



WILLIAM GODWIN AND FRANKENSTEIN:
THE SECULARIZATION OF CALVINISM IN GODWIN'S
PHILOSOPHY AND THE SUB-GODWINIAN GOTHIC NOVEL; WITH
SOME REMARKS ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE GOTHIC TO
ROMANTICISM.

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SUMMARY

The subject matter of this thesis is William Godwin's Political Justice and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein.

My central argument is that there is a secularization of Calvinism in both Godwin's philosophy and the sub-Godwinian Gothic novel. The relationship of the Gothic to Romanticism is also a primary consideration here.

I thus aim to demonstrate how a particular theological model becomes secularized, both as an intellectual system and as a literary form. Part One involves an examination, through an analysis of Political Justice, of how Godwin's early Sandemanian Calvinism becomes secularized in the idealistic anarchism of his political philosophy; Calvinist predestination is translated into progress, as reason and the human will assume the role of deity. Part Two then argues that Victor Frankenstein's distinctive qualities can be attributed to a Calvinist world view, an outlook which also defines the Gothic. The Gothic, however, is an extreme psychological and emotional response to Calvinist rationalism and absolutism. In Frankenstein's Romantic Gothic text, a yearning for the completion and wholeness which is a characteristic of Romantic

organicism is combined with the despair and damnation of a fatalistic Gothic universe.

I interpret Frankenstein as an allegorical representation of the development and possible consequences of Godwinism, with Victor and his creature as embodiments of this process. Victor's history mirrors the possible psychological, emotional, and intellectual conflicts which might ensue in someone who effectively fails to make the transition from a fatalistic world view into that of beneficent Romanticism, with its utopian ideas of progress and millennial felicity.

Frankenstein reveals an ambivalence about the powers of human rationality which conflicts with the overt message of Political Justice; it can be read both as a subversion of Godwinism and as a questioning of Romantic organicism, as a reaction against rationalist systems of progress and utilitarian relativism. As an assertion of essentialist and absolutist values and truths it represents Mary's rebellion against her origins.

This is to certify that the following thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

I consent to the thesis being made available for photocopying and loan if applicable if accepted for the award of the degree.

VIVIENNE ANN BELL

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to demonstrate how a particular theological model becomes secularized, both as an intellectual system and as a literary form.

In Part One I discuss how William Godwin's early Calvinism becomes secularized in his political philosophy. This process involves the rejection of a view of the Creator as transcendent and an acceptance of deity (albeit secularized) as being immanent in matter, thereby allowing for the development of utopian ideas of progress and millennial felicity.

Such a response implies social and political involvement, and can be seen as an optimistic reaction to Calvinist impotence and despair. Conversely, the Gothic novel represents a reflection of the pessimistic and anxiety-laden psychological state attendant upon a world view which can be seen as similar to that of Calvinism. Here impotence and inertia remain, for the Gothic victim ultimately has no sense of the autonomy of the will in the face of transcendent fate.

The creative act which proceeds from true union of mind and nature in Romantic organicism cannot be attained in Godwin's philosophy. I will argue in Part Two, which deals with Mary Shelley's Romantic

Gothic text Frankenstein (E),¹ and where I regard Victor Frankenstein largely as a model of Godwinism, that this particular Calvinist-based intellectual system cannot be reconciled with Romantic organicism. This novel demonstrates the intellectual, psychological, and emotional conflicts which ensue in someone who cannot effect a transition between conflicting world views.

Godwin's own Gothic novels can be seen to reveal the despairing underside to Political Justice's (PJ) optimistic idealism.

¹ I refer throughout this thesis to the 1831 edition of Frankenstein.

PART ONE: POLITICAL JUSTICE

PREFACE

The first three chapters here are concerned with historical, theological, and philosophical influences upon Godwin, while the fourth is a detailed analysis of the evidence of these influences in Political Justice, specifically of the manner in which his early Sandemanian Calvinism becomes secularized in his philosophical anarchism.



CHAPTER ONE: THE MILLENNIUM

Certain ideas which originate in the Reformation inform the later belief in the realization of the biblical millennium within the temporal sphere of existence. Theories of evolution and progress echoed the concept of religious redemption, while it was the Protestant tendency to view the Deity as immanent rather than transcendent which allowed the role of Providence to be gradually transferred to immutable natural laws. Godwin's philosophy can be seen as one example of the culmination of these cultural developments.

Progress may be seen historically in terms of a secular shift from the millennial idea: it is commonly believed today (as Godwin did) that a scientific positivist age is an advance over a theological one. The poet, philosopher, and theologian Henry More (1614-87) had suggested that God was working out a gradual redemption of humanity through a series of ascending epochs of history (Tuveson vii), and by 1692 Thomas Burnet (1635-1715) had worked out a well-developed theory of progress (Tuveson v). He saw God's plan in terms of cultural development, with a refining of spiritual and mental faculties paralleling a movement from the primitive to the philosophical state of humanity.

Burnet reconciled the Neoplatonic idea of a movement towards greater complexity with the Christian linear view. Unlike the Classical attitude the Christian is in the main hopeful and, in contrast to Renaissance ideas, the change was now considered by many to be inevitable, and not just a possibility. Apocalyptic theory is actually behind our ideal of progress, not Renaissance cyclical historiography (Tuveson 75); with science, the cyclical element becomes teleological. There is, for example, a residual teleology implicit in the evolutionary idea that better and "higher" forms of life are yet to emerge.

The teleological aspect of individual perfectibility, in being concordant with the unfolding of latent potentialities, combined with the idea of God's working only through inexorable natural laws, to lead to the consideration of nature's method as being itself progressive (Tuveson 194). An increasing focus upon the psychological and emotional aspects of human experience stemmed from Behmenist "inner light" theology while, with the individual now beginning to be seen as governed by the same immutable laws as were postulated for the natural world, the concept of renewal could be transferred from the organic realm to that of the individual's spiritual life.

In this period the "magical" alchemy was becoming secularized in the science of chemistry.¹

Francis Bacon had been influenced by the Hermetic religio-social idea of controlling nature, while for "Behmenists ... alchemy was an outward symbol of internal regeneration" (Hill 233). The alchemical image is central both to Frankenstein and to Godwin's St. Leon.

The abolition of purgatory and limbo, as well as ecclesiastical magic put a greater strain upon the individual; either heaven or hell awaited, for there was no mediation. This fear of hell made it easier to accept both the idea of the millennium and that heaven and hell were within; this latter notion, which marks the beginnings of a psychologizing of the transcendent, was believed by Boehme and Milton's Satan (Hill 140-41). One consequence of this internalization of the spiritual dimension was that some individuals were encouraged to believe in nothing but nature and an after-death oblivion (Hill 139). In the seventeenth century, heresy was equated with revolt; since secularism was not regarded as heretical (Hill 146), some sectaries such as Ranters were free to see matter as good. They were materialistic pantheists who denied dualism (Hill 165). For these persons, God became a synonym for the natural world (Hill 166), an attitude which Victor's search for meaning in natural philosophy can be seen to parallel. By contrast, some Presbyterian ministers suggested that anyone seeing beauty as inherent in an object was

necessarily damned, for they considered the physical world to be utterly fallen (Hill 139). Victor is also a legatee of this Calvinist view, hence his ambivalent attitude to the phenomenal realm.

The Neoplatonic idea that all creation is an emanation from God and will return to Him influenced some seventeenth century sectaries to feel that Christ dwelt within them and that somehow sin was not their responsibility (Hill 151). An unfortunate consequence of this belief was antinomianism (Hill 164); the Ranters, for example, were proven to be antisocial in the sense that they denied the necessity for civil and moral righteousness (Hill 166). Such a rejection of conventional morality and original sin led to an outlook which was favourable to the development of ideas such as Locke's tabula rasa theory; this development, in turn, paved the way for human pretense to the role of deity.

A growing awareness of the "social and democratic possibilities of the new science" (Hill 232) was joined with millenarian enthusiasm to create utopian visions; and by the late seventeenth century the study and observation of nature had become a religious enterprise (Tuveson 102). The millennium came to be viewed as a continuation of earthly existence, with the scientist Boyle seeing a greater later reward for those who had used their understanding whilst on earth (Tuveson 103); this attitude becomes secularized as a moral imperative

in Godwinism. To know God through nature replaced the centrality of human existence in the universal order and the goal of the ascent of the soul to God: judgement and divine presence were no longer to be sought in the heavens. The earth now became the centre of eschatological interest, with natural formations being endowed with an apocalyptic sublimity and dramatic power which were to reach their peak in Romanticism.

The Faustian desire for knowledge of the infinite is evident in Boyle's assertion that the knowledge by the saints in the heavenly city would be more penetrating than Adam's in paradise (Tuveson 100). In fact, the possibility of human control was already evident in that forerunner of sociology, the astrologers' belief that the principles underlying the development of human society were capable of human explanation (Hill 234). With God now residing in the human breast, it had become inconvenient to have Him intervening in everyday affairs; the way had been paved for what was to become the apotheosis of individual autonomy in Romanticism.

The ideal thus moved from one of earthly transcendence to that of world reform:

If we would have a fair view and right apprehensions of Natural Providence, we must not cut the chains of it too short, by having recourse, without necessity, either to the First Cause, in explaining the Origins of things, or to Miracles, in

explaining particular effects.
(Thomas Burnet quoted in Tuveson
119)

The early Church Father St. Cyprian's view that nature was declining through old age (Tuveson 13), had thus been replaced by the Reformation. The earlier theory was retained in a limited sense, however, in the Calvinist rejection of the material world (Calvin was anti-millenarian), and in the later Gothic preoccupation with physical decay. However, private property and an unequal society were seen as inevitable consequences of original sin, thereby allowing for the development of the work ethic in the acquisition of property. This view was reinforced for his followers by Calvin's assertion that poverty was a sign of sinfulness (Hill 125), and therefore possibly evidence of damnation; paradoxically, Calvinists therefore both disdained and yet found theological meaning in material possessions. The type of psychological conflict which Victor displays can be seen to originate in this contradictory attitude to the phenomenal realm.

The "decay of nature" theme of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance literature, which is also Gothic, was associated with the coming Apocalypse and the final Judgement. The process is thus simultaneously degenerative and progressive, for the decay of the elements is evidence that the Second Coming is imminent; the Gothic is hereby linked with

millennial thinking, for the one can be seen to anticipate the other. In Frankenstein, humanity actually intervenes in the degenerative process in order to attempt to effect the instauration of millennial felicity.

By the early eighteenth century the idea of the perfection of humanity began to develop, often being represented by the imagery of transfiguration. This process can be interpreted as a secularization of the Platonic doctrine of pre-existence, which had been defended by Thomas More (Tuveson 95): the soul at birth is given a body, with new bodies to be provided for the resurrected. This image of resurrection, to be attained through a regeneration which is both spiritual and physical, occurs in both Frankenstein and St. Leon.

The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century revolutionary movements emphasised education and the revolt against tyranny as representing a gradual moral and intellectual improvement of humanity; progress had become a certainty. Our history now becomes parallel to that of the earth and reflects our moral development; and, through our past, we could learn God's plan. For Hegel, history was actually perceived of as the unfolding of a mind (Tuveson 193): the transcendent divinity had become both immanent and accessible to human reason.

In Political Justice Godwin says that only the mind and understanding could perceive the deity,

echoing Winstanley and others who had earlier equated God with reason (Hill 165). Godwin even believed that reason could cause the instincts to be superseded, in an attitude which is derived from his early Sandemanian conditioning. That is the next topic for consideration.

¹ Newton's gravitational force can also be considered as magical in that it operates non-mechanically across vast distances (Hill 236); however, from within our later secular framework, we overlook its "magical" quality and thereby unconsciously accommodate contradictory elements in our scientific world view.

CHAPTER TWO: SANDEMANIANISM

Godwin's philosophical views involve a transmutation of transcendent and theological categories into those of immanence and secularism. As these attitudes are largely derived from the sect in which he was raised, Sandemanian Calvinism, the process of this transmutation must be traced through an examination of this theological system and the way its influence on Godwin was modified by broader philosophical and cultural trends.

By combining intellectual abstraction with intensity of feeling, Godwin helped to create the late eighteenth-century cult of sensibility. His denial of free will, in the consideration that everything was determined by first causes, meant that he was a necessitarian; he also emphasized reason, thereby fusing mechanical philosophy with Protestant dissent. Although non-prescriptive, his philosophy anticipated the nineteenth-century sense of nature as actual and historical, as opposed to the eighteenth-century one of the abstract and potential. He thus marks a transition point in the history of ideas.

Godwin enunciated the extreme conclusions of eighteenth-century rationalism at the point of an incipient reaction against them. An "atheist" from 1787,¹ he believed in progress and perfectibility and the Lockean tabula rasa theory: the belief that

one's personality is built up by association out of sensations. He was thoroughly grounded in sensationalist psychology, and was profoundly influenced by Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding.

In accordance with these Lockean views, he was non-prescriptive: no rules or tradition were to be called upon and each case was to be considered individually through the operation of reason. His individualism echoes the Calvinist individual fact of election and is analogous to the particularized fate of the Gothic hero. Godwin read Holbach's La Système de la Nature in 1782; with its rejection of revelation, this work converted him to deism (Smith 57). Holbach held the opinion that, as human beings are works of nature, then they are subject to its laws. Godwin's necessitarianism accords with this view and can be seen to originate in Calvinist thought, where predestination makes for a determinate universe. Articles published in 1785 in the Political Herald reveal that he had adopted the "Newtonian model of human affairs which sees conduct as determined by scientific laws, and he is convinced that there can be no higher authority than a man's individual judgement" (St Clair 33-34).²

In that he considered tradition and government to be evils, the issues of politics and education became of primary importance to Godwin. He supported Rousseau's ideas on education, and thought

that only the educated individual could possess a virtuous character. His belief that enlightenment through education would produce political change is concordant with his view that mental attitude could lead to freedom; he thus dissolves the distinction between private and public morality, for inner thought was linked crucially to public action. The goal was whatever would be of the greatest benefit to society. Calvinist teaching had theoretically minimized the value of good works but in practice admitted them; social harmony would otherwise have been at risk.

[Godwin's belief in enlightenment through education led to his pacifism; he felt that war was excusable only in self defence.] His emphasis is wholly upon the function of mind in the chain of causality of events; a person can be made just by persuasion. His view that retribution, not a concern for justice, was behind the penal laws, led him to consider that such a system should be replaced by his own rationalist and enlightened one. He could foresee a time when, after a transition period when punishment would still be required, we would all become ruled by reason and benevolence in a Godwinian utopia.

In Neoplatonism, that dominant influence upon Godwin and the major Romantics, evil is never pure evil but merely the negation of good; the relative evil of the phenomenal world is actually produced by

God's love, and He desires to draw all of His creations back to the Source. The inevitable and optimistic process inherent in Neoplatonism easily accommodates Romantic organicism, where mind is assimilated to nature, and the ideal to the real; such a model also allows for millennial developments to occur, for the temporal realm is never perceived of as being pure evil.³ Such a hopeful attitude is not possible in Calvinism, however, where only absolute evil is present in material existence and God rejects, and hence damns, most of His creation for all eternity. The process by which Calvinism can begin to be transmuted into a millennialist vision is therefore crucial to Godwin's philosophy.

The Romantic idea of an immanent destiny can co-exist with both empirical scientific determinism and Calvinism. This Romantic view considers that the elements of the world are endowed with intelligence and are arranged and united to fulfill the views of the creator, thereby allowing for the freedom of organic self-expression, if not that of self-conscious and unconditioned choice (Thorslev 81). In Calvinism, however, God or meaning cannot be located in immanence.

Calvinists believed that since the Fall the laws of nature are perpetually violated and therefore knowledge of them is unimportant. Furthermore, their consideration that truly virtuous acts cannot be effected by human and sinful wills,

but only by divine interposition, meant that God alone was deemed to be responsible for such acts of virtue. The Calvinist view of human history and nature as malevolent could, however, be overcome by recourse to the belief that a transcendental destiny could supervene upon an immanent one: the Calvinist theologian Jonathan Edwards (with whose writings Godwin was familiar [Marshall P.H. 22]) said that the elect will be saved by the intervention of a transcendent destiny (Thorslev 14). An escape from the evil of the temporal domain of existence is thus tied crucially to the hope of one's election; if a secular model is substituted for a theological one, then an assurance of this privileged status can readily become linked with utopian visions, as images of resurrection replace those of decay.

In this way, it was theoretically possible for Jonathan Edwards to begin a process of changing foreordination to progress; and this was despite the fact that Calvinism precluded redemption and progress, for, theologically speaking, a Calvinist cannot believe in the millennium. Edwards saw the advance of knowledge as being as essential as piety; foreordination thus becomes secularized to a teleological view, where the progress involved is in a gradual and non-materialist moral and intellectual improvement and perfectibility (Tuveson 139).

Edwards thus adapted the Calvinist model to a millennial outlook, and this was taken up by Godwin

who similarly ascribed a moral purpose to intellectual pursuits. They both reflected the Calvinist disdain for the phenomenal realm in their non-materialist concept of progress; paradoxically, however, Godwin's goal of perfectibility also marks a denial of the Calvinist corrupt nature of humanity and is, therefore, a rejection of original sin. Godwin's political philosophy is thus implicitly materialist, for it indicates a concern with human welfare in the temporal sphere of existence.

Jonathan Edwards's essay "Foreknowledge Inconsistent with Contingency" (from Freedom of the Will 1754; Brody 395-403) illustrates the Calvinist attitude to free will and determinism; conflict over this matter becomes a central theme in Frankenstein. Edwards asserts that connection between entities implies necessity: "'Tis very evident, with regard to a thing whose existence is infallibly and indissolubly connected with something which already hath, or has had existence, the existence of that thing is necessary" (Brody 393). He goes on to say that: "'Tis also very manifest, that those things which are indissolubly connected with other things that are necessary, are themselves necessary" (Brody 393). What is implicit here is that a truly contingent event can have no relation with anything already existent; as unique creation it must therefore originate with God. This admits, in the form of the otherwise inexplicable, a belief in the

spontaneous intervention of the Deity into an otherwise determined system which is characteristically Calvinist, and also Gothic.

Edwards argues that the foreknowledge of events has no influence upon those events, and thus God's foreknowledge need not interfere with a predetermined universe: "Infallible foreknowledge may prove the necessity of the event foreknown, and yet not be the thing which causes the necessity" (Brody 398). There is the sense here that the Calvinist Deity is somewhat like that of deism or the pantocrator of Newton's clockwork universe: omniscient and setting all in motion, but intervening only occasionally in a contained and determined system. Cosmic determinism can be seen, therefore, as a model for the later ideas of secular biological and cultural or environmental determinism.

The theoretical existence of a limited free will within the larger orbit of determinism is allowed for by Edwards; he agrees with Dr. Whitby that "the foreknowledge of any action that would otherwise free [meaning that it would indicate the operation of free will], cannot alter or diminish that freedom" (Whitby, quoted in Brody 397). There is, for Edwards, a necessary connection between God's foreknowledge of an event and the event, and therefore His introduction of a decree, whereby events are foreordained, cannot interfere in any way

with this connection; accordingly, a decree cannot interfere with human freedom or liberty (Brody 396-97). There is the implication in Edwards's argument that an individual is pre-determined to exercise free will; this is obviously a Calvinist rationalization, in an attempt to obviate the problem of Christian free will when all has been predestinated.

Edwards does, however, like Godwin in Political Justice (355; bk. 4, ch. 8), reject the Arminian belief in an unconditioned free will (as opposed to free grace): "God's certain prescience of the volitions of moral agents is inconsistent with such a contingency of these events, as is without all necessity; and so is inconsistent with the Arminian notion of liberty" (Brody 402). Edwards thus denies a contingent reality:

if future existence be firmly and indissolubly connected with that event, then the future existence of that event is necessary. If God certainly knows the future existence of an event which is wholly contingent, and may possibly never be, then he sees a firm connection between a subject and predicate that are not firmly connected, which is a contradiction. (Brody 399)

Accordingly, the fact that Godwin thought humans never knowingly chose evil, for they possess no unconditioned free will (PJ 355; bk. 4, ch. 8), is a reflection of the Calvinist belief that

unconditioned free will conflicted with God's foreknowledge. There remains a logical inconsistency in the admittance of a limited free will within a deterministic model.

Protestants saw the Bible largely in terms of history or prophecy; this is a scientific attitude (Hill 74) which indicates a concern with objective and literal "fact". An inversion of sorts in rank is possible with Protestant prophecy, for God might speak directly to the common person thus giving him or her a higher status than another of greater social standing. This attitude allows for that abrogation of the powers of the Deity which is so evident in Godwin, Victor, and St. Leon.

The Protestant rejection of transubstantiation as a superstition allowed rationalism and scepticism to emerge in their outlook. Calvin's apprehension of God was an intellectual one, based upon thought not feeling:

Calvin rejected the mystic and contemplative ideal of a personal union with God achieved in the individual soul; he saw faith as an active principle directed to the Son as the sole means of grasping the reality of the Father. (Elton 216)

Christ was the knowable fact, the evidence of God, but Calvin's thinking was primarily theocentric. Rationalism also ruled the Sandemanian Calvinists.

For Godwin, intention and correct judgement were all-important, that is, the intention to divine

with accuracy the truth of a situation. This is the secular equivalent of desiring to know God, of seeking to be proved one of the "elect"; Calvinism is non-democratic, and so was Godwin. A passionate desire to be saved was considered by Calvinists to be strong evidence that one was among the elect; the desire became the fact. Thus we all carry mortal sin but, through grace, we can still be of the elect.

Property could be an indicator of election for Calvinists. For Protestants, private property was seen as the consequence of sin; accordingly, property was considered as an inevitable burden which was to be protected against the unpropertied; this was also Godwin's attitude (PJ 717; bk. 8, ch. 2). Calvin had said that poverty was a sign of damnation, and wrote that Solomon exhorted "the poor to patient endurance" (quoted in Hill 125), for this was the burden of their sinfulness. Property therefore became equated with godliness and election, with Calvin advocating the use of the magistrate to defend one's property against the public.

Boehme and the Familists believed in the superiority of the spirit of the law to the letter of the Scripture (Hill 118). This is analogous to the Sandemanians' view that the truth of Scripture could be discerned through rational thought, and was to be given precedence over the letter of Scripture

(Marshall P.H. 23). Godwin's tutor Samuel Newton followed the eighteenth-century Calvinist, Sandeman, who believed that grace could not be achieved by good works or faith, but only by the "rational perception of divine truth" (Marshall P.H. 23).

Calvin had put Christians on their guard against any delusion that good works alone could save an individual from hell. Sandeman had taken that logic a stage further by insisting that those who relied on faith were equal victims of false doctrine put about by the Devil in order to entrap them. "God scorns to save or damn a man", Godwin wrote in describing the Sandemanian creed, "but according to the right or wrong judgement of his [a man's] understanding". (St Clair 7)

The ruler of the individual as reason, conscience, or love has now moved within and has therefore become immanent. Protestantism internalized sin, and conscience became the guardian of virtue as inward penitence replaced outward confession.

The emphasis upon the rational interpretation of Scripture had developed in the seventeenth century from the problems being encountered with individual interpretations. In Treatise of Christian Doctrine, Book I, Milton had said (privately) that our reason possesses an illumination superior to Scripture (Hill 212) and, in Of Education: To Master Samuel Hartlib, he (like Godwin) hopes that learning will undo the consequences of the Fall: "The end, then, of

learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright" (Paradise Lost: And Selected Poetry and Prose [PL] 439).

The Sandemanians believed that reason could ascertain moral laws which in turn might oppose societal laws. They did not, however, consider that reason could dispense with New Testament truths and attempted to take them literally; their influence was one of anarchism, communism, and the "noninstitutionality of the church of the New Testament" (Smith 42-43). Taking Christ's golden rule as a natural law, they felt that one should love others for truth's sake, not out of partiality (Marshall P.H. 25). The Sandemanians felt that there is an injustice in partiality, specifically in family feeling: for them, reason subdues all. This influence led to Godwin's rejecting private emotional feelings, for these were considered to be of secondary importance; similarly, Victor sacrifices family and friends for the benefit of wider humanity. This view was later theoretically rejected by Godwin; however, his treatment of both Mary and his step-daughter Fanny Imlay suggests that his recantation did not go very deep.

In what was a movement away from the Calvinist burden of wealth theory, the fact that there is no New Testament sanction for the accumulation of wealth led the Sandemanians to consider each person's goods and property to be at the disposal of

others (Marshall P.H. 26). This communism of wealth was a belief to be practised most assiduously by Godwin: when in financial need, he thought that it was the moral obligation of others to come to his assistance. This attitude is blasphemous, however, for, given that private property was traditionally considered to be an indicator of original sin, to reject it is to assert implicitly that one is without sin; and Godwin did reject original sin.

The instruction which Godwin received at Hoxton Academy reinforced Sandemanian attitudes. This was a broad rather than deep education (Marshall P.H. 32) which included Classics and natural sciences and, typical of a Dissenting institution, was based upon Lockean tabula rasa notions. Samuel Newton, the minister with whom he boarded at this time, delighted in observing cruelty and torture: Godwin suffered beatings at his hand and, in perceiving this treatment as a violation, was left with a hatred of coercion and violence (Marshall P.H. 19). He borrowed books from Newton's library without permission (Marshall P.H. 20) and, like Caleb Williams, came to associate this curiosity with rebellion and guilt; excessive reprimand, he thought, produced a sense of despotism, rebellion, and of original sin (Marshall P.H. 19). This cruelty and oppression caused him to escape into his imagination where he dreamt of new institutions of

government and education, and where all was ideal (Marshall P.H. 21).

Godwin said that his first lesson was the Calvinist one that the unrighteous shall not be saved (Marshall P.H. 21), and in youth predestination weighed heavily upon his spirits: he was convinced of his damnation (Marshall P.H. 23). In fact, until 1782 he had been "a firm believer in the doctrine of Calvin that the 'majority of mankind were objects of divine condemnation, and that their punishment would be everlasting'" (Smith 56-57). In a sermon which he delivered at Hoxton, he said that "Christians should never complain about poverty, disease, [and] betrayal ... since men are sinners, they have forfeited all claims to justice" (St Clair 9); this same attitude is evident in Victor's treatment of his creature. However, this viewpoint did not prevent Godwin from being full of pride as a child, and he never lost the desire to reform others: he was in the habit of preaching sin and damnation to the village children (Marshall P.H. 15). This activity reveals behaviour which was as cruel and despotic as that which Newton later displayed towards him.

Horror and fear were actually associated with the certainty of election for the Sandemianians; such an attitude was derived from an obsession with the awe and power of God. There was always the danger, however, that this horror could paralyse the all

important understanding (Marshall P.H. 24); as is true of the relationship between Victor and his monster, the Sandemanians' excess of rationality seemed to produce a concordant reaction which was characterized by an excessive irrationality. Emotionally, Godwin appears to have remained a Calvinist although he theoretically rejected such a harsh creed in his humanism and anarchy. His anxiety did seem to be palliated by social approval, however, as though it were the secular equivalent of being in a state of divine grace (Marshall P.H. 24).

The Scriptures, reason, and common sense were basic to Samuel Newton's ideas (Marshall P.H. 22), and they were also to become Godwin's. When he says that the "right or wrong judgment of his understanding" (Marshall P.H. 23) would determine one's salvation, Godwin thereby links rationality with predestination, as being an indicator of one's possible election.

The prime aim of Calvinism is to know God, not to glorify Him; this is rationalist. Calvin said, however, that knowledge of God cannot be realized by human effort, only by grace; but only the elect would receive this grace. He also asserted that: "The consciences of believers may rise above the Law, and may forget the whole righteousness of the Law" (Hill 173), and that "all external things [are] subject to our liberty, provided the nature of that liberty approves itself to our minds as before God"

(Hill 173). The equating of God with reason soon became extended into the doctrine of rationalism; thus Godwin's Sandemanian God easily becomes translated into that of Rationalism.

The Sandemanian belief that individual conscience can discover natural law, which was considered to be more important than human-made law, drew the charge of antinomianism upon the sect. This same view was basic to Godwin's philosophical anarchism; Rousseau saw government as a necessary evil and others saw it as a moral necessity, but not so Godwin. It was thought at Hoxton that the application of logic to incontrovertible propositions could lead only to the truth (St Clair 58). Godwin considered that there was an abstract and immutable justice which transcended human-made laws; in an attitude which marks a democratization and secularization of Sandemanianism, he felt "truth" must be apparent to anyone if he or she were exposed to it. For "God, Godwin the philosopher now read Reason or Truth; and for the illumination of the Holy Spirit he read the careful and honest exercise of individual judgement" (St Clair 58).

That belief which the Sandemanians held, in a close association between inner sentiment and external action, was to lead to Godwin's view that changing one's opinions would alter behaviour: he said that mental attitude created volition (PJ 723;

bk. 8, ch. 2). Like Victor, Godwin believed in the power of mind over matter.

The right of private judgement of the Dissenters resulted in the rejection of tradition as authority. In Godwin, this rebellious attitude was to become anarchism: the rejection of all forms of established authority. His "benevolence" and "justice" represent a secularization of the Sandemanian belief that political methods of reform are vain compared with the dissemination of the spirit of Christ. Godwin's belief that moral laws could be abandoned in special cases led to his consideration that it was permissible to break a promise for utilitarian ends: the greater good of humanity. Similarly, Victor breaks his promise to the monster to create a female creature, also for the greater good of humanity. There is a possible connection here between the existence of a treacherous and unjust God in one's experience and a devaluing of the ethical responsibilities of keeping one's word.

The attempt to contact God through intellectual awareness of Him brings the Deity down to the level of the personal psyche and, although this practice contrasts with the Behmenist "inner light" communion with Him, both theologies pave the way for the idea of God's immanence in matter, a belief to be later secularized in materialist philosophy.

Human intervention results in a sense of purpose; this is a parallel model to that of the intervention of a fatalistic deity in the order of events, with the view to effect some change and thus to alter the future course of these events. Such a process is intrinsic to Godwin's philosophy, and to Victor's attitude.

Godwin constructs himself as a "secular" Calvinist deity, in effect choosing the "elect" himself: "Thus every view of the subject brings us back to the consideration of my neighbour's moral worth ... as the only standard to determine the treatment to which he is entitled" (PJ 171; bk. 2, ch. 2). Even as a child he had a "sense of destiny and uniquely personal sanctity" (Smith 123); and his "religious" pride and arrogance, which are analogous to those that Victor possesses, usurp the powers of the deity in what is a positive response to the sense of helplessness and hopelessness associated with "election".

Through the influence of his tutor Kippis the right to private judgement and the principle of utility became basic to Godwin's political philosophy. Kippis believed in the law of universal benevolence and the social contract theory; he also possessed a hedonistic utilitarian ethic. The most famous Dissenting pedagogue of the eighteenth century, Doddridge, considered that the individual was not obliged to submit to the rule of government

unless believing it would be for the benefit of the whole (Marshall P.H. 33, 35); Kippis inculcated this same belief in Godwin. Like Rousseau, Godwin felt the imperfections of government to be the source of human vice (Marshall P.H. 50). His utilitarian ethos can be seen to have grown out of such influences.

In equating happiness with knowledge, Godwin considered that happiness could be a consequence only of consciousness. This belief is an inversion of, and thus marks a rebellious attitude to, that conventional interpretation of the Edenic myth which equates consciousness and, therefore, knowledge with evil and unhappiness.

By the early 1780's, Godwin felt compelled to follow "truth" wherever it led him and, in what is an example of the Edenic image of Adam disobeying God in Paradise, he began a conscious process of rebelling against received notions and practices. In 1782 he became a Socinian (or Unitarian) (St Clair 15), thereby denying Christ's divinity and the Arian doctrine of his pre-existence. Calvin "had ordered the burning alive of Servetus in 1553 for denying the divinity of Jesus" (St Clair 16); as latter-day Calvinists such as Godwin's father regarded this heresy with abhorrence (St Clair 16), Godwin's action here can be seen in terms of a rebellion against both his own father and the

Calvinist God. This is an activity to be repeated by Mary, and by Victor and his creation.

In an attitude later paralleled by Victor's monster (and by Prometheus in Shelley's Prometheus Unbound [PU]), Godwin feels free to question the actions of the Deity, even declaring that: "God Himself has no right to be a tyrant" (Sermon 1 of Godwin's Sketches of History, in Six Sermons [1784], quoted in Smith 55-56). Furthermore, in a late essay, which continues to express his perfectionist ethos (The Genius of Christianity Unveiled; not published until 1873), he utters a sentiment which is both blasphemous and hubristic, for it denies that human beings are necessarily morally mixed: "To be independent and erect is essential to the perfect man. To stand in awe of neither matter nor spirit" (quoted in Smith 83).

However, an equivocal attitude toward his conscious rejection of traditional forms in theology and politics is evident in Godwin's Gothic novels. The emotional level of existence which he repressed is akin to the trans-rationality of theism, which he also repressed; but they both come to haunt him in his fictional works. His novels can be seen as works of secular confession: "The dissenters, like their puritan forebears, were compulsive diarists and Godwin was no exception" (St Clair 55). He remained emotionally and psychologically a Calvinist, haunted by ideas of sin, retribution, and

guilt. Fate, guilt, and fear became basic to his novels. Caleb Williams's Falkland, for example, can be seen to represent the omniscient and unrelenting Calvinist God, an omnipotent and inscrutable Being who pitilessly condemns Caleb as being depraved and worthless; he whose curiosity, like Godwin's, caused him to pry into his "Lord's" forbidden secrets.

Sermons Godwin delivered in 1783 at Stowmarket anticipate his later ambivalence in questioning theism, and include such Job-like (Job 17: 14) statements as: "if I reject Christian teaching, 'I may consider my condemnation as sealed. I may say unto corruption, thou art my father, and to hell and the abyss, thou art my mother and my sister'" (St Clair 15). This imagery of corruption and the abyss is to be echoed later in Frankenstein.

In a notebook on Political Justice's three errors Godwin actually conceded a conscious awareness of the dangers of emotional repression. He said that his first error was the principle that pleasure and pain were the only bases for morality, while he considered his second and third errors to be the suspicion of emotion and the condemnation of private affections: Sandemanians were notorious, even among Calvinists, for the abstract and intellectual nature of their creed (Marshall P.H. 25). There is, however, not much evidence from his personal history that such a conscious acknowledgement of flaws in his philosophy

influenced his behaviour in anything more than a superficial sense.

I will now consider other philosophical influences upon Godwin.

¹ Mark Philp considers that this was a term "used pejoratively to cover deists, materialists, free-thinkers, and unitarians" (34).

² The articles published were "Critique of the Administration of Mr. Pitt" and "The Grounds of a Constitutional Opposition stated" (St Clair 33).

³ In the Timaeus Plato said that it was God's benevolence in wanting to communicate existence to the other than himself which impelled him to generate things evil and imperfect (Taylor 441).

CHAPTER THREE: OTHER PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES UPON
GODWIN

The doctrine of absolute revolution has a theological, not empirical basis. Here, a faith in Providence is converted into its secular equivalent of an immanent teleology, or dialectical necessity, or the scientific laws compelling historical events (Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism [NS] 63); the Apocalypse becomes radical change in human events, to be instrumented by human endeavour. This is idealistic philosophy, for subject, mind, or spirit takes over the initiative and functions of deity. Godwinism is a typical example of such developments.

It was thus not only Sandemanianism which informed Godwin's philosophy. He was "the heir of Locke's epistemology, radical Protestantism, Roman republicanism, Rousseau's naturalism, and the political theories of Helvetius and d'Holbach" (Smith 146); in 1791, for example, he read Plato, Rousseau, Hume, Voltaire, Helvetius, d'Holbach, Locke, Price, Burke, Paine, Bentham, Condillac, and Condorcet (St Clair 59).

Godwin's system is an individual secular theodicy, involving self-forgiveness and self-redemption, and where the imagination becomes equivalent to a Redeemer: a process which was thought possible by all the major Romantics.¹

Godwin justifies self-discipline and self-denial in the service of a moral goal, in accordance with moral absolutes and the ideal development of one's human potential. The imagination aids in the development of these ideals and sanctifies one's purpose.

Philosophically speaking, Eden may be the dominion within human beings of nature, that is, the senses, instinct, and (as with Godwin) the rule of necessity; nature is here equivalent to innocence. Conversely, the Fall is associated with reason, the distinguishing between good and evil, the freedom of the will, knowledge, and the confrontation with multiple moral choices. Godwin combines the rule of necessity with the operation of rationality, thereby reuniting Eden with the Fall. When he dispenses with free will and original sin, however, his morality becomes service to the fulfilment of those unquestioned moral absolutes which are to be ascertained only by the truly enlightened individual.

Godwin's ideal is Neoplatonic in the sense that affinitive love is the integrative force and self-love the separative force: being farthest away from God. I will argue below (vide Part Two), however, that Victor Frankenstein, perceived largely as a model of Godwinism, demonstrates a failure to attain the goal of such a Neoplatonic quest.

In the eighteenth century, laws just as certain and universal as the Newtonian laws of physical structure were sought in the realms of psychology, ethics, and morality. The hope was that a moral transformation would follow from such a discovery: Godwin's "gradual improvement of mankind" (PJ 407; bk. 5, ch. 1). Christian and humanistic optimism were combined by Godwin. Latin Classical history gave him ideas of virtue and liberty associated with Republican government; and in the 1793 Preface to Political Justice he mentions his indebtedness to the French Philosophes Helvetius and d'Holbach (PJ 69). "Godwin derived from Helvetius the Lockean idea that man is the product of his education, the sum total of all the influences that play upon him from his very birth" (Smith 43).

Hartley and Condillac developed Locke's psychology into theories which suggested that sensations, linked together by association, form the human mind; even abstract ideas were thought to be the product of simple sensory phenomena. The hopefulness of the theory was based upon the idea that positive alteration of the environment would necessarily produce alteration in the character. For Godwin, it was not the force of law and authority alone acting upon a subject which had a predictable effect on opinion, for authority did not necessarily convince; rather, attitudes and conduct could best be determined by the manipulation of

environmental influences, specifically by way of individual persuasion (PJ 559; bk. 6, ch.1): for him, external forces operated through psychology.

Locke argued against Plato's innate ideas or principles, and he was the founder of empiricism: the belief that all knowledge (except perhaps logic and mathematics) is derived from experience (Russell 589). Although the Lockean tradition of sensationalist psychology rejected innate ideas and instincts, Godwin, as a legatee of Calvinist influences, continued to believe in Platonic universal and immutable truths (with morality a fixed absolute) which were discoverable by reasoning. His rejection of original sin, however, suggests that he did not consider it to be an immutable truth, thereby allowing him to believe that human progress and perfectibility were possible; he never saw evil as an integral part of the nature of humanity.

Both Locke and Godwin felt that there would be no need for human law to restrain human beings if all were pious and prudent, while Locke's characteristically liberal view that private and public morality were ultimately identical (Russell 593) was also taken up by Godwin. In the first of his two Treatises on Government (Russell 596) Locke criticizes the doctrine of hereditary power, and says in the second: "Men living together according to reason, without a common superior on earth, with

authority to judge between them, is properly the state of nature" (quoted in Russell 602). He preached enlightened self-interest and considered that: "The government of our passions [is] the right improvement of liberty" (quoted in Russell 592). Locke's contract theory represents a terrestrial origin for governmental authority and, like Godwin, he advocates a "community of virtuous anarchists" (Russell 602).

Lockean Nominalism (Russell 590) means the rejection of the reality of abstract concepts and the assertion that all that exists is a particular; he thought, for example, that it was language which gave "essential" qualities to things, thereby denying such qualities in an ontological sense (Russell 590). Locke believed in free discussion and gradual reform; he was tentative and experimental in politics, considering each question on its merits, and rejecting large programmes (Russell 621). Similarly, Godwin felt that each situation demanded a decision specific only to that occasion (PJ 324; bk. 4, ch. 6, app. 1).

A characteristic of British philosophy in the Lockean mould is to attempt to prove a general principle by "examining its various applications" (Russell 619); this is what Victor attempts, but fails, to do in the construction of the female creature. Godwin learnt this reductive and

inductive scientific method from William Nicholson's
Introduction to Natural Philosophy (1782):

i) No more causes of natural things ought to be admitted than are true and sufficient to explain the phenomenon; ii) And therefore effects of the same kind are produced by the same causes; iii) Those qualities which do not vary and are found in all bodies with which experiments can be made ought to be admitted as qualities of all bodies in general. (St Clair 61)

Locke's empiricist approach meant that he was always willing to sacrifice logic rather than become paradoxical, and his general principles often led to strange consequences or conclusions which he failed to draw (Russell 586). Conversely, rationality remained supreme for Godwin although he also often drew strange conclusions, albeit derived from logical argument: he considers a time when the power of human volition may obtain absolute control over "every articulation of our frame" (PJ 774; bk. 8, ch. 9, app.), an idea represented metaphorically in Victor's construction of the monster. Furthermore, in suggesting that it "would be idle to talk of the absolute immortality of man" (PJ 776; bk. 8, ch. 9, app.), he is nevertheless implying that it might be a possibility.

The Reformation had led to the replacement of the sovereign prince by the individual, on whose behalf Locke, and later Rousseau, had worked out a

theory of natural rights (Cobban, Romanticism and Consciousness [R & C] 144). These Lockean assumptions of natural law and individualism were to lead to Utilitarianism, with the assumptions of the pleasure-pain calculus replacing those of natural law (Cobban, R & C 144); such a utilitarian ethic rules Godwin, and also anticipates Bentham's system. However, the Lockean doctrine "that an individual has certain inalienable rights is incompatible with utilitarianism, that is with the doctrine that right acts are those that do most to promote the general happiness" (Russell 606). A utilitarian must, upon consideration of the possible effects of a law or rule, accept the fact that, in certain circumstances, the law might always have to be broken (Russell 606). Godwin attacks the Lockean natural rights tradition as well as contract theory (PJ 213-14; bk. 3, ch. 2). His capacity to deny inalienable rights in his political philosophy is equivalent to the Sandemianians' view that human beings had no rights because they were sinful; and these rights are what Victor implicitly denies to his creature in the destruction of the female monster.

In ethics Locke believes pleasure to be the good (Russell 620), thereby allowing for the moral law to be broken: "Things are good or evil only in relation to pleasure or pain" (quoted in Russell 592). Similarly, and as with the Sandemianians,

Godwin felt that the truth of human law was relative, and that these laws might be broken by one capable of discerning the immutable truths behind them. After Kant, those who continued to believe in ethics based upon moral law, and in cosmic justice, often substituted heroism or strong emotion for perceived injustice and therefore unhappiness (Russell 620). Byronic heroes, and Victor's monster, display such a response, and the latter can be seen to represent the protesting underside of Godwinian moral relativism.

The English utilitarian philosophers had "insisted that the highest, indeed, the only virtue of man is to obtain his own pleasure" (Smith 39), whereas Godwin emphasises the power of the pleasure obtained from doing and observing the good of others. He did endorse the hedonistic view that pleasure was preferable to pain, but it was intellectual and moral pleasure; he devalued sensual pleasure. However, although an idealist, Godwin disagreed with the absolute idealist Berkeley that the body was of no significance (Smith 78).

Although making a clear distinction between theory and action, Godwin sought to produce the whole person who would create the perfect society; his goals were ultimately millenarian. The extent to which he is influenced by humanist considerations is evident in his belief that reasoning and truth can support moral principles, and that facts about

human nature were relevant to values. Ethics thus became inseparable from politics for him, with the central concerns being independence, individuality, rationality, and happiness.

Godwin adopted a Newtonian mechanistic view, considering that everything is governed by necessary and universal laws.² He accepted causality on practical grounds but was not a materialist, for he saw mind as a real cause and as interacting with matter in an unknown way. He felt that psychology influenced behaviour, that thought is the source of physical movement, and that consciousness might be a "sort of supplementary reflection" (quoted in Marshall 96), "one of the departments of memory" (PJ 370; bk. 4, ch. 9).

Free will was seen as being consonant with behaviour independent of morality to Godwin: because free will was autonomous, one would not be open to the persuasion of others. His belief that influence should operate only through persuasion led him to protest against the use of force, considering that force "exerted upon reason produces only stubborn rebellion or supine acquiescence" (Smith 38). The final goal was always individual liberty.

However, uncertainties underlay Godwin's optimistic assertions. Malthus had argued that nature had laid insurmountable obstacles across the path to human progress: he saw the food supply as not increasing at the same rate as the human

population. The political radicals were opposed to this view but, after 1798, Godwin was increasingly influenced by it, becoming ever more sceptical and anti-materialist (Pulos 58). In "On Astronomy" in Thoughts on Man (1831) he speaks of the limitations of the human mind, that it is the sceptic's contention "that reason in practice is the slave of the passions, degenerating into selfish sophistry when not motivated by charity and love" (Pulos 60); this sentiment is foreshadowed metaphorically in Victor's slavery both to rationality and his creature. Godwin later said that he wrote Political Justice "not at all sure of the truth of his system" (quoted in Smith 62).

Burke, Rousseau, and Kant undermined much eighteenth-century Lockean-inspired thought, which seemed to admit the reality only of things of immediate perception. After becoming a Coleridgean theist in 1800, Godwin acknowledged human motives to be inscrutable, recognizing the importance of the imagination, dreams and emotions:

My theism ... consists in a reverent and soothing contemplation of all that is beautiful, grand, or mysterious in the system of the universe, and in a certain conscious intercourse and correspondence with the principles of these attributes. (Quoted in Smith 57)

Frankenstein reflects the conflict of someone who stands at the apex of Enlightenment thought and

Romantic reaction to it. The twin bases of nineteenth century politics are the mutually incompatible theories of the absolute state and the absolute individual, leading to either tyranny or anarchy. This conflict between anarchy and tyranny is figured in the struggle between Victor and his creature, revealing the disparity between the idealist content of Political Justice and the likely non-ideal praxis of this philosophy.

I will now discuss in detail Political Justice.

¹ For Wordsworth, for example, suffering is justified in the service of personal redemption. Physical and moral evils are thus given meaning while delight and terror, and pleasure, pain or awe are combined in nature in a paradoxical union.

² In Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, Demogorgon is equivalent to Godwin's Necessity, set free to move the world along its course of progress (once Prometheus is able to forgive Zeus).

CHAPTER FOUR: POLITICAL JUSTICE

The previous three chapters have traced the manner in which Godwin's early millennial ideas of progress, echoing the concept of religious redemption, transmute the concept of Divine transcendence into immutable natural laws.

This millenarianism, combined with Sandemanian dissent, rationalism, and individualism, leads, in Godwin, to a rejection of all forms of established authority; these influences are conducive to the development of his philosophical anarchism.

Sensationalist psychology's focus upon the individual mind and personality helps to produce, in Godwin, an idealistic philosophy, where mind assumes the initiative and functions of deity. His system is driven by a moral imperative which is, in its directives, every bit as controlling and absolutist as that of the Sandemanians.

However, for all its idealistic focus upon the individual mind and will, the impulse behind Political Justice is one which is directed towards an ultimate optimistic engagement with the political and social spheres of existence. For Godwin, there is a moral obligation to strive for this millennial goal; and social and political regeneration are to be effected through an alteration in consciousness.

The extent to which his early Sandemanianism becomes secularized in his political philosophy will now be examined. Attitudes and values revealed here will later be found in Victor Frankenstein. The subject matter of Frankenstein can therefore be viewed largely in terms of Godwin's Political Justice.¹

In fact, both works may be regarded as secular confessions. Godwin suggests that one should "make the world ... [one's] confessional" (PJ 312; bk. 4, ch. 6), just as Victor's tale is an act of confession to Walton. Unfortunately, as his peer Walton has not the power or authority to absolve him, Victor must either continue to carry his guilt with him or attempt a process of self-absolution: Godwin's "making every man a judge in his own case" (PJ 331; bk. 4, ch. 6, app. 1). The irony of the unjust trials in Frankenstein suggests that human judgement may not always be either objective or just.

In Political Justice, Godwin develops the moral implications of Locke's ideas, attempting to reconcile sensationalism with rationalistic morality. Theories of the mind and human motivation direct his investigation of political and moral principles, in what is an extension of the search for immutable natural laws. Victor's search for the laws of nature is really a figure for Godwin's much more comprehensive endeavour.

Godwin considers truth to be omnipotent, humanity perfectible, progress inevitable through the operation of the law of necessity, that private affections militate against the practice of universal benevolence, and that vice is merely an error in judgement.

The Sandemanian centrality of liberty, reason, knowledge, and truth leads to Godwin's consideration that there are objective standards of good and evil which can be realized through private judgement and public discussion. God's grace becomes equivalent to the rational exercise of private judgement. The highest moral imperative is to act in accordance with these truths, with truth considered to be of even greater importance than utility maximization (Philp 85). Similarly, Victor unwittingly sacrifices others' well-being at the altar of knowledge and truth.

Godwin's Newtonian determinism illustrates the pre-eminent role which he ascribes to reason. "They will know that they are members of the chain" (PJ 777; bk. 8, ch. 9, app.); his use of this metaphor indicates his belief that if the laws of the first link were perfectly known then one could predict how the final link would operate. It is an image echoed by Victor's "whole series of my life" (E 178); and Godwin uses this figure again in Mandeville, where Mandeville and his "evil genius" Clifford are described as being bound together with a chain, "the

links of which could never be dissolved" (quoted in Marshall P.H. 337).² A limited teleology is allowed for in this image, suggesting a residue of Calvinist predestination, with Godwin assuming the insights of deity.

Godwin thus adopts Newton's mechanistic view of the universe in his metaphysics: that everything in creation is governed by necessary and universal laws. In a Humean sense, he then applies these laws of necessity to mental processes. His psychology traces the manner in which sensation is recorded by memory and then arranged by association; voluntary action is extended as the developing understanding compares and judges these sensations (Marshall P.H. 98). The concept of soul is hereby dispensed with, and life therefore becomes merely a series of different (perhaps monstrous) aggregations of matter.

Although in Political Justice Godwin denies the idea that reason and sensation are at constant war in us (PJ 117; bk. 1, ch. 5), he does anticipate a time when we will have matter for our "Helots" (PJ 759; bk. 8, ch. 8, app.); and he later says that the mind has the body as "its subject and its slave" (Thoughts on Man [1831], quoted in Marshall P.H. 369). This later conflictive view seems to be more in keeping with the likely consequences of Political Justice's extremely rationalist tenor than are any attempts to unify mind and nature through his

philosophy. The problematic nature of this relationship is figured in Frankenstein (and Mandeville), where Victor and his creature can be seen to represent the alternate influences of mental and physical determinism. Victor's quality of mind is directly reflected in the manner in which he shapes the physical world, whereas the monster's physical appearance is seen to determine both his moral constitution and his behaviour.

The problem is, in a psychology of mental determinism, that if necessity blows us, through perception, from experience to experience (imaged in Romanticism by the Aeolian harp), then there is no requirement for consistency of behaviour. The spontaneity of the cult of sensibility evinces this same tendency.

However, driven by a moral imperative, Godwin emphasises conscious decision and the intervention of human will upon this determined universe, in the same manner in which the Calvinist Deity is seen to act. Mind is not a real cause in the sense that psychology influences behaviour; it is rather that the operation of external influences upon the individual mind produces volition through an improved perception. This makes Godwin an empirical determinist: in a system which is not absolute, he assumes the predictability of future events with a fair degree of certainty, based upon knowledge of antecedent circumstances (Thorslev 24). Causation,

at the level of organic matter, can then be seen to manifest itself in purposive activity, which includes self-conscious and intentional human behaviour (Thorslev 25). This view allows for the Godwinian assumption that educational principles will have a certain effect. He and we, as creators, in this way create a destiny, a telos. His immaterialist "progress" is accordingly the regeneration of humanity intellectually and morally, through education and the enlightenment of reason, in a secularization of millennial ideas: "Man is perfectible, or in other words susceptible of perpetual improvement" (PJ 140; bk. 1, ch. 5). His progressive education is therefore a secularization of theological salvation.

Truth, reason, and will, as moral absolutes, are thus substituted by Godwin for God's teleological direction of this universe; God and mind seem interchangeable for him, and both are the medium for truth. Mind now becomes an intervening force, breaking in upon determinism's regularity and conjunction. He speaks with confidence of a time when, with matter having become the slave of mind, we will have attained "the point from which ... [the Deity] began" (PJ 759; bk. 8, ch. 8, app.). Ironically, both Godwin and Victor make the assumption that the unknown is governed by the same laws as the known; this involves a faith which is tantamount to a religious one.

Godwin does not, however, adequately explain how the will can intervene upon a wholly determined system: it is not important "that we cannot see the ground of that necessity, or imagine how sensations, pleasurable or painful, when presented to the mind of a percipient being, are able to generate volition and animal motion" (PJ 340; bk. 4, ch. 7). This is the same logically inconsistent model as that of the Calvinist admission of a limited free will into a predetermined universe.

The Sandemanians' readiness to reject secular laws is translated into the belief that reason must be applied anew to each situation, for the diversity of human experience defies generalization. Victor's inability to replicate his experiment in the female monster episode is a figure for Godwin's belief in the specificity of each event; it is also a rejection of his assertion that science can divine the "original principles" (PJ 340; bk. 4, ch. 7) of the universe.

For Godwin, general laws belong to the universal transcendent realm only. What leads from this is his consideration that it is the business of science to reduce the "diversified events of the universe to a small number of original principles" (PJ 340; bk. 4, ch. 7). However, although his thesis that particulars, not universals, are of primary importance in morality (PJ 324; bk. 4, ch. 6, app. 1) may not be a logical contradiction of the

necessitarian doctrine that particular events are not unique but can be generalized and therefore predicted, it is definitely at odds with the dominance of the rule of the majority decision implicit in his utilitarian ethos. Even though, ideally, there is no majority view but only a unanimity according to reason, in practice the majority decision dominates. There thus remains the problem of the nature of the intersection of general and particular laws.

Victor's creation of his monster can be seen to figure this problem, for it represents the raising to prominence of the particular situation over the operation of the general rule which is at the base of his experiment: at Ingolstadt, he had received from Krempe "a course of lectures upon natural philosophy in its general relations" (E 46). That amorality which Godwin tacitly approves of if the particular situation demands it (PJ 330-31; bk. 4, ch. 6, app. 1) is hereby implicitly associated with the rejection of traditional practice in Victor's activity.

Godwin held a lifelong distinction between theory and practice, considering that generalizations and abstractions are necessary in order to use language and to think, but that true knowledge is of particulars (PJ 324-334; bk. 4, ch. 6, app. 1 & 2); this attitude echoes the individualist fate of Calvinists. He thus feels

that one should focus upon the particular case, for the inevitable generalizations can obscure our vision. Those principles concerning sincerity, utility, and private judgement are not open to assessment (being part of the universal transcendent realm), unlike those which are derived from experience and act as rough guides to action (Philp 156). Although one should be guided by general principles, every case becomes a rule unto itself, and sincerity may always be sacrificed for the sake of a perceived lesser evil (PJ 331; bk. 4, ch. 6, app. 1). Upon the grounds of utility, general laws or rules can thus be superseded by the demands of a particular case; it was upon such a basis that he rationalized his marriage to Wollstonecraft. This view, which is basic to his anarchism and utilitarian ethic, is derived from the Sandemanian belief that moral rules could be abandoned in special cases. The problem is that putting the "particular case" into practice can be detrimental to wider society, as Victor discovers. Paradoxically, however, although he deals with the particular case, he at the same time fails to consider the finer points of the matter: hence the monster's size and appearance. In failing to act with Godwinian "caution and sobriety ... [Victor unintentionally becomes] the occasion of evil" (PJ 781; bk. 8, ch. 10). Frankenstein asserts that it

is better to stay with general laws, if the consequence is to stray from accepted morality.

In line with his particularist views, Godwin rejects such abstractions as "society". Society is only an aggregate of individuals and their opinions, and public policy should not be imposed upon them. Rather, truth is irresistible and a country is changed as the views of its citizens change; men are brutes without cultivation (PJ 394-95; bk. 4, ch. 11). It therefore becomes easy, for him, to see government as evidence of incorrect education.

In Lives of the Necromancers, Godwin criticizes those who (like Victor) inquire into the causes of things; to do so meant to people "nature with Gods and Devils" (Marshall P.H. 378). One should instead employ one's powers to improve temporal existence. He had himself been guilty of the same thing, however, in presuming to know what absolute truth was: justice, knowledge, virtue, and reason. Furthermore, he is blind to the ironic fact that his rationalist philosophy is analogous to the magician's art in that they both wish to influence future events.

Both Godwin and Victor evince the extreme logical conclusion to the Cartesian split: the mind becomes as womb, as matrix, in a usurpation of both God's and woman's traditional roles. The emphasis now is upon becoming, rather than being.

Godwin considers that the true self is "disembodied consciousness" (Marshall P.H. 376): "Man, in the strictest sense, is nothing but a principle of thought, which no material force can arrest or imprison, which bids defiance to all limits of space and time" (Deloraine, quoted in Marshall P.H. 376). Although he is not an absolute idealist, the autonomy of mind suggested here demonstrates both a hubristic disregard for one's mortal limitations and a tendency towards solipsism; they are qualities which Victor also possesses.

This impulse to control one's life and destiny is an emotional response to the powerlessness of the doctrine of election: it marks the desire to abrogate to oneself the powers and insights of deity, in a type of auto-redemption. In what is an act of rebellion, the individualized quality of election is translated into a similarly individualist philosophy. Godwin actually pushes his anarchic-individualist ideal to the elimination of all forms of co-operation: "everything that is usually understood by the term co-operation is, in some degree, an evil" (PJ 758; bk. 8, ch. 8, app.). Victor can be seen to practise what Godwin preaches: "We ought to be able to do without one another" (PJ 761; bk. 8, ch. 8, app.).

Godwin rebelliously asserts (in Essays Never Before Published, Marshall P.H. 383) that the God of Scripture must be a tyrant in making this life a

probationary state or the preliminary to eternal damnation. His antinomic statement that "God is the devil" (in Essays Never Before Published, quoted in Marshall P.H. 383) is ironic because his god is reason and the Hebrew myth associates consciousness and knowledge with the Devil. Furthermore, it represents the same sentiment expressed by Victor's Miltonic and antinomic monster: "Evil ... became my good" (E 220).

This allowance for the inversion of received moral truths is a development of the Sandemanian belief that institutional law and authority might always be resisted if they conflicted with the individual's perception of divine truths. Godwin's belief that tradition and repressive education chain and torture reason reflects the development of an anarchic temper of mind, built upon foundations laid down by his Sandemanian history.

This produces a relativistic philosophy in which only the truly enlightened individual can discern absolute moral truths. Pain becomes the "only absolute evil" (PJ 397; bk. 4, ch. 11) for Godwin whilst "good" is always provisional and relative, and derived from a utilitarian ethic.

Believing in the primacy of the moral regeneration of humanity, Godwin sets out to look at the moral bases of society, motivated by the Sandemanian idea that reason could discern immutable natural law; this was abstract and immutable

justice. Reason should be the only legislator; and virtue would make government unnecessary. He dogmatically asserts morality and virtue to be "the most interesting topics of human speculation" (PJ 570; bk. 6, ch. 2).

In an image earlier employed in Frankenstein, Hazlitt, in The Spirit of the Age (1825), actually says that Godwin had rendered an important service to moral science "by attempting (in vain) to pass the Arctic Circle and Frozen Regions, where the understanding is no longer warmed by the affections, nor fanned by the breeze of fancy" (47): "Reason is our criterion - touchstone - surest guide - great distinction" (Godwin, quoted in Marshall P.H. 393).

If uncovering God's purposes in nature was part of the agenda for Enlightenment Rational Dissenters, then to become more fully rational was to be more fully an expression of God's will and nature. The light of divine grace could then be equated with truth. One was morally committed to perform an appropriate action if one became aware of a moral truth. Within this framework truth alone becomes the motivating force, and is dissociated from any exclusive identity with God or His law. Justice rules conduct and can be ascertained only through the exercise of understanding. Political Justice asserts that individuals become increasingly rational through the practices of private judgement and public discussion.

Godwin has a Platonist account of truth: truth provides us with ends "which we can recognise as intrinsically preferable and which we will necessarily act to realise, because they reveal to us the rational order of the world and our essential purposes as human beings" (Philp 93). Mind becomes the medium for eternal truths as Truth and reason gain ascendancy over our corrupt human nature. The residual teleology inherent in the notion of human purpose reflects the fact that his rational and perfect will stems from a necessitarian system.

Moral truth is thus objective and perception of it is a motivating force, operating through our faculties of judgement and deliberation: "Every principle which can be brought home to the conviction of the mind will infallibly produce a correspondent effect upon the conduct" (PJ 145; bk. 1, ch. 5). As the impetus to action, morality necessarily becomes related to political and social concerns. This process is a gradual and infinite one: we cannot step outside society and grasp these truths, we gradually gain knowledge of our telos through the study of human nature and society. Morality concerns one's social relationships (PJ 634; bk. 7, ch. 1); accordingly, only government, not society, can be dispensed with. As society is essentially discursive, public discussion becomes the most important vehicle for the development of truth "because it ensures the detection of our

errors" (Philp 95). Government interference with private judgement will increasingly diminish as we become more knowledgeable in moral truth.

It is, then, "Truth, immortal and ever present truth" (PJ 302; bk. 4, ch. 5) which Godwin comes to worship. In an attitude derived from the Calvinist view that reason can discern the Deity, he who sees truth thereby sees God. "Truth and falsehood cannot subsist together: he that sees the merits of a case in all their clearness cannot in that instance be the dupe either of prejudice or superstition" (PJ 297; bk. 4, ch. 5). Walton, also, places "truth" higher than "faith" (E 210).

Godwin does, however, reject innate ideas and instincts (PJ 103; bk. 1, ch. 4); as there are thus no essential differences between persons, infinite progress and perfectibility are possible. Later, however, as a result of observing his son William, he did come to believe that there were character differences at birth, thereby revising his views on the omnipotence of education.

Godwin's philosophy is metaphysical in the sense that he believed in transcendental significations, immutable truths, and also in the existence of the phenomenal world. He moves towards monism, however, for he implicitly locates meaning in temporal well-being; this is the ultimate purpose, the telos of his system. Victor can also be seen to break the boundaries between metaphysical dualities when he

creates the monster: specifically, those of life and death.

For Godwin, "virtue is inseparably connected with knowledge" (PJ 301; bk. 4, ch. 5). Perceived in such terms, then, and in a parody of Rousseauian original innocence, Victor's monster is initially ignorant and therefore evil; he remains evil, however, even when he has acquired knowledge.

As virtuous action involves the imperative to follow immutable truth, and as virtue is tied to "greater probability" (PJ 330; bk. 4, ch. 6, app. 1) in the calculation of consequences, then immutable truth (PJ 117 n; bk. 1, ch. 5) becomes linked with this greater probability. In turn, the utilitarian calculation of predicted greater or lesser good or evil (PJ 331; bk. 4, ch. 6, app. 1) hereby becomes associated with immutable truth. This view is deterministic, for what is most likely to occur becomes "immutable".

It is Godwin's belief that necessity makes the operation of persuasion valid and necessary; he relates truth's omnipotence to "the persuasibility of human reason" (Smith 32). He again reveals a teleological viewpoint in considering that, because human reason is highly persuadable, then truth must be omnipotent; in what is a rationalist judgement, there would apparently be no other explanation for the persuasibility of human reason.

In valuing above all the development of moral and intellectual capacities, Godwin is a perfectionist; but he also possesses a complex form of a utilitarian ethos. A potentially irreconcilable tension is hereby established between the ideal and the pragmatic exigencies of human existence.

Godwin is thus a utilitarian in his ethics: one is obliged to use one's talents for the general good. For him, morality is a subject of reasoning "and places its foundation in a principle of utility" (PJ 322; bk. 4, ch. 6, app. 1). The fact that his obligation to general utility outlaws contracts, promises, and oaths (PJ 217; bk. 3, ch. 3, PJ 592; bk. 6, ch. 5) is actually a transference of Sandemanian doctrine, while the origin of his view that morality is a fixed absolute can be ascribed to the central position which the Sandemanians gave to Gospel truth.

While the utilitarian ethic would have as telos greater and better pleasures, the view of a goal of a society of virtuous agents is perfectionist if we believe that in aiming so they thereby realize their essential natures or telos (Philp 54). Godwin's ideal type of utilitarian ethos considers that intellectual and moral pleasures are better than others; this provides another basis for potential conflict.

Godwin thus agrees with the Epicurean philosophers that "'pleasure was the supreme good'" (PJ 391; bk. 4, ch. 11). Although he does not engineer a developed calculus of pleasure and pain as Bentham does, he advocates the reduction of pleasure to a science (PJ 391; bk. 4, ch. 11), with pain being the only evil (PJ 397; bk. 4, ch. 11): "It is not difficult to form a scale of happiness" (PJ 393; bk. 4, ch. 11).

He possesses a universalist and essentialist view of moral truths: "We have a common nature.... There is one thing, or series of things, that constitutes the true perfection of man" (PJ 392; bk. 4, ch. 11). These truths are rooted in human nature and inform us of the means to attain pleasure and avoid pain. Therefore to know ourselves is to know what is best for all, with the goal being the teleological one of the realization of one's essential nature. It is thus only through the pursuit of self-interest that we can determine what will be for the general good. Self-love is therefore important, but there is a moral imperative to turn it towards what is socially useful; this is seemingly a rationalization of the realization of the potential moral problems attendant upon an individualistic theology. The tendency here is for the self-styled great man, such as Godwin, to become as God and judge on our behalf; he does in fact ally himself and his message with "God ... [who] is more

benevolent than man because he has a constant and clear perception of the nature of that end which his providence pursues" (PJ 305; bk. 4, ch. 5, app.).

The only rule of conduct for a rational being is justice, for this is an indispensable quality of a virtuous character (PJ 308-09; bk. 4, ch. 5, app.). Godwin's idea of moral equality means to apply "one unalterable rule of justice to every case that may arise" (PJ 182; bk. 2, ch. 3). One must never confer a favour but always be motivated by the law of justice; he reveals an accountant's mentality in suggesting that to do otherwise would be unjust, for it would detract from the sum total of justice (PJ 176; bk. 2, ch. 2).

Social and political life are considered to be "epiphenomena of the moral world" (Philp 56), with the rational agent always exercising private judgement in the attempt to reach beyond the social and political order to grasp the eternal moral truths. Virtue thereby consists in the mind's disposition and attitudes, in that it is inseparably connected with knowledge in the mind (PJ 301; bk. 4, ch. 5); and knowledge has a tendency to produce happiness (PJ 304; bk. 4, ch. 5, app.). The intention, not just the consequence, is important although the only value of intention is in terms of its utility; morality "is nothing else but a calculation of consequences" (PJ 322; bk. 4, ch. 6, app. 1).

Godwin's essentialist claims about human capacities, that certain qualities are definitive of human nature, are what the "scientist" Victor searches for. The rational perfectibility of humanity is thus based upon an essentialist claim. Our perfection and telos lie in the progressive improvement of our moral and intellectual capacities, in the triumph of reason and justice over our animal natures; the monster is an image of this failure in Victor. True wisdom becomes true felicity, so perception as awareness, as a cognitive state, becomes pure pleasure. The description of pleasure will be also that of the perfectly rational mind, according with the Calvinists' view that God is the embodiment of reason, and not a being of emotion and sensation. Human nature will be deified as our capacities expand in an understanding of and harmonizing with the rational order of nature. Knowledge of God is gleaned through knowledge of His created world.

When Godwin hubristically deigns to assume that it is rationality that motivates God when He demands faith for salvation, a line of equivalence is drawn by him between the temporal and transcendent spheres of existence. His rationale here is that someone lacking in faith would be unhappy in the company of saints (PJ 121; bk. 1, ch. 5); a utilitarian ethos apparently also motivates the Deity.

It is as a legacy of Calvinist Puritanism that Godwin considers that true pleasure can be derived only from the pursuit of truth and virtue, that intellectual and moral pleasure is to be thought preferable to sensual. Placing his faith in an intellectual elite, he feels that, in an enlightened society, reason would subordinate individual pleasures to the general good: "One tendency of a cultivated and virtuous mind is to diminish our eagerness for the gratification of the senses" (PJ 776; bk. 8, ch. 9, app.). Luxuries would not exist in his utopia (PJ 751-52; bk. 8, ch. 7); and pleasure should be removed from sex, even to the extent that persons in his future utopia "will probably cease to propagate" (PJ 776; bk. 8, ch. 9, app.). The Calvinist work ethic is evident in the fact that he thought that every moment of life should be spent industriously and profitably, in order to overcome "that indolence and want of enterprise which ... are characteristic of all human minds" (PJ 327; bk. 4, ch. 6, app. 1).

The implication is that moral action will be pleasurable, causing the motive of duty to disappear; paradoxically, action then loses its moral quality, for the distinction between duty and inclination disappears. Even though Godwin's philosophy is idealistic, because it gives precedence to happiness it actually sacrifices duty, for duty cannot always be reconciled with happiness.

In just such a way did Victor sacrifice familial duty to a wider utilitarian goal.

Godwin counters this danger that duty might be sacrificed to individual happiness by placing considerable emphasis upon the idea that the claims of justice are superior to those of liberal rights, that we have no rights, even to life (PJ 191-99; bk. 2, ch. 5); it is thus in a Godwinian sense that Victor deprives his monster of any human rights, rights which he concedes the creature should enjoy (E 146-48).

The fact that we have a duty to tell the truth and to practise virtue, but no inalienable rights, is a direct corollary of the Calvinist view that fallen humanity has no rights, and is redeemed only by God's grace. Self-interest should accordingly never be a consideration, only the public good; this is one of Victor's expressed motives in refusing the monster a mate (E 144-45). Godwin believes that we should be moral, therefore, because it is our duty, not out of personal affection for individuals, for no-one has a right to another's regard. The tension between duty and pleasure remains, however.

To consider that we have no rights means, for Godwin, that we can redeem ourselves only through right actions. The emphasis is upon human potential; this assumes a lack of free will and of original sin which would presuppose an innate idea, a warping, at the moment of conception, that would

limit potential. He did not believe in natural goodness, but that we have a potential for either good or evil. Paradoxically, however, in considering that humanity is born with a natural propensity toward reason, truth, and perpetual improvement, he is actually ascribing to us innate characteristics.

Godwin argues, in a teleological sense, that the influences of education and argument towards beneficial and moral ends would be pointless in a being possessing free will, for sheer caprice in that person could overcome these influences (PJ 350; bk. 4, ch. 7, PJ 355; bk. 4, ch. 8); his poor view of human nature here is perhaps a legacy of Calvinism. Furthermore, by asserting that God would never have created such an individual (PJ 350; bk. 4, ch. 7) he is presuming to know God and His motives, that the nature and will of the Deity are discernible to his rational faculties.

An absolute, unconditioned free will is thus denied by Godwin: that evil can be chosen as evil (PJ 275; bk. 4, ch. 2). He therefore also rejects punishment, for an individual can never be fully responsible in a wholly determined universe:

all erroneous conduct ... will be regarded with disapprobation. But it will ... be considered, under the system of necessity, as a link in the great chain of events, which could not have been otherwise than it is (PJ 357; bk. 4, ch. 8).

Moral persuasion, through the self-evident power of truth, rather than judicial punishment, was the procedure to be taken with a criminal. He seems to be blind to the fact that persuasion can be in practice as great a tyranny as force, even though moral persuasion implies no tyranny, but the consent of intellect and feeling within the individual persuaded. Moral determinism thus denies individual responsibility, although the distinction between virtue and vice remains; vice occurs solely from the lack of a cultivated mind.

"It would be of infinite importance to the cause of science and virtue to express ourselves upon all occasions in the language of necessity" (PJ 359; bk. 4, ch. 8). Whilst having always considered that "To be independent and erect is essential to the perfect man. To stand in awe of neither matter nor spirit" (from Essays Never Before Published, quoted in Marshall P.H. 383), it is clear that Godwin, like Victor, is led by this spirit (or demon) of necessity.

There is actually no logical conflict between determinism and the immaterialism of Godwin's idealistic philosophy, for necessary connection can theoretically apply to a universe conceived of as thought just as easily as to one conceived of as matter. The Humean view, that all we know of causation is the constant conjunction of objects in the external world or ideas in our own minds, means

that necessary connection can logically be ascribed to the mental sphere as easily as to the physical. The antecedent environmental influences, such as education, are therefore crucial in this chain of events. The understanding is determined to produce volition, which has the appearance of free will. As is true with Calvinism, free will is an illusion which, for Godwin, is useful purely for moral purposes: antinomianism springs from belief in an absolutely determined system, where the concept of human volition is not provided for.

Godwin thus argues that every so-called "free" act (PJ 347; bk. 4, ch. 7) is actually determined by an antecedent act of the mind. He draws a distinction between necessity in nature and in the human mind, where voluntary conduct enters (PJ 344; bk. 4, ch. 7): voluntary actions are necessary because they are determined (by mental causes), even though at the same time they are dependent upon choice (PJ 346; bk. 4, ch. 7). It is the initiating power of the mind which gives us the illusion of free will. Godwin's idealism is, however, questioned by his own assertion that mental events voluntarily cause actions in the physical world, a problem figured by Victor's activities.

Accordingly, it was for reasons of pragmatism that, although remaining theoretically an immaterialist and necessitarian, Godwin created a split between ideal and real in order to be able to

function in ordinary life, where he acted as though believing in free will and the existence of the external world.

Godwin's immaterialism is therefore able to be manifested in a political philosophy which is Epicurean in its approximation of the moral good with the maximizing of pleasure (albeit intellectual pleasure) and the minimizing of pain. This necessarily leads to a focusing upon the phenomenal sphere of existence in the attempt to create a new society through a reconstituted humanity. In this sense Godwin is similar to Victor; and, in being conditioned by Calvinist values, they are both clearly "sinful" in looking to find "God" in His works (Elton 216).

There is criticism by Godwin of a wholly deterministic system, such as Calvinism (PJ 404; bk. 4, ch. 11), where one is merely accepting, resigned to one's fate, and not interventionist. He says that if everything that happens could not have been otherwise, then it is just as valid to say it is the worst of all possible worlds as to say it is the best (PJ 400; bk. 4, ch. 11). His pessimism here calls for the moral response of the intervention of the human will and reason in order to assist, through correct action, in an inevitable, albeit gradual, human progress (PJ 398; bk. 4, ch. 11, PJ 407; bk. 5, ch. 1); this intervention was requisite, for nations and peoples could degenerate and

progress thereby be reversed (PJ 153; bk. 1, ch. 7). His statement that "Brutes ... have never made our progress" (PJ 400; bk. 4, ch. 11) reinforces the link between civilization, reason, and progress.

Godwin fails to see here that his progress is a secularization and adaptation of Calvinist predestination. Furthermore, in condemning the doctrine of election, and the accepting manner in which a Calvinist will regard the fate of those whom God has cursed (PJ 404; bk. 4, ch. 11), he is also blind to the fact that he, himself (most strikingly in the infamous Fenelon example [PJ 170; bk. 2, ch. 2]), judges and damns those whom he considers to be of inferior moral worth. In his treatment of the monster, Victor is guilty of the same practice; and the same arbitrary quality of election is evident when the creature deals his victims a similar form of retributive punishment.

In what is thus a secularization of a personalist theology, and of election, Godwin says that "it is probable that one of us is a being of more worth and importance than the other" (PJ 169; bk. 2, ch. 2). One must earn one's consideration by others: one's moral worth and importance to the general weal are "the only standard to determine the treatment to which ... [one] is entitled" (PJ 171; bk. 2, ch. 2). One is morally obligated to judge and censure one's fellow human being (PJ 755; bk. 8, ch. 8).

Furthermore, he plays the Calvinist God of election when he says: "We rejoice when we save an ordinary man from destruction more than when we save a brute, because we recollect how much more he can feel, and how much more he can do" (PJ 299; bk. 4, ch. 5). He damns the brute, just as Victor does, who also ascribes a relativity of valuation to different individuals.

Godwin is like Victor and his monster in that (like Milton's fallen angel) he does not defer to his Creator's greater power and rank, but presumes an equal status with Him. He feels at liberty to judge others as God does. The qualities of pride, rationality, and justice are what raise each of these individuals to the presumed equality with his creator; each lacks humility in imposing his notion of justice upon his creator. Godwin associates a necessary sense of justice with greatness (PJ 309-10; bk. 4, ch. 5, app.), just as Walton calls Victor "glorious ... noble and godlike" (E 210). Godwin also moralistically and judgementally decides that Rousseau and Voltaire should have "co-operated for the salvation of the world" (PJ 311; bk. 4, ch. 5, app.); he assumes the task they reneged upon. If truth, reason, and justice are equivalent to God then one can know God through them.

The basis upon which Godwin assumes some individuals to be morally superior to others, and hence to be of greater value to society, is thus one

of "justice, pure, unadulterated justice, [which] would still have preferred that which was most valuable" (PJ 170; bk. 2, ch. 2); he considers that there is "no ingredient that so essentially contributes to a virtuous character as a sense of justice" (PJ 308; bk. 4, ch. 5, app.). Suicide is, for him, non-moral because it is a waste of the time in which one would otherwise be at the disposal of the general good (PJ 178; bk. 2, ch. 2, app.1). There is a strange combination of altruism and utilitarian ethics involved in his judgement of his and others' motives: all in the service of justice. This correlation between justice and virtue is, however, ironically undercut in Frankenstein, for the monster possesses a strong sense of justice and yet is immoral; and Victor would consider himself to be virtuous and yet is not overly concerned with the injustice behind the fate of the ironically named Justine.

Benevolence is a result of the awareness of knowledge and truth: "Eminent virtue requires that I should have a grand view of the tendency of knowledge to produce happiness, and of just political institution to favour the progress of knowledge" (PJ 304-05; bk. 4, ch. 5, app.). As it is benevolent intention (PJ 385; bk. 4, ch. 10), not self-love, that is most compatible with virtue (PJ 387-88; bk. 4, ch. 10), the value of a political structure is thereby considered in terms of virtue

and happiness, rather than security and power. Godwin is free to anticipate a time when, through self-controlled individualism, political jurisdiction would become irrelevant, for he believed that no vice could exist with perfect liberty (as distinct from free will).

A concordance between capacity and performance is to be evaluated before an individual can be considered to be virtuous in an action (PJ 187; bk. 2, ch. 4). Intention is important only in terms of how it leads to utility; intention is the means, with utility the end (PJ 190; bk. 2, ch. 4). The problem is one of being able to judge both whether or not an act actually is good in intention, and what its probable outcome will be; Godwin seems to imply that every action can be accessible to conscious reason. Although he considers the judging of intentions by actions to be fallacious (PJ 385-86; bk. 4, ch. 10), he cannot believe it probable that a good intention can result in an immoral act or consequence (PJ 189; bk. 2, ch. 4). Since benevolent intention was necessary to virtue (PJ 385; bk. 4, ch. 10), he thought that human motives were of overriding importance in shaping the world. However, although he is full of good intention, Victor is hasty in his performance: he miscalculates. He and his creature can be seen as embodiments of Godwin's idea that "Pure malevolence is the counterpart of disinterested [in the sense of

involuntary] virtue" (PJ 384; bk. 4, ch. 10), with the implication that Victor's activity is not, perhaps, a fully conscious one, that is, not purely voluntary, and therefore not actually selfless and benevolent in intention. Volition should be linked to conscious, rational, and virtuous intention or evil will result, just as the monster becomes "the slave, not the master, of an impulse" (E 220).

Thus the "criterion of morals is utility" (PJ 723; bk. 8, ch. 2); and all will know "that they are members of the chain, that each has his several utility" (PJ 777; bk. 8, ch. 9, app.). Amazingly, the utility value of an inanimate object is also a criterion of its merit (PJ 190; bk. 2, ch. 4). The individual has now been reduced to an inanimate link in Godwin's chain of necessity, like the inanimate parts which make up Victor's necessitarian monster.

As Godwin considers the concept of free will to preclude any subjection by prediction or influence, he thereby also makes it inconsistent with the operation of reason; it is therefore associated by him with the irrational. Analogously, Victor's monster, after choosing to exercise free will (E 136), succumbs to the passion of destructive behaviour. The creature can again be interpreted as exercising free will when it is said that "his countenance expressed the utmost extent of malice and treachery" (E 166), for in Godwin's view malice is associated with free will (PJ 350; bk. 4, ch. 7,

PJ 355; bk. 4, ch. 8). Paradoxically, then, Frankenstein asserts that the Godwinians Victor and his creature actually do possess free will; and it is implicit that irrational and violent behaviour is, with them, inevitable. This is at once an affirmation of Godwin's thesis on free will, and a condemnation of his larger philosophy.

As an originator of systems, Godwin is not open to others' influence and persuasion to the degree that he considers everyone should be (PJ 350; bk. 4, ch. 7); to the extent that he is thus an autonomous being, he is as God and, therefore, can be assumed to possess free will. The monster represents the Godwinian thesis that free will would be productive of violence but, ironically, he also represents Godwin the determinist. The implication is that, yes, with free will, we are capable of violence, but the fact is: we do possess it. In contrast to Victor's monster, Elizabeth is amenable to others' influence, and is destroyed by that determinism which produces in others a will to evil. The novel suggests that to deny free will actually produces it and the choices then made will be violent and, hence, anti-social ones. Godwin implies that the denial of free will means that we have the potential either for good or evil; Frankenstein asserts that Godwinism will, of necessity, result in evil. The text's true hero (or victor) is that of orthodox

Christian morality, based as it is upon the doctrine of free will and original sin.

Godwin does, however, increasingly adopt the language of empiricism and scepticism (Philp 202) and leaves off that of rationalism, attempting to integrate feeling and emotion with his account of moral actions. Now, our preferences are considered to be rooted in our desires: "It is true that reason is nothing more than a collation and comparison of various emotions and feelings" (PJ 644; bk. 7, ch. 3). However, although he moves from a rationalist to an empirical epistemology, he considers that it is reason which helps us distinguish between pleasures. "Reason is omnipotent" (PJ 644; bk. 7, ch. 3), and must direct the feelings; his conception of virtue thus remains rationalist. It is also utilitarian: "if the injury and unhappiness of which man is the author, outweigh the contrary effects, he is to be regarded as a bad member of society" (Godwin quoted from The Enquirer, in Philp 206). He did, however, eventually come to deny that "reason has any role in the selection and recognition of moral ends" (Philp 219): we act morally when we further the happiness of others.

Godwin maintained a sharp distinction between the individual liberalism of his theory of progress and "the collectivist socialism by which impatient reformers have hoped to accelerate the process" (St Clair 343). He was, however, not clear on how the

intersection of reason, motivation, and perception operates; and the nature of the linkage is obscure when it comes to combining a political theory with one of individual psychology. However, he did become convinced that literature was one of the great shaping influences upon human conduct. Through the novel of sensibility, the imagination becomes the link between correct perception and virtuous motive; the matter was not simply one of being aware of immutable truths. Progress would be effected through intellectual insights, which would in turn lead to moral insights. He considered that the methods to be employed (literature, education, and sincerity in argument) could modify the mind in a certain manner, thereby altering the character (PJ 341; bk. 4, ch. 7). Like the seventeenth-century Puritans, he felt that truth can issue only from sincerity, and only then lead to progress.

Literature was always perceived of as a moral force by Godwin. As it provided, through the imagination, the motivating impetus in the link between reason and sensibility, it was the vehicle by which moral behaviour was effected; as a unifying principle, it can be seen to effect a type of secular resurrection. The will, as an act of volition, is also the focus of expression of a unified personality. He takes an objective, scientific attitude (which is also one of transcendence) when he says: "We are able in

imagination to go out of ourselves, and become impartial spectators of the system of which we are a part" (PJ 381; bk. 4, ch. 10). He also links dreams with the imagination, and anticipates Freud in suggesting that dreams may be "the unconscious production of our own minds" (PJ 376; bk. 4, ch. 9); like Freud, he wanted to make the unconscious conscious. As with determinism, depth psychology reduces one's motives to events over which one has no control and one's freedom almost to non-existence. Godwin's first cause, however, remains the conscious mind.

Godwin felt that the true end for rational beings was "the development of a wisdom that can best be characterised as a state of blessedness" (Philp 96). This represents an individual secular redemption which is, however, not equivalent to the characteristically Romantic model, for, with Godwin, reason remains in control. In his group the rules of debate were: "no one has a right to go against reason, no one has a right to coerce another's judgment, and every individual has a right - indeed, a duty - to call to another's attention his faults and failings" (Philp 128). Sensibility played an important part here for it was a celebration both of a social world as well as the emerging self-understanding of its members; it thereby aided in the exploration of emotional and social experience. In the literature of sensibility every dogma was

laid open to criticism through rationalism; this included the arena of politics, from which the dissenting class was largely barred (Philp 128). Sensibility's "critical value lies in the fact that, when directed by the powers of reason, it can provide an epistemological underpinning for moral judgments" (Philp 166). Reason thus orders the realm of sentiment, which then allows us to respond to the needs and desires of others.

For Godwin, sympathy is the basis that we recognize, through reflection, that our acts should be directed towards maximizing the overall good (Philp 208). Truth does not motivate of itself but benevolence does; this fact is related to the pleasures of social interaction. However, private judgement "determines which acts a utility principle could legitimate" (Philp 209).

We thus come to act upon moral truths through private judgement and public discussion, with true sensibility being considered "as a guarantor for ethically correct conduct" (Philp 178). Godwin's Caleb Williams invokes a dialectic between sentiment and reason, with sentiment sanctioned only when under the control of reason. The suggestion is that the despotism evident in this novel would only be overcome by enlightenment, for progress cannot be forced.

As a consequence of Coleridge's influence, the poetic imagination becomes for Godwin "the essential

further link in the complex psychological chain which ... connects true perception with virtuous motive" (St Clair 230). It thus becomes a moral force; and, after his own emotional awakening through Wollstonecraft, emotion is seen as a means of reinforcing rational insight, for it is amenable to conscious control. The old passive view of the mind has given way to the idea of stimulating the creative imagination; and literature carries the power of transformation.

Godwin's "imagination" thus leads to enlightenment, in turn leading to virtue and then to social and economic justice. This imagination appears to be similar to Coleridge's "secondary imagination", to the extent that it is intuitive, that is, originating from the unconscious. If the unconscious is perceived of as the relocated realm of the transcendent Deity, God becomes moral force, exercising His influence in history through the will; Godwin's philosophy is a secularization of this model.

In fact, however, unlike Coleridge's secondary imagination, Godwin's (and Victor's) imagination is not genuinely creative or purposive. It is rather, as a legatee of Calvinism, close to the Gothic and also Freudian view of the unconscious, for it is comprised of repressed material, unacceptable to consciousness. As such, it is also the domain of the irrational, and has a diabolic propensity; it

contrasts sharply with the associationist world, the domain of his rational mind.

The hypocrisy which Godwin's system breeds is evident in the statement: "Sincerity, upon the principles on which it is here recommended, is practised from a consciousness of its utility, and from sentiments of philanthropy" (PJ 320; bk. 4, ch. 6). However, sincerity is not actually possible where its practice is based upon ulterior motive, for this contradicts the definition of the term.

Just as Victor breaks his promise to the monster for the perceived greater good of humanity, Political Justice asserts that a promise may be broken if a greater good can thereby be effected. The fundamental axiom of the text is that virtue consists in promoting the general happiness of society; this is a humanist aim and breaks the link between religion and ethics. The problem is that the threat of Hell may be a deterrent to criminal behaviour. Godwin's reward for virtue is honour (hence his own love of fame); and his philosophy is, after all, a judgement on the part of fallible humanity. His search for the principles of justice is analogous to St. Leon's desire for the philosopher's stone, which is, in turn, equivalent to Victor's quest for the life principle. The etymology of Frankenstein ("free stone") links Godwinism with the alchemists' hubristic search for eternal life on earth.

In a refutation of Godwin's ideas, Victor's monster represents the Rousseauian view that an individual will not follow the common good simply because it is good, thereby making individual freedom irreconcilable with law, society, and the common good.

In combining a utilitarian ethos with a strict individualism, Political Justice presents the problem of the reconciliation of individual interests with those of the rest of the community.

There is a logical contradiction in the Sandemanians' belief in the application of Christ's golden rule as a natural law (secularized in Godwin's utilitarian ethic) and in their view that the rule of reason should be pre-eminent; Godwin gives precedence to reason, for he discriminates against some in favour of others whom he deems to be worthier (PJ 170; bk. 2, ch. 2). Victor is like a rationalist Godwinian whereas the monster reveals the contradiction between this view and the message of Christ's gospels, where all are deemed to be equal and where private and emotional concerns (expressed through the non-Godwinian virtues of charity and forgiveness) assume an equal status with any others.

Godwin's idealism thus precludes him from founding an adequate political praxis, for he cannot reconcile ideal and actual; this contributed to his political disenchantment.

Towards the end of Political Justice he concedes that "it may not be utterly impossible that the nature of man will always remain, for the most part, unaltered" (PJ 780; bk. 8, ch. 10). Then in 1799 (in St. Leon) he says that "there was a principle in the human mind destined to be eternally at war with improvement and science" (289-90); and by the time of his History of the Commonwealth (1824-28) he says: "But, unfortunately, men in all ages are the creatures of passions, perpetually prompting them to defy the rein, and break loose from the dictates of sobriety and speculation" (IV, 579, quoted in Marshall P.H. 359).

Like Victor, he comes to recant his absolutist views upon human nature and progress as he moves towards a Humean scepticism and transfers the motive force of action from reason to desire.³ The irony is that even his early absolutist tabula rasa view of human knowledge and capacities means that death arrests the development of the individual, with each baby being born a blank slate, inheriting nothing; progress must inevitably be a limited process under such circumstances.

Godwin does, however, retain the main outlines of his philosophy: his necessitarianism, immaterialism, rationalism, anarchism, and utilitarian ethos remain essentially intact. A grafting of Romantic insight and feeling onto his rationalist philosophy suggests a certain adaptation

which Victor cannot attain. Unlike Prometheus, who does not give in or give up, Victor ultimately submits to fate. As Gothic individual, he cannot free himself from a belief in his domination by a universe of moral absolutes, where evil exists as "pure evil", not merely as "pain" in the Godwinian sense (PJ 221; bk. 3, ch. 3).

Victor's failed experiment indicates the chasm between aspiration and attainment in Godwinism; the higher the aim, the wider the gulf between profession and performance. Fantasy and illusion are the products when reality is allowed to be relative to the human mind.

Godwin's idealism leads him into a timeless world of values which is analogous to Walton's experience near the Pole (E 18). Victor's selection of certain components for his new humanity necessarily involves a hypothesis as to their significance: value inheres within fact. He is, however, unaware of this, for, like Godwin, the reconciliation of value and fact, ideal and real, is precluded by his idealism; and it is the intersection of ideal and real which produces a monster.

Victor's judgement here upon what is important implies a reasoned doctrine of the ideal ends of life. However, his and Godwin's idealistic philosophy is conditioned by the fact of temporal existence. Godwin's lack of consideration for

temporal limitations dooms his philosophy to failure. His extension of logical argument to its most extreme conclusion in the absurd notion that mind might prolong the life of the body perhaps indefinitely, in a "species of metamorphosis" (PJ 774, 776; bk. 8, ch. 9, app.) which is figured by the monster, reflects this loss of contact with temporal reality.

It is also ironic that the rationalist deductive method employed in Political Justice (proceeding from a proposition, to a demonstration of it, then considering possible objections before concluding) actually permits such an argument, when carried to an extreme, to fall into its polar opposite: absurdity.

In his Gothic novels Godwin felt he was revealing "the spiritual terrors underlying the age of reason" (Marshall P.H. 395), that is, revealing (as expressed in the sub-title to Caleb Williams) things as they are. These terrors can also be read as his own inner conflicts concerning his rationalist philosophy; and Victor and his monster can be seen to represent these same antitheses.

Godwin's philosophy enunciates the extreme conclusions of eighteenth-century rationalism; it also embodies the progressive and immanentist doctrines of Protestant millenarianism. However, where Romantic organicism sought to unite mind and nature, a true adherent to Political Justice would

be prevented from attaining any such reunion; this would always be precluded by the dominance of the rule of rationality.

Through the person of Victor Frankenstein, Frankenstein explores the impossibility of realizing the Romantic quest when mind remains controlled by the narrow rational faculty. Figuring as a master and servant relationship, the text reveals a struggle for domination which expresses a consciousness of self as a doubled and contradictory being. Frankenstein may be read as a failed Bildungsroman: the journey into a higher reunion, following the necessary stage of division and conflict between self and outer world, cannot be effected. The rule of reason, accompanied by an overwhelming impotence and despair, is the legacy of Calvinism's pessimistic predestinarian doctrine; and the suggestion is that its tenacious hold cannot be loosened for long by someone who has been subject to its influences. Victor's consciousness betrays him, but it cannot redeem him; Frankenstein asserts that the world cannot be redeemed by an abstraction.

In Part Two, I will shift the terms of discussion by considering Frankenstein in terms of Godwinism, Calvinism, the Gothic, and Romantic organicism.

¹ Mary read Political Justice in Autumn 1814 and April 1817 (whilst revising Frankenstein) (Reed, John R. 324).

² The relationship between Mandeville and Clifford is very similar to that between Victor and his monster. Godwin wrote Mandeville between May 1816 and October 1817 (Marshall P.H. 336); Frankenstein was written between June 1816 and May 1817 (E xviii).

³ In contradiction with Political Justice's text, Godwin says in his "Summary of Principles": "Reason is not an independent principle, and has no tendency to excite us to action; in a practical view, it is merely a comparison and balancing of different feelings" (PJ 77; VI). He takes here a more intuitive view of human reason, one which accords with the increasing role he gave to feeling and sentiment.

PART TWO: FRANKENSTEIN

PREFACE

Part One has argued that Godwin's idealistic philosophical anarchism can be regarded as a secularization of his early Sandemanian Calvinism.

Part Two asserts that the sub-Godwinian Gothic literary form provides an alternative example of the same Calvinist world view, again secularized. The Gothic, however, is often, and I consider typically, an extreme psychological and emotional response to Calvinist rationalism and absolutism. In the Romantic Gothic text of Frankenstein, a yearning for the completion and wholeness which is a characteristic of Romantic organicism is combined with the despair and damnation of a fatalistic Gothic universe.

As mentioned in Part One, Victor Frankenstein is regarded as an embodiment of Godwinism.

Chapter One deals specifically with Frankenstein in terms of the Gothic, and Chapter Two with the extent to which Calvinism can be seen to be evident in the text, especially in relation to individualism and fatalism.

The degree to which Frankenstein is an example of the characteristically Romantic reworking of myth forms and imagery is examined in Chapter Three,

while Chapter Four considers Rousseau's presence in the text.

Focused upon the monster's creation, Chapter Five deals with conflicting world views, attitudes which provide much of the subject matter of Frankenstein and which are reiterated by textual and syntactic ambiguity, contradiction, and inversion; the question of doubt and certainty regarding absolute truth is hereby raised.

Chapter Six considers the influence of determinist associationist psychology and of Godwinism upon the creature's educational development. A conflict between determinism and free will theodicy is evident here, however, rendering inconclusive the real influences upon the monster and, in turn, his actual constitution. Textual ambiguity and uncertainty represent an implicit questioning both of Godwinism and associationist psychology.

Chapter Seven is concerned with Victor's scepticism regarding absolute knowledge and truth following the monster's creation; his endeavours can be seen as a distortion of Coleridgean organicism. His fall into solipsism and despair foreshadows a return to a dualist fatalistic world view, following a rejection of optimistic and monist Romantic organicism.

Chapter Eight regards the text's structure as outlining a spatial pattern which can be interpreted

as an inversion of the characteristically Romantic version of the Neoplatonic journey: it follows a circular movement away from the Source into phenomenal existence, and then back towards the Source in reunion with the One. The Romantic version includes outward-directed and upward-spiralling movements whereas that of Frankenstein evinces the inward movement of a vortex. Victor's final journey towards the Pole in pursuit of his monster involves a reversion to a dualistic fatalist world view where he is convinced of his damnation. His Pole is not the Source of optimistic monist Romanticism.

Chapter Nine deals with the ironic stance of the implied authorial voice. This involves a never-ending questioning and undermining of every position taken and assertion made, as is characteristic of scientific method: the attempt to prove a hypothesis by the undermining of negative instances (as with Devil's advocate procedure). This process reiterates the text's thematic ambiguity, contradiction, and inversion which is characteristically Romantic but which the Romantic sublime aimed to overcome, specifically in the transcendence of metaphysical oppositions; Romantic paradox asserts that one polar opposite always inheres within the other, thus transcending mere dualism. Victor experiences only brief moments of this transcendence in the sublime; he cannot

maintain his vision, and the text's ironic voice implies that it is, anyway, an impossible task. A world of dualities is the text's ultimate assertion.

CHAPTER ONE: THE GOTHIC

A basic conflict between Romantic optimism and Gothic despair is combined in the Romantic Gothic of Frankenstein.¹

This chapter will argue that the Gothic element in the text can be linked to the psychological and emotional influences of Calvinism, a doctrine which also structures Victor Frankenstein's intellectual system and can be associated with the political philosophy and Gothic writings of William Godwin. As characteristics of the sub-Godwinian Gothic novel also apply to the Gothic form generally, the implication is that a similar world view operates across the genre as a whole.

This Gothic literary form remains the overriding force in Frankenstein, dominating the text's Romantic organicism and eighteenth-century sentimentalism.² Each of these genres has links with the cult of sensibility, whereby mental processes were conditioned by affective experience.

The Gothic supernatural of the novelist is equivalent to the transcendent sphere of the philosopher or theologian, where Gothic mystery can be considered as a fundamentally Protestant substitute for religious awe and mystery. The basis of the terror is thus theological (and pre-eminently

Calvinist), and is manifested in anxiety and in psychological and moral ambiguity.

Whereas both the Gothic and Romantic millenarianism and organicism secularize theological models, the Gothic internalizes them in a response which stems from an overwhelming sense of alienation. This is a universe consistent with a personalist theology and marks the re-introduction of personalized and transcendent destinies (be they gods, fates, or spirits) into the Romantic organicist world view (Thorslev 126).

The Gothic involves destinies separate from and often disruptive of natural and organic processes, in the service of suprarational powers which are only dimly apparent to the characters concerned. Similarly, Calvinism asserts that God often intercedes in "the particular events of the world" (Chadwick 93), suspending the laws of nature in the process.

The Romantic organicist imaginative transcendence of metaphysical oppositions is not allowed for in the Gothic: its imaginative flights and experiences of terror and horror remain bound within a dualistic framework where good and evil continue to exist as moral absolutes, even where the boundaries between them might be violated.

This genre presents a perverse demonic quest romance, where a psychologically self-divided individual embarks upon a self-destructive quest for

the "absolute" (Thompson 2). Gothic narratives are personal ones of secular religious confessions involving sin, guilt, and retribution with a fall from grace and subsequent pursuit by perceived demonic forces.

Victor breaks his covenant with the monster over the creation of the female. In this classic Gothic view of the universe the creator is presented as unreliable and treacherous, characteristics which can also be ascribed to the Calvinist Deity (vide Part Two Chapter Two below), and to the Gnostic demiurge (Pagels 62-65). The Gothic asserts that there is no rational moral order supported by the deity. Here, radical and inexplicable evil exists, the laws of commonsense and cause and effect are dissolved, and individuals are manipulated by transcendent forces which are inscrutable, capricious, and even malevolent in their effects upon human lives (Thorslev 131). These demonic forces do not enforce natural or moral laws, justice seems perverse or idiosyncratic (Justine's trial, for example), and unnatural crimes abound: the sadistic persecution of the innocent, incest, and fratricide.

The ethical implications of Gothic fatalism and Calvinist predestination are that moral exhortation becomes superfluous or absurd and therefore "moral and social reforms become impossible to effect" (Thorslev 21). Like Victor's monster and the gods

of Greek tragedy, Gothic forces dominate through power, not justice or superior morality; and the coin of fate falls either way. It is ironic that in Frankenstein it is the hubristic Gothic rebel-hero and not the deity who assumes the responsibility for moral transgression, internalizing his guilt and suffering the resultant moral and social isolation. Victor is both criminal and martyr, unable to purge guilt although he employs rationalization in an attempt to do so: the statement "yet another may succeed" (E 218) marks an attempt to absolve himself, minimizing the moral transgression of his act by implying that the outcome could always have been otherwise.

Structurally, in the Gothic the categories which apply to our world view become inapplicable as demonic and inscrutable forces dominate existence (Thorslev 129). Here, the use of the grotesque is associated with the suspension of the ordinary laws of nature: Victor's monster can be interpreted as a figure for this phenomenon. His physical ugliness can also represent the antipathy which the idealistic dreamer Victor feels for the mundane world and is analogous to the Calvinist disdain for phenomenal existence (vide Part Two Chapter Two below). The Gothic moves between the idea of God's immanence in the physical realm, a presence which ultimately cannot be accepted, and a sense of



annihilation with which it is obsessed: revelation, illumination, and hope are always withheld.

Within the associationist psychology of Locke and Hartley the concept of human evil could no longer be accommodated and "original sin" met its demise; an apparently motiveless malignancy cannot be accounted for by a belief system which traces all mental activity to the accidents of association and to the twin drives of the search for pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Similarly, orthodox Christian doctrines of eternal retribution or reward, with their basis in a just judgement of individual worth and where hope and salvation remain possible, make the tragic vision of the Gothic impossible, but it is a vision consonant with the Calvinist experience of an unjust God (vide Part Two Chapter Two below).

For those seeking to make sense of an apprehension of the world which did not accord with the orthodox hopeful view the Gothic supplied a form, where the inexplicable found a vehicle in what was a pessimistic protest against optimistic mechanistic science and organic faith (Thorslev 131). There is a ritual aspect to the Gothic in its recurring motifs, providing reassurance in an uncertain world where rationalism could not supply all the answers.

As Abrams has said, in Romantic and Neoplatonic thought, division, isolation, and separateness are

equated with evil and death, and philosophical reflection is a spiritual sickness. The cause of evil and suffering lies in the split between ego and non-ego, subject and object, nature and mind; and the primary fracture which occurs is both cognitive and moral (Abrams, NS 181-82). This loss of psychic unity, which remains a permanent state in the Gothic, means that the division between metaphysical oppositions can never be overcome. Unlike Romantic organicism, which diminished the significance of free will and original sin, these categories remain in the Gothic. Victor's awareness of the "wickedness" (E 166) of his promise to create the female monster indicates his continuing distinction between good and evil.

Romantic thought sets out to annul this primary separation in a metaphysics of reintegration which is a reconciliation of what is opposed, divisive, and conflictive (Abrams, NS 182). Frankenstein traces the process of this initial separation, of the disintegration of a mind's cohesion, along with the despair of any imaginative reintegration under a Gothic heaven, for such a reunion is denied by the old transcendent Deity. Where Romantics such as Schiller and Coleridge (Abrams, NS 185-86) optimistically included the multitude of the phenomenal, epiphenomenal, and transcendent worlds with the unity of mind, thereby allowing for the exercise of autonomy and freedom, Victor ultimately

possesses no such power, control, or optimism. He perceives a loss of unity with nature when he says "I ... neither saw the descent of the evening star, nor the golden sunrise" (E 154). By this stage Romantic organicism has no longer any significance for him: his increasing reversion to a Calvinist world view means that evidence of God's grace can no longer be sought by him in the phenomenal realm, for the Calvinist belief that the laws of nature are perpetually violated renders knowledge of them unimportant.

Romantic organicism thus provided a vehicle, by way of the imagination, for the escape from or transformation of the fragmented self, but the Gothic denies the efficacy of this type of transcendence: it represents a dualistic outlook which does not allow for imaginative transcendence of contraries. Furthermore, Gothic fear can be seen as a negative counterpart of the transcendent Romantic sublime. The axis along which the Gothic moves effects a physiological response, being comprised of uncertainty, ambivalence, suspense, and astonishment; and through terror and horror the reader shares an emotional involvement with the process. However, unlike Greek tragedy, which, as a consequence of sympathizing with the hero's plight, purged the soul with pity, in the Gothic there is no resolution of psychological conflict.³

Victor's terror stems from his separation from that mundane world which the monster desires, where reason and domestic affection rule in concert. His fear is actually related to the fact that he remains sceptical of the powers of the imagination to maintain the creation of new worlds; his imaginative flight is in reality that of a Keatsian "weak dreamer". The monster is a figure for this terror of discontinuity from ordinary existence, a fear which is related to the exercise of hubristic scientific utopianism. The creature is Janus-faced: he is an embodiment both of the logical extension of the rule of rationality when in league with Promethean imaginative insight, as well as that recalcitrant aspect of Victor's psyche which desires to return to a world of human affiliation, where reason is balanced with affection and does not dominate the imagination.

Victor's crime is both Promethean hubris and the inability to sustain imaginative vision. Gothic individuals have no faith in the maintenance of an imaginative transcendence and fall back into a fragmentation of personality where the unknown is perceived in negative terms. They are confined to the limits of reason, with no "intuitive" solutions possible, and cannot maintain a belief in a holistic system. The monster's speculative eyes are linked with the moon (E 9, 58), the cold and limited reflected light of reason speculating on the nature

of reality and only partially reflecting the divine light of imaginative insight. In Coleridgean terms the Gothic works only with "fancy", just as the ancient Mariner is constrained forever to tell his tale and never to transcend the agony of the compulsion to do so.

[The Victorian love of permanence (Peckham 222) can be seen as a compromise between static Medieval and dynamic Romantic views of creation.) The Gothic represents the persistence of this relationship between the static and the dynamic, where a transition does not occur but where no compromise is possible: in his conflict, Victor is placed in a permanent state of alienation from either position. The dominating power of the Promethean monster of rationality destroys Victor's imaginative vision and thereby his attempted transcendence of these oppositions.

In the Romantic, profound discontent leads to secular conversion and faith in organicism, whereas the Gothic marks a failure to achieve this conversion. In optimistic Romantic organicism God is immanent (in matter) but not locally particularized whereas in the Gothic evil is particularized in demonic forms. The Romantic endeavour was to expand consciousness and knowledge but the Gothic involves an extreme apprehension of evil with no solution or escape possible. The Gothic individual is suspended between faith and

scepticism (Thompson 3) but yearns for the duality and absolutes of a pre-Enlightenment age.

The Gothic hero is essentially a metaphysical not a social rebel, a forerunner of the existentialists (Thorslev 127) but, unlike them, a believer in destiny. As is evident in Victor's breakdown after the creature's animation, the transcendent intervenes here through the unconscious in dreams and visions which are then repressed. He has thus no escape from the absolute hold of consciousness; his unconscious is thereby not creative and purposive as is Coleridge's "secondary imagination" or Wordsworth's "organic mind".

The determinism of empirical science and the immanent destiny of Romantic organicism, where God becomes an organic force working through our wills, in effect do not operate in the thoroughly Gothic universe; rather, Victor's undetermined and unconditioned free will is thwarted by the conscious design of a supernatural agency.

Like Shelley's Jupiter in Prometheus Unbound, Victor is typical of the Gothic rebel-hero who retains a belief in God but not in His goodness. The only crime certain of punishment in the Gothic is self-assertion, which risks the displeasure of the gods (Thorslev 141). Victor's status in this role is equivocal, for when he becomes aware of the presence of a transcendent fate after the monster's creation (coincident with the failure of his

imaginative vision) he accedes to its inscrutable decrees, thereby allowing himself to be determined by it. It is only in the final pursuit of his creature that Victor abrogates the exercise of his free will, becoming a "determined" vehicle for the fatalistic intent of his Deity in a seemingly contradictory co-existence of transcendent and necessitarian universes.

Until his final pursuit of the monster the threats to Victor's freedom are either wholly external or determined by the agencies of his unconscious. Up till this point his moral decisions are free in the sense that they are self-determined, even in the existentialist sense of not being accounted for either by his heredity or his environment (Thorslev 128): his Enlightenment education cannot explain his moral failing in the rejection of family and friends.

Unlike the hero of an organic universe, Victor has no hope of maintaining an imaginative escape from consciousness and his dignity lies in his conscious awareness, if not defiance, of the fates who are his antagonists (Thorslev 128): "You may give up your purpose, but mine is assigned to me by Heaven" (E 216). As opposed to the organicist world, in the Gothic (and as with Calvinism) there is no sense of redemption possible and Victor's individual suffering seems not to be justifiable as part of a larger beneficent ordering of things. His

punishment and fate seem out of all proportion to his crime of Promethean-like transgression and, therefore, our sympathies tend to lie with him as both villain and victim (Thorslev 128).

In the transcendentially determined world of the Gothic chance events disappear, for anything may have meaningful significance when the normal laws of cause and effect and rationality are continually broken. When the mind attempts to make sense of such events the phenomenal world becomes charged with meaning (Thorslev 130), and coincidence always seems to serve some purpose. There is the absence of an explanation for many strange events in the novel: for example, Victor does not attempt to defend Justine but rationalizes to himself the pointlessness of doing so (E 80), and he does not heed the monster's warning concerning his wedding night.

It is characteristic of the Gothic for significant links between events to be implied without explanation being given. Similarly, in our post-Freudian scientific age the supernatural, with its transgression of the subject and object split, continues to exist in the unconscious. The elements of our deity, the unconscious psyche, are unknowable but a causal relationship between apparently unrelated events is posited, as with the Freudian slip.

In Frankenstein accident and coincidence are given both a commonsense and a deeper significance: Elizabeth's adoption is both a happy and improbable accident for the Frankenstein family, and she serves a deeper symbolical significance as a personification of Victor's narcissistic solipsism as well as being the objectified image of his quest's goal, that is, to wed Promethean desire to imaginative transcendence as the bride of his imagination.

All metaphysical oppositions break down in the Romantic experience of the sublime, which allows for new worlds to be constructed by the individual as creator. Where the world is an uncertainty, an unknowable entity, the emphasis is upon individual perception, upon vision. This is represented in the novel by the Romantic image of the mirror, dematerializing matter and allowing alternative images of the world to be explored. Fact becomes idea, the "real" world is distorted, and even the self is a distorted image to be examined objectively (as in scientific practice) as the "double".

Romance is based upon the ideal and irony upon reality. The tragedy of Frankenstein involves the transition from ideal to real. We hover between the ideal or imaginary and the real in reading the text, for the monster is both real and imaginary or paranormal. This hesitation between real and imaginary highlights one subject matter of the text:

the question of the nature of reality and the imagination.

The monster represents an allegory of ideas but also "reality". In order to consider him as fantastic we must read the text literally and regard the events of the novel as realistic. The narrative novelistic form does support a realistic interpretation and anticipates the classic realism of the later Victorian novel. The creature is thus not simply part of an allegorical order; we are always uncertain of what he represents and the novel ends inconclusively.

The substance of the Gothic is something whose materiality has been freed in sublimation from all conditioning factors (Brown 276) so it can represent both the unknowable and the possible. Here, the world of transcendental signifieds is confronted, thereby challenging received truths. The etymology of "Frankenstein" can be linked to the German "frank" meaning free and "stein" meaning stone (Ketterer 44), suggesting among other things the freeing of the stone of matter from all constraining forces, just as organic nature is dissolved in death and reassembled by Victor.

In the sadism of the Gothic the body is wounded or destroyed (Brown 277), freeing the spirit or imagination. Here, the limits of experience are tested and examined, specifically, of moral perversion and bodily suffering, in what is a

rejection of the quest for meaning in the temporal sphere. The goal is thus analogous to that of the Calvinist, who seeks for knowledge of the unknowable creator (vide Part Two Chapter Two below). This reduction of the physical marks a devaluing of Romantic organicism and the Promethean quest in nature; here, the apprehension of both the phenomenal world and the unknown is accordingly a negative one.

In the Gothic "physical destruction and mental resistance are mutual and inseparable" (Brown 278). The model is of mind, idealism, or the imagination rejecting the objective phenomenal world in the search for contact with the unknowable divinity. This quest is a purely spiritual one, unlike that of Romantic Prometheanism (in Frankenstein the Promethean quest becomes a Gothic one), but always the unknowable is perceived pessimistically, as a negative power.

The problem is, in an individual such as Victor, conditioned to a world of faith, one of attempting to employ both reason and the imagination in an exploration of the problems of reality in a post-Enlightenment age, where the existence of absolutes is questioned and the individual pursuit of some personal "truth" is the only imperative.

The symbolic art of the Church attempts to provide a physical vessel for the spiritual, where the transcendent is expressed by the unnatural in a

type of incarnation. The cathedral, with its soaring spires and its inward directed labyrinthine passages and recesses, is the central icon of the Gothic (Thompson 4), where the grotesque becomes a corollary of the mind's unknown and fearful secret places. In Frankenstein this traditional Medieval iconography, with its combination of terror and sublimity as fact and symbol, is represented by the monster; terror, in the fear of pain and death, and horror, in the perception of evil, are combined here with the religious dread of the incomprehensible. However, in Gothic art where the transcendent is always unknowable, its existence is represented but not its symbolic incarnation. These grotesque representations are thus the manifestations of psychological projections; accordingly, the monstrous represents an individual perception of an unknown absolute. Only the grotesque can convey the alienation and dread in the Gothic individual's response to the incomprehensible. In this sense the monster is metaphor not symbol for, as signifier, he cannot unite different orders of reality in a culturally specific symbolic identification when the signified is always inaccessible; metaphor more easily permits the Romantic individual ascription of changing meaning to image (a private symbolism, such as Shelley's, is relatively inaccessible and does not convey this sense of changing meaning).

Where the nature of reality is unknowable, the representation of incongruent elements as contiguous (for example, Victor's creature and human society, and the ancient Mariner and the Wedding-Guest) causes us to assume a possible relationship between them, highlighting the characteristically Romantic problem that we know nothing and must individually attempt to create our own meanings. Victor's internal conflict over this concern is acted out as perversion, as the transgression of moral boundaries.

Conflict over what the monster represents thus highlights the problem concerning the nature of reality. As the Gothic universe is both psychological and supportive of a transcendent reality, it is, like the creature, a hybrid and, by definition, heterogeneous or unnatural conception.

The monster is not merely a science fiction character, where the fantastic is given a naturalistic explanation. He can also be psychologized, where the unknowable phenomena of the transcendent sphere are relocated to the level of the individual unconscious, as in Freudian psychoanalysis. This process marks a rationalization and domestication of the Gothic forces which is, however, undercut by the fact that the creature remains of the preternatural: he does represent a breach in the natural order, for

external destiny is necessarily superimposed upon the natural world in his unearthly shape.

If a supernatural sphere is postulated then so is a transcendent realm, in opposition to the essentially monistic world of scientific cause and effect; even in the apparent dualism of the scientific mind and matter split the tendency is for the mental substance to be regarded in material terms. In contradistinction to scientific method, the monster's metamorphosis involves a transgression, through Victor's idealism, of this mind and matter separation. Similarly, Godwin considered that mind could influence matter, in a manner analogous to contemporary psychosomatic theory (vide Part One Chapter Four above).

In Frankenstein the association of the Gothic with science is a secular vision (and strictly speaking an aspect of Romantic millenarianism and organicism) that translates spirit into natural energy. In organicist optimism, the deific force of Necessity marked a secularization of Christian tradition that was counterbalanced by the subjective philosophies of Kant, Berkeley, and Hume which concluded that the external world was a delusive projection of the mind (vide Part Two Chapter Seven below).

The world as object may either be a structure infused with spirit and supplying symbols of the other reality or as mere physical matter with no

ultimate meaning for us. The world as subject may be a dynamic projection of our indwelling spirit or an arbitrary imposition of idiosyncratic meaning upon void (Thompson 5). These are all concerns with which Victor is obsessed.

It is characteristic of the monstrous, in its freeing of matter from empirical limitations, that the idea of material organic coherence, and hence Necessitarianism, is implicitly rejected. The creature cannot be accounted for by being considered as the mere animation of the sum of his parts. His creation undoubtedly involves the intervention of a transcendent being since determinism and organicism cannot adequately account for such an aberration in creation; and the assumption is that the deity involved is malevolent for, after his rejection by specific human beings, the monster becomes a threat to human life and to societal integrity.

The supernatural and the imagination defy limits and transgress boundaries: of life and death, good and evil, and of the taboos against murder and incest, in a testing and exploration of the boundaries between moral absolutes which Victor practises. The Gothic supernatural is amoral and seemingly pre-Christian.

In a supernatural interpretation of events, where the intervention of chance is rejected, a generalized causality is postulated (Todorov 110); this is characterized by the transgression of limits

between matter and mind, and object and signifier. The creature can be viewed as a signifier who embodies the very idea of these transgressions and, if perceived of as both signifier and signified, he represents the unknown element in transgression as being monstrous.

The Gothic transgression of limits and boundaries is analogous to the experience of the Romantic sublime; thus the grotesque can be seen as the counterpart in art of the sublime in nature. The monster appears in situations where there is an experience of the transgression of these limits: for example, that of the traditional sex and religion, and life and death barriers is figured in Victor's dream embrace of his mother and Elizabeth, an image of necrophilia and incest.

Victor's scientific endeavour is a figure for a secularization of the anticipated Christian Apocalypse which is to follow the decay of the material world and to precede the Judgement and millennium; however, as soon as the monster is animated this hope turns back upon itself. Victor recoils from the millennial utopian vision and embraces the old belief that the phenomenal world is running down in decay, thereby precluding for him the realization of the millennium.

He ultimately returns to the pre-Enlightenment view with its belief in the inheritance of original sin through the sexual act. The Deity is no longer

immanent for Victor and therein lies his separation from Him, for his God is the unknowable Calvinist Being of election and damnation. The next chapter will consider Frankenstein specifically in terms of Calvinism.

¹ Following an accepted convention, I refer throughout to Mary Shelley as Mary, and to Percy Shelley as Shelley.

² Organicism involves the assimilation of mind to nature, where the freedom of self-determination is limited to a self-motivated action and expression shared with the animate world (Thorslev 86). As with Determinism, it diminishes the significance of free will and original sin.

³ I consider the Radcliffe novels, and others, which end happily, to represent a "domestication" of the Gothic in the sense that they merely play with the idea of the Gothic.

CHAPTER TWO: CALVINISM

Frankenstein's Romantic Gothic text includes elements, such as individualism and fatalism, which are analogous to those found in Calvinism.

In fact, the novel can be considered as the secular confession of a Calvinist, of someone who attempts a process of self-absolution for the sins of hubris and self-justification, themselves inevitable products of this theological system. The problem is that hubris and elitism represent the unabsolvable sin of pride, which Victor comes ultimately to perceive as having been divinely determined and therefore unchangeable. The doctrine of predestination makes considerations of salvation and absolution irrelevant, placing the onus for the attempt at the determination of one's election upon the individual intellect. Victor's swings between self-justification and self-doubt follow the pattern of such an attempt, in a quest for what proves to be an unattainable certitude. The narrative can thus be considered as an epistemological process, as Victor attempts to define a theory of knowledge of his world.

An inability to cope emotionally and psychologically with uncertainties is at the base of the affective quality of the Gothic. The terror here is of the same order which the Calvinist feels

in the uncertainty of election and in the contemplation of God's power and wrath (vide Part One Chapter Two above); it represents the fear of discontinuity from the security of the known world which, in Victor's experience, is figured as the horror attendant upon what proves to be the monstrous transgression of physical and moral laws. Victor seeks to know what can be learnt in spite of epistemological problems (Swingle 58), whereas the monster tells him that "the human senses are insurmountable barriers to our union" (E 145), thereby setting up an oppositional relationship between them; this statement emphasises Victor's inability to transcend the division between subject and object, the mind and the senses, knowledge and faith, and between social utopianism in imaginative vision and in practice. At the novel's end the horror of not knowing, and of scepticism concerning the nature of reality (vide Part Two Chapter Seven below), continue to lie in the "darkness and distance" (E 223) of the abyss into which the monster springs.

Victor's search for ontological and epistemological truth is a quest for absolutes, not relations. In constructing the monster he is seeking the imaginative transcendence of metaphysical oppositions (for example, in the dissolution of the boundaries between life and death), but he also seeks the essential quality of

and meaning inherent in these polarities. Victor speculates on the causes of things, on divining the world's secret (E 36), an endeavour reflected in the monster's "speculative eyes" (E 9). Victor wastes away physically both whilst constructing and pursuing his creature; the sadism here of an unpredictable god wasting the body with suffering also implies a freeing of the spirit from matter in the metaphysical questing which is the nature of his life's journey.¹

Victor's Enlightenment education does not conflict with what would have been for him, as a Genevan citizen, a Calvinist religious upbringing.² As is true of Victor, Calvin's apprehension of God was an intellectual one, based upon thought not feeling: "Calvinist theology found it easier to accommodate itself to the mechanistic universe ... than did the emotional salvation theology of Luther" (Elton 216). Just as the transcendent God of eighteenth-century rationalist deistic theology is based upon a Newtonian model, Calvin's God the Creator "has affinities with the Prime Mover of Newton or the First Cause of the rationalists" (Elton 216). Conversely, the Coleridgean God of Romantic organicism is force, not intellect, where the worlds of matter and human beings are God's body and will; in the text, it is Victor's rationalism which destroys this organicism, embodied as it is in Clerval and Elizabeth.

Like Calvin, Victor is more concerned with "the Creator than ... the Redeemer" (Elton 215) and therefore less concerned with the issue of salvation than with "the transcendental problem of the universe" (Elton 217). For Calvinists, however, the Fall had "erected an insuperable barrier between man and God" (Elton 216), a barrier which Victor will never transcend.

Calvin's greater concern with "justice now rather than salvation another time" (Elton 221) is echoed in the monster's demand of Victor for the right to justice above all else (E 144-46). One finds it impossible, however, to conceive of any justice in the actions of a Deity who damns most of humanity for no apparent reason, just as Victor rejects his creature for failing to meet some arbitrary standard of his ideal humanity. There can seemingly be only injustice and irrationality at the base of such a theology, whose logic can never be amenable to human reason. Accordingly, Calvinist theology combines a paradoxical mix of rationality and illogicality. Conversely, the story of Job illustrates that, although the Old Testament Yahweh might inflict apparently unreasonable suffering upon His people, this pain can be rationalized in terms of a testing of specially chosen individuals; where all are chosen, suffering can be interpreted as being in some sense meaningful, thereby leaving the Deity just, even if unfathomable. The Calvinist

God, like Gothic fate, remains unknowable, capricious, and essentially unjust.

Victor's perception of his promise to the monster to create the female as being one of "wickedness" (E 166), indicates an acknowledgement of moral distinction between good and evil. He is, however, unable to choose rationally and consciously between them; he destroys the female with "a sensation of madness . . . , and trembling with passion" (E 166), as moral choice is arbitrated by his unconscious will. Similarly, Calvin had problems with the idea of a conscious choice between good and evil, a concern which he pushed "on one side" (Elton 218) and had at its base the question of theodicy: he could not explain the validity of free will in the face of predestination, and the vindication of divine providence therefore remained an insoluble problem.

The Calvinist disdain for the phenomenal realm can be related to the Neoplatonic idea that metaphysical evil is the logical result of the creation of the material world (Thorslev 42), for the creation cannot be as perfect as the creator and therefore marks a falling away from perfection; in this sense, the monster embodies the realization of the materialist farthest point from Victor's idealistic and perfectionist conception. In this view of creation, it is therefore logically necessary that evil exists in the created world;

such a model thus allows only for necessities, with contingencies or unrealized possibilities thereby not being provided for. Accordingly, this produces a tendency towards an acquiescence in things as they are; logically speaking, this results in an attitude of conciliation, just as Victor is freed of conflict when, during his final journey, he is reconciled to his fate and no longer driven by a will for knowledge. In such a determined universe as this is free will and, consequently, moral responsibility are also disallowed; in fact, Calvin and Jonathan Edwards had said that unconditioned free will conflicted with the foreknowledge, and therefore detracted from the glory, of God (Thorslev 11).

Calvinism does assert a limited free will and adherence to the moral law can be considered as an indicator of election. This is, however, a rationalization, in an attempt to prevent antinomianism, that logical consequence of predestinarian doctrine which is figured by the monster.

Victor's circumscribed free will is thus like that of the Calvinist who can choose between good and evil but whose election is not dependent upon this choice; predestination makes free will and original sin logically irrelevant. In just such a fashion is Victor's free will irrelevant; and the monster is born without original sin.

The problems of free will versus determinism, and of fatalism, are a central concern for Calvinist theology; this same conflict lies at the core of Frankenstein (vide Part Two Chapter Five below). Jonathan Edwards denied that God acted fatalistically (that is, that He intervened arbitrarily in the universe), and that an absolute decree of His interfered with human liberty. Edwards's argument is based upon the belief that God's foreknowledge of events is infallible and indissoluble, that the connection between foreknowledge and event is necessary, and that the application of a divine decree to the process can in no way intervene in this necessary and perfect connection, the decree therefore leaving human freedom untouched. However, as predestination has enforced the necessary connection between the cause of effects in the divine mind and the effects themselves, it makes it impossible for "unregenerate men to perform the conditions of salvation" (Brody 402), thereby making superfluous any free will which may be deemed to exist. Similarly, the illusory quality of free will when contained within a deterministic orbit is voiced by the monster when he says: "I had no choice but to adapt my nature to an element which I had willingly chosen" (E 220).

Edwards's Deity thus bears resemblances to the Prime Mover of Newton's Clockwork universe, a Being who, after setting everything in motion, intervenes

only if a problem arises. Ironically, this determined system makes the Deity increasingly irrelevant and leads to the belief that freedom and choice are meaningless terms.

Although the doctrine might deny it, the inherent injustice of predestination does in practice incline an individual to regard the Deity as a being who acts fatalistically, for evidence of His personal favour is desperately sought. At least some Calvinists believed that God intervened in their affairs: a 1601 diary entry of an English Calvinist squire reads "My servant going with his cart laden, fell down, and the wheels being iron-bound, went over his leg, yet hurt him not at all: Laus Deo, praised be God" (Chadwick 181).

Furthermore, Godwin had said that he never really lost his Calvinist fatalism: "Though (Godwin's) orthodoxy went early, he did not lose without difficulty ... his Calvinist fatalism: 'All my enquiries', he says of his early studies, 'terminated in Calvinism'" (Patrick Cruttwell, quoted in Porte 52 n).

There is much ambiguity in Frankenstein over this question of free will and determinism, as though orthodox theology is in contest with that which includes predestination. When Victor, on the occasions of his lapses of consciousness (equal to the death of the imagination, and in turn equated with actual death in Romantic imagery), appears not

to possess free will, it is rather that its exercise is thwarted by the agencies of his unconscious which are now in control of his psyche. The fatalist or determinist Calvinist God has moved from the transcendent sphere to the personal but He remains of the same order and constitution.

"Calvin's ultimate religious act was the assent of the will to an everlasting Lord" (Chadwick 93). There is a distinction between the thwarting of Victor's free will in his lapses of consciousness and his assenting to abrogate his free will to his Deity in his final "pursuit" of the monster. The creature who flees Victor also leads him and is determined in his action by Victor's God; he is an agent or spirit of this Being. Here, free will and fate appear to translate into determinism. Determinism works through our wills not in spite of them and ultimately, in accepting his "fate", Victor's will works in concert with his determined end.

Kant felt that our transgression to rationality was the first step in the progress to perfection (Abrams, NS 205-06); however, Victor is actually prevented from realizing this goal, for, in seeking to eat of the Tree of Life, he wants that which Adam and Eve were precluded from even desiring by their swift removal from Eden (Gen. 3: 22, 23). The awareness of this transgression of God's will condemns him to eternal damnation. Victor proves

not to have freed himself of the Judeo-Christian laws which are thereby still operational in his epistemology and that come to dominate him absolutely. In retrospect, in the telling of his tale, he rounds his experience with a universe controlled by a transcendent and fatalistic deity. He now speaks in terms of always having been controlled by fatalistic forces: "Natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated my fate" (E 38), where even empirical science is described in terms of a fatalistic spiritual force and images of transcendence and immanence are combined. Furthermore, the pre-eminent position which he ultimately ascribes to fate is acknowledged when he says: "I pursued my path towards the destruction of the daemon, more as a task enjoined by heaven, as the mechanical impulse of some power of which I was unconscious, than as the ardent desire of my soul" (E 204). An equation between heaven and the unconscious is drawn here just as transcendent fate is spoken of in terms of a mechanistic necessitarian deity, deterministically working destiny through Victor's will. Although immanence and transcendence are not necessarily mutually exclusive, seeming contradictory philosophical systems do coalesce here and one is transmuted into the other.

The creation of the monster actually marks the intervention of the transcendent into the organic and mechanistic sphere, for the breach of the

natural order which the creature represents signifies the firm establishment of transcendent fate in Victor's consciousness, thereby disrupting his belief in empirical science. This fatalism is actually part of a belief system which is closer to those which accommodate magic and transubstantiation than it is to organicism and empirical science; Victor proves to be more of a defective alchemist than a scientist. After the monster's creation Victor's universe is inverted into a Gothic and Calvinist one of fate, predestination, spirits, vengeance, and calamity. Romantic organicism is thus overruled, along with beneficent, Newtonian mechanical science and its benevolent, almost irrelevant deity: "Ever since the fatal night ... I had conceived a violent antipathy even to the name of natural philosophy" (E 67), later even describing himself as "a blasted tree" (E 160).

In a reversion to a pre-Enlightenment and Calvinist mode of thought, Victor actually discovers Satan in natural philosophy. The monster represents the ugliness of unredeemed matter which is equivalent to mechanistic determinism; in what can be read as an attack upon Godwinism, he also marks the failure of imaginative vision when it is employed in the service of reason and a millennial objective. Paradoxically, the creature also embodies the spark of vitalism in matter, which is in reality a pseudo-vitalism for it does not

originate from God. The monster is the satanic immanent deity which avenges the material world upon imaginative vision, attempting to draw Victor back to the mundane world of familial relations and the status quo, and also to the semi-oblivion which this state represents to conscious awareness. For the idealistic dreamer Victor, that part of the psyche which is repressed by imaginative vision is perceived of as being monstrous.

There is a process of cumulative psychic division involved in the destruction of Victor's family and friends, but it is a division devoid of the hope of Romantic reintegration. The Romantic ideal of individual spiritual development, a goal deemed to be attainable through strenuous effort along the road of culture and civilization, and with an overall pattern of cohesion, cannot be realized by Victor. From the early days of his alchemical studies, when he becomes imbued with the alchemist's belief that one must "separate spirit and life in nature" (Pachter 102), he, in effect, actively seeks inner division. Paradoxically, however, the polarities which emerge in the separation of mind and matter of Victor's scientific endeavour, actually come together in the monster's animation.

The alchemical tradition and scientific practice which contribute to the monster's creation have at their base the idea that humanity can help itself whereas Calvin felt that help came from

without, from God's grace; this anti-salvationist and anti-millennialist attitude is the one which Victor reverts to after the creature's animation. As is in keeping with the view of the Calvinist, Victor's "fall" actually erects an insuperable barrier between himself and God; the failure of his Promethean quest and the resultant reactionary sense of guilt are reminders that he is no more than one of the class of fallen humanity who can never know the Calvinist God in "His works" (Elton 216).

Victor's "conversion" into the pursuit of the monster is not a movement into any typically Romantic transcending, cognitive transformation but into the acknowledgement of a fatalistically determined universe (vide Part Two Chapter Eight below). He is driven to reunite with his opposite term in Geneva (E 201), but this proves to be an impossibility; the monster meets with him on his death-bed but he moves off unreconciled. This process of creator seeking reconciliation with his creature marks an inversion of the usual model, whereas the doomed Victor never actively seeks what he believes would be an impossible reconciliation with his own Creator, although this final journey is also a movement towards Him.

Reared in Calvinist Geneva,³ with his father a magistrate of the city's laws (E 31) (and in this sense an equation can be drawn between his earthly and heavenly fathers), Victor has been conditioned

to belief in a transcendent Creator, and he cannot adjust psychologically to ideas of a deity, immanent in matter. In recoiling from the monster it is matter infused with the satanic counterpart of the divine spark of vitalism which repels him; his realization, here, is that humanity cannot replicate the work of the Deity.

The city walls of Geneva in effect provide a magic circle of protection for Victor. Calvinism thus protects him against the monster of social utopianism: his introduction to the "laws of electricity" (E 41), the construction of the creature at the Roman Catholic University of Ingolstadt, which was renowned for its work in Newtonian science (Vasbinder 73), and all encounters with him, occur outside Geneva.

The fulfilment of Victor's imaginative vision is focused upon his Promethean and rationalist millennial quest in nature. He is, however, a Keatsian "weak dreamer", and his terror of separation and discontinuity from the mundane state of existence in this imaginative transcendence can be related, in him, to the Calvinist distrust of the imagination.

Victor's failure to maintain the imaginative transformation of matter into a Godwinian "new creature",⁴ to be followed by his total rejection of the phenomenal realm of existence, also marks the ultimate failure of monistic, necessitarian

philosophies to provide meaning for someone who has been conditioned by Calvinist dualism and who now becomes accepting of his perceived damnation.

Victor's Enlightenment education, his endeavours using empirical science, and his experience of organicist pantheism in the Alps cannot, in him, compete with the power of the force of the transcendent God of Geneva. The creation of the monster had marked what was to prove an active, self-conscious, and deliberate realization of his separation from his Deity while at the same time being the means whereby his belief in this Being reasserted itself.

Victor calls upon a Genevan magistrate to exact vengeance on his behalf upon the creature, in effect demanding the justice and retribution of a Calvinist God; justice is emphasised in a doctrine which disavows salvation. Conversely, the ironically named Roman Catholic Justine desires absolution and, hence, salvation rather than justice; the text suggests that this is perhaps a truer justice (E 87).

In an inversion of Christ's plea on the cross to His Father to "forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34), Victor assumes the role of his God, the magistrate becoming a self-projection whom he condemns for what is his own "pride of wisdom" (E 201). In his solipsistic universe Victor has created the very system which

destroys him, for he has assumed the attributes of deity without actually being free of a belief in a transcendent and judgemental God. This belief subverts, for him, the possibility of maintaining an organicist world view, although being something which he envies in the Wordsworthian Clerval (E 154-56). His early seeking for evidence of his election in nature, in a secularization of the Calvinist's search for similar proof, is now pointless for he knows he is one with fallen humanity.

The psychological problems associated with the Protestant internalization of guilt, where one's own conscience is the moral arbiter, bring with them the question of whether or not the individual psyche can support this responsibility; Victor cannot bear the burden of his creation.

Predestination results in an inward focus and a consequent alienation from others psychologically, for these others cannot be of assistance and may themselves be damned; and this includes the maternal source of one's physical being. With Calvinism, election is by definition an individual concern. The individual often tends, therefore, to seek for evidence of election in the phenomenal realm, for the Creator is an unknown quantity; this then leads to what is the characteristically Romantic consideration of oneself as the sole source and site of meaning. There is an application of scientific subject and object division in the analysis of self

which the process produces, and self-delusions and rationalizations are the necessary consequences of such an anxiety-laden exercise.

It appears that Victor's obsessive search is unconsciously motivated by a desire to be assured of his damnation, as though knowledge at any cost is preferable to being in a state of unknowing. The Gothic victim, such as Elizabeth, knows terrors which are small compared with those of the victim-hero: her agony is related to questions of contingency and circumstance whilst Victor's is self-originated and ultimately unconnected with phenomenal events or concerns. Victor, however, is not a colossus of demon-inspired guilt, such as we find in The Monk or Faust figures. His guilt is to a large extent mitigated by his belief that, ultimately, all his activities are predestinated, and by his attempts at a type of auto-absolution through the process of the telling of his tale.

The novel Frankenstein demonstrates that when the Old Testament God of the Calvinists remains in control, vengeful of those who would transgress upon His powers, then the pantheisms and millennial optimism of Romanticism cannot be maintained. The text's inversion of the optimistic Neoplatonic journey, in both content and narrative form (vide Part Two Chapter Eight below), indicates an imaginative vision which cannot be maintained in an individual who is controlled psychologically by a

fatalistic Deity,⁵ and who is therefore an ineffectual quester. The Protestant internalization of guilt, with the responsibility for salvation placed upon the individual, leads to autonomy but also psychological alienation, and Frankenstein asserts that one conditioned by these influences cannot easily escape them.

Chapter Three will consider Frankenstein in terms of the individual recreation of the world through the reworking of traditional myth forms. This process reflects the new Romantic view of oneself as the sole source and site of meaning, and is imaged in Mary's account of her novel's inception and creation (E 8-10). Protestant individualism can be seen to be an intrinsic element in this phenomenon.

¹ As mentioned in Part Two Chapter One, the German "Frankenstein" means "free stone", which can be interpreted as freeing the "philosopher's stone" of the complete inner person from all conditioning factors. This is an idea analogous to the alchemist's transmutation of metal to gold, of the symbolical transmutation of the physical to a spiritual state.

² Victor says that his "ancestors had been for many years counsellors and syndics [of Geneva]" (E 31). According to Bertrand Russell (in speaking of the Rousseau of 1754), "only Calvinists could be citizens of Geneva" (663-64).

³ Mary had noted in her journal that "The Genevise are ... much inclined to Puritanism" (Marshall Mrs. J. 137).

⁴ Although Godwin's goal of a morally perfectible humanity is idealistic, not materialist, his philosophy is nevertheless millennial in the limited sense that the perfection sought is to be manifested in this temporal realm of existence and is to be judged in terms of social and political harmony and well-being, that is, in accordance with a utilitarian ethic (vide Part One Chapter Four above). Furthermore, the utilitarian ethic behind Victor's millennial endeavour is evident in: "My duties towards ... my own species had greater claims ... because they included a greater proportion of happiness or misery" (E 217).

⁵ A journal entry of Mary's reads: "Fate has been my enemy throughout" (Marshall Mrs. J. 284).

CHAPTER THREE: FRANKENSTEIN AS ROMANTIC MYTH

Frankenstein involves the characteristically Romantic reworking of traditional myth forms both Judeo-Christian and Classical. The inept creators or demiurges within Romantic creation myths actually represent a questioning of one's origins and a decision to change one's direction in history autonomously (Cantor 7), to create independently meaning in a now chaotic universe. The open-ended conclusion to Mary's novel, with the monster's leap out of the narrative structure, exemplifies the open-ended narrative patterns which were now required for the new indeterminate vision of human possibilities.

The god and humanity, master and servant relationship, which is central to Frankenstein, focuses upon the new Romantic concern with the unknown as the uncertainties of the past were overthrown. The central mythic image here is that of parricide, the myth which was later to dominate Freud. Victor's monster is an emblem of this rebellion, just as he is symbolic of Godwin's principled opposition to tyranny in Political Justice.

Genesis embodies the conservative moral that our disobedience ruined our Paradise and can be recovered only through grace; the implication is

that we must obey God without question and not attempt to improve upon His handiwork. The Bible's clearly defined idea of human destiny was rejected by the Romantics, for the ideal of individual development is incompatible with the generalized format brought by Biblical myth.

To see the Creator as malevolent or merely incompetent (and an implication of Calvinism; vide Part Two Chapter Two above) is to throw off restraints upon our attempts to improve our condition, and to free us to pretend to the role of deity. This can also lead to the characteristically Godwinian desire to remake humanity until it is fully the product of human will (vide Part One Chapter Four above).

In the West, until the Romantic age, demonic imagery, such as incubi and succubi, represented negative moral absolutes (Kiessling 36); with Romantic subjectivity and the relativity of knowledge, however, this imagery came to represent the fear and wonder of the unknown. The demonic thus became morally ambiguous and able to symbolize both the temptations and the aspirations of hubristic Promethean power.

The Romantic goal of liberation, in the overturning of established orders, meant the employment of gnostic ideas to modify the conventional creation myth; these ideas included the revaluation of gods and devils. In Frankenstein the

Christian idea of inversion, in the paradox of the Divinity or the infinite manifesting itself in the physical world or the finite, becomes traduced in the gnostic inversion of the creator and creature relationship, where the rebel turns tyrant himself.

The serpent becomes the hero in gnosticism, "teaching Adam and Eve the true path to divine illumination" (Cantor x). The fall then becomes humanity's first step towards salvation and the traditional act of creation the work of a fallen being. This is analogous to the sympathy which Shelley feels for the devil in his Preface to Prometheus Unbound, where the traditional devil or trickster figure becomes the saviour of humanity and the divine Jupiter becomes demonic;¹ the Romantics had taken up that aspect of the Prometheus myth which portrays him as a rebel against divine tyranny and the would-be benefactor of humanity, overlooking his trickster element. In "Gnostic myth, the creation and the fall are in effect conflated into a single event" (Cantor x), one thereby becoming identified with the other; this is also the case in the standard Blake tradition. Similarly, the monster's creation marks Victor's fall while the production of Mary's novel itself is an implicit act of iconoclasm in rebellion against her father's philosophy.

The creature and creator in Frankenstein long to exchange roles: the monster's freedom is a curse

to him but it is what Victor desires, just as the creature desires the society which Victor rejects. Paradoxically, the monster becomes both the work of art as well as the rebellion against artistic ideals; as a figure for the rebellion of the instincts against consciousness, the human limitations of the creature rebel against the artistic ideal of the Romantic artist Victor. Furthermore, the repression of affections which is necessary in order to produce the monster is later spoken of with ironic hindsight by Victor, as he comes to voice his own creature's position: "If the study to which you apply yourself has a tendency to weaken your affections ... then that study is certainly unlawful" (E 56).

The etymological association of Lucifer with the light of consciousness underlines Victor's problem. His obsession with physical decay highlights the equivocal value of consciousness, for to be awakened by Satan from primeval ignorance is to become aware of one's mortality. Bloom suggests that all Romantic horrors are diseases of excessive consciousness: "Kierkegaard remarks that Satan's despair is absolute because Satan as pure spirit is pure consciousness" ("The Modern Prometheus." Partisan Review 617). When the monster gains knowledge of fire it is both the same fire which Prometheus stole and an image of his emerging

consciousness which will be the source of his anguish.

The prospective immolation scene in the novel centres on the "common Romantic image for consciousness: a fire rapidly consuming itself which gives off blinding light but eventually burns itself out" (Cantor 123); the monster anticipates with enthusiasm the extinction of such "burning miseries" (E 223). Imagination was employed by the Romantics as a defence against these horrors of consciousness, just as the monster longs to return to a state of unconsciousness: "Of what a strange nature is knowledge! It clings to the mind, when it has once seized on it, like a lichen on the rock. I wished sometimes to shake off all thought and feeling" (E 120). As with our first parents, the creature's sorrow had increased with knowledge; and Victor refers to the desire for knowledge as "a serpent to sting you" (E 30), he who even outstrips Adam, for he seeks to eat of the Tree of Life as well as that of Knowledge. Waldman is the serpent of temptation with his knowledge, his musically sweet voice like that of Milton's Satan: "chord after chord was sounded, and soon my mind was filled with one thought" (E 48). Furthermore, the "scientific" endeavour soon assumes a spiritual purpose: "exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein" (E 48).

Stereotypic images are mixed and conflated in new combinations in Frankenstein. Victor compares

himself both to Satan and to Adam experiencing the Fall. He also appears like the angel at the gates of Eden, addressing the monster as "Devil" and threatening him with "the fierce vengeance of my arm wreaked on your miserable head" (E 99).

Furthermore, the creature often speaks like a Godwinian (E 147) and Victor like a subjective, self-reflexive, agonized Romantic (E 177, 184), even when his posture is that of the experimenting rationalist.

As an example of a secular religious confession, Victor's tale is apparently intended by him as an exemplum. However, unlike Coleridge's ancient Mariner, Victor wins not even a temporary release from his own story by telling it; and, as a fellow seeker of the millennium, Walton has not, in Victor's eyes, the power or authority to absolve him. Furthermore, by his inaction Walton refuses to destroy the monster, thereby aligning himself with what the creature represents and placing himself in opposition to Victor. Paradoxically, the rationalist scientist Walton wants to prove the truth of a myth, that of a lush and warm paradise at the North Pole, thereby obscuring the division between myth and fact, spiritual and secular; and he speaks from St. Petersburg and Archangel, from the gates of both Heaven and Hell, whilst living in a "Paradise" (E 17) of his own creation, a secular Eden.

The title page of Frankenstein refers to Prometheus and Paradise Lost, and therefore to Genesis; the heretic inversion of the god and devil relationship found in Paradise Lost serves, in fact, as the primary mythic model for the text, as creator is called upon to justify himself to creature. The breaking down of the master and servant relationship which is evident in Milton's Paradise Lost suggests Puritan inner discipline replacing traditional imposed discipline (Hill 38), a quality that characterizes Victor.

Frankenstein can be read as a retelling of Paradise Lost, where the creator of humanity and the fallen humanity are one and the same being; the creator figure is at once divine and demonic. To admit of defects in the original Paradise is to impugn divine providence; by implication this is what Victor does. His action suggests that God's original creation was defective and implies that humanity owes nothing to such a creator.

The Fall brings about an element of awareness and independence; the awareness of nakedness is a figure for the desire to rise above one's bodily nature. Although Milton does not openly approve of the disobedience which led to the Fall, he regards it as fitting within a larger providential scheme for the development of the human spirit: "That all this good of evil shall produce, / And evil turn to good" (PL XII, 470-71). The internalization of

paradise begins here, for its restoration would include heightened awareness: "A Paradise within thee, happier far" (PL XII, 587). If paradise becomes internalized, it becomes accessible to us.

In Paradise Lost God is warring with His creatures. In Frankenstein, the two characters of the monster and Victor must be correlated with the three in Paradise Lost of God, Adam, and Satan. The result is that Victor and the monster are creator and creature and both in some sense also Satanic (Cantor 105). In the traditional Genesis story and in Paradise Lost Satan takes some blame away from both God and humanity; he is Milton's fallen archangel. Victor has Satan's pride and will to power plus God's creative energy, and like Satan he has the will to become as God; like the archangel, he "aspired to omnipotence" (E 211). Similarly, Prometheus is a saviour to humanity but a rebel to Jupiter; and it is equivocal whether or not the creature's rebellion will lead to liberation.

Like Milton's Satan, the Adamic monster in Frankenstein becomes Satan and, Job-like, questions and judges his maker. Milton's Satan can be considered as a justified rebel, with God as the tyrant. The creature has Satan's motives of envy and thirst for revenge, although to some extent he is, like Adam, an innocent victim; like Satan, he actively pursues rebellion. Like Adam, the monster is revealed to be made in the image of his creator,

although here the image is distorted into a visual (and literary) representation of the symbolic significance of Victor's activities, and the two characters reverse their roles as the narrative progresses until it becomes difficult to differentiate one voice from the other. The creature models himself upon Victor: "I, too, can create desolation" (E 143) while Victor speaks of "the whole period during which I was the slave of my creature" (E 153).

Frankenstein combines the open-ended Romantic outlook with the reverse of the Romantic ascending spiral: that of a vortex in the world repeatedly returning to chaos (vide Part Two Chapter Eight below). This suggests the view that paradise can only ever be lost and never regained, in a reversion to the pagan view of degeneration from a lost Golden Age. The mythic ambiguity here points to a moral ambiguity in both Victor and the monster: neither of them has morally pure motives, just as Satan in Paradise Lost possesses both good and bad qualities. In Prometheus Unbound Shelley had left Prometheus pure and Jupiter impure; Frankenstein undermines this clear-cut distinction between moral absolutes, with the implication that one polar opposite inheres within the other.

Mary's novel can be seen as a "proleptic critique of Shelley's vision in Prometheus Unbound" (Cantor xviii). Shelley's poem explores the

problems of evil and suffering in terms of the loss of the Golden Age when the Olympian Jupiter replaces the Titan Saturn. The pagan myth is fused with the Christian one of fall, redemption, and millennial felicity. The prominent figure employed here is that of the exile, return, and marriage; which is an image central also to Frankenstein. Shelley associates Prometheus with Christ, his torture becoming equivalent to Christ's crucifixion; the rebel against orthodoxy becoming a saviour (Cantor 78). In the Preface to Prometheus Unbound Shelley suggests that his creation improves upon Milton's: "Prometheus is ... a more poetical character than Satan because ... he is ... exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, [and] revenge, ... which in the Hero of Paradise Lost, interfere with the interest" (Reiman and Powers 133). Victor is closer to the Satan of Paradise Lost.

With the animation of his creature, Victor can now be seen as Prometheus's simple brother the After-thinker Epimetheus who, in marrying the Eve-like Pandora, had opened symbolically the "store-jar" (Oxford Classical Dictionary [OCD] 883) of evils. In Godwin's Caleb Williams, Falkland's box possesses a similar symbolic significance, luring Caleb with its forbidden secret.

"And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth ... / And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth"

(Gen. 6: 6, 7). Victor is an offended Jehovah, disgusted with his creation. The Calvinist theologian Jonathan Edwards had said that men were "naturally God's enemies" (Porte 56), for in the Calvinist system "all unregenerate men are monsters" (Porte 56); the monster is the unregenerate sinner pursued by the predestinated agent of damnation.

The New Testament God of love and forgiveness is thus absent from the text; an envious and unforgiving being, like Jahweh and the Calvinist God, rules here instead. As a Calvinist creator, Victor is similar to Godwin who in effect "damns" those whom he considers morally inferior: "Thus every view of the subject brings us back to the consideration of my neighbour's moral worth ... as the only standard to determine the treatment to which he is entitled" (PJ 171; bk. 2, ch. 2). For Victor, the monster is not of the elect; and the Biblical "sins of the fathers" is evoked when the Calvinist God damns Victor who damns his creature who, in effect, damns his victims.

The monster is like the bewildered, uncomprehending Calvinist who cannot understand why God would create a being whom He then damns for all eternity. Why create an aberrant being? In discussing the creation of the female creature with the monster Victor concedes the justice of owning a moral responsibility for the happiness of his creation (E 148), thereby implicitly acknowledging

the logic of this argument. However, the Godwinian utilitarian motive of an action's presumed benefit to greater humanity later causes him to break this promise, the text thereby explicitly linking Godwinism with Calvinist election and damnation.

The Romantic vision of an incompetent, power-mad creator is reflected in the monster's attitude to Victor: the vision is one of creators who are responsible for the misery of their creatures. This image of monstrous faulty creation is equated by the creature himself with moral failings, the responsibility for which he hubristically deflects back upon his creator. The monster confronts his creator and admonishes him for his faulty creation, just as Victor (and Godwin; vide Part One above) implicitly does in his desire to improve upon his creator's handiwork, in the typically Romantic individual recreation of the world.

The Gnostics felt that they "being spiritual, were released from ... ethical restraints" (Pagels 68). This view is similar to that of the Anabaptists and the Antinomian Calvinists, although Calvinist doctrine asserted the universality of innate depravity and original sin; the logical extension of predestination is antinomianism (vide Part Two Chapter Two above), for which the monster is a figure.

As with Calvinists and the Biblical Job the monster and Victor always justify themselves, in the

process disclaiming ultimate responsibility for their actions. Victor attempts to purge his guilt through rationalization, hoping thereby to absolve himself: "During these last days I have been occupied in examining my past conduct; nor do I find it blameable" (E 217). Paradoxically, however, although he is perplexed at the injustice of his fated damnation, he yet accepts it, whereas the monster rages against his fate.

Being born of a non-sexual act the creature has not inherited the sin of Adam and, Job-like, he feels free to judge his maker: "he justified himself rather than God" (Job 32: 2). Job's "I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me" (Job 33: 9) could speak for the "tabula rasa" monster who also "added rebellion unto his sin" (Job 34: 37). Like Job, the question of salvation is not an issue for the monster; he is concerned only for his temporal well-being, that logical extension of millennialist thinking. Conversely, Victor is concerned only with the transcendent and does not judge his maker; his initial pride gives way to humility. The Romantic inversion of the creature and creator relationship, subscribed to by the monster, is ultimately rejected by Victor as he "reverts" to a Calvinist belief system (vide Part Two Chapter Eight below).

Mary can thus be seen to turn the Romantic creation myth, of exposing the corrupt foundations

of political and religious authority, back upon itself: human creativity is unpredictable and uncontrollable in its effects. The nightmare of her story (E 9) is the monstrous embodiment of this Romantic hubris as, ironically, her text symbolically and Oedipus-like destroys her father, just as he, in turn, had destroyed his.

The next chapter will consider Rousseau's presence in the text.

¹ Cantor (x) considers that Shelley was probably familiar with Gnosticism; Blake certainly was.

CHAPTER FOUR: ROUSSEAU'S INFLUENCE

The presumption to the role of deity, which is a logical extension of the Calvinist doctrine of election (vide Part Two Chapter Two above), will release restraints upon human attempts to improve our temporal existence; this is a pattern which is at the heart of the Romantic reworking of myth. As is argued in Part One, Godwin's intellectual system, as the product of someone who had been conditioned to perceive the world according to a Calvinist theological model, represents a secularization of such a model. The father of Romanticism, the formerly Calvinist Rousseau (Russell 660), can be placed in this same category.

Rousseau gave breadth and scope to the cult of sensibility (Russell 652), while the influence of his Second Discourse became pervasive in the late eighteenth century (Cantor 4). Godwin (PJ 69; 1793 Preface) and Shelley were both influenced by him and his presence is evident in Frankenstein. Shelley was familiar with Emile, the Nouvelle Heloise, and the Reveries (Cantor 5); and in a letter (from Champagne Chapuis, near Coligny, 1 June 1816) Mary remarks that "Rousseau ... has produced enduring benefit to mankind" (Shelley Letters 20). This is a statement ironically at odds with Frankenstein's anti-millennialist thrust.

The rejection by Rousseau of the traditional biblical model of human nature and our original state led to hopes of recapturing paradise (Cantor xv). He secularized the idea of an unfallen state of innocence, uncorrupted by the evils of society, believing society to be a force destructive of benevolence: in Frankenstein Elizabeth is removed from a Rousseauian rural idyll into a situation supposedly better but where an incestuous marriage causes her death.

Rousseau saw irreconcilable antinomies in nature and civilization, reason and passion, and the extraordinary individual and the community. In Frankenstein, the De Lacey episode, combining rural simplicity with the knowledge and genuine refinements of European culture, contrasts the injustice of the French monarchy with the simplicity and harmony of the German countryside and recalls the poles of Rousseau's system: civilization and nature. The Romantic enterprise was to seek optimistically a higher synthesis, and thus transcendence, of these antinomies through art.

Unlike Godwin, Rousseau did not consider reason to be basic to human beings, emphasising free will rather than rationality as the distinguishing human characteristic. He later decided, however, that free will was too determinate a characteristic for defining humanity and, like Godwin, settled on perfectibility as being what distinguishes us from

animals (Cantor 6). In the traditional view God and/or nature define our essence and therefore set limits to what we can become, whereas Rousseau believed that our nature is the result of an accidental historical process and can develop otherwise. Like Godwin, he was not prescriptive, denying that there was a fixed human nature, an eternal essence, and considering our nature to be almost infinitely malleable (Cantor 7).

Rousseau based his belief in God upon the typically Calvinist experience of awe and mystery associated with Him (vide Part One Chapter Two above), thus doing away with the old proofs associated with logic; and his former transcendent Deity becomes immanent. He considered that his Natural religion, of listening to what God says to the heart, served the common interest by leading us to virtue; and natural law could be deduced from the state of nature. Like Victor's monster, he rejected original sin, believing that we are naturally good.

The problem which underlies Romantic creation myths is whether we are most fully human in the exercise or in the restraining of impulses; Rousseau raised this same question. In his democratic republic all will participate in the creation of laws and therefore restraint will equal self-restraint, leading to a sense of individual autonomy. This is as much freedom and independence possible in a state of civil society, and his

"sovereign" becomes the collective and legislative capacity of the community; Godwin's utilitarian ethos (figured in Victor's endeavour) represents a similar denial of individual rights.

Rousseau sees reason as creating the will to power, upon which society is based. In the Reveries, in language echoed by Victor's monster (E 219), he says:

If I had remained free, obscure,
and isolated as I was made to
be, I would have done only good;
for I do not have the seed of
any harmful passion in my heart.
If I had been invisible and all-
powerful like God, I would have
been beneficent and good like
Him. (Quoted in Cantor 120)

Unlike the later Romantics, Rousseau does not add a third stage of attempted resolution, by way of imaginative transcendence, to the paradise and fall of his sharp distinction between the state of nature and civilization; rather, he raises the problem of how the advantages of both nature and civilization can be provided. As is illustrated by the initial stages of the monster's development, if we had remained in the pre-moral (not innocent) state of nature we would have remained ignorant, our faculties undeveloped. In this natural state the passions do not rule, for they are not repressed; however, as is figured in the relationship between Victor and his creature, the repressed material becomes our master.

Rousseau saw reason as the source of our ills, for it inflames the passions (Cantor 12). This is so because reason becomes equated with infinite desire in society, a desire which is manifested in private property: for him, the fundamental societal institution (Cantor 10). These desires compete for ascendancy when social control is present, creating psychological divisions. As with Godwin, being a legatee of a rationalist theology, Rousseau related the desire for knowledge to the desire for pleasure; the realization of our potential thus allows for the development of the passions (albeit moderated [Cantor 11]) as an integral element of character.

Rousseau emphasises the fact that we must chart our futures and take responsibility for them. He felt that our ingenuity and development are cultivated by natural calamities and their associated hardship and tribulation, thus obviating the intervention of a higher power and negating the need for a theodicy. Nature gives us no reason, language, or sociability, but it also sets no restraints upon us, making our potential limitless; we thus acquire speech and reason from a monstrous beginning (Cantor 14), and this sets the pattern for infinite improvement.

In "Essay on Christianity", Shelley says: "Rousseau certainly did not mean to persuade the immense population of his country to abandon all the arts of life, destroy their habitations and their

temples and become the inhabitants of the woods" (quoted in Cantor 199 n). Rousseau realized that we would lose our enlightenment if we returned to a state of nature. In an image which can be applied to Victor's monster, Rousseau says that we are those "whose passions have forever destroyed their original simplicity, who can no longer nourish themselves on grass and nuts, nor do without laws and chiefs" (quoted in Cantor 15). His only solutions were the "social contract" or the Reveries' "solitary walker". The civilization and nature antinomy becomes, therefore, the bifurcation of humanity into the common person who must learn to live in society and the exceptional who must go beyond it (Cantor 15).

The "solitary walker" is the solution for a special few who attempt to repress the conscious mind and, through reverie, contact nature directly in an experience of organic union with it. The enterprise is one of overcoming self-consciousness and seeking to heal the division between the mind and the world, in what Rousseau considers to be a divine state. The "solitary walker" is the prototype of the Romantic artist but, like Victor, his isolation from human beings arouses horror and contempt in them when they become aware of his anti-social activity.

Some Romantics hoped to overcome this division between extraordinary individual and ordinary

community in art, combining nature's immediacy with the self-reflexive quality of civil society (Cantor 21), in a democratic community of free and creative individuals. Rousseau did perceive the imagination as one of the positive faculties which civilization had developed but the "solitary walker" is passive and possesses Romantic sensibility without creative power; to translate his reveries into artistic form is to lose the immediacy of experience (Cantor 20).

There is a tension in Frankenstein between the Romantic notion of humanity's visionary powers and the spiritual limitations upon us as mortal creatures, thus highlighting the dangers of unbridled idealism. The human spiritual regeneration is figured in Victor's attempts to reconstruct and improve upon the human frame. The creature can be seen as Rousseauian natural man, with the fall being his attraction to human society and civilization, corrupting an essentially benevolent, if amoral, being into a demon who then embodies unbridled passion.

Rousseau is explicitly associated with Victor's monster. During the French Revolution the Genevan populace had shot on the Plainpalais the successors of the Genevan magistrate who had exiled Rousseau (Shelley Letters 20). This is also the site where the monster takes his first victim, William; William is an aspect of Victor's narcissistic solipsism and the murder is an assertion of Rousseauian

"community". In Rousseauian terms Victor's monster can be equated with the unexceptional many of society who must either accept societal mores or turn them about altogether. Such non-creative individuals can invert categories but not transcend them: "Evil thenceforth became my good" (E 220). Revolutionary fervour and irrationality are the other side of Rousseauian egalitarianism.

The Romantic struggle to overcome the antinomies in human existence is not possible for Victor; like Rousseau, his universe remains dualistic and his inner conflicts cannot be overcome. For them both, consciousness and creativity mean permanent separation from nature and innocence. There is no transcendence of the contradictions for Rousseau, and for Victor the transcendence cannot be maintained.

Rousseau's antinomies of nature and civilization gave way to Romantic dialectic. In "A Vindication of Natural Diet", Shelley early perceived the problem: "How can the advantages of intellect and civilization be reconciled with the liberty and pure pleasures of natural life?" (quoted in Cantor 22).

The Romantic exercise involves the attempt to understand the psychological process of our self-division and self-enslavement. Blind natural forces and our own actions produce our development, removing the divine from our nature and leaving us

free to improve on God's handiwork. The more lowly we conceive our origins to be the greater the desire to transform ourselves into something perfectible, for total self-determination implies that total self-creation is possible. Victor's construction of the monster represents this Romantic protest against humanity's inherited condition and this hope that we can improve upon God's design. In this respect Victor can be seen as an embodiment of Godwin's political philosophy.

Rousseau's fundamental insight, however, is that human perfection is ultimately incompatible with human freedom, for human perfection would make human striving and, therefore, human freedom pointless; and, ironically, Victor proves to have been never so lacking in free will as when pursuing his perfectionist enterprise (vide Part Two Chapter Five below).

CHAPTER 5: CONFLICTING PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWPOINTS

This chapter is focused upon the monster's creation, and deals with conflicting world views. These views provide much of the subject matter of Frankenstein and are reiterated by textual and syntactic ambiguity, contradiction, and inversion. By these means, the question of doubt and uncertainty regarding absolute truth is raised.

Frankenstein can be read as an allegory of ideas, as communicating, through the person of Victor Frankenstein, both the dangers of and the problems posed by Godwinism as well as by the process of Godwin's changing position, both theologically and philosophically, over time. The dangers of Godwinism, expressed as monstrosity, also imply the presence of Godwin's "deputy-creator" Shelley in the text, and of his attempts to put into practice Godwin's idealist, non-materialist philosophy.

Victor's apparent geographical journeyings are really through a map of the mind. He moves from alchemy to Newtonian mechanics and chemical physiology,¹ to vitalism and organic immanence, and then back to his original Calvinist fatalism. In the text there is a psychological conflict between the transcendence of imaginative insight, the hold upon Victor of the God of the Calvinists, and his

Promethean quest in the phenomenal world where he steals metaphorically the fire of the sun-god (as both divinity and imaginative creativity) on behalf of humanity. His scientific endeavours are motivated by personal pride, a millennial optimism, and an adherence to the notion of progress, all of which can be linked directly to Rousseau and his belief in the authority of nature; by implication, they can also be tied to Godwin's system of political and social reform, based as it is upon the idea of a limitless human perfectibility (PJ 140; bk. 1, ch. 5) (which logically must, however, remain limited), operating through the powers of the rational mind.

In the novel, the Romantic reworking of myth (vide Part Two Chapter Three above) is evident in the overriding structural use of Gnostic, alchemical, and Christian Neoplatonic imagery. Victor's scientific endeavours, representing his conscious goal of perfectionism, which is realizable through the autonomous imagination, are carried out within the orbit of an alchemical model: alchemical imagery abounds and represents the conflictive quest for psychic wholeness. This alchemical quest is also analogous to that represented by the Neoplatonic "journey", where the philosopher's stone is equivalent to the Pole of the Source (vide Part Two Chapter Eight below).

The creation and fall of the monster's construction marks a symbolic movement away from the Neoplatonic Source into phenomenal existence. This movement is associated with Victor's Promethean quest of locating meaning in the physical realm, a world which is, paradoxically, also perceived of as ugly to the idealistic dreamer Victor who wants to change given material existence; this domain is also connected with desire, and its associated repression, for material existence is ultimately lacking in meaning for the imaginative consciousness. The Source represents actual death and spiritual life, thus the farthest point away from the Source is equivalent to spiritual death. When Victor creates the monster he is situated at this point of fullest immersion in the phenomenal realm, and his fall into a lengthy period of unconsciousness marks the death of imaginative vision: dreamless sleep representing the death of imaginative vision in Romantic imagery.

The alchemists' labours over the retort had a dual function: to elicit the secrets of the chemical transformation of substances and also to effect a parallel psychic process in the evolution of personality. Like Victor, they "ran counter to the church in preferring to seek through knowledge rather than to find through faith" (Jung, Psychology and Alchemy [PA] 35); and also like him, in their search for the original and incorruptible nature of

things they presumed to take on some of Christ's redemptory role for themselves, thereby implying that His function is inadequate.

The systems which Gnosticism,² alchemy, and the Romantic version of the Christian Neoplatonic journey outline all suggest a desire for a movement away from dualism into monism, of a wish to transcend metaphysical oppositions. Alchemy, as a foreshadowing of science, seeks both to separate spirit and matter and, as philosophical alchemy, to unite all metaphysical oppositions. The text implies that the reductive analysis of the scientific enterprise is merely one aspect of what is actually a comprehensive belief system for, here, "science" is garbed in alchemical imagery, as a vehicle to express both the desire for and the failure of the realization of the wider goal: the philosopher's stone, the Neoplatonic Source, and the reconciliation of metaphysical oppositions. The problem is that Victor is psychologically divided regarding his goal; his desire for imaginative transcendence and perfectionism means that he can never attain contact with the Neoplatonic Source and, hence, psychological wholeness. The alchemic stone or lapis, analogous to the Neoplatonic Source, represents completeness but not the perfection which Victor seeks above all; this fact is imaged by his rejection of the search for the philosopher's stone in favour of that for "the elixir of life" (E 40),

an ambition which the text asserts remains unattainable for fallen humanity.

The goal of philosophical alchemy is the union of opposites. However, the end goal of the philosopher's stone cannot be attained for the Calvinist Victor because the repression of all but the rational faculty is in him so absolute that all other aspects of his psyche can never be permitted to attain their rightful place in a balanced personality; the emotions, instincts, and the intuitive faculty remain completely repressed. There is irony in the fact that his desire to free himself of empirical limitations (to "free" the "stone" of the complete inner person from matter) actually precludes his attainment of this non-empirical goal. The rationalist Victor does not accept and confront the antinomial character of his personality, but mistakenly wishes to destroy it. He does not acknowledge the paradoxical constitution of the psyche, as both conflictive and uniting. In the extreme disunion of conscious and unconscious, the fear of the unknown calls forth the frightening figure that is the monstrous. Victor wants knowledge of the unknown entities of the unconscious but the split in his psyche, and his constitutional distrust of anything but the rational, means that assimilation of these unknown elements can never be realized in a unified and higher consciousness.

Alchemical imagery is capable of admitting the idea of fatalistic forces (this being difficult within the limitations of scientific imagery) which, by implication, can also permit the entrance of Calvinism. Victor's deep-seated Calvinist conditioning prevents the attainment of the goal: ontological certainty and perfectionism, but also the transcendence of metaphysical oppositions in what would be an experience of the organic sublime. His Calvinist conditioning precludes the development of a "Blakean" imagination. Alchemical imagery, linked in the text with fatalism and the Devil, suggests this failure for Victor: "the fatal impulse that led to my ruin" (E 39) is associated with alchemy, as is the "raising of ghosts or devils" (E 40).

As discussed in Part One, Calvinism, which allows for a limited free will (although theoretically predestination does not allow for it), can lead to Godwin's philosophical idealism. The latter allows for change in the otherwise determined direction of events by the intervention of the purpose of an individual will. Godwin does not, however, adequately explain how the intervention of what is thus unique and original occurs in an otherwise determined system (vide Part One Chapter Four above), just as Frankenstein remains ambiguous on this point.

Both the younger Victor and his creature are the means whereby free will can be seen to enter into a determined system: Victor says "you have won me to alter my determination" (E 29) and he freely chooses to study alchemy, thus disobeying his "father" (E 39) (which can also stand for the Calvinist God). Furthermore, in a manner analogous to this type of intervention, the transcendent, in the form of a pseudo-vitalism, can be seen to animate the monster who himself chooses freely to declare "everlasting war against the species" (E 136).

Frankenstein itself, although an amalgam of existing philosophies, theologies, and literary forms, actually is, like the monster, a unique and original product. Accordingly, both the novel and the creature are constructed out of existing forms and materials although something unique is found in the final outcome.

There is thus the assertion here of the intervention of either free will or some unknown unique force into a determined system. This is undercut, however, by the implicit countervailing assertion that determinism (the linkage of a chain of causality is an overriding motif in the novel) can be considered as an adequate explanatory model, echoing Godwin's: "Trace back the chain as far as you please, every act at which you arrive is necessary" (PJ 347; bk. 4, ch. 7).

Initially, Victor's free will is exercised in pursuit of the life principle, apparently according to the laws of scientific determinism which propose a generalized causality. Destiny is actually seen to operate through his rational mind and will: his "change of inclination and will" (E 42) was to prove the work of a "Destiny ... too potent" (E 42). Later, Calvinist predestination is the dominating principle, although it is expressed in the form of a pre-Christian fatalism which marks the objectification of elements of Victor's unconscious mind: "I call on you, spirits of the dead ... ministers of vengeance. ... the furies possessed me. ... I was reserved for vengeance" (E 202). Here, the assent of the individual will to that of God, along with His associated thwarting of this will, suggests the particularization of fate and the denial of general laws. Godwin's conflicting sentiments regarding general and particular laws are echoed here: "the human mind is perhaps incapable of entertaining any but general ideas" (PJ 158 n; bk. 1, ch. 8), and "were it not for the existence of general laws ... man could never have been either a reasoning or a moral being" (PJ 344; bk. 4, ch. 7). However, he also says that although to "rest in general rules [of morality] is sometimes a necessity ... the true dignity of human reason is ... to go beyond them" (PJ 324; bk. 4, ch. 6, app. 1), and to decide everything "upon its own merits" (PJ 324; bk.

4, ch. 6. app. 1); reason is here explicitly given precedence over received moral law.

The text's implied authorial voice can be interpreted as an example of something akin to Keats's "negative capability": the intersection of so much that is contradictory means that, ultimately, judgement remains suspended. This is the stance of a sceptic, such as Shelley or the later Godwin (vide Part Two Chapters Seven and Nine below), and thus is a view at odds with Victor's quest for absolute knowledge.

The novel can therefore be seen to be built up out of conflict, contradiction, paradox, and ambiguity, with the final product transcending all of its constitutive dualities.

The intersection of conflicting philosophical viewpoints is pivoted around both aspects of the landscape and the monster's creation and education which, in many respects, represent a projection and, thus, objectification of Victor's psychological conflicts: the creature is the offspring of chaos. Issues of empirical determinism and of organicism are suggested by the monster's construction and landscape imagery respectively, while the conflicting issues of immanence and transcendence are imaged through landscape and atmospheric contrast and contest. These oppositions point to the overarching antinomies of Calvinist despair and

fatalism, as well as the Alchemic, Neoplatonic, and Godwinian hope and faith in human exertion.

Empirical Determinism

Ingolstadt was renowned as a centre for Newtonian research (Vasbinder 73), and it is apparently the determinist "monistic, Newtonian science of Erasmus Darwin, Joseph Priestley, and Sir Humphrey Davy" (Vasbinder 2) which is at the novel's base and at the heart of the monster's construction.

Prior to the beginning of the eighteenth century the threats to our sense of freedom were external and theological, being associated with doctrines of predestination and foreordination. However, the mechanical determinism of Newton and Descartes was extended in the eighteenth century to biology and psychology, and with Newton's deism, although God remained necessary as a first cause, He became irrelevant as a continuous Providence, this leading to a sense of the loss of freedom and destiny.

This was a time of transition from a world founded on metaphysics to an era of immanentist explanatory principles. Actions determined solely by environment, heredity, and present circumstances must now ultimately be considered to account for moral evil as well as physical and natural evil. This implicit rejection of original sin, and of the consequent relativity of moral absolutes, is evident

in Godwin's statement that "Morality is nothing else but a calculation of consequences, and an adoption of that mode of conduct which ... appears to be attended with a balance of general pleasure and happiness" (PJ 322; bk. 4, ch. 6, app. 1); the power of foresight is also assumed here. However, one cannot be ultimately responsible unless some of one's actions can be considered to be ultimately free, and in this sense Victor can be seen to possess unconditioned free will in his early days. This is implicit in the Edenic image of his disobedience to his father in choosing to study alchemy (although these merely misguided studies would not have led to the ruin which natural science entailed), and in the fact that his amoral behaviour is not attributable to environment, heredity, or, indeed, circumstances. A Calvinist view of this would consider that Victor's amoral activities were evidence of his damnation, moral behaviour being considered, by Calvinists, as a sign of possible election.

The cyclical theory of history is linked to the pagan idea of a decline from a Golden Age into a continual degeneration, decay, and destruction that is also characteristic of the Gothic. Francis Bacon's attitude that a cyclic view of history was antithetical to science and progress influenced Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, who held him in high esteem (Abrams, NS 59-60). Bacon saw the fall

as being from a state of moral innocence and control over nature, in the separation of mind from nature and the empirical senses from reason (Abrams, NS 59); an increasing control over nature was therefore deemed by him to presage a linear movement towards the millennium (Abrams, NS 59). The implication is that this will be achievable only through the union of mind and nature.

As mentioned above (vide Part One Chapter Two), Jonathan Edwards had begun a process of changing foreordination into progress. Victor's father (and by implication the Calvinist God) also believes in "progress": that the "modern system of science had ... much greater powers" (E 39) than those of Agrippa. In light of the fact that the cyclical theory is associated with degeneration, it is ironic that Victor's scientific endeavours are contained within a series of narrative circles, while it is his attempted "control" of nature which leads to his destruction.

The Chinese box effect of the novel's narrative structure suggests the idea of a series, which can be linked with determinism. Mary actually refers to the "machinery of a story" (E 7) and Victor feels his "machinations" (E 176, 186) are responsible for the deaths. Furthermore, an analogy between the determined Calvinist world and that of scientific necessity is evident in "a task enjoined by heaven,

as the mechanical impulse of some power of which I was unconscious" (E 204).

Newton's scientific method does not relate to sense impressions or experience; the smallest entity is inert. His empiricist determinism was non-teleological but it did allow for predictability, for it assumes that one can foretell future events with a fair degree of certainty based upon knowledge of antecedent circumstances (Thorslev 24); the proposed construction of the female monster is an example of such an approach. Newton's clockwork universe did, however, give a telos to the whole (Thorslev 37). The assumption of predictability is based upon the hypothesis that there is a high degree of regularity and uniformity in the events of our experience, whether physical, organic, or psychic; but this view is not absolutist, for some natural systems are considered to be less predictable than others (Thorslev 24). The outcome of Victor's experiments in "nature" proves less than predictable.

Here, causation exists at the level of inanimate matter (ruled by the laws of physics), organic matter (including the purposive activity of plants and animals), and self-conscious and intentional human activity, that which constitutes human and social destiny. Any kind of freedom or destiny which does not imply the transcendent is

allowed for here (Thorslev 25), although it does not permit noumenal existentialist freedom.

What had previously been ascribed to the transcendental and divine, of which human beings could never know anything, now became internalized in the individual psyche. Elizabeth expresses the Humean idea of necessity ruling mental processes when she says that the human heart and natural processes are governed by "the same immutable laws" (E 64).

The views of empirical materialism assume that the body is animated through the strict law of necessity, from an interaction of the body parts. Godwin had said that "It would be of infinite importance to the cause of science and virtue to express ourselves upon all occasions in the language of necessity" (PJ 359; bk. 4, ch. 8) and in Victor's experiments it is the "minutiae of causation" (E 52) which, according to his perception at the time, alone account for "the change from life to death, and death to life" (E 52).

The materialist Hartley had divided humans into body and mind; these were considered to be interrelated but his "mind" was without soul (Vasbinder 40).³ Hartley's god of Necessity is an amoral one: impervious to and indifferent to human concerns and morality. Concepts such as the soul or a divine animating principle are now dispensed with and replaced by electricity. La Mettrie had said

that "thought is so little incompatible with organized matter, that it [matter] seems to be one of its [thought's] properties on a par with electricity, the faculty of motion, impenetrability, extension etc." (quoted in Vasbinder 90 n); and Galvani, Priestley, and Volta conducted experiments on living animals with electricity (Vasbinder 90 n), the force which apparently animates the monster (E 57).

Empiricists believed that a free act is causally responsible, and some considered that free acts originate in the self and are expressive of it, thus implying the existence of purposive or end-directed activity which is an attenuated vestige of teleology. We have moral freedom while plants and animals unconsciously fulfil their purposes, even though such assertions of freedom do not allow for full moral responsibility (Thorslev 8-9).

The immaterialist Godwin sees mind as a real cause, with causation as well as mind and matter interacting in an unknown way: "Mind is a real principle, an indispensable link in the great chain of the universe; but not ... a principle ... as to supersede all necessities, and be itself subject to no laws ..." (PJ 352; bk. 4, ch. 8). Thought is a source of physical movement for him (PJ 364; bk. 4, ch. 9) and will become part of understanding (PJ 378; bk. 4, ch. 10). He denies the independent operation of reason and passion, intellect and

action, defining passions as vivid thoughts (PJ 136; bk. 1, ch. 5) and considering that reason could perceive intuitively. In an analogous fashion, the spontaneous irruption of a "sudden light" (E 52) into the "darkness" (E 52) of causation of Victor's experiments represents his discovery of the "life principle".

As in Godwin's system, Victor's goal implies a limited teleology in the sense that it is deemed possible that purposeful human intervention in the normal course of events can be a causative factor in a movement towards a benevolent destiny (which here, however, becomes malevolent), having only, as in a Marxist Utopia, the sanction of the human will.

The text challenges these assumptions of empirical determinism: the monster's "speculative eyes" [E 9]), suggest the speculum of the telescope, of the distorting action of this piece of scientific equipment, increasing as it does the size of the tiny alchemic homunculus into a huge mirror image.

Empirical scientific determinism can be consistent with immanent destiny, although this actually suggests a nascent vitalism and is not a logical consequence of "necessity" (Thorslev 33); however, the teleology implied must be accounted for by the laws of nature (Thorslev 25). Here, as is true of the monster, the elements of the world are organized to fulfil the views of the creator, thereby to possess a freedom of organic self-

expression if not that of self-conscious and unconditioned choice (which the monster does, however, prove to possess). Post-creation, there is no need for God's intervention in this process, just as Victor feels that there is no need for him to intervene in the monster's life. Victor acts as a deistic as well as Calvinist deity: he tries to remain uninvolved.

Immanent destiny is inexorable and without conscious direction, only becoming conscious in the human mind. Similarly, Coleridge's "One Life" is a holistic determinism in which destiny is immanent and unconscious, operating through the function of natural laws; and Coleridge was a significant influence upon Godwin, just as he is a presence in Frankenstein (59).

The Enlightenment philosophe Volney, as well as Erasmus Darwin, spoke of a "Spirit of Nature" which inspired and carried forth the development of the whole, including human history (Thorslev 60); God now became the inevitability of progress, immanent destiny, or the Spirit of Nature. Volney, who therefore supported the organic universe view, is an important influence in the monster's education (E 119). The Ruins of Empires thus represents a conflicting viewpoint to that of the espousal of free will found in that other great influence upon the monster: Paradise Lost.

Organicism

During the eighteenth century science played an important part in the divinization of nature for, in natural religion, nature furnished the principal evidences of both religion and science as the supernatural was banished from the phenomenal world (Willey 3). As science was considered to be the study of God's works, it was rescued from Satan (Willey 4) and given to God; this is not so for Victor or the Calvinist (vide Part Two Chapter Two above). In the Middle Ages science was considered to be largely black magic and the physical world the chosen abode of apostate spirits (Willey 4); Victor reverts to a similar view after the monster's creation, and this is the realm which he occupies in his pursuit of the monster.

Organicism is actually a logical development of Newton's empirical determinism as ideas on sentience and purpose become extended to unexplainable essential properties such as inertia and gravity. Unlike the Gothic, there are no external accidents here, where no transcendent fates or destinies exist. Here, human beings and nature, mind and matter, subject and object, are ultimately aspects of one being, substance, or force. This force is totally immanent, is inexorably determined, and therefore makes itself apparent in history as process; it is value-oriented and beneficent to human beings (Thorslev 108). With immanence, the

mind and matter split breaks down in monism and God becomes creative energy. Matter becomes sentient and purposeful but at the same time is linked to the blindness of the efficient causes of mechanism. The extreme rationalist Victor is, in effect, devoid of a body and attempts to create one for himself; he can be seen as a blind god, enslaved by material perceptions, creating a destiny immanent in matter.

Victor is actually caught between static mechanism and dynamic organicism. The monster's construction combines the classical, medieval, and Enlightenment values of perfection, uniformity, and rationalism with the novelty and change of organicism. There is the intersection in him of static and dynamic views of the universe, expressed through the metaphors of both machine and seed ("dormant" [E 103]).

With organicism, change becomes a positive value, an opportunity, and not a punishment for sin; imperfection becomes a positive quality. The artist becomes an instrument for introducing novelty into the world and is creator in an imperfect world, as both Victor and Godwin would like to be. Where the creator is equated with an imperfect and changing universe, evil is dispersed within this evolutionary process. The idea is that life can come from death, that something can come from nothing, whereas Mary's "Introduction" says that creation can emerge from chaos, but not from a void (E 8). Similarly, the

alchemist's initial state was named the chaos, and was "sought for as the prima materia" (Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis [MC] xiv); the initial material was also the philosopher's stone, the beginning and the goal, as well as the reconciliation of opposites (Jung MC 42). The philosophy now is one of becoming, not being, with relationships, not entities, the subjects of contemplation, whereas Victor searches for entities, essences, and static absolutes. He never really accommodates himself to organicism; hence his recoil from it. The new metaphor of the tree, which is also an alchemic image for the "development and phases of the transformation process" (Jung, Aion 235) from base metal to symbolic gold, becomes a blasted tree in Frankenstein, and represents Victor's rejection of the praxis of the new organicism: the organism itself.

With organicism, the unconscious is the means whereby novelty enters into consciousness whereas the associationist psychology of Locke and Hartley (demonstrated in the monster's development; vide Part Two Chapter Six below) asserted that new ideas were created in the mind from sensations.

The Cartesian association of the conscious mind (human, angelic, or divine) with self-originating, purposeful, and teleological activity, and the unconscious with what became the associationist psychology and physiology of Hobbes, Locke, and

Hartley (having at its base the analogy of mechanical Newtonian physics) was reversed by the Romantics (Thorslev 90). For them, the unconscious mind organizes perception for its own ends, which are realized and expressed in dreams or art and therefore must be defined in terms of "will, desire, and creative and self-sustaining energy" (Thorslev 91), not in terms of memory or association; the monster represents the application of the Coleridgean mechanical and aggregative to ordinary consciousness.

Victor's apparent retreat from ordinary consciousness in the process of the monster's creation is seemingly an example of his conversion to a god-like Romantic. His conscious mind and will form his creature and, in accordance with ideas of Newtonian science, he believes that this creation will be something new and unique; but the operations of his conscious mind prove to be an example of Coleridgean "fancy". The fact that his imaginative "vision" is employed in the service of rationality means that it is not autonomous, not genuinely visionary and creative, and he therefore produces a defective humanity. Victor can be perceived of as a false demiurge who cannot raise a new humanity from its dismembered parts. There is thus an implicit assertion by the text of the validity of the genuinely Romantic view of creativity.

God becomes equivalent to the universal unconscious mind for the Romantics, and is immanent as force or energy, with ordinary consciousness perhaps being considered as a type of original sin. To the Gnostics, Boehme, and Blake, the first fall was the creation, in the realization of one's separation from God (Thorslev 92), and in this sense Victor's "creative" Newtonian analytic reasoning represents the primal sin.

Both Victor and Godwin can be seen to be caught between two worlds, not to be true Romantic creative geniuses, and they represent rather the dangers of the Romantic ideal when sought for by individuals ruled by the Coleridgean fancy. The monster, the product of that fancy, behaves in the unconscious, spontaneous, Rousseau-inspired manner of the Romantic ideal; after he exercises free will in his decision to murder (E 136) he becomes an example of the organicist assimilation of mind to nature, as moral and ethical imperatives become almost irrelevant to him, and the unconscious directs his actions. He no longer possesses noumenal existentialist freedom; freedom is now limited to animal-like impulse and instinct.

The intuitive "transcendence" of the Cartesian dissociation of organic nature and self-conscious mind proclaimed by some Romantic poets and philosophers seems always to be a question of mind assimilated to nature or vice versa (Thorslev 87),

rather than mind's and nature's assimilation to some higher term in transcendence. Self-consciousness is what must be overcome in the process of mind assimilated to nature, where nature literally takes on some of the qualities of mind. The experience of transcendence in the organic sublime is for a short time Victor's whilst in the Alps (E 94-98), but this he cannot sustain and he is later possessed by the "fates".

Elizabeth first "knows" and then "feels" that Justine is innocent: "falsehood can look so like the truth" (E 93). She does not restrict her judgement to reason alone, she is also intuitive: "notwithstanding all the evidence produced against her, I believe and rely on her perfect innocence" (E 85). She also relies upon others' opinions: "you are of the same opinion, and that confirms me" (E 93); and a pun on "confirm" here implies a religious conviction. Unlike Victor, Elizabeth retreats from the abyss of the unknown, where reason tries to go, into the relative security of shared opinion. Her truth is intuitive, not based upon "facts": a true Romantic vision where the intuition of the unconscious rules.

The creation of the perceptual world was not conscious for Wordsworth or Coleridge, and Clerval is implicitly associated with Wordsworth, for he also "had no need of a remoter charm, / By thought supplied, or any interest / Unborrow'd from the eye"

("Tintern Abbey"; E 156). Elizabeth and Clerval, with their dependence upon others' opinions, do not share Victor's state of separate individuality; they are dependent upon others and thus represent community and relationship, as well as the emotional life which is destroyed by the rule of rationality. There is an implicit assertion of organicism here, in this retreat from separateness, whereas memory and consciousness remain Victor's burden.

The emotional advantages of purposive freedom and organic self-determination are enormous, the implied continuity of growth giving a sense of immortality, superseding individual death. The freedom of self-determination is basically what we share with the natural world in the expression of personality. Hegel defines it as the freedom of submission to "Reason", being the immanent destiny of the universal organicism (Thorslev 86).

Victor seeks the principle of life in matter; this is close to monistic pantheism, in identifying God with the phenomena. He was attempting to eradicate original sin from himself and his progeny, just as Godwin thought procreation would perhaps one day be dispensed with (PJ 776; bk. 8, ch. 9, app.). The denial of original sin is an implication of organicism and pantheism, for, if the deity is immanent in matter, then the presence of evil is difficult to explain. Like Burke and Godwin, Victor presumes to know where evil lies: not in the soul as

traditionally believed, but rather in the phenomenal world where it can be located and expunged. This is implicit in his attempts to reform the human frame, to seek for the "truth" in natural science.

We chain ourselves with self-love for it destroys the affinitive love we crave. Victor's affinitive love is corrupted into self-love, and its concomitant lust for dominion and tyranny is represented in the monster (as with Jupiter in Prometheus Unbound, his power has been vested in him by his victim); both Victor and the monster are aspects of a Calvinist tyrant god in a distant heaven. Godwin's philosophy produces this same effect: altruism is apparently its motivating force, but it destroys affinitive love through pride and egotism (vide Part Two Chapter Eight below).

The secularization of the religious sublime meant that vastness, diversity, and irregularity in nature were seen to echo the psychological state of unknowing, as the external universe became a mirror to one's subjective state. Only briefly, whilst in the Alps, is Victor attuned to the immanent destiny of benevolent organicism: "maternal nature bade me weep no more" (E 95). The immanentist theodicy of organicism, which justifies Nature or the Hegelian World Spirit to human beings, ultimately cannot be accepted by Victor. The text asserts that to abstract oneself from the process of organicism, is to cut oneself off from life and enter a living

death. Victor is unable to adjust to changing and unpredictable circumstances, and work out a purely human and relative destiny.

The Burkean paradoxical union of delight and terror, and of pleasure and pain or awe enters a new dimension with the Romantics. Whereas eighteenth century ideas of the sublime were purely affective (a sense of pleasing fear being produced through the seeming infinity of darkness and obscurity) Victor's experience reflects the Romantic ascription of an ontological and metaphysical status, as well as a life-force and moral and aesthetic significance, to nature's power: the "ever-moving glacier. ... gave wings to the soul, and allowed it to soar from the obscure world to light and joy" (E 97); the "sight of the awful and majestic in nature had indeed always the effect of solemnising my mind" (E 97).

Victor experiences benevolent organicism in the Alps but he also, in his memory of the organic sublime (E 97), experiences a force which is amoral and supremely indifferent to human concerns, although pervasively and inexorably realizing itself in natural and human history. The monster's irruption into Victor's line of sight here shatters his experience (E 98), and reflects his inability to maintain a unified consciousness.

"Sight" in Romanticism is a paradigm for all other sense perceptions (Abrams, NS 357): the focus upon material perceptions enslaves the perceiving

mind and it is this slavery to sense impressions which the monster represents. When the monster covers Victor's eyes (E 101) he is (by removing himself from Victor's presence) freeing him from this slavery to sense perceptions which restricts his true imaginative vision; William also covers his eyes at the sight of the monster (E 142). This motif can be read as an ironic comment upon the idealist philosophy of Godwin's text which, paradoxically, produces a concern for material well-being in its utilitarian implications: "when the film is removed from their eyes, and they see things as they are" (PJ 173; bk. 2, ch. 2). The blind De Lacey can be seen to represent true imaginative vision, to which the monster makes vain appeal; although the appeal is vain because it is interrupted, the implication is that a being who is the product of rationalist divisiveness could never attain organicist wholeness.

Immanence and Transcendence

An antinomial opposition between immanence and transcendence is set up in the text just as, by virtue of the fact that he can be seen as a metaphor literalized, the monster is both a subjective imaginary and transcendent supernatural being.

The Alpine and Arctic settings, along with the associated images of lightning, electricity, and magnetism can be seen as manifestations of

transcendence, opposing the immanent force of nature.

The slowly moving glacier may be considered as a metaphor, or a synecdoche by association, for immanent destiny and scientific thought. The peaks appear above the clouds, as though immanent destiny were gaining ascendance over transcendence, and it is implied that these peaks are possibly the "spirits" whom Victor addresses. His words appear to produce the monster who, by association, then becomes identified with the spirit of the mountains: immanent destiny (E 98), that logical extension of the empirical determinism which apparently creates him.

The alternation of sublime and picturesque imagery when Victor is descending the Rhine below Mayence with Clerval, with castles on precipices and labourers tending their vines (E 155), merely contrasts these aesthetic oppositions. An alternative view is also presented, however, for whereas at the close of Chapter Six Victor is filled with ecstasy at the beauties of nature, the beginning of Chapter Seven greets him with news of William's death: the pleasant, cultivated beauty paradoxically presages calamity, as benevolent organicism is overtaken by malevolent fate.

Neoplatonism, Alchemy, and Godwinian Hope;

Calvinist Despair

Neoplatonism

It is Victor's love for humanity which is the motivating force behind the monster's creation, analogous to the Platonic notion (from the Timaeus [Willey 47]) that it was God's love in wanting to communicate existence to the other than Himself which, paradoxically, impelled Him to generate things evil and imperfect, thus making plenitude desirable.

Alchemy

Alchemy remains an important influence upon Victor in the creation of his creature; Newtonian scientific practice is imaged as being merely the development of an element intrinsic to a larger alchemic paradigm. Burke had evoked the same image in referring to the Revolutionaries as "sorcerers, alchemists, and fanatical chemists" (Baldick 18).

Waldman admits the value to science of alchemy (E 48), and the imagistic intervention of the transcendent (the "spark of being" [E 57]) into the organic in the monster's creation marks the persistence in Victor of the old belief in magic and transubstantiation. In fact, he describes the enthusiasm of his study of physiology as being "almost supernatural" (E 51), thereby identifying himself with the transcendence of the earthly.

Frankenstein (meaning "free stone" in German) implies the freeing of the spirit from matter, and so may be related to the Paracelsian separation of spirit from matter: "the art of separating the useful from the useless" (quoted in Pachter 106).

Paracelsus made the "chaos" of the older alchemists, being the "unorganized, primeval state of matter which contained all substances before the Creation" (Pachter 105), equivalent to the essence and "soul" (Pachter 105) of substances. This essence was considered to be the fountain of eternal youth, a substance equivalent to the rejuvenated gold which would, when found, reconcile one with the universe. It would also enable one to "be reborn like the Phoenix" (Pachter 107), an image implicit in the monster's prospective immolation (E 223) (the alchemists used fire [representing spirit] with their retorts).

As with Coleridge's ancient Mariner, Victor seeks life in death but brings about death in life: in seeking to transmute alchemically inert matter into metaphoric gold the ideal is sought in the refuse of life. Paradoxically, when the alchemic goal of separating spirit from matter implies a devaluing of matter, Paracelsus had held the belief that things of God were evident in His works (Pachter 21); and, like Agrippa, Paracelsus is a model for Victor: "Krempe often asked me ... how Cornelius Agrippa went on" [E 50]).

Alchemic and religious imagery are used to represent Victor's professors at Ingolstadt. The natural philosopher Krempe (who denounces alchemists [E 46]) speaks out of a "pulpit" (E 47), and the chemist Waldman is imaged as the serpent in Eden who, Satan-like, seduces Victor by his manner and enthusiasm, praising Agrippa's and Paracelsus's "indefatigable zeal" (E 48), along with alchemy itself, as the foundation of modern science.

With a voice sweet as that of Milton's Satan, Waldman speaks in fervent religious terms of the achievements of distinguished chemists who create "miracles" (E 47) out of dabbling in dirt. Paradoxically, it is the emotional and affective aspects of the rationalist chemist which impress Victor and, even while being seduced by him, he is aware of being in a state of psychic conflict: "I felt as if my soul were grappling with a palpable enemy" (E 48) (an image reminiscent of Blake's "Angel Michael Binding Satan", and of Paradise Lost VI 324-30).

Interestingly, a phonetically similar first syllable to their names links Waldman with Walton and Wollstonecraft. The latter's "equal rights" feminism, with its implicit denial of the instinctive element in the mother and child relationship, is perhaps, as an aspect of the same broad philosophical approach as Godwin's system

(with its tabula rasa bias), also under attack by the text.

Victor's impulse was always for absolute truth (E 41); while in the middle of a "thousand contradictory theories" (E 40) he could not suspend decision, and hence he would never exemplify that ideal state expressed by Keats's "negative capability". His one purpose becomes to "unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation" (E 48), and his chamber and laboratory (analogous to Falkland's box in Caleb Williams) is the place of God's and life's secrets. However, it is implied that it is rather the Devil's secrets with which he deals and, like a practitioner of the black arts, he works through the night on his studies (E 50).

After a time during which the conflicting pulls of alchemy and modern science work upon him (E 46-48) Victor accepts the new discipline but, ironically, still remains motivated by the same goal of "immortality and power" (E 46), which proves to bring forth the same "chimeras of boundless grandeur" (E 47) as those belonging to the more ancient science for which he had a "natural talent" (E 48).

In retrospect, Victor fails to link modern science with alchemy: to see one as an outgrowth of the other. Instead, he dismisses his former studies "and all its progeny as a deformed and abortive creation" (E 41) (ironically, an image he later

applies to the monster [E 165], thereby linking modern science with alchemy), and sets up a contest, as though between good and evil, between the intervention of his "guardian angel" (E 42) of the new mathematical science and the "terrible destruction" (E 42) of a too potent Destiny (E 42). Not to see modern science as a logical development of alchemical studies allows Victor to condemn one while maintaining his belief in the transforming power of the other.

In the typical rationalization of a belief system by a believer Victor sees another (E 218) as possibly fulfilling a task he had been unable to perform. Similarly, in his alchemical experiments, he had attributed the failure of his magical "incantations" (E 40) to raise ghosts and devils (an ironic foreshadowing of what was to come) to his own ineptness, and not to the study itself. In associating "the fatal impulse that led to ... [his] ruin" (E 39) with his alchemical studies, Victor also links these pursuits with evil and "Destiny" (E 42); by implication, the hubristic alchemist is hereby identified with the alienated Gothic hero inhabiting a fatalistically controlled universe.

Victor's longing for certitude ultimately leads him back to a belief in a fatalistic Deity. Similarly, both Agrippa and Paracelsus recanted, returning in the same year to their former Catholicism (Pachter 60). Agrippa, as with Victor,

no longer saw "the unity of the world in an all-embracing power of Reason" (Pachter 81): "Agrrippa and Paracelsus, who once had proclaimed themselves God's equals, even His betters in their own field, now see His fingers in every corner of creation" (Pachter 202).

The textual concern with the questions of free will and determinism further links Victor with his alchemist antecedents, who also differ in their attitude to this matter. The Aristotelian Albertus Magnus (Russell 444) believed (as did Godwin [PJ 155; bk. 1, ch. 7]) that only a lesser good could be chosen, and in this sense free will was considered to be intuitive and trans-logical; it also allowed for the doctrine of predestination. The Platonist Paracelsus, however, considered that the will is prior to reason, that existence is prior to essence (Pachter 261), and that evil can be chosen as evil; this is basic to Arminianism and is anti-Calvinist.

Waldman's statement that: "The labours of men of genius, however erroneously directed, scarcely ever fail in ultimately turning to the solid advantage of mankind" (E 49), with the implication that good can come out of evil (vide Paradise Lost XII 470-71), can be read as an ironic comment on Godwin's opinions regarding virtue, and upon means and ends. Although Godwin considers intention to be "of the essence of virtue" (PJ 190; bk. 2, ch. 4), it is, however, "of no further value than as it

leads to utility" (PJ 190; bk. 2, ch. 4), with morality itself "nothing but a calculation of consequences" (PJ 114; bk. 1, ch. 4) and duty "merely the best application of capacity in an intelligent being" (PJ 191; bk. 2, ch. 4). By implication, he devalues the importance of means, and he also draws a strict connection between understanding and virtue (PJ 303; bk. 4, ch. 5, app.), considering that the genius, having the greatest capacity, will be best able to produce the greatest benefit to humanity (PJ 307; bk. 4, ch. 5, app.). There is even the tendency Victor-like to raise the genius above the normal human condition of sin and fallibility: "men of talents, even when they are erroneous, are not destitute of virtue, and ... there is a fullness of guilt of which they are incapable" (PJ 308; bk. 4, ch. 5, app.).

If Waldman can be likened to Godwin here, then, when Victor becomes Waldman's "disciple" (E 49) (he is advised by Waldman to study every branch of natural philosophy, including mathematics), he can be compared to Shelley; Waldman can also be compared to Shelley.

Godwinian Hope: Victor and the Monster's

Creation

Ingolstadt, the place of the monster's construction, focuses ideas of Newtonian mechanics and of revolutionary fervour, of rationality and the

irrational, for it was both a centre of Newtonian research and the home of the Illuminists: "a secret international society seeking the creation of a secular, egalitarian society through world revolution, which was founded by Dr. Adam Weishaupt in May, 1776, in Ingolstadt" (Ketterer 36).⁴

With science, design, order and law replaced chaos in the physical universe and it was considered that God's plan could be divined by the rational mind, whereas Mary's "Introduction" asserts that chaos lies at the base of things (E 8).

There is a hubris, however, in Newtonian mechanics, in presuming to describe the laws by which God rules the universe, and Victor's desire for this knowledge puts him on a level with God, but also in conflict with Him; this implies a position of moral indignation with the state of his world which, paradoxically, leads to amorality in Victor.

When Waldman says, regarding the new scientists, that "they can command the thunders of heaven, [and] mimic the earthquake" (E 48) the implication is that it is the power of the deity which fascinates the rationalist Victor; ironically, the desire for this power actually marks the contamination of the rational by the affective.

Superstition also affects the rational, for Victor's obsession with mathematics, after his rejection of alchemy, is still based on the belief that magical power can be located in the right

formulae, just as we regard modern technology (Pachter 255-56); and Victor the scientist speaks as though his soul is being fought over by both God and the Devil (E 42).

During the eighteenth century the apocalypse moved from revelation to revolution, then (as with Victor and Godwin) to cognition or imagination. Similarly, in the monster's construction and beyond, the metaphysical becomes psychological, for increasingly psychology becomes the determinant of Victor's moral actions. His misery (as with Satan's in Paradise Lost) does spring from his crime, however, whereas the monster's crimes stem from his misery. Considered in Godwinian terms there is a cause and effect relationship here, in a system devoid of free will: one's psychological state determines one's actions, and volition is the last act of the understanding (PJ 378-79; bk. 4, ch. 10).

Victor's elitism and sense of privileged superiority are psychological residues of his early Calvinist conditioning. There is a secularization of the Calvinist's sense of election in his Promethean and god-like desire to "banish disease from the human frame, and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death" (E 40) which is analogous to Godwin's ideas: "We can now perhaps by an effort of the mind correct certain commencing irregularities of the system, and forbid ... the heart to palpitate, and the limbs to tremble" (PJ

774; bk. 8, ch. 9, app.). The elitism inherent in such a view is synonymous with that of Calvinism, where the self-assurance of Prometheus and Lucifer is adopted. To presume to participate in the attributes of deity is a logical outcome of a process of damning most of humanity in the self-justification of one's own election, with its associated sense of co-operation in God's purpose.

A connection is drawn between Victor's volatility and aggression and his idealistic pursuit of first principles, and where natural philosophy is ambiguously figured as the "highest sense" (E 37) of the metaphysical, giving precedence to theoretical knowledge of the phenomenal realm over that of the transcendent. His early career does involve a rejection of a transcendent view of deity and the adoption of what is a secularization of a view of deity as immanent in matter.

To the Romantic view, where nature is merely a figure for the mind, Victor's imagination embraces the counter-principle of the false natural religion of associationist psychology and deism: the idea that moral truth can be discerned through the senses and the natural world.

Victor's wilfulness marks the imposition of his personality upon the world. He is possessive with Elizabeth, just as he desires the complete devotion which could be expected from a race of beings of his own creation; this is analogous to that type of

secular grace (Marshall P.H. 24) evident in Godwin's desire for fame.

Victor seeks the first cause in nature and, ironically, becomes himself the first cause in a string of destruction. His creative impulse is actually generated by the sight of the destruction of an oak tree (E 41) (also an alchemic symbol of the Tree of Knowledge, of the mother, and of the vessel of life [Jung, MC 70-72]) by lightning: by destruction of the organic world. In this image of the transcendent meeting the phenomenal, electricity is the apparent vital life principle. This can be seen to represent, with the emergence in Victor of the Promethean impulse (analogous to the strike by lightning), the fact that his desire for power and acclaim is greater than it is philanthropic, for it is destructive of life.

The Darwinian notion of random mutation can be perceived of as a secular equivalent to the idea of a transcendent deity intervening in the phenomenal realm. In the biological sphere the cause is either radiation, some inbuilt propensity in the organism, or unknowable, while the effect is random and indeterminable. Victor combines both views for he is an inept creator, intervening in the normal course of dissolution and death with purpose and intent, but with unforeseeable and unknowable consequences. He can be compared here with Godwin whose "understanding" (PJ 349; bk. 4, ch. 7) (as

mind, reason, the passions or desires) is "determined" (PJ 346; bk. 4, ch. 7) to intervene in the chain of the normal course of events (PJ 379; bk. 4, ch. 10). In addition, the transformation Victor effects when he becomes a slave to his toil (E 56) can be seen as an ironic inversionary figure for Godwin's "species of metamorphosis" (PJ 774; bk. 8, ch. 9, app.), occurring when "involuntary motions are frequently found gradually to become subject to the power of volition" (PJ 774; bk. 8, ch. 9, app.), with the view to causing "Matter, or ... the certain and unintermitting laws of the universe ... [to] be the Helots [of humanity]" (PJ 759; bk. 8, ch. 8, app.).

As with Godwin, Victor attempts to transcend death, mutability, and time; but they both attempt to do so through the medium of the temporal or phenomenal world, through that matter to which time is so conclusively bound. Even Godwin's idealist philosophy is based upon the materialist propositions of associationist psychology.

Like the monster, Victor is associated with images of the resurrection and the animation of inert matter, and "animate" is used in various contexts, linking together various characters. First Clerval (E 59-63) and then Walton "resurrect" Victor. He is restored to "animation" (E 25) when taken on board Walton's ship, informing Walton: "you have benevolently restored me to life" (E 26), and

feeling from this time that "a new spirit of life animated ... [his] decaying frame" (E 26).

Victor asserts that a "human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind" (E 55) although, in the monster's creation, there is ambiguity as to whether or not it is stress which destroys Victor's analytical judgement (E 55), or if it is impossible that the essential nature of a being lies in an amalgam of its parts. He had been taught by his parents lessons "of patience, of charity, and of self-control" (E 34) but he is overcome with anxiety (E 57). His haste is perhaps an ironic attack upon Godwin's requirement that our "second duty is tranquillity" (PJ 790; bk. 8, ch. 10); Godwin says that an individual is bound, as a philanthropist, "not to abstain from acting, with caution and sobriety, upon the judgements of his understanding ... lest ... he should unintentionally be the occasion of evil" (PJ 781; bk. 8, ch. 10). The creature is the unintentional evil consequence of Victor's activity.

Victor attempts to gain immortality of sorts through the proposed propagation of his "species". This Faustian quest is like that of St. Leon's; the latter assumes the curse of immortality in return for the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life (equivalent to the Edenic Tree of Life), striking a bargain with the Wandering Jew (another of the

elect), and dooming himself, like Victor, to a life of endless solitude.

Victor keeps his affections in abeyance while constructing the creature (E 55), and his creation can be seen as the work of a sublimated sexuality. His fear of sexual union (if his image of "combat" [E 195] is read in terms of the "monster" of sexual passion) marks the fear of the loss of individuality and independence and, as with the elder Frankenstein (E 31), his early career in public life had only been possible because he was single. Similarly, Godwin said that "We ought to be able to do without one another" (PJ 761; bk. 8, ch. 8, app.), and that "One tendency of a cultivated and virtuous mind is to diminish our eagerness for the gratification of the senses" (PJ 776; bk. 8, ch. 9, app.).

Outside Geneva, there are no moral absolutes for Victor but, paradoxically, the monster's creation at Ingolstadt, apparently employing monistic Newtonian scientific principles, produces the dualism of a good and evil opposition.

Victor examines the cause and effect relationship between life and death. He then reverses this process (E 52), thereby calling into question both cause and effect thinking and the scientific method; the Judeo-Christian linear notion of time is hereby also queried. There is ambiguity in the fact that he creates a life out of death, for it is a life which in turn creates much death. The

effect becomes the cause here, reminiscent of Paradise Lost's: "this good of evil shall produce, / And evil turn to good" (XII 470-71).

With the discovery of the cause of generation, a pseudo-vitalism enters Victor's "mechanistic" system, along with an immanent destiny. He believes that he has discovered the life principle of vitalism but, as a pseudo-creator, what he discovers is a pseudo-vitalism. This process of endowing life does not occur like "a magic scene" (E 52), and there is nothing magical about its product.

The Romantic faith in the power of the imagination to shape a new world is also Godwinian: [the denial of limitations on human creative power, even the ultimate limitation of death, is not a barrier.] Victor's "too much exalted" (E 53) imagination is apparently like that of the poet; but in him, the rationalistic world of the scientist is not distinct from the imaginary, and he is actually tied metaphorically to the rock of Prometheus, for his imagination is bound by reason. Victor is playing god but is an inadequate one, for he ascribes pure rationality to mixed humanity. The monster is mixed like all humanity and is not the rational creature Victor had wanted to create: this projection of his own true self, and not of his perceived self-image.

In the statement "I created a rational creature" (E 217) Victor could be speaking of

Godwin's philosophy, and implying the uncertain nature of the products of rational inquiry and social utopianism. The inadequacies of the rational faculty are emphasised here along with the assertion that absolute truth sought in nature is an impossibility. The "light" of reason actually finds its inverse in the rule of reason which the monster represents, the "darkness and distance" (E 223) of this dominance by the rational faculty.

The monster says that he "will not surely think thus" (E 223). The linear idea of process is represented here, along with the notion that the systems produced through the operation of reason (the monster) are changeable, and not absolute givens, perhaps with the implication that absolute truth, if it lies anywhere, does so elsewhere, beyond the products of rationalism. The inevitability of change is suggested here, along with the idea of the inability to control all variables and know all quantities or entities, just as earlier in the text the questioning of the ability to replicate scientific experiments is implicit in the suggestion that the female monster may be a greater unknown than the male.

The monster represents a reverse theodicy: in demanding that his creator justify his ways to him he is regarding himself as a benchmark for moral judgements, just as he is antinomian in his "revolutionary" fervour, in feeling free to break

conventional moral laws. Ironically, revolution is condemned by Godwin (PJ 779; bk. 8, ch. 10), although the text of Frankenstein is implicitly asserting that this is a danger attendant upon his rationalist philosophy; at the novel's end the former "rationalist" Victor describes himself as perhaps still "misled by passion" (E 217).

Victor represents humanity in its struggle for redemption, desiring to achieve a vision of the infinite through imagination (and idealist philosophy), but thwarted and "imprisoned" by the temporal world. The revolutionary (monstrous) part of him would create a new morality but is punished for this hubris. Victor refuses to acknowledge the interdependent contraries in his psyche, and so they remain in a state of war as each struggles for dominance.

Godwin's philosophy implicitly denies the validity of original sin but he considers, in a Platonic sense, that moral absolutes exist: this is a contradiction in logic in a utilitarian ethic which stresses relativism and rejects absolutism.

Victor does not consider the morality of what he does; the utilitarian and perfectionist ethic dominates him and, like Godwin (who, for example, refused to claim the body of his suicide step-daughter Fanny for fear that it would reflect badly upon him and his philosophy [St Clair 412-13; Sunstein 127]), he is willing to sacrifice family

and friends for a visionary dream of promoting the general good. As in Godwin's philosophy, for Victor there is no theoretic antithesis between social utopianism and the personal affections. However, in the monster's creation Victor implicitly destroys all that is, in practical terms, antithetical to his scientific utopianism: the sexual, the affections, and the domestic.

Victor's confessional statement: "I could not, my father, indeed I could not sacrifice the whole human race" (E 186), can be interpreted as a castigation of his father the Calvinist God for sacrificing most of humanity in the election of a handful. This also represents an inversionary movement from the particularity of an absolute truth to the generalities (as in Newtonian science) attendant upon a utilitarian ethic.

Like Godwin, Victor is egoistic and willing to sacrifice his family for the common good of the human race but, ironically, he also suffers by sacrificing his emotional and affinitive life. His torture of living animals (E 54) is perhaps a comment on Godwin's inhumane philosophy, upon the mind controlling matter and altering it, all in the service of an absolute moralistic ethic, rationalist and judgemental.

The breach of human moral law that helps to produce the monster also marks a transgression of natural law. This raises the question of the nature

of the relationship between culture and nature, the abstract and the material, the epistemological and the ontological.

Victor is attempting to eradicate original sin from himself and his progeny; original sin was transmitted by the sexual act and, in both Godwin's philosophy and Victor's scientific method, the curse of original sin disappears (both literally and figuratively, and theologically), for the concept of sexual procreation has been dispensed with. In natural procreation, the visiting of the sins of the fathers upon succeeding generations cannot be avoided and, in the image of death and decay with his dream embrace of Elizabeth and his mother, the spiritual curse of original sin is associated with natural procreation and, by implication, the female.

Victor's non-sexual creation imitates that of God, where both God and woman are displaced from the act of "childbirth" and, therefore, creation. Victor seeks immortality in his creature through the acclaim he would receive, in what is a secularization of the Christian survival of the soul.

Ironically (when he behaves so amorally), the text emphasises Victor's moral nature; and Godwin also had an overriding concern with morality, operative through behaviour and motive (PJ 192; bk. 2, ch. 5).

Victor exercises free will and acts morally in destroying the female monster. He would not knowingly set upon the earth a creature of vice, telling the monster: "Your threats cannot move me to do an act of wickedness" (E 167). However, the denial of the feminine principle, with the frequent association of the female with death, continues in this destruction of the female monster. The female cannot be allowed to live, for this would represent normal procreation and the normal familial ties and affections which Victor's (and, by implication, Godwin's) utilitarian philosophy destroys. There is ambiguity, however, in his decision to kill the female, for he cleans his instruments afterwards, as though for further use, although there seems to be no suggestion that he plans to put them to the same use (E 170).

Although he is hereby knowingly sacrificing his family for the good of general humanity it is paradoxical that the female is a product of this same utilitarian ethic; the "natural philosophers" (E 158) whom he consulted prior to her construction are the British empiricists, the logical forerunners of the Utilitarians (Russell 740) whom Godwin anticipated. Victor is, at this stage, still persuaded by the monster's plausible arguments, although the ambiguous symbolism of the female monster (representing both perfectionist social utopianism and its rejection) suggests his

psychological confusion. The lack of coherence and consistency in the application of an image here denies the idea of allegory; in fact the text's symbolical actions and metaphors are, as a whole, disconnected and not part of an allegorical order. This disparateness and lack of cohesion in metaphor and symbolical action can be seen as emphasising the non-connectedness of everything, and thereby attacking the idea of necessity.

At the time of the monster's creation there is a metaphoric relationship between creativity and sexual energy: "After so much time spent in painful labour, to arrive at once at the summit of my desires, was the most gratifying consummation of my toils" (E 52). Imagistically, he wants to possess sexually his dead mother: he pursued (mother) "nature to her hiding-places" (E 54) and "disturbed, with profane fingers" (E 54). However, these images also suggest, upon his realization of the true significance of his laboratory experiment, his desire for reunion with the true giver of life: the mother.

The unity of the mother and daughter image in Victor's dream-embrace of Elizabeth and his mother suggests, as well as his desire to return to the founts of normal procreation, the natural cyclical displacement of mother by daughter. This cyclic process finds its antithesis in Godwin's (and Victor's [E 40]) notion that "perfectibility" might

dispense with procreation and death, in what amounts to an intervention in the processes of time and mutability, and of their consequent transcendence.

Victor's self-consciousness, being the source of his alienation from nature and integrated self, cannot be overcome (vide Part Two Chapter Seven below). In the Cartesian mind and body split the body is governed by the laws of physics and the mind is the free world of the spirit; this split remains in Victor (and, by implication, in Godwin). There is a dissociation between organic nature and the self-conscious mind at the monster's creation; the assimilation of mind and nature to some higher term in transcendence cannot be effected, for Victor's mind is associative only, and not genuinely creative. Some ambiguity remains here, however, for, as the organicist believes literally that nature takes on some of the qualities of mind, Victor can be seen as an organicist in the sense that the monster represents the physical manifestation of this ascription of a subjective psychological state to the objective world. The ambiguity here reflects Victor's inability to rest with any belief system; his mind is in a constant state of flux.

Calvinist Despair

Election gave a sense of freedom to certain individuals, for they then co-operated in God's

purpose. This, however, led to a determination to prove oneself, for doubts remained: Victor wants justice and knowledge, secular equivalents of this proof, whereas Justine wants only Catholic confession and absolution, without which "sin" remains.

Calvinism leads logically to antinomianism, for the exercise of free will, in the desire to adhere to the moral law, is logically unnecessary with predestination. Antinomianism is a democratization of election and Protestant individualism (Hill 271), for the individual feels free to make decisions concerning moral behaviour, in turn becoming either amoral or immoral in the eyes of others; both Victor and the monster can be seen as Antinomian Calvinists.

There is therefore a contradiction regarding original sin at the heart of Calvinism, for original sin theoretically exists but, in reality, does not. This fundamental contradiction continues in Godwin's philosophy for his moral absolutism is inconsistent with his utilitarian ethic, implying as it does the relativity of all value systems. The attempt by Victor and Godwin to improve humanity is to deny original sin; even the idea of an improved humanity in effect denies original sin.

Victor's craving for ontological certitude, when he lacks a Blakean imagination, could perhaps be satisfied by the acceptance of redemptive process

in Romantic organicism. He does not, however, really want the latter; he desires both knowledge of metaphysical absolutes and imaginative transcendence, yearning to know God as the Calvinist does.

Only God creates out of a void. Although believing in creative originality, in bringing both artistic concepts and ideas into being, in creating "a symbol of truth" (Peckham 218), in reality the Romantic artist creates out of chaos. In her "Introduction" (E 8) Mary adheres to the pre-Romantic view that only nothing can come from nothing, asserting that only the re-arrangement of existents is possible, as all possibilities of things have been implicit since creation. This is a static, hierarchical view whose ruling metaphor is the machine, not the dynamic organism: Victor believes he is a true creative artist when he is merely a re-arranger and animator of existents, in fact creating a symbol of error.

Coleridge's "Speculative Reason" (in turn theoretically similar to Godwin's): the power by which we "aim to produce unity, necessity, and universality in all our knowledge by means of principles a priori" (Biographia Literaria [BL] Vol. 1, 293) can be applied to Victor's endeavour. The text suggests, however, that Victor and Godwin use this power without actually possessing secondary imagination, that is, in employing fancy alone. The

creature is thus the product of fancy and represents the ugliness of the activated darkness of matter in natural philosophy, unredeemed by true imaginative insight: the monstrous is produced every time nature is invoked. Irrationally, Victor is influenced unfavourably against Krempe's views by his unattractive physical appearance (E 46), this being another example of the ugliness of unredeemed matter; he is, even at this early stage, unconsciously rejecting the Promethean quest in nature in which he is assisted by the natural philosopher Krempe.

Victor desires, in a Baconian sense, to instaurate for others the false Eden of millennial felicity. The monster is a figure for the enslavement of his imagination in the service of reason, which is in turn an outgrowth of his Calvinist conditioning. The text also suggests the negation of the feminine principle by scientific rationalism, through the destruction of the feminine and the affinitive generally.

The text's preoccupation with alienation and community anticipates the Victorian concern with them. Victor's solitary cell at "the top of the house" (E 55) is an "architectural analogue" (Ketterer 46) of the mind and body split. His conflict is between the desire to retain individuality and the impulse to return to the world of community. Inner psychological unity is a pre-

requisite for social community but Victor's guilty secret leads to moral isolation, just as the monster's physical ugliness (equivalent to the Calvinist's disdain for phenomenal creation) leads to his isolation. Consciousness divides and is equivalent to evil and disease; this is equivalent to Adam's loss of Paradise.

Victor's will in his early days is indeterminate; it is unconditioned and free from traditional moral and social codes, and also from all inherited or environmental influences. The Adamic image, in his disobedience to his father by continuing to read Agrippa (E 39), is evidence that he possesses free will. This is a libertarian view that evil can be chosen as evil, and conflicts with the system Victor apparently operates within while constructing the monster: scientific empirical determinism which rejects the unconditioned free will that is beyond the scope of natural law. In retrospect, he speaks of having been determined by "Destiny" (E 42) during this early period, but he may be re-assessing these events in the light of future occurrences. This is a backward looking attitude, just as he is reactionary both philosophically and theologically. In the sense that he has symbolically opened Pandora's box, he is perhaps also a modern Epimetheus.

His later reaction against the Promethean quest is implicit, even in the days before he leaves home,

in this retrospective ascription of destiny to the motivation behind his early experiments, and of fate in regard to his mother's death ("an omen, as it were" [E 42]); this reaction becomes explicit after the creature's animation. Perceived in psychological terms, Victor's projection of his refusal simply to accept his ordinary human "fate" becomes imaged as a demonic struggle whereas, when he accedes to destiny, it is then interpreted as "a spirit of good" (E 203), directing his steps.

In an image suggestive of the pagan idea of decay and dissolution in a decline from the Golden Age, Victor wastes away physically while constructing the monster. During this time his "eyes were insensible to the charms of nature" (E 55); he even supposes, following his betrayal by organicism, that the mountains of home are possibly mocking him (E 75). However, evidence of the pathetic fallacy here implies that, with his mind assimilated to nature, he is still held by the power of organicism.

The underside of the Romantic idyll is evident in the Calvinist Orkneys where, in what is perhaps a wry comment on the Rousseauian noble savage, "suffering blunt[s] even the coarsest sensations of men" (E 163). Victor's "obscure forebodings of evil" (E 164) here presage later events.

Frankenstein the elder says regarding Justine: "rely on the justice of our laws" (E 81); this is

the law both of the Calvinist state and of its Heaven which can never give her justice, for Roman Catholic Justine is not of the elect. It was a sin for Calvinists to be concerned with earthly well-being but, unlike Justine, Victor's initial concern is with this world; paradoxically here, one polar opposite can be seen to have merged into the other. When Justine tells Elizabeth that only the Devil would be capable of such a crime, and to "Learn from me, dear lady, to submit in patience to the will of Heaven" (E 88), she is anticipating Victor's later "conversion" away from millenarianism.

Victor retrospectively ascribes a fatalistic controlling agent to all his seemingly "free" activities; at the novel's end the truth of this matter remains ambiguous and therefore unresolvable.

From the moment he left his "father's door" (E 45), which is also the entrance to the Calvinist God and His law, Victor felt himself to be under the omnipotent sway of the influence of the "Angel of Destruction" (E 45). Furthermore, prior to constructing the female creature he awaits letters from home with trepidation, fearful that therein he would "ascertain ... [his] fate" (E 162): he was awaiting the unfolding of destiny. He is wandering in a Calvinist world here, in feeling himself guiltless but as having drawn down upon his head "a horrible curse" (E 162), and carrying, like the ancient Mariner's albatross, a "deadly weight yet

hanging round ... [his] neck" (E 151-52). He now perceives himself to be "a miserable wretch, haunted by a curse that shut up every avenue to enjoyment" (E 154).

In a linkage with the early tree and lightning image (E 41), Victor images himself as both a "blasted tree" (E 160) and as Christ crucified (originally from Ps. 105: 18): "the iron had eaten into my flesh" (E 160), "the bolt has entered my soul" (E 160); a pun on "bolt" here has transformed lightning into iron. Paradoxically, however, he remains drawn to organicism for he speaks of Clerval's spirit, which is that of organicism, as still visiting him (E 157), even after death.

It is also paradoxical that the Calvinist rationalism, which is the ultimate cause of the monster's creation, is actually a protection against his influence. Victor could not commence work whilst in Geneva and the creature is never present within its walls; this city represents the ideal of the absolute rule of rationalism, along with control by the dominants of conscious life. Ironically, although it was Victor's concern with the principle of life which delayed his return to Geneva (E 60), he wastes away while constructing the monster and returns to health whilst in Geneva (E 149). This is so because, outside Geneva, he is always in some kind of association with the monster (who can be seen as equivalent to the alchemic "son of

darkness", to "melancholia" [Jung, PA 36], to the evil within); even in wanting to destroy him he is acknowledging his existence. This image is an ambiguous one for it implies that he is also wanting a type of reunion with his creature, and reflects the antinomial character of Victor's psyche which itself represents both conflict and unity.

The next chapter will consider the monster's development, which further demonstrates the operation of conflicting philosophical systems.

¹ Chemical physiology combined research in biology, chemistry, mechanics, physics, and medicine (Mellor, Mary Shelley: Her Life Her Fiction Her Monsters [MS] 90).

² The Gospel of Thomas (45.30-33 in the Nag Hammadi Library 126) says (and attributes to Christ): "If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you" (quoted in Pagels 135). The same impulse as the Romantic one towards a unified psyche is evident here. Furthermore, if he is perceived in such terms, Victor can be seen to be destroyed by the monster of psychologically repressed material.

³ In 1812 Shelley bought a copy of Hartley's Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations (Vasbinder 40).

⁴ In 1814, Shelley purchased Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism (1797-98) (Ketterer 36).

CHAPTER SIX: GODWIN'S PHILOSOPHY AND THE MONSTER'S DEVELOPMENT

This chapter deals with the influences of determinist associationist psychology and Godwinism upon the monster's development. A conflict between determinism and free will theodicy is evident here, however, rendering inconclusive both the actual influences upon the creature and, in turn, the true nature of his constitution. This ambiguity and uncertainty represent an implicit questioning of Godwinism and associationist psychology.

The chaos at the core of the novel's inception (E 8) relates to that of the age, where meaning had become a function of private, subjective concerns. The work of art, employing private symbolic systems and creating analogies between nature and the human moral world, now becomes the locus and generation of meaning; the creation both of Frankenstein and of Victor's creature can be seen as artistic struggles for meaningful form.

As individuals focused more and more upon the natural world, there was a tendency towards the dissipation of the traditional belief in an ultimate unity and, increasingly, the Humean idea that nothing absolute could be known tended to turn ontologies into psychologies (Wasserman 255). Victor's search for absolute truth in a purely

allegorical and metaphoric narrative structure suggests the slightly absurd situation of someone caught between two systems, one of which offers ultimate truths but only in terms of the second, the Romantic arbitrary and personal discovery of a new reality. He wanders in a universe which is a fictional creation of Mary's, seeking the essential truths of a pre-Enlightenment age where allegorical artistic creation accorded with some absolute on a cosmic scale. Now, however, beyond the organizing power of the mind and the work of art, all is chaotic flux.

The basis for this idea of the individual creation of meaning out of experience was associationism, which also lies at the heart of Godwin's philosophy. Mary, her novel, Victor and his creature can all be considered as products of a Hartleian chain of associations: the "series of my being" (E 219; PJ 347; bk. 4, ch. 7, PJ 362 n; bk. 4, ch. 9).¹

Utilitarian sensationalist theory is a strong intellectual force in the novel, raising questions of free will and determinism, and of good and evil. Hartley's empirical materialism and Locke's tabula rasa theory attribute all causes to experience and are systems which logically dispense with the idea of original sin, making free will an irrelevancy. The fact that the monster does appear to possess free will (he consciously chooses evil: "should I

feel kindness towards my enemies? No" [E 136]) indicates a further epistemological ambiguity in the text which, in embracing the ontological uncertainties of the period, is throughout much concerned with the problematic nature of knowledge. The monster's "series of my being" (E 219, 222) also suggests Locke's "train of Ideas, which constantly succeed one another in ... [the] Understanding, as long as ... [one] is awake" (Locke quoted in Ketterer 100), and implies that human reality is time-bound, always in the process of becoming and, in any essential sense, finally unknowable. In what is a characteristically Romantic concern with reality and the mind's relation to it, only the individual intercepting mind is now considered able to make sense out of this "train of Ideas".

Locke denied the existence of innate principles and felt that all ideas were derived from sensation or reflection, with pleasure and pain being the motivating forces. His system is a dualistic one, asserting the existence of both the human mind and an external reality. It did, however, provide a basis for the monist idealist position that all reality is in the mind, leading through Berkeley and Hume to Romantic solipsism (vide Part Two Chapter Seven below). He asserted a causal relationship between the outside world and the human mind by way of the senses, through to ideas of things which are generated by reflection upon sensation. Berkeley

and Hume questioned this causal link (as the world of ideas is not equivalent to the phenomenal world, mediated by the senses), leading to Hume's decision that no reality beyond experience can be assumed to exist, and suggesting that causality was only a mechanical process of association. In Frankenstein, that Romantic metaphor for associationism, the tuned string (the Eolian harp image), is suggested in the blind guitarist old De Lacey (E 132): he is an image of the blind and unconscious forces of immutable process, and is seemingly the only individual not aware of the monster's significance (E 135).

Hume's idea of causation in nature as a bundle of ideas connected in our minds by customary association was extended by Hartley to the moral order: we develop a moral sense out of simple sensation. Hartley was a forerunner of Wordsworth, and believed that nature built up our being out of sensation, imagination, and reflection: ideas of sensation gave rise to intellectual concepts. His association of changes in the brain substance with changes in ideas was actually close to our contemporary knowledge derived from endocrinology and studies into the brain's biochemistry. His view was Lockean: moral sense, sociability, and compassion are all learnt and stem from associationism.

In Neoplatonic thought metaphysical evil is the logical result of the creation of the material

world: as phenomenal existence marks the farthest point away from the Source, natural and moral evils follow as necessary implications of this distance. As with Calvinism, there are no contingencies or unrealized possibilities here, there are only necessities. The monster, as the child of millennial utopianism, can be viewed as embodying the fullest manifestation of both Calvinist and Neoplatonic metaphysical evil, whilst his development and education represent Godwin's ideas on the growth of mind and morals. Godwin retained a belief in Platonic forms, whilst his associationism (PJ 368; bk. 4, ch. 9) can be seen as a logical development of Calvinist determinism (vide Part One above).

Godwin stood firmly in the Lockean tradition of sensationalist psychology in rejecting innate ideas and instincts (PJ 103; bk. 1, ch. 4; Russell 589) but, unlike Locke, he believed in Platonic immutable and universal truths which were discoverable by reasoning (PJ 99; bk. 1, ch. 4, PJ 302; bk. 4, ch. 5), with morality being a fixed absolute. As with the Sandemanians, his natural law was equated with abstract and immutable justice which was considered superior to human-made law.

The creature is similarly a seemingly contradictory admixture of innate and learnt qualities. His development draws a Lockean and Godwinian direct association between the

distinctness of sense impressions and the formation of ideas (E 104; PJ 338; bk. 4, ch. 7), but this cause and effect relationship is contradicted by the statement: "My eyes became accustomed to the light, and to perceive objects in their right forms" (E 104), where the implication is that, in a Platonic sense, "right" forms exist in nature prior to individual perception of them. Furthermore, the monster's fear at his own "uncouth and inarticulate sounds" (E 104), along with his delight at the beauty of bird-song, suggest that he possesses an innate aesthetic sense, just as, in applying an organic metaphor ("dormant" [E 103]) to himself, he is being likened to a seed, as though deterministically containing final form in embryo.

This confusion concerning innate and learnt characteristics echoes the novel's central conflict between free will and determinism. The monster is apparently an Enlightenment child, a tabula rasa, born without culture and infinitely malleable by it. His education, by both nature and culture, has, however, not engendered in him true moral feeling, as Wordsworth would have asserted it should. The text suggests that when absolutist religious laws are eschewed in favour of relativist ones, with nature and culture being one's moral instructors, then individual subjective assessment and rationalization must inevitably be the actual moral arbiters. The creature's antinomianism is the all

too likely outcome of such a Godwinian ethos (PJ 723; bk. 8, ch. 2, PJ 781; bk. 8, ch. 10); and, ironically, Clerval, who cleaves to nature in a Wordsworthian sense (E 156), is easily destroyed by this monster of relativism.

The god-like Romantics believed that they could create out of a void whereas Mary says that creation can be made only out of chaos, inchoate matter (E 8). Paradoxically, then, the monster's mind is demonstrated as being created out of a tabula rasa which is at the same time a "confused and indistinct.... multiplicity of sensations" (E 102); and even if his conscious perceptions do stem from some organized synthesis of sense data, still he must be pre-determined to arrange this data in a particular fashion.

The optimistic theism of the seventeenth century was joined by Hartley and his materialist psychology to produce a faith in the necessity of progress towards perfection which is also characteristically Godwinian. In eighteenth-century materialism the subject is both the product of and the changer of circumstances. This is a view which Godwin subscribed to, although his idealism is non-materialist: he saw mind as a real cause, interacting with matter in an unknown way (PJ 378-79; bk. 4, ch. 10, PJ 632; bk. 7, ch. 1).

In Locke's and Godwin's systems, moral freedom is possibly consistent with mechanistic empiricism,

analogous to the Calvinist model of a limited free will operating within a larger deterministic orbit. Godwin's necessitarianism involves the idea that, god-like, one can determine future events oneself by being amenable to the influence of others and acting upon that influence; he believed that psychology influenced behaviour. A Necessitarian would concede that one's personality, character, and inclinations will determine one's actions, thus allowing for the operation of a moral freedom which is, however, not true noumenal free will (which Godwin rejected, considering it consonant with behaviour independent of morality [PJ 350; bk. 4, ch. 7]).

The contradiction in necessitarian morality is that, if the moral sense be generated in us mechanically, then how can one intervene in the process in order to maximize the best environment possible for such a development, as the associationists and Godwin believed possible? There is an additional problem here in that novelty cannot be explained in associationist terms. If we are considered part of the natural causation, then nothing we create can be considered unnatural for, if we believe in mechanistic and organic determinism, then there can be no ontological difference between us and what we create. Whence, therefore, comes a monstrous aberration in creation out of Victor's apparently scientific endeavour?

The Romantics (after Rousseau) defined sincerity as spontaneity and naturalness of expression and action, unmediated by deliberation or conscious judgement. However, when mind is thus assimilated to nature, instinct and impulse rule and moral and ethical imperatives become almost irrelevant. For all his Enlightenment education, Victor's antinomic creature can be seen to embody this negative underside of Romantic enthusiasm: he is a model of passions released following their rationalist repression.

Conventional society will regard the unconventional as fearful and monstrous. The creature's situation is parallel to that which Rousseau mentions in the Second Discourse, of natural man in the midst of a civil society, of "savages" brought to Europe and regarded as beasts (Cantor 125). Like Rousseau's natural man (and Shelley), the monster is vegetarian; he is also initially compassionate as well as being physically stronger, hardier, and more agile than others.

The creature is also Enlightenment man. He is better suited to cold than heat (E 131), with the white snow with which he is associated being a figure for cold rationality and the Lockean tabula rasa. The Godwinian belief in the power of education is underlined by the minute attention given to his acquisition of language; Mary allows him to be born apparently good and then corrupted by

society. When he accuses his superiors and protectors of failing in their responsibility to him, he speaks in traditional republican terms, in language learnt from Plutarch (E 128), who was another influence upon Godwin (PJ 446; bk. 5, ch. 6). He describes the proposed creation of a female as a "right" (E 144) which therefore should not be refused him; notions of "contract theory" here are reminiscent of Hobbes's social contract and of Rousseau's ideas. (Rousseau's The Social Contract "advocated democracy and denied the divine right of kings" [Russell 665].)

In a typically Lockean fashion, the monster experiences first confused and then distinct sensations, followed by the development of social affections, and moral and intellectual judgements. Just as God alone had taught Adam, this non-social being learns everything, even language, without direct human assistance. Logical deduction was possible for him before the acquisition of language, for which he possesses an inbuilt aptitude (E 112): with his discovery of the fire he begins to think in terms of cause and effect, and of metaphysical oppositions (E 104). However, it is only through language that he acquires full abstract thought, in line with the Hartleian association of ideas and language (Russell 740). This developmental process is analogous to Godwin's notion of the development of "imperfect abstraction" (PJ 160; bk. 1, ch. 8)

from the comparison of two ideas, a process which precedes language but is also a necessary preliminary to it; language, in turn, facilitates the development of abstract thinking (PJ 160; bk. 1, ch. 8).

The creature voices the Godwinian polemics of responsibility to family and community. Whilst with the De Laceys he speaks in terms of social and cultural determinism (E 127) and the rationalist utilitarian notion of the desire for happiness as being the motivating force. This is Epicurean and Godwinian, relating virtue and vice to pleasure and pain (E 129). The monster's (and Godwin's) will is thus regulated by mechanistic deterministic influences and is therefore not free; for Godwin, will is the last act of the understanding (PJ 349; bk. 4, ch. 7) and not a distinct faculty (PJ 379; bk. 4, ch. 10).

However, self-interested emotional responses actually prove to motivate the creature, not reason and benevolence; Godwinian utopianism releases that uncontrollable and destructive energy, for which the monster is a metaphor. In what is an echoing of Godwin's anarchic view, the creature cannot understand why there are laws and government (E 119) and, ironically (in view of his later behaviour), feels disgust and loathing at details of vice and bloodshed (E 119). Then, in the apparently contradictory exercise of free will for a

"determined" being, he declares everlasting war upon the species (E 136). Godwin had also implicitly rejected his species; in desiring to regenerate humanity he had rejected the idea that humanity was created by God, which carried the implication that His handiwork was defective.

The monster claims, in Godwinian utilitarian fashion, that his treatment has determined his actions, but still he makes the choice to make evil his good (E 136). Neither he nor Victor is what each appears to be; the fact of original sin underlies the veneer of utilitarian ethics, perfectionism, and the idea of social determinism.

Ambiguity on this matter permeates the text. In speaking of himself, the creature uses "blot" (E 120) in the sense of "stain" (implying original sin) and also, in a Lockean sense, as a "blank" in memory (E 121). The suggestion here is that the associationist world, without the organizing structure of the mind, is atomistic and disordered whilst, paradoxically, being at the same time productive of original sin and thus part of the world of eternal absolutes.

Victor says that he had endowed the monster with "will and power to effect purposes of horror" (E 77). As he is described as a being "such as even Dante could not have conceived" (E 58), the creature is hereby linked with the Scotist Dante who (like Paracelsus) was a believer in free will: that evil

can be chosen as evil. Ambiguously, however, the monster's genesis in associationist thought is reiterated here by the contextual dissociation with Dante.

Like Adam, the creature makes the free and unconditioned choice of disobedience. As distinct from Neoplatonic thought, an implication of free will theodicy is that evils and imperfections in the universe are not necessary and cannot be accounted for logically: if we were all moral, evil would not exist. All natural as well as metaphysical evils can therefore be ascribed to original sin: "she plucked, she eat. / Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat, / ... gave signs of woe / That all was lost" (PL IX 781-84). The storm in the Alps following William's murder (E 75-76) parallels images from Paradise Lost of nature's disapproval of human moral transgression: "Nature gave a second groan; / Sky ... / Wept at completing of the mortal sin / Original" (PL IX 1001-04). This storm scene is another example of the text's implicit assertion of free will and original sin; and in "William ... this is thy funeral" (E 76) there is the implication that it is Godwin's philosophy which is being condemned.

The monster learns benevolence from the De Laceys and social virtues from their readings, but the first time he is treated unfairly he rejects their teachings; he has not been deeply impressed by

this moral instruction. When he is shot it is his treatment which appears to determine his behaviour, supposedly replacing "kindness and gentleness.... [with] eternal hatred and vengeance" (E 141). At this point his reaction appears to be a reflex one, but this is belied by the fact that upon leaving the cottage earlier he had consciously chosen evil in "everlasting war" (E 136) against all humanity. The creature is hereby proven to be duplicitous, just as his later persuasive assertion of a necessary connection between solitude and vice (E 147) can be refuted by the example of religious mysticism. The reality is that he did not intend to hurt William (E 142) but, in having sworn eternal revenge upon Victor, he was "determined" to act upon this decision after learning of the relationship between Victor and William. It would appear that, in Godwinian fashion, ideas have here determined behaviour although free will proves to be at the base of the original decision (E 136). The monster has in reality inherited the sins of his "father".

Individual responsibility is removed with utilitarian ethics: the creature blames others for his character and behaviour. Victor sees the "justice" in his argument and agrees that, as creator, he owes his creation a "portion of happiness" (E 146). However, the text reasserts the orthodox position that happiness is not prescribed for fallen humanity (we implicitly question God if

we demand this right), and therefore one does not have a right to it outside Eden. The monster's attitude here is millenarian; he imagines a South American paradise where he will retreat with his female, but does not question that right after having sinned. Furthermore, the reasoned conclusion to their argument does not in the end hinder Victor from destroying the female, thereby in effect ruthlessly and Jahweh-like passing judgement upon such a presumption to happiness. The creature represents humanity in a utilitarian, millennial age, rationalistically demanding justice. Victor's concerns are, however, metaphysical ones; he wanders on the boundaries of different systems, playing with science and utilitarian values when his fate belongs to a different order of being.

Victor's individualism springs from the Calvinist individualist rejection of all temporal institutions and offices, making the Calvinist a natural republican (based on the personal relationship to God). For Puritans, the mere contemplation of God is unacceptable: He must be glorified in the work of the sinner. Perversely, however, Victor's and Godwin's work seeks to glorify human beings; and Victor sacrifices fraternity to liberty.

The monster is created after the Fall, after Victor has destroyed his Eden by seeking beyond its boundaries for knowledge outside its preserve; the

moral here is that one's will should not be exercised against the law of nature.

The novel, as work of art, can be defined in terms of metaphorical transcendence, like the transcendent world of an omnipotent god, and yet narrative has arguably an inevitable subjective dimension, thus uniting ideal and real.

Victor and his creature can be seen as representative of both sides of Godwinism: the idealist vision and its corresponding reality. In Frankenstein, the Romantic creative artist becomes scientist and transmutes vision into fact; this fact resides in a narrative fiction, however, whilst carrying metaphoric truth for the actual reader. The text suggests the impossibility of containing imaginative vision within a sphere of pure speculation; what is implied is that no division between ideal and real exists, that anything imagined is in some sense also always fact. Like Victor, Godwin stopped short of speculating upon the full implications of his idealist vision, a vision which was thus only partial and therefore deficient.

The creature's vision of himself in the pool is, to him, a validation of his essential nature: "I was in reality the monster that I am" (E 114). The belief that one's character and moral nature could be ascertained through one's physiognomy was fundamental to the new science of phrenology.² This form of biological determinism can also be seen as

part of a false world of illusory appearances. The slavery of the mind to visual perceptions and Coleridgean "fancy" means that the surface appearance must be taken for the substance. Paradoxically, however, in this case the appearance proves to be the reality; the monster is a concept literalized, and people recoil, not simply from his appearance, but from the false world of sense impressions and millennial utopianism which he represents. Conversely, old De Lacey is persuaded by language, reason and ideas, not by vision, and he falls prey to the plausible language of this satan (E 133-35) (plausible like Godwin's). The text can here be seen to be offering an ironic comment upon a Romantic organicism which is presented as being delusory.

The associationist psychologists refused to distinguish between thinking and perceiving, with the former being active and the latter passive. Coleridge did differentiate between them, however; he liberated the mind from the eye, making thinking an unconscious act and thought the product. Distinction then does not necessarily mean division, although Victor does not know this for he divides and cannot effectively reunite. Old De Lacey can be seen to represent Coleridgean "thinking" and the others "perceiving"; they, however, see the truth, for, even though they are chained by sight, they do interpret the creature as metaphor as well as fact.

Thus, in the sense that he is monstrous, the creature is not deceptive, whereas the natural can more easily deceive. In fact, the absurd ascription of human qualities to the odd bits of organic matter that comprise the monster can be seen as a parody of the Romantic pathetic fallacy (that product of Coleridgean imagination, not of fancy), of assimilating mind to nature in a perhaps delusory organicism. Coleridgean fancy is hereby asserted, above imagination.

The creature's increasingly complex store of knowledge can be seen as a psychological equivalent to the diversity of the natural world. His despairing attitude is an aspect of this: with knowledge, his sorrow is increased (E 120), just as the phenomenal realm marks the farthest point away from the Neoplatonic Godhead.

(In alchemical imagery the forest signifies the body (Jung, MC 5); this is a region of danger where the treasure of the life-potion is hard to attain (Jung, PA 335).) Like the exiled ancient Jews by "the rivers of Babylon" (Ps. 137: 1) the monster "sat down and wept" (E 103); and in his exile, he desired his own element. He thus sought "the forest near Ingolstadt" (E 102), purposely aligning himself with the "dimness" of sensual, phenomenal existence, and of social utopianism and Newtonian mechanics. He had found the sun's light oppressive (E 102) and retreated from this too brilliant light, signifying

creative genius, into the moon's lesser light of cold rationality, of reflected brilliance (E 103).

The fact that the creature's story begins (E 102) at Victor's crisis point on the Mer de Glace (aurally "mother of ice" or "dead mother") can be seen as a comment upon the undermining of conventional interpersonal relationships by Godwin's utopian philosophy. As "merde glass" the glacier also suggests Victor's damnable mirror image: the monster.

The creature employs Godwinian polemics. He is an intellectual rationalist, suppressing irrational energies which thus build up to dangerous levels; and the dualist mind and matter split, with the associated repression of the body in a rationalist system, is implicit in Godwin's philosophy. In aiming to destroy Victor's expanded consciousness, the monster's ambition is shown to be limited to the desire for domestic happiness.

Victor realizes that his monster is a being "possessing faculties it would be vain to cope with" (E 148). Such a supra-normal creature must of necessity possess a constitution which cannot be determined by scientific and environmental factors, and thus cannot be known by Victor.

The text implies that this is a creature of the devil. His theft of remnants of the shepherd's breakfast suggests Christ's Last Supper, to which he has not been invited; and he dislikes the wine (E

106), that symbol of Christ's blood and of divine love. Furthermore, the flames with which he destroys the De Lacey cottage are described in terms of Hell and the Devil: the "forked and destroying tongues" (E 139) can be taken to imply the duplicitous and destructive Godwinian philosophy at the base of his creation.

Aligning himself with imagery with which he has no true identity, the monster swears by the sun, the blue sky of heaven, and his love, that "while they exist" (E 148) he will keep his promise. There are no eternal, no absolutes referred to here, all is contingent and suggestive of the impermanent quality of imaginative insight, divine love, and human benevolence; this expresses a submission to utilitarian relativities and limitations. Conversely, Victor says that "the eternal twinkling of the stars weighed upon [him]", and sensations possessing "a mountain's weight" (E 149); there are no longer such contingencies or relativities for him.

Clerval is associated with the moral relations of things, with foreign languages, alternative forms of perception, communication and interpretation, with relativities, not absolutes. He and Elizabeth are believers, not rationalists or sceptics. However, Victor's search for absolutes destroys these moral and relational concerns.

To justify suffering within the limits of experience itself, as an indispensable role in human development, is a tenet of the Romantic secular theodicy. The Romantics' hope was a moral stance but, after the monster's creation, Victor is devoid of this hope.

The text asserts the ultimate denial of Romantic organicism and utopian optimism, but with reservations. The implication is that the fact of Godwinian anti-social solipsism means that the millennium will be realizable only through the imagination and cannot be sought in the phenomenal realm. Victor's rejection of this creature of social utopianism and revolution, who destroys society's integrity, can thus be read as a moral act. The darkness which takes the monster can be interpreted as standing for the negation of Locke's tabula rasa (with its imagistic association with "whiteness") as well as the refutation of the void which his theory represents.

The creature can be seen as a collection of the conflicting philosophies which besiege Victor. He thus reflects the desire of the age to employ art to reintegrate mechanical disintegration into an organic whole, being analogous to Coleridge's secondary imagination and its transcendence of the limitations of "fancy".

However, the created object which is the monster displaces the individual human being,

anticipating the twentieth-century idea of a domination of the human world by a world of objects, analogous to Marxist "reification", where an abstract concept is converted into a thing and is thereby materialized.³

(Following Rousseau's ideas on the development of the child, the creature learns for himself. This suggests the secularization of morality where religion is a diminishing force, whereas the text is both implicitly and overtly morally didactic and moral absolutes are assumed.)

There is irony in the fact that Victor is so concerned with the accuracy of Walton's notes, correcting and augmenting them (E 210), when the substance of the narrative reveals such a contradictory and confusing tale, thereby suggesting the difficulty involved in attempting to know anything. He uses organic imagery ("preserved" and "mutilated" [E 210]) in referring to his narrative, implying its origins in immanent process and associationist thought.

The artist creates new worlds with language; language is both an explicit theme of the novel and an implicit model of its organization. The monster describes language as a "godlike science" (E 112). Like Godwin, he is eloquent and employs reason and the persuasion of language, compelling Victor to listen to his story: "His words had a strange effect upon me" (E 147).

The text raises the question that reality cannot be grasped, of both the idea that language produces the theory, that meaning is determined by the system which governs the individual, and also its obverse. As the creature acquires language he separates things: subject and object, mind and matter, past, present, and future, and cause and effect. He sets up and defines barriers whereas in his construction Victor had broken barriers down. With the monster's acquisition of language in the De Lacey's episode there is the conventional fixed ascription of name to object whereas his confrontation with different languages suggests the arbitrary nature of this ascription of name to object and, by implication, of meaning itself; he becomes aware of the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign. Through the different literary works which he reads, various philosophical viewpoints are introduced to the creature and he consciously chooses one (Paradise Lost) to be his "true history" (E 129). There is a similar impetus behind Victor's desire to name the unknown by attempting to locate it, although Victor never finds the "truth" he seeks.

The distinction between signifier and signified is analogous to the difference between real and ideal, and between appearance and essence. The dissolution of the boundaries between essence and appearance is apparent when the monster sees himself

in the pool (E 114): he is defined ontologically by what he appears to be, with the implication that an alternative appearance would have meant an alternative moral categorization. This suggests his realization that, although there is no necessary connection between essence and appearance, paradoxically the one actually defines the other; appearance both reflects and determines moral significance.

In what is a problem of solipsism, relation, and communication, the monster is transfixed by the portrait of Caroline Beaufort. This suggests a desire both for the symbolic and for the natural realms, to merge into the image as does the infant identity with the mother, and to be one with the fount of natural procreation in what is a denial of his own unnatural origins. This is also an implicit rejection of the denial of the feminine principle so intrinsic to Calvinist theology.

The text can be read as a contest between masculine and feminine forces. In Paradise Lost Satan suggests woman always wants more power and may usurp man's place. Victor's creation removes woman from the sphere of procreation and can be seen as a type of patriarchal revenge upon woman by the god-like Victor. However, the Fall comes about through Eve, and, ironically, the fall for Victor's family comes with his destruction of the female monster.

Like the creature, Mary rebelled against her parent's philosophy, in which both she and the monster were schooled. As she was to have been a boy called William, and just as the monster destroys William Frankenstein, her birth symbolically destroyed this William and actually destroyed her mother. Furthermore, the novel's message is an implicit destruction of the elder William, for it is a refutation of his philosophy. The fact that the parricidal monster of Godwinism is both produced and destroyed by this creation of Godwin's offspring, is also ironically self-reflexive.

Along with Victor's questing, the monster keeps developing, and he says he will revert to being good if he is treated properly. The idea of process is evident here, rendering inconclusive all present evidence and combining a cyclical and linear view (he never does revert).

Process is also evident in Victor's changing attitudes. He was certain of alchemy, becomes certain of Newtonian science, and then is certain of a fatalistic world which involves his own damnation, until at the end he wonders again if science might not have the answer (E 218). All his alternatives seem mutually undesirable. However, alchemical imagery remains dominant in the text and, in what can be interpreted as a refutation of Godwinian rationalism, he proves to be much more of an alchemist than a scientist.

In his first days at Ingolstadt Victor is disappointed in the mundane aspirations of science: those "realities of little worth" (E 47). He seeks, through imaginative vision, to create "chimeras of boundless grandeur" (E 47), in the process hoping to leave even Prometheus behind.

Victor's quest to produce (metaphorically) gold from dross matter is analogous to the activity of the alchemist in separating spirit from matter. However, the process is here reversed in that spirit (the life force) is infused into base matter, for he mixes the pure with the impure. In reaction to this, the "spirit" of his imaginative vision rejects the material world and, hence, the Promethean quest. Ironically, spirit and matter are hereby separated in what is the task of the alchemist.

Alchemy was an art, not an experimental science; when Victor fails to reproduce the results of Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Albertus Magnus he blames himself and his method (E 40), not the philosophy of the alchemists. However, this same rationalization occurs in scientific practice, and, in what is possibly an ironic suggestion that science and alchemy are really one and the same thing, Victor finally raises the devil by science that he had sought to raise by his alchemy (E 40).

There is the suggestion that anyone possessing Victor's notes could, in accordance with true scientific method, also make a creature. However,

there is also the implication that only Victor could have produced the monster for its creation is concordant with ceremonial magic: the unrepeatabile control of the natural world by supernatural means. To Paracelsus, the naturalistic and the spiritualistic are basically identical (Pachter 175), allowing for the true alchemist to supervene in the processes of nature. Victor's product can therefore be interpreted as the work of an alchemist although, as the size of the creature is perhaps meant as an ironic contrast to the Paracelsian homunculus (Pachter 220), the implication is that Victor is not a true alchemist; he is a weak magician and scientist as well as a weak dreamer. As the agencies of the spirit world and the purity of the student's mind are crucial to alchemical operations, the purity of Victor's motives (and, by implication, Godwin's) are hereby called into question.

The emphasis that it should be the individual who practises experimentation made the study of nature analogous to the search for truth in Holy Scripture and in mystical experience. This individualistic impulse, however, leads to Victor's desire for knowledge of the Tree of Life, a desire which subverts everything into a Gothic nightmare.

The Pole is both spatial and mythical, and corresponds to the internal, psychological, central pole of Safie's story. The warmth and love of

Safie's mother at the novel's innermost core is parallel to the mythic warmth and light at the Pole, when the reality for Victor and his creation (and for Mary) is the dead mother, the Mer de Glace.

In the text, physical decay is associated with "spirit": Victor's bodily wasting whilst constructing the monster, the spirits of his dead family near their tomb (E 202), and the transcendent fates on his final journey when he becomes exhausted to death. In the Gothic, this "petrification is inseparable from exaltation" (Brown 279), as matter is freed from empirical limitations; Gothic freedom is, however, a negative counterpart to the alchemist's goal of separating spirit from the dross of matter.

Like unpredictable fate, Victor's unconscious, the creature, and the transcendental realm are unknowable in their quality and likely actions. The creature is repaid with violence for saving the girl's life (E 141); revenge grows in him but revenge is pointless in a Gothic universe, for one's adversary is unknowable. Similarly, Victor cannot explain the justice of his having created the monster, for the answer is unknowable to him. The monster kills others but they are not his real adversaries; his "adversary" is the "unexplained" which is also the "inexplicable"; "not knowing" is his enemy; the "mystery" is his foe.

The overriding tone of the novel is one of scepticism; it undermines the rational and the moral, and questions the relationship between size and power, beauty and virtue, and the sublime and the beautiful. Antinomies remain unreconciled, and uncertainties continue although their resolution is the purpose of Victor's quest.

Victor's scepticism will be the subject matter of the next chapter.

¹ As noted in Part Two Chapter Five, in 1812 Shelley bought David Hartley's Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations (Vasbinder 40). Mary studied Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding between 16 Nov 1816 and 8 Jan 1817 (Mary Shelley's Journal 68-71, 74, quoted in Ketterer 26).

² Mary had learned its basic tenets in 1814 from Henry Voisey (Mellor MS 128).

³ "Soul" had been a material quality for Paracelsus (Jung, MC 11, 198).

CHAPTER SEVEN: VICTOR'S IDEALISM AND SCEPTICISM

Following the monster's creation, Victor becomes sceptical regarding his search for absolute knowledge and truth. The accompanying solipsism and despair foreshadow his reversion to a fatalistic universe, in retreat from optimistic Romantic organicism. His creative activities can then be read as distortions of Coleridgean organicism.

Coleridge's "science of BEING" (BL, vol. 1, 252) united the speculative and the practical in the coincidence of subject and object which he felt were the grounds of all knowledge. Victor can be seen as someone whose idealism prevents the admixture of the objective with the subjective, and who thus fails to attain this Coleridgean goal of assimilating nature to intellect.

The operation of the secondary imagination involves the act of ultimate synthesis in the dialectic of mind and nature, where two forces or concepts in dynamic tension are engaged by the imagination, which reconciles and unifies them (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, 299). This philosophic imagination, which is a higher form of reasoning, is equated with the self-intuition of one's consciousness in relation to nature, but without direct contact with the experience of the world sensually and empirically (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1,

xciv). Only in "Art" is the philosophic imagination used to combine the forms and intuitions of the self-conscious mind with sensuous experience and matter (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, xcv).

Like the secondary imagination, Victor's "art" struggles to unify and idealize in recreation after a process of dissolving, diffusing, and dissipating; as such, his activity appears to be vital, unlike the objects with which he works, being the fixed and dead elements (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, 304) of the monster's parts.

Coleridge images this passage from the inorganic to the organic as operating via electricity (between the co-ordinates of east and west) and magnetism (between the poles of north and south) (Barfield, Romanticism Comes of Age [RCA] 159). Victor and his creature, in their geographical movements of attraction and repulsion, trace a process which is based upon this Coleridgean model; in their case, however, true art is never created.

For Coleridge, the identity of representation and object (for which he employed an equatorial image) can occur only in self-intuition (BL, vol. 1, 278 n). The law of polarity is therefore the process which underlies all life, providing identity in duplicity, and duplicity in identity, and therein also productive unity through the act of self-consciousness (Barfield, RCA 155).

This Coleridgean image of the "Polar Sciences" (BL, vol. 1, 282), as being the union of opposites at an equatorial point, is intrinsic to Frankenstein. Walton is stationary at the Pole while Victor journeys all over Europe, as though Victor is attempting to negotiate a meeting point between the religio-philosophical pole of Geneva and the Arctic. If considered as the Neoplatonic Source (and well), the Pole can be seen to absorb the dross of matter into the more purely spiritual, thereby uniting antinomic elements. When he writes to his sister that he has "no ambition to lose ... [his] life on the post-road between St. Petersburg and Archangel" (E 18), Walton suggestively associates the gates of Heaven with Lucifer (in Isa. 14: 13, Lucifer is associated with the north), thus locating both heaven and hell in this region. Furthermore, his dream of realizing an Eden at the North Pole implies, in its image of paradisaal warmth, the Coleridgean equatorial union of opposites. However, the common association of geographic north and cold with the intellect is also an assertion of the dominance of Victor's subjectivist and idealist qualities over this Coleridgean balance.

Coleridge was a monist who wanted the indivisible but who realized that the evil of distinction was necessary for progressive development. Dualism, polarity, and strife as thesis, antithesis, and synthesis were necessary in

nature. Victor, his creation, and their mutual interaction, can thus be seen as ironic distortions of Coleridge's view that all progressive movement and productivity "is a generative conflict-in-attraction of polar forces, which part to be reunited on a higher level of being, ... [evolving into] an organized whole" (Abrams, NS 268). Victor cannot convert the "series" (E 30) of his tale, nor his creature the series of his being (E 219), into a truly original whole.

The Fall marks the beginnings of rationality, for thought divides the one in primal consciousness (Abrams, NS 268). Rationality (also Godwin's sin) is thus the original temptation; and the monster is an image of this failing, for Victor's consciousness remains divided in his creation. His rationality will ultimately never concede any of its power to the operation of the secondary imagination: the free intuitive thinking of imaginative vision. The monster proves to be a "magic-mirror" image, not of what Victor's new humanity would be, but of what he, himself, is: a less than fully human being, and the inverse of what he would hope to see.

"Imagination creates metaphor and symbol by a unifying metamorphosis" whilst "Fancy" delights in "difference thrown together in a heterogeneous way" (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, ciii); in fancy we consciously choose to unite disparate entities while the secondary imagination wills new wholes into

existence. There is a sense in which the monster can be seen to combine these dissimilar categories, for he is projected as a unifying metamorphosis but remains a heterogeneous amalgam; he continues caught between inorganic and organic.

The natural philosopher, who assumes the priority of objective nature, seeks to prevent the blending of the subjective (spiritual agents, and final instead of efficient causes) with his knowledge of the objective (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, 257-58). For Coleridge the "highest perfection of natural philosophy would consist in the perfect spiritualization of all the laws of nature into laws of intuition and intellect" (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, 256). What follows from this is the fact that there is the potential for human consciousness to convert the phenomena of nature into a spiritual force, whereby the laws of thought actually would become more real than apparently external objects (Barfield, RCA 150). Victor, however, is no true natural philosopher for he fails to assimilate nature to intellect; and, at the monster's creation, his refusal to join his own with the objective being precipitates a fall into complete subjectivism and scepticism.

Victor appears to be a transcendental philosopher in the Coleridgean sense, one who ultimately objects to the admixture of the objective into the subjective; and the means of this

separation is scepticism (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, 257). This scepticism is "voluntary doubt, ... self-determined indetermination" (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, 258), where he substitutes subjectivism, and the spiritual and the occult (imaged by the "alchemic" transgression of natural law), for the objective. Paradoxically, his subsequent reversion to a fatalistic universe marks a substitution of a new certainty for this doubt.

The idealist thus fights the "original and innate prejudices" (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, 258) such as the fundamental presumption that there is an external reality (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, 259). The precedence of the existence of self remains because even to assume the existence of something outside the self (in natural philosophy) must first presuppose the existence of the self (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, 260 n).

Strict transcendentalists such as Coleridge and Wordsworth accepted Kant's distinction between the trans-experiential pure reason and the mere understanding but, preferring intuitive to logical thinking, they exalted pure reason and abased the understanding (Pulos 7). They did disagree with Kant, however, in believing that pure reason could divine the noumena (Pulos 74), his "things-in-themselves" (Russell 685); like the early Victor, they felt dogmatic certainty concerning ultimate reality. Victor, however, proves to be working with

associative fancy and the mere understanding in his creative activity; and his creature's "speculative eyes" (E 9) reflect the speculative reason (being theoretical and scientific organizing power; Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, 293) which he also employs. The Kantian distinction between certain knowledge and the unknowable therefore remains in Victor. The suggestion is that intuitive thinking and the certain knowledge of absolutes is not possible when the imagination is servant to the rational faculty; this makes for a Keatsian "weak dreamer".

The fire and ice imagery at the Pole can be interpreted as figures for the secondary imagination and the mere understanding. At Victor's death, he and the monster imaginistically unite; the subjective and the objective hereby fuse in the Coleridgean ideal, for Victor's scepticism also dies when it joins with the objective world which the monster embodies. Ironically then, the creature's prospective immolation will effect the annihilation of the grip of Victor's idealism. In the coalescence of fire and ice, the equatorial paradise of renewal in self-intuition (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, 278 n) of Walton's quest is thus to be realized by the creature at the Pole. Walton can be seen to represent this synthesis, and thus to have discovered his "country of eternal light" (E 16).

Victor dies on September 11, shortly after the ship's passage to the south is freed (E 216-18).

The process of freezing and thawing of polar ice suggests the Coleridgean concern with the mutable (his "degree" is a figure for the changeable), and with kind. Coleridge's "kind" is "an indestructible power with two opposite and counteracting forces" (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, 286). Degree is the apparent meaning of things and kind the actual; thus the freeing of Walton's ship suggests the abstraction of kind from degree, of actual from apparent, which can in turn be equated with the Coleridgean "highest perfection of natural philosophy" (Coleridge, BL, vol. 1, 256), that is, the spiritualization of natural laws into those of intuition and intellect. Walton has hereby attained what Victor never could.

Victor desires to reconcile idealism with empiricism, specifically with the speculations of science. However, the problem is one of an inspiration and composition gap. He experiences a disparity between idea and result which is analogous to that which Shelley speaks of in "A Defence of Poetry": "when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conception of the poet" (Reiman and Powers 504).

Victor's imaginative vision reveals the eternal and infinite; nature, however, cannot accommodate this vision. He thus seeks in vain to apprehend the

pattern of his ideal humanity in ultimate reality, for this "ideal Being" is a creation of his own mind and has, therefore, no objective existence. His "Image" (E 183) proves to be monstrous when realized in the temporal; the lie that is the creature can accordingly be linked with Shelley's "the deep truth is imageless" (PU II, 1V, 116).

Victor's quest is futile, for the physical world "cannot contain the infinite energy demanded by the vision" (Bloom, R & C 379) and is, as a consequence, destroyed by it. Furthermore, as the temporal is not equivalent to the vision, the finite product is not congruent with the creative process: the quest in effect destroys this visionary realm. Thus the ideal is distorted into the monstrous which, in turn, destroys the dream. The dualism of utopian expectation and demonic reversal are hereby internalized. Victor's response is to retreat into idealism and solipsism, in an attempt to protect the imagination's integrity. For Victor, the idealist dream can now be approached only through the imagination, not by way of natural philosophy.¹

With the pathetic fallacy (for which the monster is a metaphor), nature is a repository for the imagination. Nature and the monster are thus mirrors for the imagination's illusions in the pathetic fallacy, and they thereby thwart imaginative vision. As is true of Victor's experiences in the Alps, nature is therefore an

equivocal element. After both the monster's creation and his female's destruction, Victor's scepticism begins in what is the abyss of unknowing at the juncture of empiricism's termination and idealism's beginning (Bloom, R & C 381); he then retreats into absolute idealism as his consciousness turns in upon itself. His bouts of unconsciousness after these crises can be read as idealistic retreats into the integrity of the imagination; these movements trace the temporary release from imprisonment by the senses which proves to be his experience of the millennial Promethean quest. These losses of consciousness can also be read as reactions to the overwhelming responsibility he assumes in his enterprise, as being retreats into oblivion where his psyche becomes a passive arena for the play of energies larger than himself.² The terror Victor experiences in the separation and discontinuity of imaginative transcendence becomes horror in the contemplation of the ugliness that the mundane realm of the monster holds for the idealistic dreamer. His only way out is to escape from both worlds.

Victor detested Ireland (E 183) and his imprisonment there images this incarceration by the phenomenal realm, for it is the site of Shelley's early Godwinian revolutionary fervour (St Clair 323). Godwin's system involves the sacrifice of family for the welfare of wider humanity in social

utopianism. The creation of the female monster can be seen to symbolize the proliferation of Godwinism, which is thereby equated with the destruction of ordinary humanity. Furthermore, in being commissioned by the monster, and unlike Eve, she is not a creative original and therefore lacks the organic life of true Romantic creativity; she is thus doomed from the outset to remain a disordered collection of disparate parts. Paradoxically, Victor's rejection of the Promethean quest in his retreat into scepticism and solipsism results in the breaking down of familial relations. This disunion is imaged by the creature's destruction of Victor's family and friends, and actually indicates the dominant role played by the rational aspect of Victor's psyche (Coleridgean "understanding", not "pure reason"); the repressed trans-rational energies retaliate with vengeance.

When he says that he is "wishing for some mighty revolution that might bury ... [him] and ... [his] destroyer in its ruins" (E 182), Victor is explicitly equating revolution with ruin; his words are also an implicit rejection of the Promethean enterprise. The Shelleyan (and Neoplatonic) image of water as the mutable realm of temporal existence, upon which we conduct our life's voyage (Reiman, in Reiman and Powers 539), is presented in "the watery, clouded eyes of the monster" (E 182); as the creature has been proven to be a false image of

truth, this also suggests Shelley's "Clouds which stain truth's rising day" ("Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills" 161). Here, the human mind and temporal existence are clouding the divine light of the sun (this latter also being a Shelleyan image [Reiman, in Reiman and Powers 584]).

Following his illness in Ireland, Victor sleeps only with the assistance of laudanum (E 184). The idea of the opium dream is perhaps an ironic comment upon Coleridge's desire to unify nature and mind, to heal the division within human beings, the ideal which Victor has just rejected with finality.

Victor represents one mode of humanity in the struggle for redemption, in his desire to attain a vision of the infinite through imagination and idealist philosophy, yet thwarted in this and imprisoned by temporal concerns. The "demonic" revolutionary part of Victor's psyche, which is associated with the powerful energy of his will, would create a new morality but is punished for this hubris by those recalcitrant aspects which desire the status quo. His refusal to acknowledge the independent contraries in his psyche leads to a state of war, as each aims for dominance.

Victor's initial over-valuing of the finite natural object has not prepared him for its betrayal of his desire for imaginative fulfilment, since his creative energy cannot be contained by the organic which thus destroys the dream. When he becomes

aware of his failure, the outward-moving creative energy which has been expended is drawn inwards in an attempt at the re-establishment of balance in his psyche. The search is then redirected into the self and its ambiguities, and nature becomes the imagination's antagonist. Unfortunately, he retreats too far into solipsism, and conflict is the result, not continuity and balance in the self.

Victor's rejection of natural philosophy is also a refutation of the deistic view that moral and religious truths can be discerned through the senses and the natural world. However, deism's assumption that religion can be erected upon a rational foundation persists in him, thereby creating another basis for psychological conflict.

Both Frankenstein and Victor hesitate between divergent world views. Paradoxically, the monster can be seen as both an imaginary and a supernatural creature who exists in the "real" world. The text involves a questioning of the normal boundaries between our categories of real and imaginary. The impersonal mode ("It seemed to me" [E 41]) is often used to connote ambiguity, keeping us in both worlds simultaneously. The supernatural in the novel is never explained, and the monstrous is mediated through the subjective mode of the narrator, relating it to the "real" world of the novel's imaginative construction, and hence authenticating it to the reader as factual. The fantastic in the

text is thus rendered as factual, as literally true: the superstitious peasants of Tartary and Russia see the monster (E 203), as does the rationalist scientist Walton (E 218). In frame narrative meaning is slippery and unstable and the supernatural element in the text contravenes our expectations of the realistic narrative prose, causing us to regard the monster as fact, not metaphor (unlike our ready acceptance in poetic language of the fantastic as trope).

The terror of the Gothic can be linked with the potential terror of a solipsistic view, of the inability to believe in any external absolutes, of anything beyond the human mind and imagination. Anything the mind is capable of imagining becomes just as real as anything apparently perceived simply. Victor's journey can be seen as his attempt to position himself in relation to the horrors his mind is capable of imagining when his view becomes a solipsistic one.

In a solipsistic world, if that world is associated with the pessimism of the Gothic, everything that is perceived of as external can be considered as alien, unknowable, and therefore "monstrous", as a projection of part of the self which is unknown but fearful, that part repressed by imaginative vision. The optimism of the Romantic pathetic fallacy, where nature serves as a mirror to moods, emotions, and mental processes, is perverted

in the Gothic. The monster can then represent everything which cannot be named, known, or understood, as all becomes a creation of the human mind, like the unique world of Frankenstein. The monstrous can also represent the terror of discontinuity with the mundane self in imaginative transcendence.

The monster is nature's revenge upon the imagination, representing the recalcitrant aspects of Victor's consciousness which fight imaginative transcendence, desiring to lead his consciousness away from possible solipsism and self-consciousness back to a state of psychological balance. The creature destroys those aspects of Victor's consciousness such as brother and lover which represent narcissistic solipsism (but, paradoxically, also emotional ties and community); he seeks no Romantic quest for a widened consciousness but merely the normal state of semi-oblivion where all aspects of consciousness (figured metaphorically in familial imagery) will be in a state of relational equilibrium.

In his solipsism and idealism, Victor identifies reality with his own impressions. He therein reveals a lack of distinction between reality and chimera, that hybrid being of fanciful conception which he equates with reality. In alienation from objective reality, his inner life becomes an inexplicable flux possessing a timeless,

static quality which is, in this sense, identical to Walton's experience at Archangel: "How slowly the time passes here" (E 18).

In Victor's state of idealist "widened consciousness" the conflict with recalcitrant aspects of his psyche then leads to the incarceration of the imagination, for his self-consciousness and solipsism prevent any self-transcendent movement of creative energy into a fusion with what is repressed. The problem is that, although he does not want to surrender the autonomy of the imagination, he is also opposed to the relaxation of the demands of reason which would be required in order to satisfy the imagination and the senses; this represents a restraint of vision which can be attributed to the Calvinist distrust of anything beyond the rational.

To the Romantics, God may be equated with the universal unconscious mind but for Victor his own unconscious mind now becomes a corollary of his malevolent ruling Deity. This Being is the bringer of nightmares of decay and moral transgression, not dreams of the creative transcendence of the dissociation of organic nature and self-conscious mind.

Victor's "reversion", immediately prior to his destruction of the female, is ironically figured in terms of Shelley's image (in Prometheus Unbound) for the spiritual millennium, being a radical alteration

of sight: he felt "as if a film had been taken from before ... [his] eyes, and that ... [he], for the first time, saw clearly" (E 170). At the same time, he realizes that the exercise of free will would be powerless to overcome the force of fate (E 170-71), as "all voluntary thought was swallowed up and lost" (E 201). His awareness of fatalism's overriding rule is thus equated with a new vision. This includes the realization that it is his father (who can be identified with the Calvinist Deity, and is likened to his "good angel" [E 181]), who rescues him from the fiend's grasp (E 184), that fiendish demon of social utopianism. This then is his "truth", glimpsed with certainty beyond the visionary limitations of matter and the human mind, and which includes the awareness that he can never know his Deity or the absolute truth of ultimate reality. Victor thus proves ultimately to be a defective Gothic hero, for he does not oppose the frustration of his freedom by his Deity, he accedes to it (Thorslev 145).

The shadow side of imaginative vision is thus the anti-social solipsism which here produces a monster; this process precipitates a reactionary response and actually leads Victor back, through societal mores and the renewed belief in a transcendent Being, towards the Source which, for the creature, marks the healing and reassuring unconsciousness of the womb. What is paradoxical

here is the fact that the monster embodies Godwinian associationism and perfectionism, which can logically lead to solipsism, while at the same time he attacks Victor's imaginative vision, which itself results in solipsism. Similarly, the creature desires the relational concerns which he destroys in Victor. The destruction of the solipsistic and narcissistic aspects of Victor's psyche also marks the annihilation of the emotional and relational elements; with solipsism, one's emotional life is directed inwards, becoming narcissistic.

In Romanticism, questions about the uncertainty of the reality of the external world typically lead to love as being seen in terms of narcissism, with incest as a model for its representation. Elizabeth, as more than a sister to Victor (E 35) and more than a daughter to his father (E 198), represents this narcissistic over-valuing of subjectivity. Her death symbolizes the failure of a renewed attempt to wed imaginative insight to the Promethean ideal, a failure which was first imaged in the destruction of the female monster. Ambiguity as to whether or not the bridal bier is that of Elizabeth or the monster (E 195) unites in a common identity both examples of Victor's failed ideal. The marriage is also a trope for his wider desire to achieve a reunion with the repressed aspects of his being. This failed union presages Victor's movement towards the Pole. He has now, in effect, rejected

the imagination's absolute rule; it has therefore doomed him to decay for, in true Romantic fashion, to lose the imagination is to die (Bloom, R & C 21).

The state of ordinary existence into which the monster now leads Victor marks the surrender of the autonomy of the imagination. This state of living death is a merging with what is greater than self, with the unknown. The recalcitrant parts of Victor's psyche thus defeat his imagination, while at the Pole nature and mind unite, as polarities disappear, in union with the Neoplatonic Source (vide Part Two Chapter Eight below).

Scepticism is implicitly ironical in that it employs reason to demonstrate its limitations. In Frankenstein the authorial stance is sceptical; there is thus a sense in which scepticism and idealism are reconciled, for ideals are revealed to be illusory. Victor actually moves from reason and idealism into faith at the end, a faith which springs from his scepticism concerning the powers of reason and idealism. Shelley's "the dark abyss of-how little we know" ("On Life", in Reiman and Powers 478) is also Victor's sentiment: "It seemed to me as if nothing would or could ever be known" (E 41). At the monster's creation, his reasoning from cause to effect collapses into fancy; reason has conducted him to an awareness of his ignorance. Like a true sceptic who doubts even doubt, he then retreats into

his old faith; his reason has failed him, along with natural philosophy.

Victor can be seen as a true Platonist who seeks death in the release of the soul from the body's domination, freeing the soul from the "stain" of matter. The Platonist philosopher thus seeks death and the fixed, immutable patterns, not those shadows of becoming, apprehended by the senses and feeling.

Like Godwin, a widened consciousness in idealism was sought by Victor, not the union of mind and nature in the oblivion and death wish of the Source. Paradoxically, however, it is just such a union which Victor realizes at the end, even while he transcends such a union, for in death he imagistically unites with the monster of phenomenal existence at the Pole, even though the union is transitory.

The next chapter deals with this journey of Victor's back towards the Pole.

¹ I owe the idea of the conflict between imagination's "choice of either sustaining its own integrity, or yielding to the illusive beauty of nature" to Bloom ("The Internalization of Quest-Romance" in Romanticism and Consciousness 5); he is here speaking of Percy Shelley.

² Godwin also suffered bouts of "delirium" (St Clair 260-61) at times of extreme stress.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE INVERSION OF THE NEOPLATONIC JOURNEY

Frankenstein's structure outlines a spatial pattern which can be seen as an inversion of the characteristically Romantic version of the Neoplatonic journey: this being a circular movement from the Source into phenomenal existence, and then back again towards reunion with the One. The typically Romantic version includes outward-directed and upward-spiralling movements, whereas Frankenstein's voice within voice and tale within tale, directed backwards in time, evinces the inward movement of a vortex. Victor's Pole proves not to be the Source of optimistic and monistic Romanticism; rather, his final journey is towards the inverse of this goal, which is a reversion to a dualistic and fatalistic world view where he is convinced of his damnation.

In Romantic thought there is a process of active redemption in the temporal sphere. The goal is epistemological and cognitive, moving from analysis and self-division to a development of consciousness which is unifying and integrative. The redemptive goal of human life is to repossess everything it has separated and alienated in earlier stages of imperfect and partial knowledge, involving the total coincidence of mind and nature as the attributes of living things are translated metaphorically to the categories of thought.

Suffering, loss, and destruction thus become necessary stages in the self-educational process, which in Romantic discourse is often figured as a quest or pilgrimage, leading the wanderer back to the point of origin (Abrams, NS 188-89, 193). In Godwinian terms this goal was to be the spiritual conversion of humanity into a new creature, although his attempt to reform the world with abstract formulations becomes the living death of Victor's experience.

This Romantic view has at its base the pagan and Old Testament central trope of life as a pilgrimage, where the goal was figured metaphorically as a woman (Abrams, NS 165), and equivalent to the alchemic "Chymical Wedding" (Jung, Aion 268): the union of opposites. Victor's aborted marriage consummation with Elizabeth and the creature's "birth" can be seen, however, as grotesque parodies of this hopeful model, in which the monster of moral evil destroys the union of the sacred marriage. The alchemic "splitting of the Original Man into husband and wife expresses an act of nascent consciousness" (Jung, Aion 204) and prefigures metaphorically what was to become for the Romantics the sundering of subject and object unity by thought; the moment when Elizabeth enters Victor's life marks the beginning of the development of his conscious life, and presages his "fall" (E 36) when he creates the monster.

Neoplatonic Christianity marked a modification and transformation of a linear Christian view by a pagan metaphysic. God the Father becomes an impersonal first principle or absolute of self-sufficient and undifferentiated unity, while evil and the fall become a separation from this unity which is equal to the fullness of the phenomenal realm. Self-centredness and self-sufficiency become the original human sin, the creation can be seen as the place of the fall (as it is with the creation of Victor's monster), and redemption is equivalent to reintegration with the Source. The "world issues from God or proceeds from God by necessity" (Copleston pt. 2, 210), evolves into everything essential in the universe, and in its conclusion returns to and implicates the premise, marking a self-reliant system (Abrams, NS 172). As God diminishes in importance, the prime agencies become humanity and the world, ego and non-ego, or subject and object, accounting for the metaphysical equivalent of the creation, the fall, and redemption. Subject, mind, or spirit (in a logic or dialectic) takes over the actions of deity, controlling all the activities of subject and object, and everything perceived may become idea.

Most Romantic versions of the educational journey thus incorporate a displaced theodicy, in which error and suffering are justified as indispensable to the self-formation and self-

realization of the mature individual in a span of reference coterminous with his or her life in this world (Abrams, NS 187).

The Neoplatonic circle of emanation and return manifests itself most strongly in the concept of "circuitus spiritualis" (Abrams, NS 152): the cohesive and sustaining supernatural energy (referred to as "love" by the Romantics and realized in the experience of the "sublime") which is manifested in the yearning to return to an undifferentiated state. This process is imaged in Frankenstein by the Coleridgean concept of polarity and the magnetic lines and fields of force; the law of polarity in nature is "the manifestation of one power by opposite forces" (Coleridge quoted in Barfield 35). The point of evil, being that of the fullest manifestation of phenomenal existence (equivalent to The Rime of the Ancient Mariner's "LIFE-IN-DEATH") and the farthest point from the Source, is also the place of conversion, marked in the novel's narrative by Victor's decision whilst in Geneva (E 201) to seek revenge upon (and, paradoxically, reunion with) the monster. The common genetic source of incestuous union often represented for the Romantics the metaphorical reunion with their spiritual origins. Furthermore, the alchemical mysterium coniunctionis was often represented as an incestuous brother-sister or "cross-cousin-marriage" (Jung, MC 466 n); and in the

1818 edition of Frankenstein Victor and Elizabeth are cousins. Victor's failed union with Elizabeth signals the despair of his hope for "salvation". He cannot successfully wed the desire for the Promethean quest in the phenomenal world to imaginative transcendence.

The most representative Romantic version of emanation and return incorporates intervening differentiations and the unity is conceived of as being of a higher type, incorporating in the spiral or ascending circle the idea of linear progress. This is a third term which constitutes more than the sum of the oppositions of which it is composed, marking an evolution towards the goal which makes the descent an indispensable stage. Walton's narrative, the "third term" of the novel's organization, incorporates Victor's and the monster's tales into a structurally cohesive whole but the content subverts this cohesion. There is no evolution towards wholeness but rather a process of splintering and disintegration as the various personalities move off, both spatially and figuratively, in different directions: Walton back to England in the rejection of Romantic idealism, Victor into the ultimate disunity of spiritual and imaginative death, and the monster into the unknowable "darkness and distance" (E 223) out of which both the unconscious psyche and the transcendent realm are constituted. At the end,

when he reverts to a belief in a transcendent Being, the existence of the unconscious is no longer a reality for Victor.

Neoplatonism attempts to combine monistic and dualistic systems (Copleston pt. 2, 168). The Neoplatonist Plotinus characterized beauty as a perception which unifies the fragments of a splintered outer world, rendering them concordant and assimilable to mind (Abrams, NS 514 n). The hideous monster can thus be seen to represent the splintered whole at the novel's end.

The movement of Romantic thought is teleological with reason being the self-evolving spirit, the immanent principle of the world; the metaphysical equivalent of redemption is to be achieved through the transcendence of ego. This involves processes of opposition, reconciliation, and renewed opposition, with the self-induced passage of each element into its own contrary and contradiction, in turn pressing for reconciliation or synthesis through the imaginative overcoming of contradiction (Abrams, NS 175). This is a process which is only partly evident in Frankenstein. The antinomies and ambiguities which comprise the very substance of the text do work to break down the idea of metaphysical opposition: one polarity merges into the other, thus denying the existence of that other upon which it is dependent for definition. However, there is no redemptive hope of imaginative

transcendence of contradiction here where the protagonist's overblown and overweening imagination is not genuinely creative and thus self-transcendent.

The Christian Neoplatonic journey does form the axis of the text, although it is represented as an inversion of the usual pattern found in Romantic discourse. This inversion is effected by a narrative structure where, in the tension of repulsion and attraction of centrifugal and centripetal forces, the centripetal tendency remains dominant. The subject and object oppositions of the text compose a linear narrative continuum which is expressed spatially in the shape of three circles, but the lineality is not upward and progressive; rather, the movement backward in time into the narratives is centripetal and hence regressive. Even Victor's "centrifugal" movement out from Geneva in pursuit of the monster is contained within one of these retrogressive narrative orbits, and Walton's prospective one is backwards to England in the same type of regressive circle. Only the monster's final leap into the darkness appears to break free of this narrative structure and in this sense makes his "negative" significance highly ambiguous.

If, ironically, there is the possibility that the monster will reach the Neoplatonic Source, in freeing himself of material existence in self-immolation, then we have an image of the phenomenal

realm, that is, the greatest negation of the Source possible, actually reuniting with It. The monster's reintegration with the Source will also represent his redemption. Victor's statement, "yet another may succeed" (E 218), may then be applied to the creature, who in turn can be perceived ironically as a Christ-like figure: sacrificing himself for the sake of humanity and thereby attaining salvation.

Human life and, therefore, the journey are circuitous and open-ended, because one can never attain a conflict-free situation; the novel too is open-ended. The narrative structure suggests barriers between different centres of consciousness: there is no omniscient narrator. The dualisms of Enlightenment rationalism and science are hereby internalized: the perceiving subject observes the object and tells the tale. In being confronted by a multiplicity of perspectives, the relationship of the reader to the created work is thus one of infinite interpretation.

The Romantic idea of the text being an organic unity, gathered into an aesthetic whole by the reader, may be seen to be questioned in the organization of Frankenstein. The laws of the novel are those of a dream and are not causal. Here, individual identity is left problematic and character is indeterminate: the organization is multi-level and resistant to unification (a quality of psychoanalytic criticism). Except by implication

(vide Part Two Chapter Nine below), Mary's voice is absent (unlike that of the humanist classic realist author) and the text is more like the polyphonic works Bakhtin spoke of (Poetics 5-46). By filtering the narrative through voices other than her own, Mary avoids moralism and she is relieved of the necessity of a single perspective. To the extent that the authorial voice is absent, there is no transcendent interpretation imposed upon the text, only various and immanent ones. Narrative can be seen as an epistemological category here, as a secular confession, and Victor, towards the end, actually effects a process of partial self-absolution by suggesting that things could always have been otherwise (E 218).

Metaphor reduces multiplicity to simplicity, conveying analogically the object of vision and intuition into unity. Unity of action forms a structural pattern in the text, not the classical unities of time and place: Victor's psychological conflicts form a spatial pattern of which the medium is language. The poetic creative imagination shapes idea into form, just as the Deity shapes spirit into matter. Thus the art of writing is equated with the work of a deity; and, as Mary's text is identified with the monster (E 10), she becomes by implication an inept creative artist.

Where God is intractable, Lucifer offers possibilities for fulfilment: hence the guilt-ridden

wanderer Cain. By way of the narrative's structure, Walton's northerly journey also takes him to the heart of Europe, Geneva, in an overlapping of events and psyches: his geographical quest is Victor's metaphysical one. The realistic documentary and confessional mode legitimates the strange and fantastic. The model is a psychoanalytic one: to bring to consciousness what is repressed in the hope of reintegrating it. However, Victor must confess to someone who cannot absolve him and he wants to destroy what he has already repressed.

The "free stone" interpretation of "Frankenstein", according to which Victor frees himself from the desire for the philosopher's stone of the complete inner person in his quest for the elixir of life (E 40), means that he rejects the Neoplatonic goal of psychic completion and wholeness, which necessarily incorporates the inadequacies and deficiencies inherent in phenomenal existence. He substitutes for this goal a perfectionism equivalent to Godwin's ideal, in line with Paracelsus's belief that all "matter is creative and has an impulse toward perfection" (Pachter 173). Like Victor, Paracelsus was concerned with first causes and principles, and Victor's ultimate desire is to transcend in a perfectionist idealism the very matter with which he works.

In alchemy, the basic substance with which one works, the prima materia, is figured as mother and moon (Jung, PA 317). Furthermore, the image of re-entry into the maternal womb is a cosmological mythic one: to re-enter the mother (Dussinger 46) in a death which prefigures a rebirth. However, in Frankenstein the dream image of reunion with the mother in death and decay, not rebirth, forms a polar opposition to that of the Neoplatonic goal of reunion with the Source; and this negative pole of decay remains the axis of Victor's experience.

The undercutting of the Romantic Hegelian Neoplatonic journey by the text's structure is a rejection of organicism and holism, as well as the concept of progress inherent to them, in an atomistic process of severance, disunion, and disintegration.

The Hegelian structure is linear, but it promotes lineality within coherence, whereas the monster's final flight suggests a movement beyond the narrative's circularity, a movement which will possibly drag with it the disintegration that marks the narrative content of the work. The final image is of two world views in static opposition and unreconciled, with dualism thereby asserted. The pessimistic and dualistic Gothic and Calvinist outlook undercuts the Romantic monistic, dynamic, and optimistic one.

The tale thus involves the distinctly Romantic life story of the creative spirit in a painful growth towards maturity. Against a backdrop of an Enlightenment education Victor's initial unitary self then falls into a suffering self-consciousness which is typically Romantic. This marks the initial stages of a problematic journey towards what will prove to be the failure of a reunification of his fragmented being.

Frankenstein can be read as a variation on the myth of primal humanity falling into warring contraries which press towards and against ultimate reunification. Victor's consciousness is a model for a cultural transition between philosophical systems, broadly speaking between Calvinist faith and scientific rationalism, and the work explores the various philosophical permutations associated with such a transition. However, the novel actually subverts the accepted order this transition is assumed to take: the hero is seduced by the new beliefs but ultimately maintains his allegiance to the old God. In fact, there appears to be a cause and effect relationship between the operation of Lockean sensationalism, Newtonian mechanistic science, Godwinian rationalism and idealism, and the emergence of their antitheses in irrationalism and fatalism. As with the narrative form, "progress" moves backwards.

The monster can be seen as an agent of the Source, drawing Victor (as one of Its emanations) back towards it; but Victor is one of the damned. His goal is infinite and boundless whilst the journey (in the phenomenal world) is finite and bounded. For most Romantics the goal of the journey was the infinite although this was to be located in the journey itself, whereas Victor always looks for the infinite beyond the temporal sphere. If the Romantic measure of greatness lies in the discrepancy between infinite reach and finite grasp, then Victor can be considered to be great, as Walton perceives him to be: "this glorious spirit" (E 218). The statement is also possibly ironic for Victor cannot maintain his imaginative vision: unlike a Blake or a Christ, he is a Keatsian "weak dreamer". His fall is into the subjectivity and excessive consciousness which Shelley equated with the death of imaginative vision (and equal to actual death).

Fatalism

Victor's final journey involves the paradoxical situation of both wanting to destroy the destroyer of his millennial aspirations (the creature is the embodiment of this failure) and seeming to want to reunite with him in the security of oblivion which the Pole represents.¹

Reunion with his detached self would in effect destroy what the creature represents: the psyche

split by an over-development of the rational faculty, and the products of this split. He will, however, never attain this goal because his god-like desire for perfectionism is greater than that for psychic wholeness. So the image of reunion is really an ironic by-product of the attempt to destroy his creature, and what appears to be the desire to reunite with his repressed and therefore unconscious self actually becomes a reunion (although not in election) with his condemnatory Calvinist Deity.

At the monster's creation, Victor's dream embrace of Elizabeth marks his adoption of narcissistic solipsism (vide Part Two Chapter Seven above: the monster can be seen as an incarnation of this solipsism) which, in becoming the embrace of his mother's decaying body, also represents his realization of the death of the imagination and the failure of idealism; he now knows that what he has been dealing with is not true imaginative insight. This death of the imagination, which is equal to actual death and oblivion in Romantic imagery, indicates the impossibility, for him, of attaining the fulfilment of the Neoplatonic goal of psychic integration.

Initially, Victor is that type of Calvinist who presumes himself to be one of the "elect" (although Calvinist doctrine denied that anyone deserved to be of the elect, according this privilege to God's

"grace"); Lucifer-like he then arrogantly places himself upon a level with God. He is full of Promethean hubris and is prideful like Job but, when his quest for knowledge and a widened consciousness fails, through the search for ontological and epistemological truth in the illusive beauty of nature, he becomes merely an instrument of God's will, losing all of his self-assurance, arrogance, and autonomy.

There is paradox in the fact that the monster, although pre-eminently embodying the monistic systems of Romantic thought, leads Victor back to the dualism of belief in a transcendent God, a Being whose damnation is preferable to the terror of a solipsistic universe.

Victor's chase actually echoes the earlier purgatorial death of his imagination. His self-transcendent "creative" energy should be an outwardly-moving force, combining physical energy with the imaginative element, but this energy of a false imagination is subverted into an inwardly-moving force which traces Victor's philosophical reaction to the Romantic ideal. He remains tempted by his former passion, however, for at the novel's end the monster of perfectionism is propelled out into the Arctic darkness as the final projection of Victor's initial need and still ultimate, although residual, desire. If carried out, the monster's self-immolation will be altruistic: to preserve

humanity from his violence. The implication is, however, that beyond death something of Victor's idealistic creation may continue for there is the suggestion that the creature might undergo a new metamorphosis and arise phoenix-like from the pyre (E 223) (the fire being equivalent to the alchemic spirit). His series of being (E 219), tied as it is to linear cause and effect and to temporality, will be at an end, his spirit "will not surely think thus" (E 223) and, ambiguously, his consummation (E 222) (also a Blakean pun) will be both an act of perfecting as well as one of being consumed.

Although the textual ambiguity continues till the novel's end, a Gothic universe comes to dominate Victor almost exclusively from the time of his pursuit of the monster. The world of Romantic irony and paradox which rules the text (vide Part Two Chapter Nine below) remains, while at the same time it allows the reactionary Victor to drop out of its confines into a universe of absolute, if damning, certainties.

Victor can be seen to have moved from an organic to a static universe where the monism of organicism increasingly breaks down into dualism and, as is evident in the representation of the monster, the denial of original sin actually seems to produce it. In the process of this transition, however, the continuing textual ambiguity intersects with antinomic elements, as though in contest with

them, and the transition is by no means definite and clear cut.

There is a conjunction of the oppositions of heaven and earth in the scene of Victor's joint supplication to the spirits of Night and the "sacred earth" (E 202) to aid him in his final quest: he must continue to live in the temporal in order to destroy the monster, for the creature is of this world.

The sceptical scientist Walton interprets the spirits of the dead, whom Victor assumes to be real, as products of dream and fancy: "This faith gives a solemnity to his reveries that render them to me almost as imposing and interesting as truth" (E 210). There is a faith and truth distinction and opposition here with Walton believing only in the visible. He is a voyager, seeking the truth like his uncle (doubting) Thomas (E 19); he is one who must see to believe (E 209) for he is bound to the false knowledge of the senses which the monster represents. However, Walton's return to England can be interpreted as a conversion, with Victor now surmising that there is little chance of his friend's meeting with the monster (E 217).

Victor's statement: "I bore a hell within me" (E 88) is that of a Manichean, of someone who believes that to love the sinner within is to make a pact with the devil, thus precluding the possibility of communication with the creature. The ground sea

(E 207) of the northern ocean, which formed "the utmost boundary of the horizon" (E 205), is an image of this impassable barrier, and can be compared to the "Aqua Permanens" of Jung (MC 40), which is associated with the sweat and dew produced from contact with the fire of the alchemists.

However, the monster is presented as both a devil and an angel, for, when he leaves food for Victor, in an image which implies both physical and spiritual sustenance, these actions are ironically ascribed to those of "a spirit of good" (E 203), and just as he is (deservedly there) named by the De Laceys (E 115). As both natural and supernatural explanations for the presence of the food can be assumed, this ambiguity implicitly breaks down metaphysical oppositions as antinomic categories coalesce.

There is a similar tendency in the ambiguity regarding free will and determinism in the monster's statement that "I had no choice but to adapt my nature to an element which I had willingly chosen" (E 220), with the implication that he had actually been pre-determined to exercise free will in the choice of evil.

Victor proves to be a utilitarian still, declaring that he had duties to his rational creature but greater ones to his own kind for "they included a greater proportion of happiness or misery" (E 217). His statement is ironic for his

rational creature is really not very rational, and he is implicitly suggesting that those of his "own species" (E 217) are not rational. Theoretically, the rational faculty should control a utilitarian ethic. However, in the service of this ethic which decrees the vengeance of his proposed destruction of the monster (ironically, when the creature represents the social utopianism behind a utilitarian ethic), Victor's rational faculty is split off from the rest of his psyche and he comes to be ruled by the irrational. Even at the end, when he asserts that he is motivated by "reason and virtue" (E 217), the unreason of vengeance actually rules him in his call for Walton to destroy the creature on his behalf. Furthermore, in Walton's regretful statement: "I have lost my hopes of utility and glory;- I have lost my friend" (E 215), he associates Victor with utility and glory, as the contradictions of utilitarian altruism and the self-interested emotion of the will to power become almost synonyms. Victor's death heralds Walton's return to England; Victor can then be seen as the hubristic and idealist aspect of Walton's psyche, being the false "friend" who is subdued and overcome by the familial ties of affection with his sister back home.

When Victor rejects rationalism God reverts to being a transcendent entity, no longer immanent in mind and matter. In his transition from

millenarianism to fatalism Victor comments upon his life, beginning with the Promethean utopian aspirations of benevolent action towards humanity, of the millennial heaven on earth (E 211), but finally moving into a fatalistic, malevolent, and guilt-ridden existence. There is a discordancy in Victor's life story between motive and action or effect which can be seen as an ironic comment upon Godwin's emphasis upon virtue as being a matter of ensuring the concordance of intention with outcome (PJ 190; bk. 2, ch. 4). There is also a theodicial critique involved in the nature of the material with which Victor works.

In Victor's final journey fate represents what is actually inner, repressed material removed to the transcendent and therefore objectified; the drama of conflict is acted out in the cosmic sphere, rather than in the personal and psychic. In an image which links Greek tragedy to the Gothic Calvinism of the text, Victor also refers to the creature as a "daemon" (E 202), a term which in Greek mythology came "sometimes near the significance of 'fate'" (OCD 310). There is irony in the fact that the "guiding spirit" (E 205) to whom the unknowing Victor refers is in actuality also Nemesis, that deceptive Devil who is in service to Victor's fatalistic Deity. The monster is that logical extension of Calvinist doctrine: the antinomian Devil.² Furthermore, his self-perception becomes

that of Milton's fallen Satan (E 136), Milton's Adam role having been denied him: Satan and the monster act out of revenge whereas Adam and Victor are seduced in their fall (Lucifer, the pre-fallen Satan, is like Victor).

Victor does not (through the agency of the monster) directly kill his father as he does the others. His father, as a Genevan magistrate, represents Calvinism, the system which comes ultimately to preside over Victor's existence; the benevolent organicism of Clerval's and Elizabeth's experience is destroyed but not Calvinism.

In an ironic inversion of the Calvinist's search for evidence of election in the temporal realm (for material prosperity was often considered, by them, as proof of election), Victor, uncertain of which path to pursue upon leaving the confines of Geneva (E 201), desperately looks for clues to the monster's presence in nature, clues which will in reality point the way to his own damnation by his ruling Deity.

Voluntary thought is now lost in Victor and revenge controls his every action. Paradoxically, his exercise of free will, both in destroying the female and in choosing to destroy the creature, means the abrogation of this will to a fatalistic deity; revenge rules him now, determining his behaviour (E 201). His torture is beyond the description of language (E 90), beyond culture (just

as the monster is outside culture and, initially, without language), and beyond society. He is now subject to the German type of Gothic terror.

The "presence", or absolute, which Victor has always sought has always been absent for him. There is thus irony in the fact that in his reactionary reversion to Calvinism he becomes, in a different sense, again consumed by an absolute; an active obsession is here equated with a passive acquiescence.

Victor knows that his acceptance of the rule of transcendent fate also means his doom, that his crime and associated damnation indicate a torment in store for him beyond death. As a Calvinist, his guilt is associated with his millennial quest on behalf of humanity, for it is a pursuit quite antithetical to the anti-millennialist doctrine of Calvin. Although there is no self-forgiveness or self-redemption for Victor, there is an attempt at self-absolution: his suggestion that another might succeed where he had failed (E 218) is, in effect, an attempt to legitimate his prior activities by removing them from the realm of moral absolutism, where to continue to be lured by the sinful temporal domain of the monster is also to be condemned.

His hubris continues till the end for there had emerged in him something of "that haughty fierceness which the martyrs of old are said to have possessed" (E 200). Furthermore, in his censure of the Genevan

magistrate he echoes the language of the crucified Christ (E 201), and, again like Christ, he spends forty full days in the wilderness of the disintegrating vessel of his psyche between his rescue by Walton (on August 1) and his death (on September 11).

Like Caleb Williams's Falkland, Victor has aged and died prematurely. This is the ironic antithesis of his goal of eternal life sought through a new humanity, and of the alchemist's (and St. Leon's) search for the elixir of life.

The next and final chapter considers Romantic paradox and the sublime, as well as the ironic stance of the implied authorial voice. This irony can be seen as an implicit attack upon the rationalist certainty of Godwin's Political Justice as well as a sceptic's assertion of the illusory nature of ideals.

¹ This process of the dissolution of consciousness is analogous to the Freudian death wish and to the Lacanian imaginary or Kristevan pre-linguistic semiotic disposition of complete identity with the mother in the womb.

² The "daimon" was a spirit "intermediate between gods and men" (OCD 310), it had the "overtones of a [good or evil] personal agent" (OCD 310), and followed an individual throughout life.

CHAPTER NINE: ROMANTIC PARADOX, THE SUBLIME,
AND IRONY

The ironic stance of Frankenstein's implied authorial voice involves a continual questioning and undermining of every position taken and assertion made. This process is a characteristic of the scientific method involved in Victor's creative activity: the attempt to prove a hypothesis by the undermining of negative instances, typical of "Devil's advocate" procedure. His experience is a reiteration of the text's overall ambiguity, contradiction, and inversion of categories which is distinctly Romantic, but which the Romantic sublime aimed to overcome, specifically in the transcendence of polar oppositions. This final chapter deals with Victor's vain attempts at such a transcendence, and the ultimate implicit assertion of a dualistic reality inherent in the novel's ironic position. Victor can thus be seen to model Godwin's position at a transition point in the history of ideas.

Romantic Paradox

Paradox, syntactic ambiguity, and contradiction construct the very text of Frankenstein. The dominant textual ambiguity regarding free will and necessity, upon which Victor's experience is focused, is merely the most significant polarity

among the many minor contraries which are so intrinsic to the work, and upon which its Romantic dialectic operates.

The Kantian division between pure reason and the understanding, and the noumenon and the phenomenon (Thorslev 158), underlies Romantic dialectical thinking. Boehme, with his love of paradox and contradiction, gave a new lease of life to this thinking in polarities (Thorslev 64, 159) which actually dates back to Heraclitus's "becoming" (Copleston pt. 1, 174). The dualist Boehme (and Victor says: "I bore a hell within me" [E 88]) thus sets the scene for the Romantic dialectic; in his system of reasoning from polar opposites, towards a higher and higher synthesis, truth becomes provisional (as in scientific theory) as growth and progress, in a transcendence of contraries (Thorslev 67).

This thinking in polarities was linked to magnetism by Hegel, Franklin, Galvani, and Volta; and magnetism is a dominant motif in Frankenstein. Magnetism led people to conceive of both inorganic and organic matter as vital, and was even considered by some as the key to all life. As it was vital, then inorganic matter was thought of as being teleologically, as well as dialectically, arranged (Thorslev 160). When he vitalizes dead matter, Victor assumes himself to be just such a link in an

inevitable process of a teleologically arranged human progress.

Romantic dialectical thinking denies the rule of the law of contradiction for it strives to transcend any such division. Schlegel's "infinity", as striving and process, is the telos and goal (Thorslev 158), with each of his steps being defined in terms of paradox. Chaos, through an endless alternation of thesis and antithesis, remains the highest order of beauty; this same chaos lies at the core of Frankenstein's and Victor's creations, while Victor and his creature figure the oppositions of imagination and reason, of self and not-self. The Romantic "synthesis" is never final, and conflict and opposition are eternal.

The transcendence of the laws of contradiction was formalized by the Romantics. The previously immutable and necessarily self-consistent system of logic had been superseded by dialectic logic where time, process, and transformation were introduced. Today we draw a distinction between dialectic as a procedure for philosophical reasoning, and the broader sense of dialectic as a method for organizing our experiences of human nature, history, and the physical universe in terms of the conflicts of opposites. The solipsism which grips Victor at the time of the creature's animation (vide Part Two Chapter Seven above) can be explained in terms of the lack of distinction between these two types of

dialectic in most Romantics who believed that, if things have no reality apart from our knowledge of them, the mind ultimately creates the knowledge which is the only reality. Accordingly, no distinction then exists between the rules or procedures of reasoning and those followed by events in the "outside" world (Thorslev 71-72); here, there is always the danger of solipsism.

Only in the human mind, where the organic and inorganic universes meld, do distinctions between good and evil become conscious and predictable, and therefore only in the human mind can evil be overcome. However, with the rise of organicism in science, aesthetics, and theology in the Romantic era, evil becomes inherent in the material world. In a monistic system the conflict between good and evil is then seen as being ultimately illusory, for evil is difficult to locate in the phenomenal realm; it then comes to exist only as a relative absence of good, of light, just as the monster is linked to the reflected light of the moon, to the shadow-world of Plato's cave allegory. Thus the monism of Romantic organicism precludes a distinction between logical and phenomenal contradiction, a process which is itself a transcendence of dialectical thinking.

Romantic dialectic accommodates the oppositional arguments of free will and necessity, which can be transcended in the sublime. Schelling insists that absolute freedom and absolute necessity

are ultimately identical, although being dialectically opposed in our consciousness (Thorslev 69); every quality can slip into its opposite. The Schellingian Absolute is absolutely free and absolutely determined and, as it is expressed through us and nature, we share this unconditioned freedom along with a universal destiny (Thorslev 72). However, as with the Calvinists, such a concept of free will defines it as subservient to a wider destiny; we can thus merely partake of this destiny and never oppose it in any meaningful way. In this sense, Victor can be seen to be exercising free will in creating the monster although he must, at the same time, have been determined to do as he does by some intrinsic quality of character, whilst being ultimately controlled by the laws of a particular theological system.

The old rationalist and Neoclassical attitude considers that in God's view all contraries disappear into universal harmony, and therefore antitheses arise only because of our partial view. Fichte placed the striving ego with the noumena, restoring our apprehension of the infinite (Thorslev 158); in the transcendence of the sublime, the Romantic artist such as Victor can thus be seen to be placed in a similar position to that of God.

Schlegel thought that paradox mirrored the contradictory nature of reality and that this was expressed by irony (Thorslev 163), for irony allows

two opposed ideas to be held in the mind at once. The ironist sceptically comments upon the world as it is perceived to be; he or she does not make metaphysical assertions about the nature of ultimate reality (Thorslev 167). The emphasis is upon the subjective nature of our experiences of irony, paradox, and contradiction, whereas, in the Gothic world of Victor's experience, the uncertainties and contradictions lie "out there", in a manner analogous to scientific "fact". A tension can hereby be seen to be set up between Victor and the text's ironical authorial voice.

The Romantic Gothic of the text of Frankenstein involves an antinomic opposition between monistic and dualistic philosophical systems such as pantheistic monism and Lockean dualism, and Romantic idealism and Christianity. There is also a psychological concern with the epistemologically ambiguous, as questions of possibility, existence, and determinism, as well as of limitation, chance, and contingency, are examined. Victor is concerned with the adequacy of reason, the imagination, or faith to make sense of the paradoxical world in which he finds himself.

The question of antinomies, ambiguities, and inversions in the text can be related to Victor's quest for the truths of knowledge and being, sought through an exploration of alternative images of the world. In a characteristically Gothic sense (vide

Part Two Chapter One above), Victor is a metaphysical rebel who, only as a consequence of this, becomes a social rebel. Where the world is an uncertainty, and where there is no consensus of viewpoint, the emphasis is likely to be upon individual perception, reasoning, and vision; this is represented metaphorically in the text by the distorting image of the mirror.

The tale demonstrates the distinctly Romantic life story of the creative spirit in a painful growth towards maturity. Against a backdrop of an Enlightenment education, and coterminous with both the study of alchemy and then Newtonian science, Victor's initial unitary self falls into a suffering self-consciousness which is characteristically Romantic, in the initial stages of a problematic journey towards what will prove to be the failure of a reunification of his fragmented being.

The text represents a model of the process of moving between opposing or alternative philosophical systems, where conscious attitudes may be in conflict with unconscious ones. This is not merely a moral fable, a cautionary tale, an assertion of any moral absolute, but rather a demonstration of the process (allegorized as a spatial journey) of this type of psychological conflict, with the monster as a symbol possessing a multiple range of referents.

The geographical journeyings, with boundaries skirted and crossed, signify movement between such metaphysical oppositions as transcendent and immanent destinies, while the overriding models are those of the Neoplatonic journey and the scientific or alchemical enterprises. A process of orientation, of positioning, is involved in one's either embracing or avoiding the sublime (figured by the abyss): the monster and Victor seek it whilst Elizabeth recoils from it.

As is the case in the novel, in paradox two contradictory ideas are both presented as being equally valid, representing our attempts to impose a limited order upon a chaos we are consciously aware of. In paradox (and irony) one thesis is never negated by its antithesis, but placed in conjunction with it, thus remaining essentially the same as before, albeit disturbed by the juxtaposition. The text's dialogue of different voices within various narratives places these oppositions together.

In the Alps, evidence of the pathetic fallacy, and of pantheism, imply both solipsism and monism. However, dualism is also suggested by male and female oppositions as well as by immanence and transcendence. Here, these antinomic images both coalesce and oppose one another. In the ravine of Arve the inexorable forces of nature, located in "the dashing of the waterfalls around" (E 94), speak of "a power mighty as Omnipotence" (E 94) (analogous

to that in Shelley's "Mont Blanc"), where an equation is drawn between the power of the immanent process of nature and that of a transcendent deity. Sexual images also abound: "I plunged yet deeper in the ravine of Arve" (E 94). The "pallid lightnings" (E 95) which play above Mont Blanc and the "rushing of the Arve" (E 95), just as they do in the storm following William's death (E 75), combine male and female associations through images of transcendent and immanent forces in scenes both of procreative wedding and of combat. Among these mountains the abyss is a maternal image for Victor, whereas the maternal is portrayed, overall, in an equivocal light.

There is some ambiguity at the novel's end on Victor's position concerning the validity of another individual's pursuing a similar quest to the one which destroys him. In the statement "yet another may succeed" (E 218) he momentarily rejoins other questers in a common search for imaginative transcendence and the infinite. His hope is that another might not be determined by the fatalistic universe which controls him. This hope represents an assertion of the relativity of any particular individual's outlook, thus emphasising its subjective quality; this is a relativity which contradicts Victor's search for metaphysical certainties, as well as his ultimate rule by a transcendent absolute. He concedes the possible

validity of the scientific, empirically determined venture although it had proved invalid for him: the phenomenal world has betrayed his imaginative vision, producing a monster in lieu of the beauty of an ideal. He is ultimately ruled and destroyed by a fatalistic world view but suggests it is only his truth, not an absolute one.

This relativity of truth is examined through ambiguities, oppositions, and inversions, the structure of the text being representative of a mental process of speculating on the nature of being. The reading of the text (which is also a listening exercise and, thus, a questioning of the reliance upon appearances) involves an activity similar to Victor's, in examining experientially the conflicts encountered by a questing individual who speculates upon knowledge and faith. Furthermore, by implication, the reader's conclusions must necessarily be ones relative to his or her particular experience, constitution, and cultural and philosophical milieu.

The problem of essentialism and relativism is confronted in the text. When the monster learns of the existence of different languages he realizes how the relationship between signifier and signified is an arbitrary one, and yet an essential correlation between signifier and signified is implied in the scene where he sees himself reflected in a pool of

water: "I was in reality the monster that I am" (E 114).

Mary's novel asserts our inability to grasp the essential nature of things. Evil is located for each character in a different place; it is a matter for individual opinion and therefore ontologically nonexistent, and there is no wholly evil character. The monster is referred to by Victor as "Devil" and "monster" (E 99); he calls himself a "creature" (E 99), and is a "good spirit" (E 115) to the De Laceys. Where there is no omniscient narrator, multiple perspectives are given, not objective, authoritative opinions. Victor says, "It seemed to me as if nothing would or could ever be known" (E 41), and only the monster himself says he is benevolent. The text asserts that conflicting claims of truth and justice cannot be resolved in terms of evidence or experience.

In Judeo-Christianity there is a distinction between the prepotent but hidden order of God and the apparent order and connections between things amenable to our senses: the first cause and secondary causes (that is nature) of theology. Along with the split between the real and the ideal of Platonic dualism, this led to a dual or multiple interpretation of events as both manifest and covert, literal and figurative, surface and symbol. This endowment of everything with a "divine"

duplicity (Abrams, NS 36) is a characteristic of Frankenstein.

The early Romantics had the idea that things were really other than they appeared to be: the "good" of the French Revolution was really evil. As in the experience of the sublime, polar opposites inhere one within the other. Evil becomes the monster's "good", and Victor comes to occupy a universe the inverse of the one he originally inhabited. The belief was that the opposite reality could be discerned by the mind. This idea is imaged in the text by polar opposition: mythical Edenic warmth at the Pole for Walton, that the boundaries between life and death may not really be impervious, and that concepts of good and evil may be relative and subjective terms.

In delving into the secrets of the phenomenal world Victor cuts himself off from it: one polar opposite inheres within the other and, depending upon one's perspective, that single antinomy can be interpreted as the sole reality.

Victor equates the phenomenal world with the moral and ideal although he comes to realize, with the creature's animation, that phenomenal data will not reveal truths about the essences of things: the monster is more than the sum of his parts, and the perceived fact is the demonic inverse of the ideal dream. However, in fleeing from the physical ugliness of the monster, he is continuing to equate

the signifier with the signified, and appearance with fact. Similarly, the monster also equates his ugliness with monstrosity (E 114), appearance with reality.

Victor later comes to consider that the monster did not necessarily embody evil but also that his eloquence might hide a duplicitous nature, and that things present might always change. The ground shifts under him as all becomes unknowable.

The monster is a Gothic version of the Romantic stranger, reminding us of the relativity of knowledge, of how little we can ever know. The question of the significance of the creature is thus related to ideas of reality, limitation, and negation; the nature of his identity is constantly questioned.

The breaking down of metaphysical oppositions in the inversion of good and evil (E 220) means that they become synonyms, and not the moral absolutes of Godwin's philosophy (which, paradoxically, leads logically to a secular equivalent of antinomianism).

Syntactical ambiguities imply identity of subject and object. The monster is often associated with the moon: "by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch" (E 58). Victor is often identified with the monster: Walton "restored him [Victor] to animation" (E 25) just as Victor had animated the monster; in this image Walton, as a

bestower of life, is also identified with Victor. The monster and Victor's father are linked in the prison scene in Ireland (E 180): one's creature becoming one's creator, and vice versa. There is also an inversion of roles and identities between Victor and the monster: "You are my creator, but I am your master;- obey!" (E 167); this is all suggestive of the Christian paradox of inversion, where the divine manifests itself in trivial objects and lowly people (in a Wordsworthian sense), the infinite thereby accommodating itself to the finite world in a process which reaches its apex in Romantic pantheism.

With the heavy emphasis upon Genesis, and of filial disobedience, the text strongly supports the notion of free will. However, ambiguity remains on this point with the suggestion that the exercise of free will may be an illusion, for any examples of its operation can all be considered to be contained within a larger deterministic circle.

Ambiguities on this issue are never resolved by the text. Victor speaks of himself when young in terms of Godwinian necessitarianism, although this is mediated through the perspective of, and couched in the language of, someone believing in a fatalistic, predestined universe: "Natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated my fate" (E 38). The Adamic image of disobeying his father over the study of alchemy (E 39) implies that he did

possess free will, a view which is perhaps undercut by the overall indeterminacy of the authorial voice; and his heavenly Father, the Calvinist God, in effect, rejects free will. As is common in the novel, a mythic image operates here as a subtext, undermining Victor's assessment of himself as a wholly determined being. The advocacy of free will, apparently as a moral position, on the part of the implied authorial voice here, can be seen to conflict with the Romantic ironic view of the same authorial position, which resists closure in refusing to accept any one attitude as conclusive; even the authorial voice is a dual and conflicting one.

The monster's free choice of evil represents the inverse of Christ's injunction to love one's enemies (E 136). Ironically, the monster, who is a Lockean "tabula rasa", determined being, is here revealed as possessing free will (although he is crucially impotent) whereas, conversely, Victor initially appears to possess free will but is ultimately presented as lacking it.

Fire can be seen as a symbol for textual ambiguity itself, for fire is an ambiguous substance in being both life-giving (as spiritual energy and physical warmth) and death-dealing. The alchemists used fire with their retorts in the transmutation process, and the monster is created out of the metaphoric ashes of human beings, just as he might

rise again, phoenix-like, from the ashes of his funeral pyre. Fire is also his first important discovery, although he does use it for the destruction of that symbol of familial harmony and well-being: the De Lacey's cottage.

Before Victor leaves for Ingolstadt he refers to the gentle, benevolent, and cultivated Clerval using ambivalent imagery: "I read in his kindling eye and in his animated glance a ... resolve, not to be chained to the miserable details of commerce" (E 44), where "kindling eye" suggests compassion as well as fire and spiritual energy, but also the monster's destructive use of it; "animated" suggests the instinctual aspect of Rousseau's "natural man", but also the monster; and "chained" (an image frequently associated with Victor) suggests Locke's chain of association, thus linking Clerval, Locke, and Rousseau with Victor and the creature.

Inversions and contradictions work in the text to unite oppositions: the failed poet Walton is now a scientist, a scientist who believes in the moral superiority of the uncultivated (E 21) and whose childhood had, paradoxically, been a Romantic, enlightened Rousseauian one: "I ran wild on a common" (E 19). He has ambivalent emotions regarding his quest (E 17), and his statement: "the soul may fix its intellectual eye" (E 16) unites contradictory terms.

In what are contradictory purposes for a scientist, Walton is required to "raise the spirits of others" (E 17), to raise both their emotional hopes as well as their phantasms. Similarly, there is irony in the fact that Clerval, the son of a Genevese merchant, is a lover of chivalry and romance (E 37), qualities criticized by Godwin, just as Clerval is destroyed by the product of Victor's philosophy.

When the monster says: "Oh, Frankenstein! generous and self-devoted being!" (E 219), contradictory qualities are presented almost as synonyms, as polar oppositions break down.

There is an implicit assertion of metaphysical dualism in the fact that the creature is a product of Lockean sensationalist psychology and yet possesses free will, just as Victor has an Enlightenment education and yet remains trapped within a Calvinist, dualistic system; again, one polar opposite inheres within the other here.

The sublime in the text can be related to the temporary breaking down of metaphysical oppositions for Victor, where one term becomes its opposite and dualism is transcended in an affective experience. A transition from pantheism to the transcendence of opposites is imaged in the picturesque valley of Servox giving way to the sublime Chamounix (E 95).

Although the monster is a creature of the sublime, it is of the negative sublime, for true

intuitive thinking is not possible when imagination is the servant of reason. The monster represents the ugliness of unredeemed matter, marking the failure of Victor's imaginative vision when in the service of reason and millennialism.

The metamorphosis found in the production of the monster represents a transgression of the separation of mind and matter which is at the base of the scientific method apparently used in this creation, for mind, matter, the life principle, and the paranormal all come together in his birth, in an imaginative transcendence of metaphysical oppositions. This transgression accords with the Romantic vision of testing the limits between spirit and matter, mind and nature. When the physical and the psychical cease to be impervious, all elements and relations become highly significant and potentially full of meaning, for it then remains not clear as to what the links between apparently unconnected objects and events might be: an invocation to "Wandering spirits" (E 98) may conjure up "the figure of a man" (E 98) that is the monster. To think in terms of cause and effect means that we equate these spirits with the "man" who is also the monster; but if we think acausally then their simultaneous occurrence may simply be a matter of contingency. The relationships between things remain equivocal; they may be causal or acausal. Furthermore, there is ambiguity in the fact that

although the creature's existence represents a metaphorical transgression of the mind and matter split, when he acquires language, and thereby begins relating to a social group, he partakes actively in a process which involves the division of the world into signifier and signified, abstract and real, subject and object, mind and matter. Conversely, the Pole (which is also the Neoplatonic Source and the goal of psychological wholeness in philosophical alchemy), to which the monster leads Victor, is also equivalent to the pre-linguistic state of the womb which precedes these divisions. The monster therefore represents both these oppositions and their transgression. He can also be seen to represent antinomianism, the inversion and obliteration of the moral law: "Evil thenceforth became my good" (E 220).

The imagistic use of magnetism and electricity (in the novel's inception, Walton's quest, and the monster's creation) is a metaphoric representation of the scientific (and the alchemic), undercutting its exclusive association with the literal, the "real", and the material, just as the transcendent, religious, and imaginative enter this world of scientific "fact", for the nature of the life-force is left undescribed.

A characteristic of vitalism (and Victor's monster is animated by a pseudo-vitalism) is that the elements of the created world are endowed with

intelligence, and arranged to fulfil the views of the creator (Thorslev 81). Victor had endowed the monster with "will and power to effect purposes of horror" (E 77), and yet his education, along Lockean lines, denies free will and innate qualities; it is therefore Victor's unconscious motivation which is embodied in the creature. Implicitly, and like Paracelsus (Pachter 262), Victor's will is prior to his reason; this is the inverse of the apparent situation.

In reversing the normal cause and effect relationship between life and death, the very idea of cause and effect is called into question; this challenges the basis of the Newtonian science which is apparently employed by Victor in the monster's creation. Pseudo-vitalism (the life spark, but not originating from God) is the factor which inverts Victor's world and reverses this normal process of cause and effect.

Victor's body is decaying in the process, as though the reason for his haste is to finish before dissolution again sets in; he is, himself, part of the process of denying the idea of cause and effect. The implications in the physical world of both Hume's (Russell 639-40) and Godwin's theories are examined here, of how a philosophical idea transforms the physical world. For Hume, the end product becomes the beginning, the effect the cause: "what appears to us as necessary connection among

objects is really only connection among the ideas of those objects" (Russell 640), for necessity exists in the mind, not in objects. In the moment when Victor animates his creature, relativity becomes king, for there are no longer any absolutes when the ultimate barrier of death is transcended.

Paradoxically, the growth of individualism from the seventeenth century onwards (with its taint of original sin in its implicit rebellion against received opinion) was a moral ideal as well as a sin; the guilt which results therefore becomes unconscious because individualism is both necessary and yet, on theological grounds, to be condemned. Victor's conflict over the desire to retain his individuality, but also to return to a world of community, echoes this process.

This individualism leads to too many choices having to be made which, paradoxically, in turn limit our freedom to choose. This is a matter over which Victor broods as he ascends Montanvert when, with the danger from falling stones, the destructive aspects of the glacier become apparent to him (E 97); melancholy is all-pervasive here. The quotation from Shelley's "Mutability" (E 98) underlines Victor's conflict. He equates our lack of freedom with consciousness, for the possession of a rational mind means that we are actually determined by ideas.

There is paradox here, for the etymological linkage of Lucifer with the light of consciousness (Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology [OED] 539) in turn links consciousness with original sin, in the freedom to choose between good and evil. The implication here is that we cannot cope psychologically with an excess of this freedom (E 97). Thus, with too many philosophies to choose from, freedom is restricted.

This passage can be seen as an ironic attack upon Godwin who spoke of the specificity of each event; he insisted that every case was a rule unto itself, with a decision therefore to be made, upon a question of morality, only after a careful weighing up of all factors relevant to the situation. The text is asserting that this is too much responsibility for the human psyche to cope with.

The Sublime

There is, in Frankenstein, a contest between what can be termed the positive and negative sublime, between the holism of original unity and the demon of perfectionism which seeks to transcend this union. In the positive sublime, where mind is assimilated to nature, metaphysical oppositions are transcended by their annihilation in union. In the negative sublime, however, the continuing controlling power of consciousness and the will, which cannot rest with simple reconciliation, means

that any idealist goal actually becomes subverted into its demonic counterpart, thereby actually negating the individual mind; ironically, then, transcendence cannot be maintained and the oppositions remain.

In the associationist psychology of Locke "the mind is not its own place, but the space in which semiotic sublimations occur" (Weiskel 17). The affective correlative of this inner vacancy is anxiety and uneasiness (Weiskel 18), resulting in the operation of the will through the desire for release from anxiety.

Locke's and Burke's ideas were like those of the Structuralists, where there is no necessary connection between signifier and signified and where order is therefore arbitrary. This type of uncertainty is imaged by the monster, whose correlative is the obscure which signals the sublime: Burke argued that it is the affective appeal of obscurity which presages the sublime (Monk 34). The anxiety which follows the discontinuity between idea and word, and between sensation and idea, produces the affective experience of the sublime, which is "that moment when the relation between the signifier and signified [although not just any signifier and signified] breaks down and is replaced by an indeterminate relation" (Weiskel ix).

In that there is no necessary connection between object and signifier (something the monster

learns when confronted with the fact of different languages), Victor's attempts to imitate some concept of the ideal humanity are doomed to fail when the epistemological system in which he apparently works, that of scientific determinism and associationist psychology, denies the possibility of this type of correlation. Similarly, Mary's creation (her text and its characters) being implicitly and explicitly an arbitrary, disordered, and misshapen entity, must also present itself as the product of just such an associationist epistemology, she herself, as the child of Godwin and Wollstonecraft, being the result of such a world view. The conclusion is that both the text and Victor's activity are not imitative of any idealist or essentialist truth.

If the sublime landscape is considered to represent God's power, then the signified overwhelms the signifier, with the individual mind being negated (the "negative sublime") by the transcendent power. Romantic poetry, however, considers the sublime landscape as representing the power of poetic language (the poet as creator god), with the signifier of language therefore overwhelming the signified of the landscape in the positive or egotistical sublime (Mellor, MS on Weiskel 132). The power of language thus becomes that of God (or of the Devil: like the serpent in Eden, the monster's

speech is persuasive upon Victor and the old De Lacey). The monster is both the power of the signified of the negative sublime, being the infinite and unknowable chaos attendant upon human presumption to infinite knowledge, and also that of the signifier of the positive sublime, for he embodies the ideologies and the linguistic structuring of this elemental chaos (Mellor, MS 133).

The sublime object is a symbol for the mind's infinity: the sublime moment actually redirects awe away from the object and towards the subject, revealing the illusion in the former and the hope of realizing the unconditioned in the latter (Weiskel 46). Victor's recoil from his creature and his fall into solipsism trace this process.

There is a sense in which sublimation turns the individual properties of things into "substance" as objects are perceived by their significance (Weiskel 59). Accordingly, the monster can be seen as a displaced projection of Victor's idealist need, a desire which can never be fulfilled for it is based upon the absence which is at the core of his existence; the experience of his anxiety is thus centred upon negation.

The cause of the sublime in Victor's experience is the over-valuing of reason, as a transcendent faculty, at the expense of his imaginative apprehension of reality. The sublime involves the

metaphorical transposition of received terms (Weiskel 22), and when his reading of reality collapses in failure another order of meaning must be substituted for it.

The psychological introjection of Victor's narcissistic identifications is reinforced by the structural and thematic use of inversion in the text. Victor is excessively attached to his own finite act of creation, overlooking his finite limitations in the desire for the absolute knowledge which leads to his narcissism; the failure to attain this perfection forces him back into the awareness that his knowledge is circumscribed by his human nature.

For Victor, fulfilment of his quest means the destruction of the illusion upon which it is predicated. The ideal is subverted by its opposite: the demonic. When Victor's narcissism is at its greatest (imaged by his marriage) the positive egotistical sublime is destroyed by the negative sublime of the demonic; the immanent and monistic identity of self with the world now admits the transcendent as well as the dualism and alienation of the negative sublime. Both forms of the sublime are thus evident in the text and can be seen to be in contest, for the egotistical represents the holism of original unity whereas the negative represents the perfectionism which actually rejects this goal of union with the Other, and which it will

always reject, for the transcendence of the rational mind remains the dominant force operative in Victor's psyche, although resulting affectively in the terror of the negative sublime, of the demonic.

There is a sense in which the monster remains only an amalgam of "his" parts, suggesting that he represents the inability to sublimate. Like the novel, Victor's creation is a fiction, and the fiction can never be a sublimation because it represents divergent or opposing views, subversion, and splintering, and not the reconciliation found in the positive sublime; the ironic stance of the authorial voice supports the dominance of the negative sublime in the text.

Victor's perspective is the subjectivist one that he must create his own meaning, with the assumption that his vision is an authentic one. The authorial position ironically undermines this perspective, for the text's various narrative voices confront and evade one another.

As with Romantic organicism, for the reader the novel's "universe" remains an organized whole in which every event, as potentially significant, may be connected with every other, even if we cannot perceive any law at work. This is a process of analysis of the world through perception of it, not interaction with it. We perceive the text as the locus of meaning although there is no single narrative voice which appears to generate meaning.

In psychoanalytic literary theory the subject is the site of meaning not its source and here Victor's mind is the site of the text's meaning, for the text is the subject which is also Victor's mind.

Victor's experience of the sublime is given an ontological and metaphysical status, for the sublime is now not merely affective as in eighteenth-century experience. The generalized use of the pathetic fallacy produces a sense of the transgression of barriers between the human mind, organic nature, and the transcendent sphere of metaphysical concepts, and this transgression of barriers tests the limits of determinism and teleology in the face of the transcendent.

The world near the Pole is both spatial and mythical and marks an absence of time ("How slowly the time passes here" [E 18]), equivalent to the Neoplatonic Nous or Mind, the Demiurge and first emanation from the One, which "is eternal and beyond time" (Copleston pt. 2, 211). This is also the site of the Romantic sublime and imaginative transcendence, where love is figured narcissistically as an image of generic unity.

Paracelsus had a material conception of the soul, associated by him with "chaos" and being the "spirit" of matter (Pachter 105, 108). The pre-Genesis-like "chaos" (E 8) at the base of the novel's and the monster's creations is equivalent to that of the Neoplatonic Source (and the alchemical

prima materia [Jung, MC 156, 385]), before separation and division from the One begins. The Romantic idea of love was extended to all forms of cosmic connection, including gravitation and electromagnetism (Abrams, NS 297), and contraries do not exist in Walton's "country of eternal light" (E 16) where magnetic polarities disappear as opposing forces are annulled; magnetism is thus a figure here for the dissolution of metaphysical oppositions.

For the alchemists, the aqua permanens, the "ground sea" (E 24) under Walton's vessel, is the source of the rivers of Paradise (Jung, Aion 235). The paradisaical mythic imagery used by Walton in regard to the Pole represents a conjoining of the coldness of the rational intellect (in the conventional polar image) with the situation of the innocent sensation of the Edenic state. The fire and ice imagery here suggests the antinomies in life and the oppositions in the human psyche which are synthesized in the closing image of the monster's prospective immolation at the Pole. One term of an antithesis inheres within the other in a Coleridgean reconciliation of discordant qualities which is also alchemical. This union of opposites in Victor and his creature must however be paradoxical, for it can only be such a union by their annihilation.

Weiskel says that Longinus regarded Nature as the demiurge, being responsible for our physical being as well as thought, speech, and imagination,

that which transcends the human (13); his influence thus allowed the transcendent to be associated with the natural world, in opposition to reductive and empirical scientific views. If (after Locke) the intellect owes itself to the senses, and therefore to nature, then natural religion is inevitable, along with the natural sublime.

Hegel associated the positive natural sublime with pantheism, and in the Romantic egotistical sublime the ego replaces the immanent deity (Weiskel 54); here there is immanence, circularity, and a lack of alienation. Unlike the negative sublime, the egotistical sublime declines to polarize thought and perception into timeless and finite, thereby subverting or evading dualism (Weiskel 63).

In the valley of Servox (E 94), Victor experiences this beneficent and non-transcendent organic sublime as it unites humanity with nature in the force of immanent process. This all-pervasive and inexorable force realizes itself in nature, is value directed towards the ultimate good, and allows for no external accidents, as there are in the Gothic.

Although indifferent to human concerns, the inexorably moving nature in the glacier, being an image of immutable natural process (E 96), diminishes the significance of human problems, overwhelming and annulling them as does that "giver of oblivion" (E 95), the maternal Arve. Interpreted

within an organicist viewpoint, the conflicts within nature which Victor witnesses in the Alps are perceived by him as part of an eternal process of dialectic growth, as nature destroys in order to create. He finds great "consolation" (E 96) in this organicist apprehension of nature, of "the silent working of immutable laws" (E 96). This passage suggests the emotional advantages inherent in a sense of individual pain being subsumed under an awareness of immortality which supersedes individual death in the continuity of growth which the human race shares with the natural world. The personalized quality of Victor's sense of destiny, and its accompanying feelings of alienation, are lost for a brief time in "the assemblance of grand shapes" (E 96) of the mountain scenery.

The image of organicism here is also maternal, of a return to the womb (E 94), to the source of Victor's creation: the water imagery of the Arve is also that of the unconscious, of the womb, and the rushing waters of birth.

In the valley of Chamounix, Victor's memories of boyhood are accompanied by feelings of sensual pleasure, as mind and body unify. This is "maternal nature" (E 95) bidding him to "weep no more" (E 95); the experience is momentary only, for the pain returns.

Victor's spatial journey is also one of an orientation among ideas, of choosing to test the

limits of speculative thought, seeking what will turn out to be the "original sin" of disunion and fragmentation, and continually crossing and recrossing the boundaries and circuitous routes that delimit metaphysical oppositions. The emphasis upon physical decay in the novel can be taken to represent the dissolving of concern with the structures and material relations of things; the quest is for the transcendental signified of vitalism, the life principle. Victor wants to use both reason and the imagination in the remaking of the material world. The problem is that he overlooks the conditions that make experience possible, and the boundaries that exist between idea and fact. The material with which he works conditions his product in a way he cannot know; fact betrays idea, the material world betrays the imagination, and the monster is nature's revenge upon the imagination. Like Prometheus, Victor enslaves himself, binding himself to the rock of his own mind's ideas and the imaginative vision which is limited by reason's hold, chaining himself to the fixity which is the reality of his utopian dream.

Considerations of mutability and of the subsistence and conservation of matter are raised by the cycle of melting and freezing near the Arctic. These are the issues of essence and accident and contingency, of the inherent, substantive properties of things and of their potential for adaptation to

chance circumstances. The nature of the intersection of life and rationality with the inert elements of matter is sought. Victor, however, cannot control the occurrence of the monstrous, he cannot get the nuances of skin texture and eye and skin coloration correct as fact betrays idea.¹ His vision in the final construction seems distorted, and "the half extinguished light" (E 57) of the candle could also refer to his own vision, to the "candle" of his imaginative vision; this raises the question of misjudgement and of how the accidental arrangement of things may be related to the nature of the objects themselves. Phenomenal data will not reveal the essence of things to Victor. He discovers the life principle (in fact a pseudo-life principle) but not how to apply it properly, which suggests the inability of the human mind to deduce the real truths of "the cause of generation and life" (E 52). The question of the nature of community is also raised; if Elizabeth is only by chance Victor's "more than sister" (E 35) then what is the relationship between essential similarities and contingency, contemporaneity, and accident? Perceived in Humean terms (Russell 639), an apparently necessary cause and effect relationship is really only a question of habit and contingency, this being a creation of the so-called individual mind in the so-called objective universe.

The monster's "speculative eyes" (E 9) suggest both speculation and the speculum mirror which offers an alternative, possibly distorted, image of the world. As objects become idea, categories of object and space, and of causality and time, break down into a reality which can become monistic and solipsistic (vide Part Two Chapter Seven above).

In alchemical transformation the image of a foetus in the womb of the philosopher's vessel is a common one. The foetal decomposition in the "mother liquid" (Jung, MC 314), with the uterus as grave, is a preliminary to the transmutation of "earthy heaviness" (Jung, MC 314) into that spiritual state which is imaged as the feminine Luna (with which the monster is identified), awaiting union with the masculine Sun; the product of this union is the lapis, the incorruptible stone which combines spirit and soul with the physical. The monster's birth can be seen as an ironic distortion of such a process.

Victor's overfilled ego is surrendered into an excessive attachment for the parts which make up the monster, a type of situation which (according to Freud) causes one to fall ill (Weiskel 160); he then wants to recover the primary unified consciousness and thus withdraws from attachment to these parts. The object is thus dissociated from the real aim: to annihilate or transcend the object and return to the primary state (Weiskel 160-61), the real source of life.

Victor could only have united with his feminine counterpart Elizabeth if self-love (imaged by the monster) had been destroyed and affinitive love cultivated. Calvinism, however, destroys the possibility of the realization of the goal of the Neoplatonic journey for Victor, for justice and reason rule here, not love and redemption. He attempts to destroy self-hood but fails because his ruling God will not allow it: such a Being, in effect, destroys affinitive love, for one is always spiritually alone when those closest to oneself are considered to be damned.

On the Mer de Glace Victor invokes the spirit of the mountain but instead conjures up the monster: nature is an awesome and ambiguous power. Here, monistic pantheistic organicism appears to produce the monster of utilitarian social utopianism which destroys human affiliation.

The aural pun which converts the Mer de Glace at Montanvert to a mother of ice, a dead mother (vide Part Two Chapter Six above), suggests the death of normal procreation and its replacement by the "false" ideology of social utopianism (imaged earlier by the lightning-blasted oak tree [E 41]), as utilitarian values replace traditional morality and conventional social affections.

The Arve soothed Victor like "a lullaby" (E 95), but here on the Mer de Glace, where the monster's tale is told, the maternal is an

indifferent presence or an absent comfort. In alchemical imagery, the term "mother" signifies the prima materia in its feminine aspect. This is the moon and the mother of all things which contains the potential elixir of life: "the miraculous water which brings together all that is divided" (Jung, MC 21). The image of the dead mother here suggests the impossibility of this type of reintegration.

The glacier, which is a metaphor for organicism and the inevitable movement of progress, barricades the valley at "the sources of the Arveiron" (E 96). In a combination of masculine and feminine imagery, the glacier ambiguously contains the maternal, both preserving and entrapping it.

In wanting to create a new race of creatures Victor unwittingly destroys his family and himself: any term also contains its polar opposite. Victor's idealism subverts into the demonic; like Coleridge's ancient Mariner, as a consequence of seeking "LIFE-IN-DEATH" he finds death in life.

In the Kantian or Negative Sublime dualism is legitimated and intensified. Whereas the beautiful imitates reconciliation, "the sublime splits consciousness into alienated halves" (Weiskel 48). The movement of consciousness over these two halves culminates in its withdrawal from the sensible world.

The sublime is always associated with anxiety. The bathos of Victor's fall from the sublime into

the ridiculous (imaged by the monster) indicates his anxiety over choice between two discrete orders of meaning (Weiskel 21): idealization and scepticism. There is a subversion of the Romantic sublime in Victor's scepticism. The idealizing quality of "perfectionism", which is equivalent to transcendence in the sublime, is what is desired above all by Victor, above the "completion" of the Neoplatonic goal that is the monster's goal; this perfectionism is undermined and hence subverted by his later scepticism. Paradoxically, the sublime moment both produces the monster and is antithetical to what he desires, for the creature represents this desire for wholeness which Victor represses.

"The negative sublime seems to offer to the poet the truly primary power of the god" (Weiskel 164). Perceived in oedipal terms, Victor's attempted abrogation of the powers of the Father also represents a desire to possess the mother, that is, to acquire the transcendental powers of the Deity along with the immanentist ones of Mother Nature, these being the "secrets of heaven and earth" (E 37).

There is an apprehension of the partaking of greatness involved in the identification of self with great object in the natural sublime (Weiskel 98-99). The demonic is equivalent to the falling away into depth when this moment of identification with greatness passes, and one becomes overwhelmed

by this power. In Shelley's Prometheus Unbound Demogorgon is Jupiter's son (and his nemesis) who draws his father down into this abyss of chaos, and has an analogous relationship to that of Victor and his creature.

The sublime moment thus precipitates a falling away, in its negation or unattainableness, from height into depth: the image of the abyss. The sublime in Frankenstein produces the monstrous, event triggers response, as though Victor's psyche is attempting to maintain a state of dynamic equilibrium.

In an image of philosophical indecision Elizabeth speaks of the inability to choose between truth and falsehood, and to be as though on the edge of a precipice, from which (unlike Victor) she retreats, feeling that thousands are crowding her into the abyss (E 93). In "Gnosticism the 'Father of All' is described not only as masculine and feminine (or neither), but as Bythos, the abyss" (Jung, MC 11). The abyss can also represent "the abyss of universal opposition in every individual" (Jung, PA 20); and Elizabeth is not such a divided being, refusing come what may to change places "with such a wretch" (E 93).

The transcendence in the sublime moment is apocalyptic in its cessation of the temporal and syntagmatic flow. This represents an excess of the signified, which excludes the search for the

signifier and the temporality necessary to the mind. The image here is that of the abyss (Weiskel 27) and the influx of the demonic, of the moment on the Mer de Glace when the monster appears (E 98); the ego is thus demonized in the sublime. Victor's guilt, over the awareness of what he has done, becomes transmuted into the retribution of self-punishment as a type of self-destruction. His guilt stems from the awareness of his transgression of both earthly and divine law, as his power as creator god is overwhelmed by that of his God.

Victor is fascinated by the abyss, by the "Alpine valleys" (E 94) and "the crevices in the ice" (E 98): he travels towards this metaphoric Alpine abyss with an involuntary movement, with a fascination which will invert into horror and dread when the fall is experienced. Reasoning is in abeyance in this moment for "the mind is so entirely filled with its object" (Burke quoted in Weiskel 104), but the influx of the rational is inevitable.

Coleridge's Secondary Imagination coexists with the conscious will, whereas "an involuntary act of Imagination does conduce to a strengthened solipsism" (Weiskel 161). Victor's late haste in the monster's creation can be seen to signify the loss of the operation of his conscious will and his imaginative vision, to be followed by his fall into solipsism.

The artistic illusion is also destroyed in Victor's failed project. The reason for Victor's imagination collapsing into Coleridgean "fancy", where "fancy" is identified with "Darkness" (E 51), is that his reason retains control. His rational faculty takes the place of Deity, in a moment of sublime identification with greatness; he becomes enchained by reason. His "imaginative" perception and insight are relinquished in favour of reason's control and the metaphor of the demonic, as experience becomes representation and personification. The fall away from idealization's goal and what this comes to represent to the mind are figured in demonic terms.

The metaphor of the demonic represents a reactionary substitution of the rational faculty for its dissolution in the incorporation of the sublime moment; thus language replaces experience, and mediates between sensation and idea; the monster is the desire to signify. He represents the discontinuity between signifier and signified, a breach which in itself produces the negative sublime which he personifies: he is both a signifier literalized and a signifier which operates symbolically, in the sense that he represents a range of mutable referents. He is sign, signifier, metaphor, and symbol. The creature is a "genius of liminality" (Sherwin 891) and has an ambiguous, mediate status. He is also made partly from animal

tissue: "the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials" (E 55), and is therefore, like the text, a hybrid creature metaphorically and actually.

Kant and Schiller denied that the human mind could attain an apprehension of the noumenal world (Mellor, English Romantic Irony [ERI] 28-29); for them, the noumenal and phenomenal remained disparate, the human condition was dualistic. Victor, however, attempts to understand this noumenal world (but, like Godwin, whose idealist philosophy has a utilitarian purpose, through its antithesis, the phenomenal), employing his reason and imagination; he wants to experience the infinite and a perfect knowledge of absolute reality, which are realizable only through the sublime, not the beautiful. This is a desire which is to be frustrated as god-like Victor again becomes wounded humanity: the image of Victor as a wounded deer (E 94) is analogous to that of Shelley's Prometheus as "some struck and sobbing fawn" (PU 1.455).

The beautiful addresses humanity, the sublime the spiritual or demonic. The sublime and demonic therefore impinge upon tragedy; they represent a spirituality of a hopeless kind, such as is found in the Gothic, and not of orthodox Christianity where salvation is more or less assured.

The creature can thus be equated explicitly with the negative sublime, where the individual psyche is negated by a transcendent power which, as

signified, is here stronger than the signifier, that is, the product of Victor's endeavours conceptually and actually. This greater power is that of the Calvinist God of damnation for Victor, who realizes that he has presumed to His powers and, in breach of His laws, sought meaning in the phenomenal realm. Victor wants knowledge of the absolute which he knows, as a Calvinist, is restricted for him, for his God is unfathomable; the noumenal thus overpowers the phenomenal for him. Victor's Calvinist conditioning means that he cannot escape damnation, for these basic "mythic" forms, even when secularized into a determinist philosophy, continue to dominate his psyche: the same fatalistic forms which constitute the Gothic.

Victor calls upon the "Wandering spirits" (E 98), but the monster appears. In reaction to seeing the creature he then feels a mist come over his eyes. Blindness here is a figure for the achievement of a new imaginative vision, which, ironically, at the same time marks a reversion to an existing theistic model: in wanting to obliterate the consciousness of what the creature represents for him (E 101) he is no longer a slave to sensual perceptions, to organicism.

Victor saw the monster "nearly in the light of ... [his] own vampire" (E 77); his being has been absorbed into the creature's identity. His final pursuit of the creature, however, can be seen as a

reaction to the annihilation of rationality in the sublime moment, for he desires to abrogate the power of the senses, to possess that part of the psyche (and to control it) which precipitated the loss of rational control.

There is thus paradox in the fact that it is Victor's excess of rationality which leads to a desire to be inundated in the abyss of the sublime. This also leads to anxiety regarding the loss of ego consciousness and rationality, resulting in ambivalence regarding incorporation. Guilt over the desire for the powers of deity and nature results in a wish to identify with that (the monster) which has precipitated the dilemma in the first place.

The involuntary movement towards the abyss produces the dread of incorporation. Analogous to this is the image of union with the mother (mother-son incest is a common symbol in alchemy [Jung, MC 19]), and incorporation into the Pole, which is at the same time desired and yet feared: hence the image of union with the mother as decay (E 58).

The position is thus one of simultaneous attraction and repulsion, an image which dominates the text, through the relationship of monster and maker, as being one of mutual attraction and repulsion analogous to that of the principle of magnetism. This textual motif implies an underlying homeostatic quality to the mind, of a balancing of oppositional tendencies.

In Walton's fourth letter, Victor is aware, just before his death, that nature "seems still to have the power of elevating his soul from earth" (E 29). The suggestion of transcendence here actually means a denial of immanence, as though nature is evidence merely of God's work and not of His presence: the orthodox view. In contradiction, he also now admits the possibility for another of the realization of the Promethean quest in nature. This is a possibility only: his statement, "my fate is nearly fulfilled.... nothing can alter my destiny ... how irrevocably it is determined" (E 30), is the only certainty for him now.

Victor's problem is one of orientating himself among antinomies. The intellectual quest for the knowledge of absolutes (the life-force) is defeated by the knowledge of the hopelessness of such an endeavour. The contraries of the work, the metaphysical speculations on the origins of experience, are circled by the affective world of horror of the Calvinist God. There is no balance of oppositions for Victor, the horror is the final message, the overriding atmosphere is of despair. The affective defeats the rational; the primal pre-rational remains in control. There is no beneficent transcendence of contraries here, as there is with Romantic organicism; the scientific, the organic are destroyed by Gothic despair. The transcendental realm of the unknowable retains control in the

Romantic Gothic, destroying the faith, benevolence, and hope which are imaged by Clerval and Elizabeth. The Gothic reinforces belief in this dualistic system of good and evil, and it becomes the victor as dualism and transcendence remain dominant.

In seeking the content, the essence of life, Victor does not consider the context: the whole, the relationship of parts. He jumps from one part or system to another, until in a mental collapse he falls into the "whole" which is a fatalistic, Calvinist one of despair, good, and evil.

Victor's retreat from the notion that we can have knowledge, by way of human reason, of universal natural laws or absolute truths, becomes the solipsism of the knowledge of his immediate, subjective sensations. His search for order and coherence is subverted into the acknowledgement of the disorder at the heart of his Gothic universe. To revert to Calvinism is to revert to the pre-Romantic certainty of a different order, where the human will is not exercised, Godwin-like, as an agent in human progress. As is found in German idealism, Godwin stressed the mind's power to create its own world of consciousness "freed from any absolute natural law" (Mellor, ERI 28). Idealism frees us to create our own being for here matter is merely absence of light, not a positive quality.

In Neoplatonism, also, matter is equated with the absence of light and spirit. Perhaps the

monster will, with his final leap (E 223), reabsorb himself into the Neoplatonic light and spirit, with the moon association (as being both the absence of the light of the sun, but also its reflection) thereby being implicitly replaced by that of the sun. There is irony here as polarities coalesce and the monstrous example of matter's absolute moral negation is possibly to be the one to attain the Goal. The image of the perfect circle means that all polarities eventually merge into their opposites and into ultimate unity, and beginning and consummation ultimately unite: the monster will "consummate the series" (E 222) of his being in his proposed self-immolation.

The text as only partial allegory, and the many and varied metaphoric significances of the monster all support the denial of absolute, essential truth, and an assertion of the chaotic foundation to existence. The partial allegory means a refusal to equate one order of meaning with another in a relation of equivalence.

Victor's perfectionist ethic means the disallowing of the values represented by the Judeo-Christian circuitous journey, by organicism, and the ordinary human needs of the creature's desires. Like the oppressed French populace, the creature then inevitably turns (he can be identified with the inevitable movement of Necessity, of the demiurge of Shelley's Demogorgon) in retribution upon Victor;

external political and social events here parallel subjective psychological ones.

The monster embodies the text's dualities. He can be equated with social utopianism as well as with its product which, in a reaction to the loss of individual rights in a utilitarian philosophy, rebels against utopianism. The creature is thus the cold, reflected light of rationality, but also its inverse: passion uncontrolled by moral considerations. He also represents imaginative insight and transcendence when employed in the service of social utopianism, along with the rejection of this imaginative insight in the reactionary desire for the surety of mundane existence, and the semi-oblivion for consciousness of the psychic integrity which is symbolized by the Source which is the Pole.

The events leading up to the creature's creation and animation can be seen to parallel an internalization of guilt on Victor's part, while his rejection and pursuit of the monster reflect his psychological release from this load of guilt and responsibility, as the contents of his unconscious mind are returned to the realm of the transcendent.

With Protestantism, there is an internalization of authority, guilt, and discipline. This may lead to the development of hubris and self-justification, with one becoming as God (as in the Romantic artist) and imaginatively recreating the world for oneself.

With reason in control, Victor extends the imaginative to the temporal sphere when he applies millennial ideas to phenomenal existence.

The psychological problems associated with this enterprise can include doubt concerning the failure of the newly created system (a failure which is imaged in the text by the demonic), as well as an alienation from others and the "external" world which can result in narcissism (imaged in Victor's marriage), and where any imagined horror can become reality in solipsism.

This can lead to the attempt to absolve oneself (the secularization of confession in narrative form, evident in both Victor's tale and the novel itself), which must lead to failure, for one's peers do not have the authority to absolve one (and, in Victor's case, neither does the Calvinist God). In Victor, this results in the abrogation of all these internalized elements to the Creator, in a psychological reaction to the pressure of carrying this load of guilt and responsibility, with his will now a vehicle for divine authority, for he is no longer self-willed and autonomous. Victor's movement outward geographically parallels this psychological projection of conscious contents onto a transcendent Being. There is a desire to destroy that evidence of his own hubris: the monster. An internal war is being waged, however, for that monster of error committed in the temporal sphere is

also representative of the best aspect of temporal well-being: social affinity, where reason and sentiment are in balance, and which invalidates the millennial imaginary dream. Thus the imaginative dreamer is still there under the surface wanting to destroy the annihilator of the imagination, but also to re-unite with that "monster" who represents Victor's desire for temporal social relations.

Jehovah is just; the Calvinist God is unjust. Victor's belief is a mixture of both: wanting to believe that the Calvinist God is just like Jehovah (hence Victor's emphasis upon justice), but despairing at the injustice of election when he is convinced of his damnation.

At the novel's end Victor swings back toward his original position, subscribing once more to the possible validity of the millennial enterprise: his "confessor" Walton is ascribed the vicarious fulfilment of Victor's dream, assuming in Victor's eyes this role which is associated with the Protestant internalization of guilt and authority. There is a see-sawing between this attitude and the abrogation of all authority and will to the Deity, who Himself does not provide absolution or salvation and therefore throws this responsibility back upon the individual; and the cycle begins again. This see-sawing effect is contained within a narrative structure which can be seen as an inversion of the Neoplatonic journey (vide Part Two Chapter Eight

above), and therefore highlights the inevitable failure of this model for the Calvinist Victor.

This process is all related to the inevitability of self-justification in a "predestinated" universe. Hubris is an inevitable consequence of the internalization of authority and guilt which result from the fear of damnation and the emphasis upon rationality, as one attempts to divine the world and the creator.

The overall effect of the text on the reader, coincident with the ironical implied authorial position, is one of confusion, uncertainty and contradiction, which contrasts with Victor's ultimate total submission to the metaphysical absolute which is his God. The text demonstrates the psychological process of someone caught in a transition between two philosophical systems. Victor returns to a static system of order and certainty, away from dynamic Romanticism where the individual is actively involved in the process of the creation of meaning.

The denial of metaphysical oppositions in any ontological sense which monistic theories represent is ultimately questioned by the text: it reasserts the validity of such polarities.

Romantic Irony

The structure of Frankenstein, of voice within voice and narrative within narrative, is circular

but episodic. Although the narrative continuity moves along, and is at times provided by, Victor's evolving consciousness, this continuity is limited, with loose threads, uncertainties, inconclusions, and syntactic ambiguity dominating the text. The idea of accident and contingency is hereby emphasised, along with an implicit questioning of the theology and immanent destiny of Romantic organicism (being linear and inevitable in its movement) which figures so prominently in the work.

This fragmented structure is echoed in the subject matter of the text: it is a diverse admixture of theologies, of fragments from other literary works, and of various philosophies, an amalgam of dialogue, verse, and prose, all imaged metaphorically by the monstrous form of the creature. Thus the novel as a whole, in both structure and content, is presented as an aberrant construction; and Victor's endeavour is a parallel one to his author's.

If the text is viewed as a series of concentric circles, then the implied authorial voice can be seen to occupy its outermost orbit, asserting, from a position of objectivity, a relativity of knowledge and truth. This stance is characteristic of Romantic irony, and is an attitude which is in direct contrast to Gothic absolutism, although, as it has its foundation in uncertainties, maintaining a strict relationship with the Gothic. This

indeterminacy and relativity are analogous to those which spring from Antinomianism; and, as with Calvinism, here there is no shared unconscious life, no retreat from consciousness, and no denigration of reason (Thorslev 143). Unlike the early Victor, the ironist sceptically comments upon the world as it is perceived to be and does not make metaphysical assertions about the nature of ultimate reality (Thorslev 167). This relativity of knowledge and truth is consonant with the views of Godwin (vide Part One Chapter Four above) which, in turn, represent a secularization of Calvinism.

The reflexiveness of the Romantic ironist is related to inclusion in a system where subjective and objective reality, and therefore division, is assumed as a given; in raising some aspect of the self to consciousness it becomes objectified, with the reflexive self eluding this objectified part in a division between observing and "empirical" self. The reflexive ironist can always rise above his or her irony in detachment and distancing and escape (Thorslev 169). The making of the creature and Victor's rejection of him represent this process of psychic division and evasion of self which always precedes another synthesis, again to be followed by division. By this stage Victor has ceased to speculate upon the nature of ultimate reality and has entered a world of relativities; he is, however, no true ironist here, for his lack of conscious

awareness of and objectivity towards this process precludes such an appellation.

There is a resistance to closure in Romantic irony for no view is considered as ultimate; a progressive undermining of one position after another means that even the "close" seems a temporary resting place, like the monster's position just before his "final" leap. The ironist thus undermines successive views in a process of detached observations which can be contrasted with the empathy of Keats's "negative capability". This is an attitude analogous to Godwin's "perfectibility": a model of infinite progression which implies a residual belief in teleology although, strictly speaking, the Romantic ironic view suggests that, ontologically, the world, natural and human, is chaotic, without telos, purpose, or discernible order.

There is no suggestion here of the indeterminacy of meaning of post-Structuralist thought, for the monster's leap at the end is actually an image of progressive searching, of becoming rather than being, in the undermining of one belief system or philosophical position after another. Unlike modern deconstructors who are sceptical only, the Romantic ironist continually constructs new forms out of the "destruction" of irony. Thus, although the attitude is based upon the idea of negation, there is the implication that

the impetus behind it is founded on the search for an ultimate absolute.

The only sanction here is human choice (Thorslev 143): Victor does not justify his actions in turning his back on the monster, and he feels no moral obligation or imperative to defend Justine. Nevertheless, an almost Calvinistic emphasis upon justice is figured in the series of unjust trials in the novel. The four trials: of Safie's father, of Felix for aiding him, Justine's, and Victor's, find Victor the only one judged not guilty. In light of Victor's and the monster's concern with justice this ironically suggests that life is a trial to be unjustly judged; and Victor, Justine, and Felix are all ironical names.

Freedom is the aim of the Romantic ironist (Thorslev 175): Frankenstein's authorial voice is outside society and history in its objective revelation of different philosophical attitudes and in its detachment from any involvement in them. The relativity of belief systems is asserted and, in the monster's creation, a sense of the limited and provisional nature of order which we create in our conscious lives, of the flux, contingency, and accident in our world (Thorslev 152). This can be contrasted with Romantic organicism where there are no accidents or unrealized possibilities.

The novel's implied authorial voice can be seen to assert a negative, pessimistic view, implying

that it is hopeless to seek absolute truths; and Victor's final retreat into an over-determined Gothic universe suggests one possible reactionary consequence of such a quest.

In Frankenstein, the Hegelian spiralling movement towards the divine and self-awareness is undercut by the text's ironic stance. What has been built up (by Mary and Victor) is questioned and then rejected, to be followed by a new construction. The monster's final leap, after the imagistic coming together with Victor (the fact that Victor is dead ensures that no real union occurs), suggests Schlegel's philosophical irony, where thesis and antithesis remain always in contradiction and never unified (unlike Hegel's thesis, antithesis and synthesis) (Mellor, ERI 11). Schlegel's synthesis is a conjunction, not a harmony. In the death scene the monster merely conjoins with Victor, they are not reconciled; and the monster would anticipate vengeance from Victor beyond death (E 223). The creature is to be reborn in a new synthesis after conjunction with his "antithesis". The Schlegelian conjunction of opposites with no resolution, and "transcendence" provided by the implied authorial voice of irony, hovering between antinomies, does not become in the monster's leap at the end (also the authorial leap into annihilation as the authorial presence disappears at the novel's end) one of resolution, although a new synthesis proposes

a distinctly new thesis and moves beyond the intersection of antinomies: "if it thinks, it will not surely think thus" (E 223).

Victor's final pursuit of the creature is analogous to the monster's final leap, and both represent the third term of the Romantic dialectic. This is a world of becoming, of change and transmutation, not of being; here, finite humanity attempts to know the infinite universe.

Schlegel's "divinity", defined as "the human consciousness of becoming" (Mellor, ERI 13) implies that the monster, as the text's symbol of becoming, is perhaps to attain the Neoplatonic goal. Ironically, Victor is arrested in this process whereas the monster is not, for, as the novel's conclusion suggests, only the creature jumps free of the text's narrative structure: the inverse of the movement of the Romantic dialectic.

The artistic process itself involves the creation of a finite, ordered world while at the same time being a representation of the human limitations and inadequacies of the author as creative artist. The fact that the language of Mary's original manuscript text was substantially altered by Shelley (Mellor, MS 60), whereby, for example, a largely vernacular idiom was replaced by a more Latinate one (Mellor, MS 59), ironically raises the question of authorial originality. For the Romantic artist, acknowledging both the creative

and destructive processes in Romantic thought, must be represented in his or her creation; this is true of Frankenstein where the creature operates as a symbol of this process in both Victor's experience and the text's production.

Frankenstein is represented both as a unique creation and as an abortive hodge-podge, possessing nothing original. It is thus, at its very core, in both structure and content, an example of Romantic irony. The narrative technique of employing various voices in the epistolary discourse, of the telling of different tales, is a method of attaining the authorial distance and objectivity necessary in an effective portrayal of Romantic irony; creativity occurs in the detached moment.

To the extent that Victor and his creature can be seen to represent Romantic oppositions, the ironic authorial stance incorporates both Victor's and the monster's positions: both poles are true in a see-sawing between chaos and order, infinite and finite, change and persistence, life and death, in a never-ending process of becoming.

The Romantic oppositional and creatively progressive movement from the desire for absolute knowledge and order towards its negation in chaos is also paralleled by the Romantic concern with the transcendence of antinomies, primarily those of the finite and infinite, and of life and death; hence the structural antinomic quality of the text, along

with the lack of ultimate transcendence of these oppositions, except in the creature's final leap. Irony breaks down all orders, and the dominance of the Gothic in the text can be seen as representing a preoccupation with the destructive and chaotic aspects of the Romantic paradigm.

Implicit, always, in this process of the consistent undermining of every assertion is the perhaps contemptuous attitude of the implied authorial voice towards the type represented by Victor (and Godwin) who narrowly, doggedly, and without humour persists in imposing an absolutist world view upon a universe which to another (such as Clerval or Elizabeth) is always polychromous in its richness and variety. Unlike Victor, such an individual leaves at the core of life a mystery which is not to be plumbed by the human mind.

In the process of affirmation and then mocking destruction, this ironic voice thus makes a value judgement, takes a moral position. The attack is only partial, however, because Victor's position remains a valid one; it persists and, arguably, is accorded an equivalent status to any alternative in terms of absolute truth.

In the text, there is an enthusiasm, creativity, and involvement dichotomous with the objectivity and ironic destruction of what has been built up. Thus the image of the mirror can suggest the mirroring of Victor's desires, along with his

critical and objective undermining of them after the monster's creation, a negation in which the mirror represents the distortion and disillusion of his idealism into the demonic.

He "hovers near the spot which I inhabit" (E 200). This image of the monster lingering near Victor suggests the hovering between Romantic creation and ironic destruction, with the monster as agent of the ironic process. The "hovering" is transcendental: the Shlegelian movement between real and ideal, being and becoming (Mellor, ERI 17), fiction and reality.

There is no explicit use of symbolism in the text. Symbolism, with its double-layered, culturally determined range of referents, fixedly unites reality and fiction and more readily precludes the characteristically Romantic individual ascription of meaning to image which metaphor permits (the private symbol systems of some Romantics exclude the uninitiated reader in a way which metaphor does not). The text's domination by metaphor and partial allegory allows for new symbolic ranges of referents to be created by the reader. The distinction between reality and fiction, those twin polarities of Romantic irony, necessarily also remains in this activity.

Romantic irony also represents the mind in the process of thinking. The implied authorial voice sees the world as indefinite chaos, with the human

mind as creatively, but with finite capacity, developing a product which is always to be broken down when placed in conjunction with the unknowable infinite. Implicit in this is the process of development, of becoming in both author and text, and the questioning of any static order in the universe, as far as human consciousness can ever have access to it. Becoming implies contradiction, of an inversion of one position into another.

The infinite is always the lure for the god-like Romantic artist whereas Romantic irony insists that there are limits to human knowledge, making a distinction between noumenon and phenomenon, and asserting a dualism opposed to Romantic organicism and pantheism; this is therefore the implied authorial position. Romantic irony thus involves a rejection of the Judeo-Christian and Neoplatonic goal of a circuitous journey back to Paradise, and can therefore be broadly placed in the same category as the Gothic. There is, however, self-parody in the authorial stance whereas the Gothic Victor takes himself far too seriously.

The different narrators carry the opposing voices of the text's Romantic irony. The contradictory ideas in Frankenstein are not synthesized or harmonised; as is figured by the monster, they persist as an amalgam of fragments which conjoin but remain disparate and irreconcilable.

There is a conjunction in the text between chaos and order, in form and content. In the process of becoming (the creature's metamorphosis and final leap) the monster is simultaneously himself and something other than himself (as potential self); he represents a conjunction of finite and infinite possibility, transgressing the barriers between being and becoming, order and chaos, coherence and freedom. Paradoxically, while the monster's substance determines what he becomes, the very nature of the process of his metamorphosis determines what his substance will be, combining both the Aristotelian and Heraclitian viewpoints (Mellor, ERI 27) on being and becoming (although Victor remains fixed within the Aristotelian attitude). In metamorphosis, the finite enters into the infinite, through the endless possibility of infinite change.

Romantic irony acknowledges change, which Victor ultimately retreats from because he can no longer confront an ontological chaos; hence his descent into a Gothic hell. Mutability is what he tries to control; he attempts to arrest decomposition and to reverse it, and yet embraces it in the process.

Schlegel rejects the Aristotelian view that substance (being) underlies change (becoming), and supports the Heraclitian view that "becoming underlies all substance" (Mellor, ERI 27). Victor

looks for the "substance" which he believes is at the heart of change; thus the finite and infinite remain disparate categories for him whereas the authorial voice is a Schlegelian one. The monster is a symbol of becoming, of the chaos of the noumenon, the thing in itself beyond human perception.

According to Popper (Thorslev 168), there are similarities in attitude and methodology between the views of the ironist and those of the scientist.

Scientific method involves the testing of a hypothesis, leading perhaps to the development of a theory, by the disproving of negative instances: oppositions to the hypothesis. This attitude is reflexive: seeking to disprove one's own theories and thereby to undermine the authority of ironist or scientist.

Victor in effect employs this procedure in the construction of the creature, for the monster represents the disproving of his hypothesis: the negative instance not having been disproved. Thus his hypothesis, that he can create a new humanity, cannot be proven to be a general law. It remains a unique and contingent phenomenon, specific to time and circumstance: Victor (rightly) was not confident of being able to construct a similar creature in the female monster. The relativity of values and truths is emphasised here along with an implicit questioning of scientific method.

As is typical in scientific practice, if not theory, Victor's scientific "theory" is arrived at by "intuition", by "imaginative vision", and not by an inductive progression from a collection of observed regularities to a general law.

The scientist and the Romantic ironist distinguish between fact and value (Thorslev 173). Romantic irony deals with values, and assertions of value do not necessarily lose their credibility, even if discredited, whereas a disproved scientific hypothesis (the monster), in a system which is based upon the testing of so-called objective "facts", does lose its validity. With Romantic irony there are no absolutes; therefore the conclusions of the understanding are as tentative and provisional as they are in scientific practice (Thorslev 143).

Victor was never an ironist or a true scientist, for science looks for empirical facts and not metaphysical truths. Science is hypothesis, not absolute knowledge. Therefore, from the perspective of the authorial voice, there is irony in Victor's quest for the impossible, in seeking absolutes where none is deemed to exist.

The text represents a questioning of scientific method in that every proposition, assertion, or theory is either disproved or at least called into question by some element, such as a mythic image, located in a subtext, or from what can be gleaned by

a very close reading: negative instances are not disproved.

The early Victor's creation is not proven and is therefore non-scientific. He is the hero, or rather anti-hero, of an indeterminate universe. Similarly, Godwin's theory was non-prescriptive, emphasizing the relativity of each situation, with the individual being the decisive operative factor in the equation. With science "truth" is provisional but reproducible; with Godwin, some absolute metaphysical truths exist but his perfectibility suggests both a teleological view as well as that of Romantic irony, where any closure is only a temporary resting place, as in the Hegelian dialectic.

The text affirms and rejects both the Gothic and the scientific views, being the assertion of a universe of absolute truths and of its negation, for science is provisional.

There is a resistance to closure in the novel. As with scientific method, any questioning of the subject matter which could be made by the reader or listener is already included with the text. Thus the methodology of scientific experiment, in seeking to falsify a hypothesis by the discovery of negative instances, which is implicitly questioned in the work, for the only (apparently) scientific experiment fails, is actually employed in the text's

very organization and in the stance of the implied authorial voice.

Accordingly, the ironic attitude of Frankenstein's implied authorial voice, which is evident in syntactic ambiguity, contradiction, and inversion, can be seen to represent a textual confrontation with Godwin's seminal work Political Justice, that is, with its rhetorical stance, rational certainty, and its implicit devaluing of the imaginative and non-rational.

The textual substance of Mary's novel can thus be interpreted as an example of the Romantic denial of tradition, as well as a rebellious rejection of a creator by his creature which is characteristic of the Romantic recreation of the world. There is, however, double irony in the fact that the text itself is thereby guilty of what it is explicitly attacking: the Promethean-like hubris of the Romantic rebel.

Similarly, Victor's dabblings in alchemy demonstrate, in his disobedience to his father, a rejection of received beliefs and traditional authority. His pioneering endeavours in science involve a rejection of received opinion, and portray Victor as Romantic creator of his own meaning, by way of the perceived truth of imaginative vision. However, Victor's imaginative vision proves to be of the same illusory order that characterizes Godwin's idealist philosophy, and his desire for release in

the experience of the sublime (E 97) signifies a longing to return to his lost origins where he was at one with both his father and tradition.

The text's assertions of metaphysical realities are always undercut by the dissolving operation of tropes and ambiguous syntax. Any perceived ultimate truth, such as Victor's presumed inevitability of human perfectibility (his "new species" [E 54] being one in this process, laying "the foundations of future success" [E 53]), is also represented as trope, without ontological existence: the monster, who, however, if considered as a metaphor literalized, actually does have ontological existence. Paradoxically, in view of the assembling of members in his creation, the monster is a metaphor for the dissolution and dismemberment represented by the text's master trope of transformation, as any "certainty" is transmuted imagistically and associatively into the impasse of uncertainty, where (as represented by the aborted construction of the female creature) no new images of certainties can be created.

Any textual assertion of the existence of an absolute reality is thus always broken down by the operation of allusion after allusion, through tropes and syntactic ambiguity: the monster is associated with the moon, which symbolizes the cold light of reason, which implies Victor, who is the inverse of the demonic, although they both represent rebellion

and the Romantic individual creation of meaning, which suggest Promethean hubris, and so on. This process marks the transposition of sign systems into one another which is characteristic of the exercise of intertextuality, with the creature operating as a symbol of this mutability and uncertainty.

¹ The monster's skin is described as being "like that of a mummy" (E 218). Mummy or Mumia was a medieval medicinal preparation supposedly made of the substance of mummies (OED 596). There is, in this image, an implicit association with the monster and Mary's dead mother. The "tabula rasa" basis to Wollstonecraft's feminism reinforces this link with the monster of rationalist utopianism. The text is hereby asserting an essentialist claim which is perhaps more in accordance with Paracelsus's view that "mumia" was a universal (like a Platonic form), the vitalist "inner balsam or life power inherent in the flesh" (Pachter 173).

CONCLUSION

Mary was conceived in November, the month of the monster's birth. Frankenstein returns her to her own origins, repeating the text's structure where the narrative progression returns itself to its beginnings, and where the outline is the inverse of the optimistic Neoplatonic journey.

The imaginative creation that is the novel is an example of Romantic recovery of original innocence through art, and of redemption through the suffering of crises and conflicts which movement away from one's origins entails. The inverted model of the journey, however, figures the failure of Mary's quest for lost origins.

I have argued that the Gothic literary form presents a universe which parallels that inhabited by the Calvinist. The Gothic attempt to divine the mystery is analogous to that of the rationalist Calvinist to know the Creator, while Gothic terror and horror echo the Calvinist psychological response to the terror and awe attendant upon contemplation of an unjust and unfathomable Deity. As Romantic Gothic, Frankenstein can thus be seen as an apt creation of a child of Godwinism; paradoxically, however, this child and her creation subvert everything for which Godwin stood.

The subject matter of Frankenstein rejects Mary's origins: her parents, and by implication their philosophies. The text both confronts and evades her parents' work; she returns to her origins and implicitly rejects them. In fact, the novel's dedication to William Godwin can be read as an ironic attack upon both him and his work.

Although the text is built up out of ambiguity, contradiction, paradox, inversion, and dualities, mythic imagery operates as a sub-text to undercut, that is deconstruct, this overt picture. In doing so it asserts an essentialist and absolutist viewpoint.

Through this act of rebellion in the production of her text, and to the extent that she can be identified with the monster, Mary also can be seen to spring free of the work's narrative structure, thereby evading Godwinism by leaving it behind as well as achieving the type of Romantic redemption unattainable by Victor. Unlike Victor, such a creature can be assumed to anticipate either peace for its spirit or a completely new conception of reality (E 223), and thus to possess no fear of the eternal retribution which the Godwin-like Victor accepts as his fate.

Accordingly, Frankenstein can be seen as a work of catharsis, of a dream-projected impulse to transcend the monster of division and disunion in order to recover the original unity which is the

goal of the Romantic quest. The creature's final leap is a figure for this impulse.

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