GOTHIC NOVEL
A type of romance very popular late in the 18th century and at the beginning of the 19th century, which has had considerable influence on fiction since. Most Gothic novels were tales of mystery and horror, intended to chill the spine and curdle the blood. They contained a strong element of the supernatural and the now traditional “haunted house” props. Often they were set in medieval castles which had secret passages, dungeons, winding stairways, a stupefying atmosphere of doom and gloom and a proper complement of spooky happenings and clanking ghosts. Other characteristics include:

- **Elements/Structure of Gothic Fiction:**
  - Setting = foreign land
  - Atmosphere = brooding and unknown terror
  - Plot
    - Exploration of the unknown or supernatural (wild)
    - Combines horror, crime, romance, realism and tragic events
  - Characters
    - Hero in search of self; usually has an irreversible fate
      - see definition of “Byronic Hero”
    - “damsels in distress” in strange and terrifying locales
    - Ghosts/monsters haunt the hero for his actions

- **Themes:**
  - sexuality, danger, desire, femininity
  - supernatural element
  - power gone mad
  - female rage & sexual desire
  - moral virtue emerges in different forms
  - slightly anachronistic/medieval morality
  - opens up dark, irrational side of the mind

CHARACTERS (VOL. I)
Ship on journey to explore the North Pole (setting)
  - Robert Walton
  - Mrs. Margaret Saville
Geneva (setting)
  - Alphonse Frankenstein
  - Caroline Beaufort Frankenstein
  - Victor Frankenstein
    - Elizabeth Lavenza (later Frankenstein)
    - Henry Clerval
    - Cornelius Agrippa
    - M. Waldman
    - Monster
  - Ernest Frankenstein
  - William Frankenstein
  - Justine Moritz

THEMES
1831 Introduction
Narrative Structure
Gothic Setting
Robert Walton (British) as narrator
Victor Frankenstein (foreign) as Byronic Hero
Importance of Well-Rounded Education
Reason & Imagination = necessary contraries to find Truth (P.B. Shelley)
Dead Mothers (no guidance)
“Savage” Monster embodies contraries: education & nature; tame humanity & wild passion