How does Mary Shelley use language to create tension in her novel, Frankenstein?

Refer specifically to chapter 5.

Mary Shelley wrote the novel Frankenstein in 1818.this was an era when Romantics; a group of people who believed that you shouldn’t play around with nature. Shelley’s mother, Mary Wollstonecraft and father, Percy bysshe Shelley were both Romantics and writers. Shelley’s mother died 10 days after childbirth due to puerperal fever, Marys feelings of not having a mother throughout her childhood are incorporated into the novel as Victor Frankenstein’s mother also dies in childbirth.

The novel was subtitled The Modern ‘Prometheus’ because Frankenstein acts like the Greek titan Prometheus, who took the sacred fire from the Greek god Zeus and gave it to the Greek civilians. However, Frankenstein did this with life. This uses the gothic horror conventions to prove the genre it is written in. Shelley also wrote the novel in the epistolary style, which means that the novel is written as a series of documents such as letters or diary pages.

The whole of the novel evolves around the happenings of chapter five as this is the chapter where Victor Frankenstein’s creation comes to life and the real signs of Frankenstein’s personality and emotion come through. Shelley uses various types of language to create tension throughout the chapter. Shelley uses metaphors such as,’ *my candle was nearly burnt out.’* , This has a double meaning : that his candle is actually burning low on its wick and that Frankenstein has been running out of time and patience while creating the creature ,which has led him to exhaustion .This language creates tension as it gives the reader the impression that something spooky or horrifying is going to happen because it sets the scene that Victor is sat in the dark, working on the creature by the light of one small candle; that soon will sizzle out and he will be left in the dark, on his own.

Pathetic Fallacy is used by Shelley to set the scene at the beginning of chapter five, such as *‘Dreary night of November’* and *‘Dim yellow light of the moon’* are used because these are classic horror genre conventions and they use imagery to set a picture of how unnatural the moon looks and how dark and scary the dreary night’s sky is.

Shelley uses imagery to give us a picture of Frankenstein and the creations personality. She gives the impression that because Frankenstein has been working so hard on this creation that it is driving him to insanity, this is shown by quotations such as.’*I thought I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms.’* This makes the reader think that the creation is driving him to insanity, and this gives the reader a bad impression of the creation, and this creates further tension later on in the chapter as the creation is seen to be ‘evil’.

When Shelley uses emotive language *‘Anxiety that almost amounted to agony.’* We start to feel emotion for Victor Frankenstein as he has been working for so long on this creature become obsessed with the creature he has become obsessed, and worried that his whole life’s work is going to be ruined by him getting caught, as in the novel it is illegal to create life and play around with nature as it was in reality in the era of the Romantics, when science was being criticised for being unnatural.

Mary Shelley uses a variety of language techniques to create tension and atmosphere in chapter five. Before the ‘monster’ comes to life, Shelley describes it as a *‘lifeless thing*.’ This gives the impression that the creation will be treated as a nothing when it is ‘born’.

Shelley uses a vivid description of the monster to build tension in chapter five.*’ his yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of lustrous black. and flowing; his teeth of pearly whiteness; but these luxuriance’s only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes’ that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and his straight black lips.’* This description uses imagery to create the monster in the readers head, Shelley used one complex sentence to describe the monster and she used many semi-colons to add length and pace to the text.

The main themes of the novel are science, and how it changes and creates things, good and bad. This relates to the time it was written in 1818, the era of The Romantics. As Mary Shelley was brought up in romantic Britain during this era, the beliefs’ of Romantics were written and incorporated into the novel. Frankenstein used electricity to bring his monster to life, and Shelley uses the vocabulary such as *‘convulsed’* to show hoe the creature came to life via electricity.

After studying chapter five of ‘frankenstien.The Modern Prometheus.’ I now have a better understanding of the purpose of 19th century prose being written; an unpretentious form of literature which showed life as it was, how it was changing and how life would become In future years. This was shown greatly throughout the novel as many of Mary’s own opinions and feelings of the 19th century and the Romantic era were incorperated into the novel and this is visable through her writing.

In my opinion Shelley was a brilliant author of this time and was very brave to write about such a tender topic of the era; Scientific experimentations. The language and writing skills used to complete the novel are unusual for a woman of her age to use, as he was only 16 when she started to write the novel and was 19 when she completed it. Throughout these years she eloped to France with her fiancé had her first child but sadly their daughter died just a few years later. I admire Shelley for going through a rough period in her life and something so great coming out of it.