

**Concept:** The sublime in nature and Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*

**Objective:** SWBAT write an essay connecting Edmund Burke's essay on the sublime in nature to Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*

**Procedure:**

1. Show slide of *Looking Down Yosemite Valley, 1865* by Albert Bierstadt and lead a classroom discussion while students take notes
  - a. Describe this painting using a few adjectives. Put answers on the board (astonishing, huge, infinite, powerful, vast, beautiful, scary, peaceful...)
  - b. How large would a person seem if he/she was standing in the middle?
  - c. Show pictures of climbers on El Capitan (the ½ dome on the right side of painting).
  - d. How has Bierdstat created an illusion of great distance and depth?
  - e. How does the light add to the drama of the scene?
2. Show slide of Barnet Newman's "Vir Heroicis Sublimis" and lead a discussion
  - a. Ask students for their initial reactions to the painting
  - b. Explain the dimensions and how this painting is displayed (this painting is 13 ft long and 7 ft tall as it hangs in a narrow hallway). How would this make you feel if you were looking at it?
  - c. Explain the role of the lines or the "zips" which are strategically placed so that they create a barrier between the vast field of vision and you.
  - d. Explain that with the sublime, you must feel pain in order to feel pleasure because pleasure is an empty feeling. (students add this to their notes)
3. Students provide examples of other things in nature (including the American Landscape) that are sublime: the galaxies, the ocean, deserts, the grand canyon, the badlands, the redwoods, Yellowstone...
4. Students read Edmund Burke's "The Sublime, the Beautiful, and the Picturesque"
5. With a partner students complete a 3+1+illustration that is on a poster sized piece of paper. (3 main ideas + 1 question +1 illustration of an example of the sublime in nature)
6. Students share out posters and class answers the questions that are posed
7. With their partners, students add an example and a quote from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* that connects with the main ideas on their posters
8. Share out

Examples: settings in the novel include Mont Blanc, a "sea of ice," the Valley of Chaminoux which all excite a delightful horror for Victor.

An example of a quote from the novel is, "The immense mountains and precipices...that overhung me on every side...spoke of a power mighty as omnipotence." This quote connects with Edmund Burke's philosophy that the sublime is, "...some modification of power..."

**Evaluation: Essay Prompt**

Examine how Mary Shelley uses three different elements of the sublime, according to Edmund Burke, in her novel *Frankenstein*

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