, and scurvy, none of the crew, including Franklin, survived. (Beattie 60-61, 160-61)

Several critics have suggested that Mary Shelley was quite aware of the events in Arctic exploration and was influenced by this renewed interest when writing *Frankenstein*. In "A Paradise of My Own Creation: *Frankenstein* and the Improbable Romance of Polar Exploration," Jessica Richard demonstrates that Mary Shelley had very



likely read the various articles on polar exploration published 1816-17 in *The Quarterly Review* while writing the final draft of *Frankenstein* (Richard 297, 309): “When Shelley added the polar frame to her manuscript...she gave her novel’s caution about scientific quests a specific contemporary application” by implicitly censuring Britain’s “hubristic ethic of exploration” (Richard 306, 308).

It is thus only logical that the criticism that does primarily address Walton and the outer frame comes from the more recent, cultural work of scholars like Laurie Garrison, Jessica Richard, and Jacob Bachinger, who examine *Frankenstein’s* geographical and historical settings with special regard to Arctic and Northwest Passage exploration preceding and following the novel’s 1818 publication. Their explicative insights have shed much needed light on the outer frame, Walton’s personality, and his narrative reliability. Richard points out, for instance, how Walton’s excessive optimism before embarking from St. Petersburg typifies late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Arctic expeditions. Polar explorers, especially those younger and less experienced with fortunate connections to wealth, were fiercely devoted to the discovery, undeterred by previous, well-chronicled, failures: “[T]hey believed in the literature of these attempts, a romance that disregarded the testimony of failed voyagers....Not only does he embark at a time and from a location that guarantee[s]...failure...but when in danger, Walton speaks the language of romance rather than that of a responsible captain” (Richard 296-305). Such romantic verbiage befits Robert Walton who, with arguably less experience than all of his crewmen, exudes excessive optimism despite the low odds. Walton makes other uninformed, illogical choices, as Richard notes:

[M]ost journeys...had reached the pack ice too late in the summer; if a ship could reach this point in early spring, the first thaws would open fissures leading to the temperate sea...Shelley subtly indicates Walton's incompetence...when she has him begin his journey...late [which] all but dooms his enterprise to failure from the outset. (Richard 299)

Remote and unconquered, the Arctic setting suggests several possibilities, but it is safe to assume that, without a keen interest in Arctic exploration (which, short of historical scholarship, no longer exists) modern, first-time readers are less incited to scrutinize Walton as closely as in the early 1800's.

Textbooks also unwittingly tend to thwart Walton's critical importance, like Lois Tyson's influential *Critical Theory Today*, which provides common, brushstroke criticism on select canonical works, including *Frankenstein*. While a proven, effective guide for students applying the fundamentals of theory to a primary text, Walton goes unmentioned in her several sample analyses, and probably for good reason, assuming normal editorial constraints. However, the student new to the novel has less incentive to consider Walton seriously, whether in the reading, or in class discussion.

Therefore, Victor and the Creature continue to get the lion's share of critical attention. Even as one of the "novel's key characters" (Gilbert 225), attendance to Walton is modest at best when compared to the other two. To offset this bias, I review the opening letters (I-III) that bring Walton's background, personality, and situation to the

forefront.<sup>1</sup> An intimate familiarity with the external narrator, *prior to* reading Victor's story, proffers the analytical vista from where it becomes easier to view Walton as *Frankenstein's* protagonist and sole narrative voice.

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<sup>1</sup> I agree with D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf's assertion that the original text "is closer to the imaginative act and atmosphere that spawned this influential novel" (39), and thus adhere to the 1818 edition for purposes here.



## CHAPTER III

## Walton's Predicament

Letter I. *December 11<sup>th</sup>, 17—*. The opening lines betray an insecurity that Walton habitually seeks to conceal. By assuming Margaret will “rejoice” over his avoiding “disaster” during his likely upper class voyage to St. Petersburg, despite her “evil forebodings,” he indicates a defensive posture and his likely subordinate position in the relationship (50). She may think her brother’s “enterprise” was haphazardly planned. She knows him to be impulsive, even reckless, and that he is likely unqualified for his present undertaking. But Walton is confident at the moment. The accommodations in St. Petersburg are reasonable and the weather tolerable in these weeks prior to setting sail.

His initial sign of retreat from duty occurs as his “daydreams become more fervent and vivid.” Despite acknowledging the North Pole as “the seat of frost and desolation,” he also calls it “the region of beauty and delight.” Advancing another misconception, he refers to the “perpetual splendor” of the twenty-four hour sun that in truth occurs but a few months of the year, depending on location. He thus “put [s] some trust in preceding navigators” who had theorized that, at the pole, a “magical passage opens up to a calm sea.” While at the time this mythical speculation may have been deemed plausible, Walton, especially boastful in these early pages, only envisions the optimal outcome. And though factual data “may be without example,” he equates his mission as one with an “inestimable benefit [he] shall confer on all mankind to the last generation” (50).

Calling the Arctic “a country of eternal light,” Walton forgets that the sun never rises in December. That he will spur scientific advancements by reaching the passage and the pole, “enticements” that “are sufficient to conquer all fear of danger or death...to commence [a] laborious voyage with the joy a child feels...in a little boat with his holiday mates,” is both naïve and idealistic. (50) Experienced captains have tried and failed so why will he succeed? Such enthusiasm can only indicate his inexperience, which is reason enough for his recently hired (and “persuaded”) crew to begin to worry.

Walton has flashes of reason, however, like when supposing to Margaret that his “conjectures” of scientific discovery might “be fake.” Nonetheless, short of failing in these secondary discoveries, he is still convinced he will find the Passage and, hopefully, the “secret of the magnet” too. Indeed, this venture is his “steady purpose,” the “favorite dream of [his] early years,” which makes sense, considering his education is comprised almost exclusively from the history books in his uncle’s library on “all the voyages made for the purposes of discovery.” He admits his “education was more neglected” (50) but he quickly minimizes this, just as he does his father’s dying entreaty that he not “embark on a sea-faring life” (51).

In a moment of reflection, Walton was equally enthusiastic during his yearlong sojourn as a “poet,” and imagined an illustrious outcome by audaciously comparing his prospective works to the likes “of Homer and Shakespeare.” However, he reminds Margaret in an abrupt shift how his literary endeavor ended in “failure, and how heavily [he] bore the disappointment.” Despite Walton’s lofty aspiration, he never indicates whether he worked hard to attain it. And after this brief year as a ‘poet,’ he inherits “the

fortune of his cousin" (51) which somehow justifies his no longer heeding his father's dying request.

Over the next six years, Walton continues his pattern of education by reading more books on navigational science, though he does get some on-the-job training as an "under-mate" (just below first mate) in a Greenland whaler—twice. From all indications, he logs little more than a few brief months of practical sea experience. So now, instead of overseeing preparations for the expedition, he gives precedence to his emotional impulses, just as he has over the last six years. This behavior is particularly evident in his first of many outcries for what appears to be a greater urgency than finding the Northwest Passage: his need for a friend, or "encouraging voice," to spur him on, keep him company, and make him feel more secure. Attesting to his already burgeoning anxieties, his "hopes fluctuate, and [his] spirits are often depressed" (51). He already suspects he is in over his head, but he is afraid too; not only of the hazards of the expedition but also of his capacity to lead. With sporadic shifts from self-assuredness one moment to self-doubt the next, Walton's initial optimism is at best tentative.

Letter II. *Archangel, 28<sup>th</sup> March, 17—*. Some of the crewmen "whom [Walton had] already engaged... [and] certainly possessed with dauntless courage" must have already been aware of his credentials but, perhaps due to job scarcity, they sign on. However, his sudden, expressed desire for a friend could indicate that his crew is already wary of him, which would only alienate him further from human empathy. His situation seems ever desperate when confessing to Margaret that, without a friend, some kind of "evil could come from it," hence his need to attain this friend however possible: "I have



one want which I have never yet been able to satisfy; and the absence of which I feel as a most severe evil. I have no friend, Margaret” (52). Should Walton’s mission somehow be successful, he will have no one “to participate [his] joy” when he is “glowing with...enthusiasm.” Conversely, should he be “assailed by disappointment,” he will have no one “to sustain [him] in dejection.” A sea captain usually has more utilitarian concerns than seeking emotional sustenance. He would also keep a journal to “commit [his] thoughts to,” (52) and record the day’s activities, but rarely would he keep a diary to record personal yearnings. It is also interesting that he finds writing “a poor medium for the communication of feeling,” since, throughout the letters, his predominant focus is just that: his feelings. It is plausible that, in Walton’s case, such journal-keeping could include various reflections, and perhaps even a fictional account of discovery, or creation.

Walton is unrelenting in his entreaty: “I desire the company of a man who could sympathize with me; whose eyes reply to mine. You may deem me romantic, my dear sister, but I bitterly feel the want of a friend.” Walton seeks the strength and resolve that only another man can help him find. This man should be like him or, better yet, a reflection of him, but more confident and self-assured. Short of Margaret, Walton wants a friend with the virtues he lacks, and with whom he connects almost telepathically through their “eyes.” That Walton seems unable to settle for anything less only assures his inability to find a real friend, especially “on the wide ocean...among merchants and seamen” (53).

His “useless complaints” continue: “I have no one near me, gentle yet courageous, possessed of a cultivated as well as of a capacious mind, whose tastes are like my own, to

approve and amend my plans.” Short of Margaret’s company, Walton wants an *ego ideal*, but not the healthy kind. What he wants is a superior version of himself to take the lead so, if anything goes wrong, he will have less reason to feel at fault. Eliciting sympathy in what seems an honest moment, he exclaims: “How would such a friend repair the faults of your poor brother!” He confesses he is “too ardent in execution, and too impatient of difficulties,” which are faults this ideal friend will repair (53).

Given the isolation of his home schooling, Walton had little opportunity to befriend others. And despite his having studied other languages (which explains how, in their climactic encounter at the end, he conversed with the Creature who only speaks French and German), he feels “more illiterate than many school-boys of fifteen” who already have experience with friendship, while he does not. Despite this deficiency, Walton is proud of his perceptive faculties and, in what may sound like further romantic musing, he actually confesses: “It is true that I have thought more, and my daydreams are more extended and magnificent; but they want...keeping.” His fantasies clearly take precedent over his responsibilities, and his friend can add new perspective to, or even mollify, his “daydreams.” The friend will also “have sense enough not to despise [him] as a romantic, and affection enough for [him] to endeavor to regulate [his] mind” (53). Because he cannot to do so on his own, Walton wants an empathetic—if not empathic—friend to do his thinking *for* him.

Recounting a potential friendship with his lieutenant, “a man of wonderful courage and enterprise...., an Englishmen [who] retains some of the noblest endowments of humanity” (53), it is somewhat amusing how Walton rejects the very friend he is

yearning for. The lieutenant is educated, intelligent, liberal, experienced, and, based on his generous spirit, should be as empathetic as any friend—and advisor—he might hope for. In fact, he is the very *ego ideal* Walton needs! As perhaps the ideal mentor, the lieutenant could teach him practical matters of seamanship and command, let alone help him build credibility with the crew. Perhaps the lieutenant is too empathetic, or too *authentic*, since Walton abruptly dismisses him as having “scarcely an idea beyond the rope and the shroud” (54), with no further rationale.

In another abrupt tonal shift, Walton is upbeat, and assures Margaret that he is not “wavering in [his] resolutions” (54), and will “do nothing rashly.” Making assumptions on her behalf, he tells her: “[Y]ou know me sufficiently to confide in my prudence and considerateness whenever the safety of others is committed to my care” (55). By Letter IV, it is all too clear that his assurances are half-hearted, if not insincere. Whether subtly or overtly, Walton tries to evoke Margaret’s (the reader’s) sympathy and manipulate her (the reader’s) sensibilities in an ongoing effort to conceal his escalating anxieties. His propensity for a psychic split becomes apparent by the end of the letter, like “the trembling sensation, half pleasurable and half fearful” that he anticipates upon embarking; or his self-contradictory concession that he “dare not expect such success” from the expedition, but “cannot bear to look on the reverse of the picture” (55).

Letter III. *July 7<sup>th</sup>, 17—*. This curt letter is the last one that Margaret could have conceivably received prior to Walton’s return. Now well within the Arctic Circle, he feigns good spirits despite untold dangers ahead. Soliciting sympathy while concealing fears, he portends not seeing her again “for many years,” yet assures her that—for both



their sakes—he “will not rashly encounter danger. [He] will be cool, persevering, and prudent.” His final plea underscores his growing pessimism: “Remember me to all my English friends. Most affectionately yours, R.W” (56). This increased despondency could indicate his wish for Margaret to miss him more than perhaps she does. He may also want her to feel guilty about letting him go in the first place, or for not having yet sent him a letter. It is also plausible that the crew is already beginning to usurp his command.

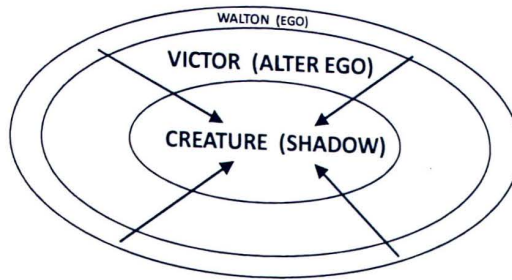
## CHAPTER IV

## The Narrative

With the greatest of ease, Mary Shelley coaxes many readers into forgetting Walton and his connection to the narrative frames once captivated by Victor's story. With Walton seemingly no longer on the scene, his narrative reliability is also less prone to scrutiny. Only in the latter part of the outer frame ("Walton, *in continuation*"), where both Victor and the Creature are present, in different moments, with Walton only, does Walton's potential significance to *Frankenstein* reemerge. We thus recall that, of the novel's surviving characters—Ernest, Walton, and (in this reading) the Creature—only Walton meets both Victor and the Creature. The rest of Victor's loved ones die swiftly, devoid of any last breath to tell about it. Alfonse never meets him; nor does Justine who is sound asleep when the Creature purportedly finds and frames her. Such events serve to reassert the potential importance of the outer frame, and the view of Walton as the protagonist. Another critical premise facilitates this view—a concentric narrative frame.

In a concentric narrative, the outer frame is like the text's veneer, or outward appearance, that delivers the reader a first impression—in this case, Walton's letters to Margaret. The inner frame contains the main story, but also elements from the outer frame that are not readily evident, especially when unreliable narrators purposely conceal them. However, if this is recognized, other analytical possibilities emerge—like the psychological one illustrated below:

## Concentric Frame Psychology



Just as the letters surround and embody the narrative, Walton's ego surrounds and embodies the other 'egos' in *Frankenstein*. One is a voice, the other a mind. Victor and the Creature not only connect to Walton, they are *aspects of him*. When situated in Walton's psyche, readers more readily consider new assumptions about the other two.

A linear, box-like view suggests the frame is just a tool to situate the narration, and open and close the story—like bookends. There is a beginning (Walton), middle (Victor, The Creature, Victor), and end (Walton). The critical scope is more finite, unlike a concentric narrative “with a [n]...influential core.” Gregory O'Dea suggests how the external frame is a “preliminary process by which readers move through a series of... narratives, as Walton's letters frame...Frankenstein's history, which in turn frames (or encloses) the Creature's tale” (O'Dea).

Viewing *Frankenstein's* narrative frame concentrically is nothing new. Kate Ellis describes the novel as a “structure...with [...] three concentric narratives” (Levine 124); Chris Baldick calls it “an elaborate framework of consecutive narratives...filled out with digressions, dialogues, scenic descriptions, and minor characters” (Baldick 3); Gilbert

and Gubar similarly call it “three ‘concentric circles’ of narration” (Gilbert 224-25).

Schoene-Harwood averts from “the spurious linearity of a chronological narrative” in his exposition of secondary literature around the novel, and prefers to follow “the intricate structure... concentrically” (Schoene-Harwood 12). Other imaginative metaphors are used that capture the same essence, like Baldick’s “concentric Russian-doll structure” (Baldick 32), or Hindle’s “Chinese box structure of the narrative-worlds-within-worlds” (Macdonald 39). In general, there is little resistance to this narrative view but Walton’s letters can still somehow seem as remote as the Arctic was to England in 1818.

In their introduction to the *Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Period*, Abrams and Stillingner address Walton’s relationship to the narrative, and how Walton

...acts as a broker between the story’s events and the reader. He is the first of the novel’s three narrators; his letters give a first-person credibility to the fantasy and establish several principal themes at the outset—in particular the opposition of science and poetry...and the theme of human connection... The other two narrators—Frankenstein (whose story is contained within Walton’s) and the Creature (whose monologue is relayed by Frankenstein)—add myriad further concerns that would have been clear to the novel’s original readers but have become obscured over time. (Abrams 905-06)

They note how the inner frame is “contained within Walton’s,” how he is the “broker” between the novel and the reader, and that his significance has become “obscured,” but



they do not credit Walton as the broker between the inner frame narratives and *his own* narrative. Wolfson and Manning remark similarly in their introduction in the *Longman Anthology of British Literature*, with even more emphasis on Walton's role, by pointing out that the novel ends "...in Robert Walton's ship in the Arctic, while its narrative structure uses that terminus as a frame for the interplay of alter-egos... Walton... whose letters open up the novel and whose journal entries close it, is an embryonic Frankenstein" (Longman 813). The "embryonic" Victor and "interplay of alter egos" between the frames gets much closer, but they elaborate no further on this.

A large share of criticism unwittingly prioritizes the inner frame by viewing the text from its center (The Creature) outward to Victor and Walton. With Walton third in line, the reader views him from the greatest distance and consequently is less inclined to afford time with a minor sea captain turned narrator in this otherwise captivating horror story.

In his recently published textbook, *How to Interpret Literature: Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Studies*, Robert Dale Parker briefly addresses *narratology* as a critical approach in his chapter entitled "Structuralism." Interestingly, without a single reference to the novel, Parker describes a narrative frame quite similar to *Frankenstein's*. His model comes with delineations that illustrate an embedded narrative, and also clarifies how critical attention to an "exterior narrator" tends to diminish once readers reach the main body of the story:

While readers might suppose that the "I" [in a first-person narrative] represents the exterior narrator, the last concentric circle of narration,

every narrative also has an implicit exterior narrator, yet more exterior than the explicit first-person "I." Readers usually ignore or oversimplify the implicit exterior narrator by thinking of it as "the author," not recognizing that the exterior narrator may pursue ways of thinking that differ from what historical evidence indicates the author may have thought. Most interpretations ignore the exterior narrator, but if we choose to pay attention to it, then we could say that the exterior narrator is yet another focalizer [or point of view]. (Parker 67-68)

Indeed, attendance to the exterior narrator is the very premise for this reading. Parker even provides a "synchronic" diagram of the frame that averts any "chronological sequence" (Parker 69), and almost mirrors my own diagram just above. From the outer frame, we retain Walton's perspective and narrative voice, peer inward to the rest of novel, and thus oblige the reading. This vantage point also avails other insights, most markedly on the vague, dreamlike aspects of the novel, like Victor's almost too perfect family and friend, or his dubious creation.

The two inner frame narratives are *contained* in Letter IV, which on its own is like a scaled down version of the novel in that Walton's voice still surrounds them. While the first three disclose Walton's character (as the first three chapters of Victor's narrative do his own), Letter IV comprises the rest of the novel. It begins with Walton projecting Victor, who in turn relates his tale of creation. It ends after Victor's story with Walton rejecting him, after which he must confront the Creature as the necessary means for

healing. Therefore, while Walton is still the apparent narrator, I will address his initial entry in Letter IV before discussing the psychology. It is Victor's fifth day on the ship.

## CHAPTER V

## Projecting Victor

*Entry: August 5<sup>th</sup>, 17—.* Walton has more than a vague notion by now that the expedition might fail, and that he must eventually concede to his crew's entreaties to sail home. Having projected Victor just four days ago, he recounts the previous days' events. He is still the Robert Walton we know, but he is Victor now too.

*July 31<sup>st</sup>, 17—.* As the morning progresses, remnants of floating ice and dense fog make navigation too unwieldy; thus Walton and crew wait it out until conditions improve. Later in the afternoon, "about two o'clock, the mist clear [s] away," and all on board are dumbstruck to find an expanse of ice surrounding—and entrapping—the ship. He notes how his "...colleagues groaned," clearly from their distress over the situation, but perhaps also from their mounting impatience with their captain's indecisiveness. Fearing what the crew may do, Walton continues in the same sentence: "...my own mind began to grow watchful with anxious thoughts, when a strange sight suddenly attracted our attention, and diverted our solicitude from our own situation." This diversion—a "being [in] the shape of a man...of gigantic stature" on a sled drawn by dogs—indicates an unconscious stirring, an omen perhaps, embodied as the "unqualified wonder" we summarily assume to be the Creature, an "apparition [soon] lost among the distant inequalities of the ice" (56-57). What Walton has unwittingly awakened, however, is the *shadow*, or the repressed, darker side of his consciousness that can offset, correct, neutralize, or even negate other, often unhealthy, forces within the ego—like alter egos.



*August 1<sup>st</sup>, 17—*. The ice breaks shortly after midnight and frees the ship. Despite the good news, captain and crew are cautious, and will wait “until the morning, fearing to encounter in the dark those large loose masses which float about” (57). Walton thus gains a short reprieve from addressing the crew’s concerns and escapes to his quarters for a few hours to take a nap while the crew seemingly carries on with their duties.

Given the approximate latitude and time of year, it is odd how Walton awakens later the same morning “as soon as it was light” (57) and makes his way to the main deck. In fact, he mentions both night (“the dark”) and day (the “light”) when, even at the Arctic Circle there is little more than three hours without sunlight on 1 August, with little likelihood of encountering ice. Ten degrees closer to the pole, however, in the mid-Arctic region, where ice is more prevalent, the sunlight remains perpetual for another twenty-one days. Since he sent his 28 March letter from Archangel, less than three degrees below the Arctic Circle, it should be safe to assume that, after four additional months of sailing, they should have at least reached the mid-Arctic where, on this particular day, *the sun never sets*. Perhaps then, the morning “light” Walton speaks of betrays his new, projected reality, which will offer the new friend he seeks, and thus a means to disregard the current crises a little longer.

It is at this moment that Walton projects Victor, who arrives on “a large fragment of ice.” Unlike the “other traveler” who sledged by a few hours earlier, looking like “a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island,” Victor is a “European” (53) gentleman. Walton is delighted, considering he has had to entertain himself (alone) for months and, for him, Victor is quite real, and more suited to his current need than the other European

gentleman on board, the lieutenant. He commences his new reality by attending to Victor's needs and nursing him back to health, like a child might do with a doll. The crew, however, only sees their captain, who appears even more dysfunctional than before he took his nap a few hours earlier. And while he seems in far better spirits, he is still guarded, and detached. After attending Victor's recovery for two days on deck, Walton "remove[s] him to [his] own cabin" (58), locks the door, and speaks to no one except (from the crew's point of view) himself, or what seems like an imaginary friend.

*August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17—*. Considering Walton has had no prior friends, he latches on to Victor with almost perverse haste. Clearly infatuated with him, he tells Margaret that he "never saw a more interesting creature," whose eyes at times bespeak a certain "wildness, and even madness," but at other times bespeak a "sweetness that [he] never saw equaled" (58). After four, lonely, miserable months, the sudden appearance of Victor, his better half, is more than good news—it may be one of the best moments of his life. Interestingly, Victor's conflicting facial expressions of "madness" and "sweetness" reflect the now two sides of Walton's psyche, as if Victor were a mirror image of himself—the same man, yet reversed, or somehow distorted; hence, they are not exactly the same.

When the crew attempts to arouse their captain with shouts from outside his cabin door, Walton records the event according to his reality: "I had great trouble to keep off the men, who wished to ask [Victor] a thousand questions; but I would not allow him to be tormented by their idle curiosity, in a state of body and mind whose restoration evidently depended on entire repose" (59). Walton has retreated (with Victor) and is

staying put. The “repose” he seeks is his own. This could also explain why his empathetic lieutenant, in an attempt to coax him back to reality, asks about his “friend,” inferring that he knows Walton *thinks* he is real. If not for the lieutenant, the crew would have mutinied by now, assuming they have not already.

Even though Victor “seemed very eager to be upon deck, to watch for the sledge which had appeared before,” Walton “persuaded him to remain in the cabin” to avoid “the rawness of the atmosphere.” Though this eagerness is Walton’s own, he fears going on deck. Should the shadow reappear and assert its recognition, he would have to give up his friend too soon. Besides, as we will later see, both cannot simultaneously exist in the narrative’s outer frame. Consequently, Walton sees Victor as “appear [ing] uneasy when anyone except [him] self enters his cabin” (59-60). By referring to his cabin now as Victor’s, his confusion over who he is from one moment to the next is apparent.

It is also interesting how Walton refers to Victor as “the stranger” prior to the inner frame narratives. Only after Victor finishes relating his tale does Walton mention his name. Perhaps Walton has yet to give him one; or perhaps he is more himself in the outer frame and more Victor in the inner frame.

*Entry: August 13<sup>th</sup>, 17—*. Walton sees Victor as “so attractive and amiable,” and as “a noble creature...[with] unparalleled eloquence,” who even “suggested several alterations in [his] plan, which [he will] find exceedingly useful.” It seems that everything about Victor conforms perfectly to Walton’s specifications of his ideal friend. Walton consummates the bond: “I have endeavoured to win his confidence; and I trust that I have succeeded” (60-61).



Already looking on Victor as a trusted role model (ego ideal) when discussing friendship, Walton confesses a critical component of his weakness: "I am self-educated, and perhaps I hardly rely sufficiently upon my own powers. I wish therefore that my companion should be wiser and more experienced than myself, to confirm and support me." It is ironic that Walton has the real life version of the companion he wants on the ship—his lieutenant. The wisdom and experience Walton speaks of is clearly misguided. Perhaps he still wants to be a poet. He was insecure then too, but more so now, given his greater responsibilities. Victor replies to Walton's confession as only Walton could: "I once had a friend, the most noble of creatures, and am entitled, therefore, to judge respecting friendship." Indeed, this sounds like Walton. Victor refers to Clerval as a "noble creature" just one page after Walton twice refers to Victor as the same. It seems unlikely that such a character descriptor would be so casually offered between two men. That Walton's alter ego feels "entitled...to judge" the merits of friendship becomes absurd once Victor shows his true colors in the inner frame. (61)

The degree to which Walton deifies Victor is almost unnatural. He believes "no one can feel more deeply than [Victor] does the beauties of nature" which, considering Victor seeks to defy (not deify) nature, exemplifies the self-deception. Walton's description of Victor that, in reality, he makes about himself, further indicates his conscious split: "Such a man has a double existence: he may suffer misery, and be overwhelmed by disappointments; yet when he has retired into himself, he will be like a celestial spirit, that has a halo around him, within whose circle no grief or folly ventures."



Victor, the “divine wanderer,” is also split, in that he sees what Walton sees: his own altered reflection, and vice versa. (61)

*Entry: August 19<sup>th</sup>, 17—*. This is Walton’s final entry before Victor begins his narration. From the crew’s point of view, Walton has isolated himself in his locked cabin—this time for a week—and talks to himself incessantly, occasionally cracking open the door just enough for the cook to hand him a small portion from what may be a dwindling food supply. From Walton’s point of view, he has a full week to listen to Victor’s story, “make notes,” and “record, as nearly as possible [the story] in [Victor’s] own words” (62).

For the better part of this brief entry, Walton generously quotes Victor in this seeming ‘setting up’ of the inner frame narratives. From the outer frame, however, Victor’s voice echoes Walton’s in every disproportionate, egocentric utterance, but embellished to conform to his augmented reality:

I have suffered great and unparalleled misfortunes... You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did...[I can] afford you a view of nature, which may enlarge your faculties and understanding. You will hear of powers and occurrences, such as you have been accustomed to believe impossible. (62)

The “internal evidence” Victor alludes to is vague, hence not *external* or objective. Coincidentally, Walton’s excitement to hear Victor’s tale comes “partly from a strong desire to ameliorate his fate” (62). Walton consistently manipulates the facts (and the reader) around his circumstances with his eloquent, yet abrupt, rhetorical shifts, and

glosses over pertinent details, or simply brushes them aside. Laurie Garrison mentions how “he places his own desires...within...inflated rhetoric,” while Victor and the Creature “are left entirely outside this discourse” (Garrison). An example of this deceptive rhetoric occurs in anticipation of his duty as Victor’s scribe: “He then told me, that he would commence his narrative the next day when I should be at leisure” (62). Notwithstanding that Victor is now clearly in control, Walton actually has the opportunity, as commander of a ship in distress, to be “at leisure” (63). Given his deteriorating mental state, with no realistic alternatives to consider, Walton’s projection of Victor may have been necessary to his overall healing process. After all, Victor’s tale of suffering will make his own suffering seem almost trite.

## Chapter VI—The Psychology

The description of *Frankenstein* as a “patchwork” of plots and themes readily applies to the Creature who is presumably patched together from various body parts. It is also not a stretch to equate this patchwork concept to a human consciousness—in this case, Walton’s. What keeps this view more hidden, however, is a natural tendency to assume Victor or the Creature (or both) as the protagonist and, when psychology is applied, manifestations of one or the other’s unconscious projections. This, however, reinforces attention to Victor and the Creature, and hinders the necessary, critical pause to determine whether Walton and the letters warrant more intensive scrutiny. This can readily occur even after noting the behavioral similarities between the three.

Here are just a few of the similarities: Walton and Victor are similar in age and, plausibly, in stature and appearance. They are loners who are prone to self-isolation and, excepting Victor’s friend Clerval, are friendless. They have dead mothers, dubious relationships with their sisters (or sister-like cousin in Victor’s case), with a conspicuous disinterest in other women. They are self-educated in highly selective, narrowly defined fields that inhibit the breadth of their world views and sense of social ethics, yet they wield a rhetorical prowess in their nearly identical hyper-articulate speech that suggests superior intellects. They lack practical experience in their respective vocations, yet recklessly pursue glory while disregarding the welfare of others. They are selfish, impulsive, and consistently avoid taking responsibility for their misdeeds and inactions.

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Though initially less apparent from the frame's center, the Creature exhibits the very same behaviors. The more we look at this, the easier it is to discern the voice and persona that fashions the two more popular characters. George Levine notes that

Walton, imagining himself a scientific explorer who will do wonders for mankind, is, of course, a potential Frankenstein...Frankenstein's narrative to him is both a series of moral connections and a potentially redeeming example. Frankenstein's relation to Walton is similar to the relation of the Monster to Frankenstein himself...[I]t is not clear that any of the three learn from the stories they hear. (Endurance 18)

Victor's family and creation, narrated as if in a "trance," is a direct reflection of the outer-frame view. Levine goes further but is by now referring to Victor, not Walton: "And the trance of the laboratory is echoed in the various trances by which Victor lapses out of action and overt responsibility throughout the narrative" (6). While these "lapses" apply as readily to Walton, Levine does not pursue this. He continues: "Yet, we know that the Monster is a double of Victor himself, and that as he acts out his satanic impulses he is acting out another aspect of Victor's creation of him" (7). Levine makes the connection between the three, but his further application omits Walton from the equation.

What William Veeder calls "ego-centric willfulness and self-abandoning weakness" in his work on androgyny in the novel readily equates to Walton and Victor, despite his not referencing the two together (Veeder 49). He also notes that "*Frankenstein* presents the two extremes of Eros in the single psyche of Victor, and then echoes both extremes in the monster" (Veeder 79). This psychological angle is suggestive of Walton

too, but he is excluded. However, Veeder does make selective reference to their similarities in his following chapter, noting their “‘manly’ qualities—ambition, daring, scientific intelligence—[that] tend...to Erotic extremism. Masculine and feminine traits in their psyches polarize into willfulness and weakness; love for woman and concern for society are seriously undermined.” He also refers to their “*dis*-affiliation with women” (Veeder 206), and “Robert’s sense of personal injustice [that is] as self-pitying and benighted as Victor’s” (Veeder 205). He then suggests how “Victor’s riven psyche attempts to heal itself through the creation of the monster” (Veeder 81), which is almost the very psychology I suggested here, including the Creature’s necessary animation for psychic healing. The only significant difference is that Veeder refers only to Victor’s healing, not Walton’s.

The Freudian model of human consciousness sets the initial framework, with Walton as the ego, Victor as the often controlling and harmful alter ego, and the Creature as superego, albeit a distorted one. Psychiatrist Revella Levin’s view of the superego, however, befits the Creature quite well. As opposed to being a force for the “good,” moral side of human nature, the superego actually has an adverse effect in moral decision-making. He sees the superego as a “structure that lies, manipulates, threatens, and appears to be motivated in the end solely *by its own continued existence* (my italics). True morality, originat [es] in the patient’s ego,” and arises from the choices made by a healthy ego which, in this view, would indicate that “the stronger the ego, the weaker the superego and vice versa” (Levin). Consequently, for those whose egos are weakened in such a way that a psychotic break is imminent, the superego has that regulatory function

as a force for good that only comes into play when the ego is too weak to manage morally-based decisions on its own. Projecting an alter ego is just one example of a psychotic break, a symptom often diagnosed as schizophrenia, (Levin) the mental disorder commonly associated with split personalities.

Lacan's dialectic between the Subject and Other that develops during the infant's "mirror stage" would also serve this reading, and especially so with Françoise Meltzer's approach to Lacan's maxim: "[T]he unconscious is that which the Subject does not recognize to be himself, and which he experiences as other from himself" (Meltzer 158). Though the differences in psychological approaches are almost negligible, the Jungian *shadow figure* brings the Creature's role more readily—if not more naturally—to view, and possibly coheres better with the poetic and spiritual influences that inspired Mary Shelley's writing. Jung's shadow, or the dark side of the self, when recognized, is monstrous. In this reading, the Creature as the 'shadow' offers a less rigid, and I believe more approachable (and Romantic) psychological perspective.

The *shadow* or "shadow aspect" is a part of the unconscious mind consisting of repressed weaknesses, shortcomings, and instincts. According to Carl Jung, everyone harbors a shadow, or the "dark aspects of the personality, [or] inferiorities [with] an emotional nature, a kind of autonomy and accordingly obsessive or...possessive quality" (Portable Jung 145). Interestingly, the shadow has the greatest affect on the individual ego "where adaptation is weakest, and at the same time they reveal the reason for its weakness, namely a certain degree of inferiority and the existence of a lower level of personality...who is not only the passive victim of his affects but also singularly



incapable of moral judgment" (Portable Jung 145-46). As early as Letter II, Walton betrays his weakness and inability to adapt to his shadow, which would otherwise make him question his own behavior more.

If the individual does not recognize the shadow, it remains healthy and unscathed. Moreover, the more obstinately one resists the recognition, the less likely one will make the right moral choices. In "Phenomenology of the Self," Jung offers a hypothetical case of a common male who, by way of projecting his shadow on others, keeps it repressed and healthy. Like Walton, this repression is firm and hidden and the resulting projection is so real that it assumes a separate identity of its own. It seems like Jung had Walton in mind because Jung literally characterizes Walton's shadow and projection of Victor:

The projection-making factor...can realize its object...or bring about some other situation characteristic of its power. As we know, it is not the conscious subject but the unconscious which does the projecting. Hence one meets with projections, one does not make them. The affect of projection is to isolate the subject from his environment, since instead of a real relation to it there is now only an illusory one. Projections change the world into the replica of one's own unknown face...lead [ing] to an autoerotic or autistic condition in which one dreams a world whose reality remains forever unattainable. The resultant *sentiment d'incomplétude* and the still worse feeling of sterility are in turn explained by projection as the malevolence of the environment, and by means of this vicious circle the isolation is intensified. The more projections are thrust in between the



subject and the environment, the harder it is for the ego to see through its illusions. (Portable Jung 146-47)

Ultimately, these projections insulate and cripple individuals by forming an ever thicker fog of illusion between the ego and the real world. Walton, isolated in a malevolent environment, exemplifies this behavior. Susan Hitchcock calls the shadow “a remarkable force within the personality [that] must be embraced, not denied or suppressed; otherwise, says Jung, ‘there emerges an amazing monster.’ The shadow...is intimately interior and yet totally other [which] helps explain the power of the mysterious monster...” (Hitchcock 56-7) With respect to Walton, however, Hitchcock makes no connection.

With respect to the first sighting of his shadow (a man of “enormous stature”) on the sledge early in Letter IV, Jung continues his inadvertent description of Walton: “Beneath the surface a person is suffering from a deadly boredom that makes everything seem meaningless and empty ... as if the initial encounter with the Self casts a dark shadow ahead of time” (Symbols 175). In *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Jung’s further illustration brings his concept of shadow to Walton with remarkable clarity:

The shadow is a living part of the personality and...wants to live with it in some form. It cannot be argued out of existence or rationalized into harmlessness. This problem is exceedingly difficult, because it not only challenges the whole man, but reminds him...of his helplessness and ineffectuality. (Jung 20-21)

The shadow is both the cause and the solution to Walton's temporary split, or loss of self. And despite the abundance of critical connections between Jung's shadow image and the Creature, most still proffer—if not assume—the shadow to be Victor's or, to a lesser but not immoderate degree, society's. Both the overt implications from Walton's inability to confront his shadow, and his rather dreamlike, *exclusive* encounter with the Creature in the final pages, do little in the way to incite more psychological attention to Walton.

The latter part of the outer frame, "WALTON, in continuation," (which is about the same length as the front part) necessarily invites Victor and the Creature in, so Walton can finish his story. It is here that Walton rejects the alter ego, recognizes the shadow, and thus heals. From the outer frame, Walton's abiding his crew's demands to turn the ship around is far more climactic than it might often seem.

It also becomes more reasonable why Victor, pursuing the Creature into the Arctic, and toward Walton, "thanked [his] guiding spirit for conducting [him] in safety to the place where [he] hoped...to meet and grapple with" his "adversary" (230). It seems Victor braves the harsh environment rather well, considering the almost habitual illnesses, ridden with fever, that normally befall him just after cataclysmic events—like the moment of the Creature's animation, or when a loved one is 'killed.' It is as if, instead of the "guiding spirit" often ascribed to his belief that the spirits of his dead loved ones supported him in this journey, it is actually Walton's ego, urging him ever closer to befriend the friendless Walton. That The Creature helps him along the way with morsels of food and escapes Victor's reach whenever it seems attainable makes Walton's

influence on this impossible trek more plausible. It is, after all, evident that he can do no harm to The Creature in his earlier, failed attempts, or even get close!

With Walton as the sole physical entity giving voice to both himself and Victor, every sentence is indicative of an internal conflict of two unconsciously battling egos. I thus confine the close reading to a few highlights: Walton's rejection of Victor, his encounter with The Creature, and some particularly startling moments that become clear from this view.

## Chapter VII—Rejecting Victor

*Entry: August 26<sup>th</sup>, 17—* With the two sides of himself in mortal combat, Walton tells Margaret of Victor's shifting emotions, how one moment "[h]is fine and lovely eyes were...lighted up," and the next they are "subdued to downcast sorrow...Sometimes he commanded his countenance and tone...with a tranquil voice," and at others in "the wildest rage" (233). While this behavior holds true to Victor's character, it does to Walton's too and, since it is Walton's story, this solo, verbal interchange is not so odd when assuming Walton is healing, albeit from an urgent necessity.

Walton tries to persuade Margaret (and readers) into believing Victor's tale with physical evidence that no one actually sees: "[T]he letters of Felix and Sophie, which he shewed me, and the apparition of the monster...brought to me a greater conviction of the truth of his narrative" (233). These "letters" Walton refers to are ominous at best, especially in light of the "internal evidence" Victor alludes to earlier. In addition, the "apparition of a monster" Walton saw is not necessarily a monster. Only after Victor's narration does Walton begin to refer to him as a "monster." It seems at this point that Walton is attempting to sensationalize what could be an unusually large, perhaps odd looking man, or even just as the "apparition" that he calls him. It thus stands to reason that Walton wants to validate Victor's tale while Victor is still alive. But Walton is getting more confused as his internal conflict escalates. For example, he "cannot doubt" that "[s]uch a monster has then really existence...yet [he is] lost in surprise and admiration." (233)



Victor's refusal to reveal the specifics of his creation is also ominous, without a total suspension of belief. No particulars of his medical knowledge are ever clearly indicated; and his earlier allusions to his process of creation also provide no clear signs. Perhaps Victor has nothing to divulge. Hence, to deter Margaret's (and our) skepticism, Walton attempts to dispel another loophole regarding his notes that Victor "himself corrected and augmented...in many places" (234), which distorts more than reveals. Besides, they are integrated, with Walton's "thoughts, and every feeling of [his] soul, hav[ing] been drunk up by interest for [his] guest" Victor (233), which makes the validity of this evidence even more suspect.

In this reading, virtually every upcoming strand of narration becomes clear in its satirically reversed, Swiftian way. As Walton starts to heal, his rhetorical stumbling between fantasy and reality accelerates. The following lines from the text offer enough analytical possibility for prolonged immersion but, assuming Walton speaks only about himself when referring to Victor, there is little difficulty relating everything to his own struggle. As illustration, I have selected a passage and, substituting pronouns where applicable, e.g., "I" for "he," or "me" for "him," broken it into explicative fragments:

"Yet [I] enjoy one comfort, the offspring of solitude and delirium:" *I am alone and in a state of delirium, but there's one thing I enjoy:*

"...[I] believe, that, when in dreams [I] hold converse with [my] friends," ...*in my dream-like state I talk to my imaginary friend, Victor...*

"...and derive from that communion consolation for [my] miseries," ...*and am consoled, and less miserable when we are together...*

"...or excitements to [my] vengeance," ...*and less angry at those who treat me unjustly...*

"...that they are not the creations of [my] fancy," ...*that my tale did not result from my fantasies...*

"...but the real beings who visit [me] from the regions of a remote world." ...*but from visiting beings from a remote world.*

"This faith gives a solemnity to [my] reveries" ...*I exalt over my faith in such beings...*

"...that render them to [others] almost as imposing and interesting as truth." ...*that those who pause to consider what I say might see through my pretenses.*

It would appear here that Walton is offering his confession, which continues with Victor's nearly page-long monologue that follows. The "beings" who visit him in this perspective is confounding, even jolting, though nonetheless could well befit Walton's current pattern of behavior. Indeed, Walton is sporadically recognizing his shadow and, rendered through his alter ego as a means to buffer the sting of its recognition, gives it expression. Walton's confession thus provides the first real sign of his healing—and probably of other conflicts he has yet to surmount.

Hereafter, there are so many examples like the one above, it gets almost dizzying how they faithfully adhere to the reading.

Walton's recovery takes several days, during which time he constantly vacillates between rejecting the alter ego and preserving it. Victor aids him a little by his discrediting Walton as a friend, who "can [not] replace those who are gone" (235).

Perhaps Walton feels a pang of disappointment when Victor compares him to Clerval who “possess [es] a certain power...hardly any later friend can obtain” (236), and is thus more disposed to expel the alter ego when the time is right. It soon becomes apparent that, the more Victor weakens the more reasonable Walton gets.

*Entry: September 2d.* The ice once again surrounds “and threatens [s] every moment to crush [his] vessel.” When telling Margaret that the crew “look towards me for aid; but I have none to bestow,” Walton concedes to his ineptitude but, quickly vacillating, tells her that “my courage and hopes do not desert me” (236). After all, he still has Victor who “endeavours to fill [him] with hope...[and] reminds [him] how often the same accidents have happened to other navigators who have attempted this sea,” which indicates some degree of returning to reason. However, he is still deluded from reality, and even believes when speaking to the crew as Victor that he “rouses their energies” and “they no longer despair.” This is likely wishful thinking since, immediately afterward, he says that the crews’ “feelings are transitory; each day’s expectation delayed fills them with fear, and I almost dread a mutiny.” Walton thinks that the crew “feel [s] the power of his eloquence” but the looming threat of mutiny he “almost dread [s]” indicates otherwise. (237)

*Entry: September 5<sup>th</sup>.* “[M]ountains of ice” still surround the ship and, though Walton acknowledges that “many of [his] unfortunate comrades have already found a grave,” we can doubt his sympathy, since he quickly accedes to his friend, knowing their time together is now limited.



Victor continues to weaken. Their patience exhausted, the crew make their demands. Brilliantly downplaying the severity of the event, Walton relates how he “was roused by half a dozen sailors, who desired admission into the cabin” and, without further description, simply says, “[they] entered.” He apparently did not initially respond to their request for entry, so they forced their way in, possibly breaking down the door. Walton sugarcoats his chat with the crew members such that the reader may not notice the gravity of his situation which, however, *must* be his intention. After resolving to acquiesce to the crew’s demands, he is “troubled” because he has not “yet conceived the idea of returning” but still knows that he cannot “refuse this demand.” It is in this very moment of personal conflict when Walton, speaking as Victor, makes his final rallying cry to the crew, which could serve at least three possible ends: 1) convince the crew to continue the mission; 2) vent his frustrations and reinvigorate his blamelessness by projecting it on the crew and their lack of courage; 3) go on record having made this last appeal to dissuade future inquiry from implicating him as the cause of the failed mission. Realistically, Walton has no desire to continue the mission either, despite Victor’s pretence to dissuade him otherwise. Ultimately, Walton must regain dominance over his projection. He made the crew a promise he knows he cannot keep with Victor in the way. It would also appear that he values his own life more than Victor’s.

A pinnacle moment occurs after Walton (as Victor) makes his final appeal to rally the crew: They “were moved...and...unable to reply.” It is often difficult to make sense of this, however, in this reading, the crew is struck mute from *bewilderment*. Their captain, just out of his cabin after escaping for a week, speaks nonsensically, as if they respected



him. That the crewmen “looked at one another,” (239) without speaking, is their surprise—and disbelief—over Walton’s unseemly antics, notwithstanding his ever getting a command in the first place.

*Entry: September 7<sup>th</sup>.* “The die is cast; I have consented to return” (239). Victor is near the end. Walton’s reasoning thus gets more sober and truer to his normal, impulsive self. He is healing.

*Entry: September 12<sup>th</sup>.* Captain and crew have apparently commenced their return voyage as Walton makes his final entry relating events primarily from the previous day. As seen from the outer frame, 11 September is the most pivotal day of his healing, with the death of his alter ego, the recognition and, naturally, the re-suppression of his shadow.

*September 9<sup>th</sup>.* The ice starts to break.

*September 11<sup>th</sup>.* The ice has melted, so navigation is now possible. Ever more aware of his old self, Walton now minimizes his role in the mission’s failure. Referring to the crew, he tells Victor that he “cannot withstand their demands,” implying the alter ego and shadow are at odds, with both wishing to dominate the ego. While the shadow may have facilitated Walton’s psychic split, it did not necessarily bargain for an alter ego projection. Once this occurred, however, the shadow naturally asserts its offsetting force to regain dominance in the unconscious. Therefore, the shadow must either negate or exterminate the projected force to regain its rightful power which, in this view, coheres to Walton’s internal conflict, and the inner frame as another story in itself.

The alter ego makes its final gestures of survival by playing either on Walton’s weaknesses or his assets, depending on perspective. Speaking now as Victor, he

confesses that, in relinquishing the alter ego, he still prefers avoiding any further pain that may come from facing his own shadow and will in fact be justified in its re-suppression: "Think not, Walton, that in the last few moments of my existence I feel that burning hatred, and ardent desire of revenge, I once expressed, but I feel myself justified in desiring the death of my adversary." Walton further indicates that, after some recent soul-searching (during the psychic split), he considers himself blameless, and thus exempt from any judgments of his behavior: "During these last days I have been occupied in examining my past conduct; nor do I find it blameable." (240-41) Walton's rhetorical irony intact, he continues quoting his weakening alter ego as he slowly eases back to rationality through "the well-balancing of what [he] may esteem [his] duties." In fact, his "judgment and ideas are already disturbed by the near approach of death" (241). While ever impulsive, he has no desire for martyrdom, yet is still not willing to admit to his own eagerness to return.

The alter ego dies three weeks after Walton projects him (and the same three weeks while pursuing the Creature to the Arctic) just seconds before the Creature appears immediately upon Walton's "behold [ing] a vision so horrible..." that he had to "shut [his] eyes involuntarily and endeavour...to recollect what were [his] duties with regard to this destroyer," which is to suppress this monstrous side of himself so he can attend to his real duties. That he "called on him to stay" implies that he had best face the Creature now and get through with the ordeal. (243)

While Walton believes he speaks to the Creature as separate being, the crew actually hears Walton "utter [the] wild and incoherent self-reproaches" (243). They never

even take notice of the Creature's sudden appearance on the ship, despite having—as Walton reports—observed him earlier from afar.

The interchange that ensues between Walton and the Creature is no different from that between him and Victor in that there is but one speaker, now “utter [ing] wild and incoherent self-reproaches.” Since the shadow is not a projection who resembles in no way an ego ideal, Walton only ‘sees’ this ghastly side of himself, the sheer shock of which stifles his urge to admonish it for causing Victor’s death: “I dared not again raise my eyes to his face...there was something so scaring and unearthly in his ugliness.” Given the sudden intensity of the exposure, it follows that Walton sees it as otherworldly, like the monster Victor calls him, whose “voice seemed suffocated” (243). However, as a force within Walton, the singular voice is more discernable as he integrates the recognition of his shadow by admitting how he selfishly eluded his responsibilities, and was envious of Clerval:

A frightful selfishness hurried me on, while my heart was poisoned by remorse. Think thee that the groans of Clerval were music to my ears? My heart was fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy; and, when wrenched by misery to vice and hatred, it did not endure the violence of the change without torture. (243)

The shadow can be both beneficial when recognized by its owner, yet detrimental when in the normal state of repression. Walton’s sense “that virtue has become to [him] a shadow” (244) now makes perfect sense when it (the Creature) refers him as “[h]e who called me into being; and when I shall be no more, the very remembrance of us both will



speedily vanish" (246). Walton, having called his shadow "into being," will remember little to nothing of this encounter, or of his alter ego—no different than a fleeting dream.

Walton ultimately reclaims his rather scant sense of moral judgment after Victor dies and can no longer obstruct his sounder judgment. Veeder remarks that "there is no clear sign that Robert is redeemed [but] there is the inescapable fact that he lets the creature go" (Veeder 208), which Walton must do, since the shadow cannot die. Its very existence depends on Walton's keeping him repressed in his unconscious. The Creature says this in the end: "Farewell! I leave you, and in you the last of humankind these eyes will ever behold" (246). The shadow foresees his retreat to Walton's unconscious, all of which the Arctic setting might represent. As Jung says, "[T]he shadow figure is so disagreeable to his ego-consciousness that it has to be repressed in the unconscious... [R]epression would prevent it from vanishing, because repressed contents are the very ones that have the best chance of survival, as we know from experience that nothing is corrected in the unconscious" (265). Walton has healed, having learned perhaps nothing from the experience. His shadow, repressed again as before, "will sleep in peace"

"[I]f it thinks" or, for some reason is recalled to the consciousness once more, "it will not surely think thus" (247), since it could then not reside peacefully. Now healed, and back to his old self, Walton has the levelheadedness to do the right thing, although clearly less motivated by humanitarian concerns than his own wish to survive. Walton, hence also Victor and the Creature, consistently put themselves before others from beginning to end. Even healed, Walton's continued self-indulgence indicates he has learned little.



*Frankenstein's* narrative structure naturally suggests numerous critical possibilities, perhaps starting with three different stories told by three different narrators, which could feasibly comprise the novel's foundational layers of meaning: 1) Walton's story of an inexperienced sea captain who, under mounting pressure, projects Victor, the friend he yearns for who, in turn, animates the Creature (shadow) to counter the projection's restrictive force; 2) The Creature's story of (possibly) a child—an anomaly—whose mother dies after childbirth and whose father abandons him. Left to grow up on his own he seeks projects a father (Victor) with an ideal family, who abruptly rejects him; 3) Victor's story, which seems to be the more common positioning, about a misguided creator and his creation. All three critical positions in the narrative frame proffer differing angles from which come the profusion of cultural, gender, socio-political, historical, psychological, biographical, and other readings. What then becomes especially intriguing is Mary Shelley's convergence of the three narrators at the end, which will be central to my further investigation. For now, it suffices to get Walton's story back on center stage with Victor and the Creature, and to suggest how this narrative position in the outer frame offers what seems a lucid, psychological reading.

Careful 'narratological' scrutiny of any great literary work with a discernable narrative frame (like multiple narrators or tense shifting) often yields another distinct, almost inverted reading. Whenever a narrator's reliability is suspect, it pays to find out why, which careful scrutiny of his or her character might uncover. This, in turn, often leads to new presumptions about the narrator's condition or situation that might better explain the otherwise questionable actions of secondary characters,<sup>7</sup> whose own points of

view are often withheld from the reader. In *Frankenstein*, greater familiarity with Walton impels further speculation on how the three narrators might be connected, one of which becomes possible through a re-assumed premise: Walton as the protagonist.

Walton narrates both the Creature and Victor's stories and thus necessarily narrates his own. If Walton is the assumed protagonist, then Walton, Victor, and the Creature become one and the same: Walton projects Victor out of misguided necessity; the Creature, his repressed shadow ever residing in the unconscious, awaits necessity. When viewing *Frankenstein* from the outer frame, only Walton *can* tell his story.

## Chronology of Walton's Letters and Other Notable Dates

Recorded over a nine month (gestational) period from 11 Dec-12Sep 17—

**11 Dec—Letter I:** Walton is optimistic; his persona is revealed.

**17 Mar—Letter II:** First signs of depression; increasing isolation from the crew turns to desperation for a friend.

**7 Jul—Letter III:** Guarded optimism fraught with misgiving.

**5 Aug—Letter IV:**

*31 Jul*— Last date to send letters home; ship gets entrapped in ice; Walton gets further alienated from crew; first sighting of the Creature as an “apparition.”

*1 Aug*— Ice breaks; Walton projects Victor, drifting on an ice fragment.

*3 Aug*— Overcome with glee, Walton retreats to his cabin with Victor.

*13 Aug—Entry:* Walton deifies Victor and thus integrates the alter ego.

*19 Aug—Entry:* With Walton as scribe, Victor relates his tale.

Final Entries of Letter IV: “Walton in continuation”

*26 Aug—Entry:* Victor concludes his narration (possibly a day earlier).

*2 Sep—Entry:* Ship still trapped by ice; Walton's process of healing begins.

*5 Sep—Entry:* Mutiny is now imminent; as Victor weakens, Walton continues to heal; Walton (as Victor) makes his final rallying speech to the crew.

*7 Sep—Entry:* Walton succumbs to the crew's demands.

*11 Sep*—Victor expires; Walton is healed.

*12 Sep—Last entry:* Walton encounters The Creature, his shadow, who soon after retreats “in [the] darkness and distance” (247) of Walton's unconscious.

### Annotated Bibliography

Abrams, M. H., and Jack Stillinger, eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Period*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., v. 2A. New York: Norton, 2000. Print.

This anthology served as a key example of how editors often equate Walton's relationship to *Frankenstein's* narrative to the student audience. Abrams and Stillinger fortify my own perspective in that they affirm Walton's importance with respect to the structure and setting up of the narrative frame, without according any real significance to his character.

Bachinger, Jacob. "The Arctic and 'Other Spaces' in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*." *At the Edge* 1 (2010): n.pag. Web. 28 Dec. 2010.

While I only mention Bachinger in relation to modern critics who attend Walton's character more closely through work on *Frankenstein's* Arctic setting, I did not directly quote him. This is due to discovering his article late in the process, and space restrictions; but I include this source due to its critical influence on my own short discussion of the setting, and intend to rely heavily on it in my expanded work on the narrative, especially with respect to the outer frame.

Baldick, Chris. In *Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-century Writing*. New York: Oxford U. P., 1987. Print.

Baldick's foundational work on *Frankenstein's* impact on pop culture, and thus the subsequent impact on popular pre-conceptions of the novel, was enormously valuable in helping me illustrate how, over time, Walton's character has diminished in relative importance compared to Victor and the Creature. This text



alone provides ample support for how Walton, in the popular mind, became a secondary character.

Beattie, Owen, John Geiger and Margaret Atwood, *Frozen in Time: The Fate of the Franklin Expedition*. New York: Madison P., 1992. Print.

Though I consulted this source briefly, it provided the historical backdrop I wanted to include that would illustrate the very real challenges *experienced* captains faced in their efforts to reach the Northwest Passage, and thus support my view that the inexperienced Captain Walton's undertaking would likely be folly. It also enabled my hinting at, besides death, the mental illnesses that come from sensory and nutritional deprivations—especially scurvy, which can lead to schizophrenia, a disorder that resembles Walton's seeming 'split.'

Campbell, Joseph, ed. *The Portable Jung*. New York: Penguin, 1976. Print.

Campbell's convenient compilation of key writings afforded me access to Jungian psychology that I previously knew little about. After becoming familiar with his *archetypes* of human consciousness and, more specifically, *the shadow archetype*, I was astounded how (in my reading of *Frankenstein*) it so readily seemed to connect to the Creature. I thus consulted further writings from Jung on the shadow (and others to a smaller degree).

Forry, Steven Earl. *Hideous Progenies: Dramatizations of Frankenstein from Mary*

*Shelley to the Present*. Philadelphia: U. O. P. Press, 1990. Print

Like Baldick, Forry's cultural work helped add more fuel to the cultural dynamics that affected readings of the novel just a few years after Mary Shelley's initial

1818 edition was released. This was particularly helpful in that it helped me shed light on how stage productions—as early as 1823—started augmenting the popular conception of the story. Hence there was little to stop the momentum that brought us to where we are today.

Garrison, Laurie. "Imperial Vision in the Arctic: Fleeting Looks and Pleasurable Distractions in Barker's Panorama and Shelley's *Frankenstein*." *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* 52 (2008): n.pag. *Erudit*. Web. 14 April 2010.

Garrison's essay helped solidify the folly of Walton's endeavor to discover the Northwest Passage and, more important, the questionability of his reliability as a narrator. Her work around Arctic exploration at the time of *Frankenstein*'s initial publication has proved invaluable.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale U. P., 1979. Print.

The feminist groundwork laid by Gilbert and Gubar was important to my broader perspective of research on *Frankenstein*, although I only cited one passage in my pointing out key critics who made mention of the narrative frame as concentric.

Graf, Miller. *Arctic Journeys: A History of Exploration for the Northwest Passage*. New York: Peter Lang, 1992. Print.

Graf's work was my primary source for history of Northwest Passage seeking voyages that also led me to the work above on Franklin's tragic experience.

Hitchcock, Susan Tyler. *Frankenstein: A Critical History*. New York: Norton, 2007.  
Web. 31 Dec., 2010.

Though I reviewed it sparsely, Hitchcock's work will clearly be useful in future applications. I especially like how she brings Jung into the realm of literary analysis, which few critics seem to do.

Jung, C.G. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. New York: Princeton U.P. 1990. Print.

Jung's archetypes intrigue me, and I am perplexed that they are seemingly scoffed at by adherers to Freud and Lacan in literary criticism. Not only did I get more familiar with the Jungian shadow archetype for my use here, but I see promising possibilities with the anima and animus archetypes for further work on *Frankenstein*. I also can see how they would fit nicely in the concentric narrative frame.

Levin, Revella. "Communicating with the Schizophrenic Superego." *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis* 24.4 (1996): 709-36. *PubMed*. Web. 10 December 2009.

I initially intended to employ Levin's (neo-Freudian) *schizophrenic superego* to depict the psychology pertaining to the Creature until I found the Jungian shadow to be essentially the same, and less cumbersome to engage. I made mention of Levin's concept, however, in Chapter VI (The Psychology) to show how a Freudian angle could be applied, since the conventional understanding of superego did not.

Levine, George and U. C. Knoepfelmacher, eds. *The Endurance of Frankenstein: Essays on Mary Shelley's Novel*. Berkeley : U. C. Press, 1979. Print.

It took little time to see how almost any new criticism on *Frankenstein* would be remiss without bringing Levine's pioneering work into the equation. His own work, and the essays of his carefully selected contributors brought me the broad critical scope on the novel that clearly led to other works. *Endurance* also diligently addressed the narrative and some elements of psychology that I especially found useful in that Walton, while addressed, did not come under careful scrutiny, which plays well into my points made in Chapter II.

Meltzer, Françoise. "Unconscious." *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, eds. Chicago: U.O.C. Press, 1995. Print.

Meltzer's essay provided a good snapshot of Lacanian psychology that I otherwise had little time to pursue, but I felt it necessary not to overlook it in Chapter VI as a matter of critical diligence.

O'Dea, Gregory. "Framing the Frame: Embedded Narratives, Enabling Texts, and *Frankenstein*." *Romanticism on the Net* 31 (2003): n.pag. *Erudit*. Web. 12 December, 2009.

Parker, Robert Dale. *How to Interpret Literature: Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Studies*. New York: Oxford U.P., 2008. Print.

I discovered Parker's text on theory by accident. His chapter on "Structuralism" includes a segment on narratology and, when I saw his diagram of a concentric narrative frame that looked about the same as I had conceived it. I read with



excitement his explanation of the frame and knew it add nice support for my discussion on *Frankenstein's* narrative in Chapter IV.

Richard, Jessica. "A Paradise of My Own Creation: Frankenstein and the Improbable Romance of Polar Exploration." *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 25.4 (2003): 295–314. *Routledge, Ltd.* Web. 22 Dec., 2010.

I found Richard's essay to be paramount to my discussions on the novel's setting and, more importantly, on Walton as a character. Her valuable support on Walton's unreliability as a narrator also helped fortify my view that he is an inconsequential sea captain who clearly is mentally compromised. She directed me to other key works on Arctic exploration at the time too.

Schoene-Harwood, Berthold, ed. *Mary Shelley: Frankenstein*. New York: Columbia U.P., 2000. Print.

I consider Schoene-Harwood's critical guide as a modern version of Levine's *Endurance*. Besides broadening my critical lens on the novel in general, I found his work accessible and enjoyable to read. The essays containing elements of psychology and narratology were also helpful to my own continually evolving critical process.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, eds D. L.

Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf. Toronto: Broadview, 1994. Print.

Besides already having been resolved to work with Mary Shelley's initial 1818 edition, I chose Macdonald and Scherf's publication as the primary text because of their fine introduction and selection of historical, cultural, and critical works. I

also nodded heartily when I first read their rationale for working with the 1818 versus the 1831 text, the differences of which are excellently detailed in their appendix.

Veeder, William. *Mary Shelley and Frankenstein: The Fate of Androgeny*. Chicago: U.O.C. Press, 1986. Print.

Veeder's foundational work proved an excellent center ground off which to bounce my own views of the psychology in relation to my thesis. There is no doubt I will continue to visit this work for various kinds of support, especially since I share his point of view in many instances. He also discusses Walton as if he is about to address what I am addressing here, but then stops short, like taking the ball, but not running with it!

von Franz, M-L. "The Process of Individuation" in C. G. Jung, *Man and his Symbols* (London 1978) p. 175. Print.

Von Franz's work provided further clarity on my understanding of the Jungian shadow.

Wolfson, Susan and Peter Manning, eds. "The Romantics and Their Contemporaries." *The Longman Anthology of British Literature, Volume 2*. Addison-Wesley: 1998. Print.

Like Abrams and Stillinger's above, Wolfson and Manning's anthology served as another example for how, in discussing *Frankenstein*, Walton is hardly mentioned. For students new to the novel, this only helps to reinforce a long standing critical bias to regard Walton as a secondary character.