

HOW DOES SHELLEY INTRODUCE THE IDEA OF OBSESSION IN WALTON'S LETTERS?

From the very first of Walton's letters it is clear how determined he is to complete this journey. Shelley is able to give the reader an insight to how Walton feels about his journey. From the first paragraph it is clear that he is completely determined to reach his goal. At this point it is not clear what this is, although we know he has arrived somewhere.

In the second paragraph, he explains to his sister that he is set on reaching wherever it is he has set out to.

"I felt a cold northern breeze, which has travelled from the regions towards which I am advancing, gives me a foretaste of those icy climes. Inspired by this wind of promise, my day dreams become more fervent and vivid."

Here he describes how he is becoming increasingly more excited and driven to reach his destination.

Reading further on;

"I try in vain to be persuaded that the pole is the seat of frost and desolation; it ever presents itself to my imagination as the region of beauty and delight."

We discover Walton is travelling to the North Pole. At the date this novel was set, which is not given other than the century (17--), expeditions to the North Pole were becoming progressively more apparent. Hundreds of teams from countries across Europe set out to conquer the unknown. At the time Frankenstein was set, no one had reached this yet. In this single sentence we discover an important fact about Walton. He admits he knows that nothing will be there if and when he arrives. However he is still set on getting there. We begin to understand why he is making this journey - he wants to prove to himself that he can. He is an extremely ambitious man and will let nothing get in his way.

He holds such determination and will take risks to get what he wants.

Later on in the letter he asks his sister;

"And now dear Margaret, do I not deserve to accomplish some great purpose?"

Here, we also see that Walton believes he should get what he wants after the struggle he had of finally beginning the journey. He claims he'd rather have the thrills of an expedition than the wealth he gave up. He knows he has a tough task but yet again, portrays such ambition that we almost know he'll make it without a problem.

He does, however in the next sentence describe things which will make the voyage harder, such as the bitter cold. He then even begins to question his return to England.

"...and when shall I return? [...] If I succeed, many, many months, perhaps years, will pass before you and I may meet. If I fail, you will see me again soon, or never."

This, maybe, is the softer side to Walton that we do not see so much. At every letter, he ends it by questioning his return, showing that he is not so tough and has difficulties like everyone else.