THE GOTHIC NOVEL: (end of 18th century)

a) warming up:
- runitalltogetherdictation: my computer has gone wrong!-: to be done in pairs.
- Brainstorm on “GOTHIC”: from some SOUNDS → words, movies, books from IMAGES (page 19 textbook module D; page 51 Maps)

b) note –taking:

Main works: The Castle of Otranto By Horace Walpole (1764); The Mysteries of Udolpho by Anne Radcliffe (1794); The Monk by Matthew Lewis (1796); Frankenstein by Mary Shelley (1818)

Why studying the gothic novel?
Because of its influence on later works (Romantic writers, Edgar Allan Poe, Angela Carter) and because some ingredients are still present in contemporary fiction. Furthermore, from a stylistic point of view it is rather innovative: Round characters with psychological development (Frankenstein), figurative language, new settings, complicated plots.

Main features which will influence romantic literature:
1. Setting in wild, exotic, remote places; choice of Catholic countries.
2. Interest in the ages of superstitions and romance (Middle Ages);
3. The aim of the novel remained the study of humanity (like Henry Fielding or Jane Austen) but the main focus shifted from reason to emotions; (anxiety, awe, fear, despair)
4. Role of the landscape –lonely landscapes, haunted castles, hidden passages, underground cellars, secret rooms, impressive scenery - to convey human feelings and emotions (in this case the sense of solitude, sadness, impending danger, melancholy, gloom);
5. Frankenstein as an implicit criticism of Romantic tendencies to rival God and as a warning against the dangers implicit in breaking natural laws.

Main features which will influence contemporary fiction:
1. Mysterious and fearful atmosphere found in ghost stories; hostile and frightening world;
2. Suspense is one of the main ingredients of the plots in both detective and crime fiction.
3. The Mysteries of Udolpho by Anne Radcliffe is considered the first thriller in British literature for its masterful handling of suspense.
4. Frankenstein is considered the first science novel. Events are not caused by mysterious causes but by man himself in pursuit of scientific research for the improvement of human society.

Frankenstein: links with other works of literature and other contemporary topics:
1. Paradise Lost by Milton and the myth of Prometheus: molding of a living being from clay; growth of malice and desire for revenge caused by a negative view of human relationships; isolation of the “hostile being” (the monster) and the increase of his hostility;
2. Humanistic science fiction: “there are things men must not know “ (link to C. Marlow’s Doctor Faustus and to contemporary science fiction)
3. Opposition Human/Not Human found in cyber-literature and films such as Blade Runner…
4. Contemporary debate on Human cloning, organ transplants and the perils in technological developments of modern science; “Should there be a limit to human knowledge?”
5. V. artificial intelligence, Frankenstein

read the extract page 58 (Type B) and highlight its gothic features.

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