Frankenstein Revisited

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ABSTRACT

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The overarching objective of this thesis is to examine the reasons why *Frankenstein* is transhistorically stable—to discover what is common to both the early-nineteenth and early-twenty-first centuries which gives *Frankenstein* its present-day relevance as a modern myth. I examine the 1818 edition of *Frankenstein* from an Ecocritical perspective and resituate it within its cultural context which I treat as a textual ecology. This resituation requires that *Frankenstein* be considered alongside the prose, poetry and philosophy of Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822). To this end I construct a rich Shelleyan paradigm within which I resituate the novel and through which I perform close-readings of key points in the text within a Shelleyan context. Among other conclusions, I show that there is connection between *Frankenstein*, *Alastor*, and Plato's *Phaedo* which indicates that *Frankenstein* should not be read literally as a Gothic novel any more than *The Phaedo* should be read literally as a the last words of a condemned man. Both works are profound allegories which require minute examination. Other conclusions are that Shelley was neither an atheist nor a materialist but a Necessarian very much concerned with the cultural transformation from the pre-industrial ethos to Industrialism. I show how the ecocentrism of Necessarianism is opposed to the anthropocentrism of Industrialism and how this conflict is incorporated into *Frankenstein*. Popular eighteenth-century readings of the mythology surrounding Prometheus and Nemesis are also examined in detail and compared to *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* as a modern myth with a modern aetiology.

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DEDICATION

I would like to thank my parents for first arousing my interest in teratology.

"Muto posterus primoris muto preteritus"

Speeches for Doctor Frankenstein VIII.

Since I dared
to attempt impious wonders

I must pursue
that animal I once denied
was mine.

Over this vacant winter
plain, the sky is a black shell;
I move within it, a cold
kernel of pain.

—Margaret Atwood: *The Animals in That Country*,
Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1968, p.46.

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PREFACE

Toward a Manifesto for Deep Ecocriticism

In accordance with the tenets of new historicism, I seek to resituate *Frankenstein* within its cultural context which consists of the network of institutions, social practices, and discourses which influenced both its production and its interpretation.[1] Through the text I shall attempt to identify the dissonant voices of the liberal and 'radical' ideologies of the period within which *Frankenstein* was written. The method, the use of "pungent anecdotes and arcane documents",[2] to demonstrate that "everything is logically connected to everything else",[3] is also taken from new historicism. Though new historicism rejects the formalism vision of a "trans-historical aesthetic realm",[4] *Frankenstein* does appear to exhibit transhistorical stability in that it retains to the present-day its currency as a metaphor for the danger inherent in industrial ideology. In the eighteenth century the membranes between the arts and sciences were selectively permeable and such a project cannot avoid becoming interdisciplinary—this too is a new historicist trait. The overarching objective of this thesis is to examine the reasons why *Frankenstein* is transhistorically stable—to discover what is common to both the early-nineteenth and early-twenty-first centuries which gives *Frankenstein* relevance today.

Unlike the new historicist, however, my intention is to treat *Frankenstein* as a living text and to attempt to revive its textual ecology. This is the domain of the Ecocritic. Both forms of criticism have much in common, but they also diverge widely in their ideologies. Ecocriticism, like new historicism, seeks to "uncover its subtext of historical and political conflicts and oppressions which are the text's true, although covert or unmentioned, subject matter".[5] Ecocriticism and new historicism differ from older forms

of historicism largely in the attention they pay to present-day and historical ideologies and cultural norms.[6] This requires that I identify the dominant present-day ideology, and, as history is an ideological construct, and new historicism is written from, as Kiernan Ryan put it in *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism—A Reader* (1996), a "politically charged perspective forged in the present",[7] I am, as an Ecocritic, also obliged to identify and position the ecological ideology: Ecocriticism is ecocentric and is opposed to the anthropocentrism of new historicism with its scientific illusions of "subject-less discourse" (as Louis Althusser would have it [8]) which relieves it of moral accountability. As Lynn White put it in her essay in *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996): "More science and more technology are not going to get us out of the present ecologic crisis...".[9] An ecological perspective is required.

The industrial ideology which informs traditional literary criticism only began to emerge in the eighteenth century;[10] it became the dominant ideology only in the nineteenth century. Though *Frankenstein* was written in protest against emerging Industrialism, twentieth-century criticism has attempted to appropriate it. Thus, reading *Frankenstein* through the lens of industrial ideology typically renders the traditional and distorted view of Victor as a scientific martyr. Both new historicism, and cultural materialism are tainted with industrial ideology;[11] discussions of 'negotiations' for pleasure and profit should not be made of texts which were critical of the reduction of society to a web of contractual relationships. One new historicist points out that the 'new' in new historicism might imply allegiance to modernity with its "linear vision of history as progress".[12] Such is not my view. Similarly, it is inappropriate (and ridiculous) to attempt a 'value-free' analysis of texts which reject the very possibility of a 'value-free', or scientific ideology. One must, I feel, leave behind materialist ideologies to read *Frankenstein*; to do otherwise is to obscure the issues it addresses.

Rather than use Greenblatt's alternative term for new historicism, 'cultural poetics', an ecologist would use the term 'cultural autopoietics' to better capture the

sense of 'self-making' which is a feature common to all living systems and living texts. Autopoiesis describes the action of a self-regulating system in sustaining its integrity or identity. The ecology of a society includes all cultural forces, literary and non-literary, and the complexity of their networks of interdependencies. 'Cultural autopoietics' therefore extends the range of contemporary Ecocriticism beyond the "relations between literature and the biological and physical environment",[13] to include relations between a text and the ethos within which it is embedded—the self-regulating system of complex interdependencies within its culture. It is to this organic sense of economy (Greek: home-managing), rather than to the antithetical, materialist sense of 'the science of economics' at the core of new historicism and cultural materialism, that the Ecocritic pays attention. Given this, however, Ecocritics and new historicists both treat literature as part of a larger "symbolic economy".[14]

By examining a text as an element within a 'symbolic ecology', or a self-regulating system of symbols, Ecocriticism avoids the dangers of retrospection inherent in new historicism, within which the "vital sense of history as continuous transformation may be stunned".[15] In an inversion of new historicist practices, Ecocriticism seeks to make the text within its context 'familiar' to the reader in such away that the present-day seems strange and its ideological "structural distortion of perception" [16] is exposed. An Ecocritical essay, like its new historical counterpart, "speeds the reader through a series of gestalt shifts that leave the brain spinning in its pan" (Veeser, 5). This Kuhnian description implies the creations of a new paradigm. I have chosen to construct a Shelleyan paradigm. In constructing this paradigm, the method is to assist the reader to 'triangulate' on the core issues of the text through an immersion in a series of linked and intersecting essays focused on the close reading of key words and phrases in the chosen text. In this way, Ecocriticism "engages with the verbal detail of texts" in ways which new historicism and cultural materialism are accused of not doing.[17]

Abrams defines Ecocriticism as conducted with "an acute awareness of the devastation being wrought on [the] environment by human activities".[18] Such a stance has inescapable ethical implications which effectively question the assumptions of the industrial ethos, assumptions which gathered momentum throughout the 1700s, until they came to dominate Occidental culture from 1800 on. *Frankenstein* was written at the apogee of this cultural transformation and was deeply critical of it. I am in complete agreement with Ryan's statement that "literature should be restored to the past in order to make it count in the present".[19] Aram H. Veeser, in *The New Historicism Reader* (1994) makes a similar statement, though more forcefully, that history is "a pragmatic weapon for explaining the present and controlling the future".[20] By restoring *Frankenstein* to its past, diachronically and synchronically, I hope to reveal the issues it illuminated before they were eclipsed by Industrialism in the hope that they might be of benefit as we enter this new age of global environmental crisis.

As an ideology, Deep Ecology recognizes only one *summum bonum*, or supreme good—achieving a sustainable existence for the diversity of all living things, from prokaryotes to the planet. This naturally favours ecocentrism over anthropocentrism. As Ecocritics cannot but be aware of the 'devastation being wrought on [the] environment by human activities', they must be similarly sensitive to the pathology, the manifestation or behaviour of [this] disease;[21] this perspective has become known as "green reading".[22] Like other "insurgent modes such as feminist criticism and queer theory",[23] Ecocriticism seeks a form of social justice. Like cultural materialism, Ecocriticism is a "brazenly engaged critical stance" which "seeks actively and explicitly to use the literature of yesterday to change the world today" and to "read the canon against the grain".[24]

As Veeser observes, new historicism's basis in materialism limits it to "study centuries-worth of literature within capitalism on precisely its own terms".[25] To this end, Veeser continues, "literature in capitalism requires a capitalist poetics".[26] By the same

logic, I would assert that literature in ecological crisis requires an ecological poetics, a poetics which celebrates diversity and resists the homogenizing influence of cultural imperialism. Ecocritics, therefore, oppose the new historicist who "accepts the inevitability of emptiness", and the "hollowness of the self", just as they oppose the pathology which leads to environmental devastation. This conflict is a dim reflection of the same ethical, philosophical, and theological polarizations of the Romantic Era within which *Frankenstein* was conceived. Veeser's "hollow, empty personalities that resemble money itself—a medium totally free, unconstrained by silly principles that would inhibit their entering any contract or compromise",[27] might be represented by the undead Being itself—all passion and reason, unchecked by virtue. Walton would represent the 'despised romantic',[28] who finally understands that the futile pursuit of 'knowledge' which transcends comprehension is to seek alienation from nature and, ultimately, death itself.

An ecocentric focus in Ecocriticism may be regarded as 'Deep Ecocriticism' in that its convictions lie closer to those of the Deep Ecology movement than to those of the weaker Green alternative, Environmentalism. Environmental Ecocriticism does not question the anthropocentric perspective of modern scientism. To date, however, largely due to the lack of a common vision, Deep Ecocritics work alone. In these times of political paranoia—so similar to those of the Romantic Era—Environmental Ecocritics fear the stigma that Deep Ecocriticism might carry due to any unjustified association with radical environmental and anti-globalization groups (who are often inspired by the Diggers and Luddites of the Romantic Era). Aston Nichols, in *Romantic Natural Histories* (2004), points out that all Ecocriticism owes a debt to Romantic thinkers and that there are significant similarities in their patterns of thought.[29] These similarities are particularly pronounced in Shelley's works—which is why I have chosen to construct a Shelleyan paradigm. Given this, in certain of the statements in this thesis I may appear to implicitly adopt Shelley's own ideology, but I do try not to impose my own Ecocritical

views on the Romantic texts I examine but, rather, I try to draw attention to the ecocentrism within them.

I recognize that one's own ideology significantly skews one's interpretations. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines ideologies as "justifying actions", ergo, no one can have a 'neutral' ideology—to think so is to delude oneself. More importantly my ideological opposition to anthropocentrism requires me to identify endemic scientism and its consequences in order that we do not carry its assumptions into a 'deeper' reading of *Frankenstein*, or, indeed, into the 'deeper' interpretation of any text written before scientism became endemic. I prefer to use 'scientism'—the almost religious belief in the "omnipotence of scientific knowledge and techniques"[30]—rather than, for example, the awkward term 'omnicompetent science' coined by the moral philosopher Mary Midgely (1919-) which, in addition to being awkward, softens any ideological impact (though it does avoid the accusation of 'anachronism' when applied to Romantic-era thought). In 2001 Midgely wrote *Science and Poetry* (2001), a book which focuses on this "strange, imperialistic, isolating ideology... which deliberately extends the impersonal, reductive, atomistic methods that are appropriate to physical science into social and psychological enquiries where they work badly".[31] That the *Oxford English Dictionary* specifies that 'scientism' is a "term applied (freq. in a derogatory manner)", attests to its status as a term soon to be ranked with 'imperialism' and 'colonialism'. There was nothing wrong with individual colonists but colonialism as a foreign policy, with its 'white man's burden', has lost the luster of a moral enterprise. It is important to note that it is not science itself, but scientism, which is deserving of criticism today. A similar distinction is clearly made in *Frankenstein* between the "instruments of life" [32] and the uses to which they are put. While waiting to dispose of the remains to the female Being,[33] Victor relates that he "sat upon the beach, employed in cleaning and arranging my chemical apparatus".[34]—he obviously intended to keep it.

Scientistic anthropocentrism is apparent in Environmental Ecocriticism—a school of criticism which began with Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology* (1991). 'Ecocriticism' is a term coined by William Rueckert in 1978 and is defined by Nichols as a school which attempts to examine the "emerging sense of connections among humans, animals, and all living organisms on the planet" and which, in common with Romanticism, holds that "nature is not here for us but that we are part of a vast web of genetic links and animate interrelatedness".[35] But Bate, and Lawrence Buell, the leading lights in the field, provide an inadequate critique of scientism, and prefer to focus on Romantic figurations of landscapes. Bate is dismissive of Deep Ecocritics whom he characterizes as utopian, primitivist, and Hobbesian.[36] He distinguishes himself from 'Green critics' whom he sets up and labels as quixotic.[37] In my view, to leave scientism uncriticized is to help perpetuate it. Bate's interpretation of *Frankenstein* in *The Song of the Earth* (2000), for example, reflects his weak attitude toward ecology and can be reduced to the following conventional boilerplate:

> "The creature is thus identified with primitivism, with the state of nature, Frankenstein with cultivation, the state of enlightenment. [...] His autobiographical narrative tells the familiar Rousseauesque story—mediated via the English Rousseau, Mary Shelley's father, William Godwin—of a fall from natural benevolence to misery and fiendishness. [...] The close of Frankenstein offers an image of nature's continuing power to resist the human quest for mastery"[38].

Bate specifically aligns himself with such scientistic thinkers as Richard Dawkins when he states that "Ecopoetics must concern itself with consciousness".[39] Dawkins wrote in *The Selfish Gene* (2006) that "We no longer have to resort to superstition when faced with the deep problems: Is there a meaning to life? What are we for? What is Man?... all attempts to answer that [last] question before 1859 are worthless and ... we will be better off if we ignore them completely".[40] Dawkin's argument, in his own words, is that "we, and all other animals, are machines created by our genes. ...universal love and the welfare of the species as a whole are concepts that simply do not make evolutionary

sense".[41] In the crisis of faith brought about by the environmental tragedy happening all around us we cannot be so hasty and dismissive. *Frankenstein* addresses these issues when the Being twice asks, "What was I".[42]

Bate dismisses any implicit political manifesto in Ecocriticism while recognizing that the manifestos of Marxists, feminists and multicultural critics are valid in that they "regard their work as contributing toward social change.[43] In apparent contradiction, the editorial waffle on the back cover of Buell's *The Future of Environmental Criticism—Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (2006) states: "This manifesto summarizes the disparate critical practices that constitute 'ecocriticism'". I say 'apparent contradiction' because it is no more a ideological 'manifesto' than is a ship's bill of lading. Buell, in an earlier essay, The Ecocritical Insurgency (1999) defines Ecocriticism as merely "environmentally-valenced critical inquiry".[44] In his conclusion he admits grudgingly—albeit in an Arnoldian tone conjuring up images of luminous wings beating in a void—that, due to the current crisis, it is possible that Ecocriticism will be taken seriously: "That self-identified ecocritics tend to be folk who seriously entertain that possibility is one reason why the best ecocritical work is so strange, timely, and intriguing".[45] I reject this weak form of Ecocriticism which identifies Ecocritics as 'humanists',[46] and prefer to align myself with Christopher Hitt's views in his essay Ecocriticism and the Long 18th Century (2004), where he states that

> "To write ecocritically means to make value judgments about the literature we study, value judgments based on a common concern about the exploitation and overconsumption of nature by certain human cultures. In other words, ecocriticism *shares* with a number of other critical approaches—feminism, Marxism, and postcolonialism, to name a few—the conviction that literary criticism should assume an overtly ethical stance" (my emphasis).[47]

Furthermore, I take Bate's term 'ecopoiesis' (Greek: 'home-making') and apply it to literary criticism itself. In his discussion of ecopoiesis Bate quotes Adorno, who wrote: "Words tend to bounce off nature as they try to deliver nature's language into the hands

of another language foreign to it". Bate then quotes Wordsworth's line "We see into the life of things" and summarizes ecopoiesis, saying that it "knows that things have a life, but it also has to recognize that it can only communicate that knowledge in the form of propositions by using the divided Cartesian language of subject ('we see') and object ('the life of things')".[48] Fifty pages later, following a discussion of Peacock's "life-affirming comedy", *Headlong Hall* (1815), Bate adds the humanistic statement that the role of ecopoiesis is "to engage imaginatively with the non-human".[49] In my view, Ecocriticism itself should be ecopoietic and attempt to avoid the anthropocentric pratfalls of Cartesian dualism, reductivism, and mechanistic accounts of works isolated within a linear view of history as progress.

But, not to throw the Bate out with the bath water, there is much in *Romantic Ecology*, to which I am indebted, such as the vision of ecology as "the oeconomy of nature" and for bringing to my attention the etymology of 'ecology' which "ultimately derives from the Greek *oikos*, meaning home, and *logos*, meaning word".[50] Also, kudos should go to Bate for asking this question: "At the beginning of the third millennium... [the] litany of present and impending catastrophes is all too familiar. [....] Where did we begin to go wrong? Where do we begin in even attempting to grasp such a question?".[51] Midgely asks a related question: "How should we deal with this [environment] conceptual emergency?".[52] These questions are not new; they were also posed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The scholars I cite give an idea of how we went wrong at the last great turning-point in Western culture—a point following soon after the publication of *Frankenstein*—an event which I believe this novel foresaw and addressed directly. Bate goes on to say that "Myths endure so long as they perform helpful work".[53] That *Frankenstein* endures—i.e., in that it demonstrates transhistorical stability—attests to its still-useful aetiology, an aetiology once more as relevant today as it was in 1818. My answer to, 'how to deal with this', is, 'learn from the past'; we might profit from reviewing

Romantic-era texts from an ecocentric perspective. For example, in a great eighteenth-century debate rarely discussed today, Liberty—the freedom to exploit one's environment—was opposed to Necessity—the duty to respect one's environment—and Shelley was, as I shall show, a zealous Necessarian; Libertarians, who supported Pragmatism (progress-as-betterment), Positivism (the rejection of all transcendent concepts), and Industrialism (the stratification and commodification of life), won the day and Necessarianism is all but forgotten. But Necessarianism, most notably in the form adopted by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), carried a with it an ecocentric imperative to respect all living things as ends in themselves. We might benefit from applying this imperative today. It is in this way *Frankenstein* acts as a bridge between the pre-industrial Romantic Era and our post-industrial age. Given that my reading of *Frankenstein*—that it was written as a warning of what was to come, Industrialism—the next question should be, 'where did the warning come from?', or 'what intellectual perspective permitted the authors to see that a warning was necessary?' All of these question require that *Frankenstein* be resituated within the bed of intellectual currents where it was conceived.

There are many parallels between the early nineteenth century and the early twenty-first century. In both, the rejection of the dominant faith—Christianity and Scientism respectively, both rejected for the atrocities committed in their names—left many wondering how to re-frame their worldview. Faith, the bedrock of all ideologies is thus a necessary component of all cultures. In the present day in which so many are questioning their faith in scientism, a pertinent question to ask might be, 'what were the alternatives envisioned immediately prior to the onset of Industrialism?'. It is hardly surprising to discover that the early-nineteenth-century alternatives are remarkably similar to many of the alternatives we are turning to (returning to) today: wholism, complexity, and ecological awareness. I shall simply point these parallels out in the following pages

without extended explanations. As I shall show, *Frankenstein* is an allegory written immediately before the Industrial Revolution as a warning against extending the impersonal, reductive, atomistic attitudes of scientific materialism into the principles of general society. In this study I hope to explicate *Frankenstein* to the reader of the 'scientific-age' without the prolepsis or the back-reading of modern scientism into a product of the Romantic Era.

To provide a non-linear context for a text without being dualistic and reductivist is obviously a daunting task for Ecocritics which requires that they prepare an intense and immersive contextual environment for their readers. Anyone who has spent any time with me knows that the phrase, 'everything is connected with everything else', has become my mantra and that I have used technology to further my ambition to discover how, in the Romantic Era, everything *was* connected to everything else. This remains my ambition and this thesis is ambitious. I understand that, by conventional standards, the non-linearity of this thesis may appear as a structural problem, but its redundant elements attempt a rhetorical emphasis not possible in a linear exposition. The variety of views attempt to triangulate on a mode of thought almost inconceivably alien to the present way of thinking. In compensation, this thesis contains much original insight which I could only have accomplished in the way that I have. As my skills improve, I hope to be better able to present these—and many other insights—in a more accessible structure.

Chapter One examines our present-day scientistic ideology to unambiguously define it so that its eighteenth-century antecedents may be more clearly identifiable, and also to assist in filtering out the distortions it introduces into our view of the past. The prognostications and historical analyses of concerned present-day cultural critics are examined. 'Progress' is revealed to be simultaneously a myth and, since the great cultural transformation the early nineteenth century, the primary source of faith in Western culture.

Chapter Two gives the broad outlines of the Shelleyan paradigm and identifies its advantages over the Marian paradigm. Two examples frequently discussed by commentators on *Frankenstein* are taken to demonstrate the explanatory potential of the Shelleyan paradigm: the case of certain obscure Kantian phrases and the case of the philosophical similarities to ideas of Shaftesbury. The point is emphasized, however, that the Shelleyan paradigm is entirely compatible with the Marian paradigm and should not be read as an attempt to displace it.

Chapter Three discusses the differences between popular, present-day interpretations of *Frankenstein.* and its deeper aetiology. The high esteem of a text in the popular opinion of different periods may be due to different features or social contexts. Transhistorically stable texts, however, maintain a continuous appeal to, what Shelley called, the 'elementary principles of human nature', through, in Greenblatt's words, a 'power of ready mutation'. The great transformation of the Western ethos in the early nineteenth century required a new, secular myth of presumption.

Chapter Four provides the cultural context within which *Frankenstein* was conceived. Earthquakes and lightning, long considered elements of God's retributive justice, are related to each other and to the change in the presumptive use of knowledge by Franklin. Beginning with Voltaire, the lightning-blasted tree appears to be an accepted symbol of Necessity's impartiality. Shelley incorporates this Power in Mont Blanc and this connection is explored in *Frankenstein.* Necessarianism and the distinctions between the three different forms of Deism are explained.

Chapter Five provides the literary context within which *Frankenstein* was conceived. Hogg's *Memoirs of Prince Alexy Haimatoff* are analyzed for their criticism of Shelley's philosophy and their relationship to *Frankenstein.* Shelley's Review of the *Memoirs* and his correspondence with Hogg appear to identify a literary project which revolves around Plato's *Phaedo* and Godwin's description of the Eleutheri, and which

embraces Hogg's *Memoirs*, Shelley's Alastor and *Frankenstein*. Fanaticism and the distinctions between the three different forms of enthusiasm are explained.

Chapter Six provides the philosophical context within which *Frankenstein* was conceived. First the misconceptions of Shelley's atheism and materialism are exploded. The Shelleyan disposition towards *tertium quid* logic is illustrated. Then the Romantic Era concept of 'imponderables' is related to the concept of the 'spark' in *Frankenstein.* Following this there is a review of the doctrine of Necessarianism—a Romantic-era version of Chaos Theory—relating it to Calvinism, Scepticism, Positivism, and Natural Religion, and noting its opposition to Liberalism.

Chapter Seven explores the moral antecedents to the ethos of *Frankenstein.* The debate over the concept of virtue—a concept still extant in the eighteenth century but extinct by the twenty-first century—is reanimated and traced through the translations of the Platonic dialogues read by Shelley, Hogg, and others. The ancient connection between the Promethean theme and the concept of virtue is re-established, and Christianized interpretations of Prometheus by Dacier, Taylor and Wollstonecraft are provided as leading toward the rejection of virtue by Locke and Bentham.

Chapter Eight examines the moral skeleton which supports the meat of *Frankenstein*—the Necessarian framework. Beginning with origins of Deism in Herbert's antisectarianism, and continuing on with Shaftesbury's secular morality of social benevolence, we see how Necessarianism is implicated in both the narrative and in the frame-like structure of *Frankenstein.* Shaftesbury's poles of 'enthusiasm', the ascetic and the sensualist, are taken as exemplar of extremes which can be avoided through 'knowing thyself'. Shelley's opposition to laissez-faire practices is noted.

Chapter Nine examines the ancient mythological systems which perfuse the meat of *Frankenstein* with transhistorical fluids. Romantic-era sources for 'the Modern Prometheus' are examined, specifically Shaftesbury and Kant. The 'Modern Prometheus' is discovered to be either a religious or an empiric 'enthusiast'. The myth of Nemesis as

the agent of Necessity also saw a revival in the Romantic Era—possibly as a Necessarian antidote to presumption. The Being in *Frankenstein* is cast as the agent of Necessity playing opposite Victor as the agent of presumption.

Also in Chapter Nine is a comparison of *Frankenstein* to two earlier versions of the Shaftesbury-like 'newly moral genre', Richardson's *Clarissa* and Rousseau's *Nouvelle Heloise*. Wordsworth's Prelude makes note of Shaftesbury as a 'depreciated' author, but appears to confound the notion of 'enthusiasm' in such a way that challenged Shaftesbury's philosophy and Necessarianism—by welcoming the presumptuous creation of an artificially living Being. A Gothic term Englished in the Industrial Era, 'schadenfreude', is used (with caution) to describe the new, justifiable infliction of pain for pleasure.

Chapter Ten resituates *Frankenstein* within the body of Shelley's poetry and prose with closer comparisons between *Frankenstein* and Alastor. Plato's *Phaedo* is shown to be an importance source for some of the allegorical elements in Alastor and *Frankenstein.* Comparisons are made between Victor Frankenstein and Hogg's Alexy Haimatoff. Note is taken of links between Alastor and Volney's *Ruins* which are also cited in *Frankenstein.* Note is taken of the same Necessarian theme which occurs in *Frankenstein*, Alastor and in Godwin's *Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams.*

Chapter Eleven resituates *Frankenstein* within the body of Shelley's poetry and prose with comparisons between *Frankenstein* and The Daemon of the World. Lucan's *Pharsalia* is shown to be an important source of allegorical imagery which underscores the fatal aspects of mad enthusiasm. The composite nature of the Soul of the Universe is revealed and Spinoza's concept of *conatus* shown to be the heart of secular morality. *Conatus* is related to the modern concept of autopoiesis. The sublime is shown to be incomprehensible and suggests why the Being in *Frankenstein* remained unnamed.

1. THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

Scientistic Ideology Examined

C.P. Snow, writing in 1959, proposed his hypothesis of 'two cultures'—that, in Western thinking, a "gulf of mutual incomprehension" separates the "literary intellectuals" from the "physical scientists".[1] Snow states that this became apparent at the turn of the last century when the "two cultures were already dangerously separate".[2] This separation accelerated with the 'scientific revolution'—of "electronics, atomic energy, [and] automation"—which began only in the 1920s and which Snow clearly distinguishes from the Industrial Revolution of the mid-nineteenth century.[3] More recently, the same point is made by Nichols, where he states that "the two-cultures separation we now often assume between the sciences and the arts simply did not exist before the twentieth century".[4] For many of us in the twenty-first century, Snow's gulf of mutual incomprehension is ever-present, ever-widening, and ever-alarming. It has not disappeared. What has happened is that scientific materialism has insinuated its way into mainstream thought. With every 'labour-saving device' 'entertainment system' and 'indispensable' computer software or hardware upgrade we have purchased, Western culture has implicitly and unquestioningly endorsed scientific materialism. We no longer recognize that a gulf exists. The anthropocentric ideology within the scientific enterprise is clearly revealed by the sociobiologist E.O. Wilson, who made this proclamation in *On Human Nature* (1978): "Make no mistake about the power of scientific materialism. It presents the human mind with an alternative mythology that until now has always, point for point in zones of conflict, defeated traditional religion... [and which is] kept strong by the blind hopes that the journey on which we are now embarked will be farther and better than the one just completed?".[5] "In short, it is a faith", writes Midgely in reference to this ideology.

Though Jane Jacobs (1916-2006), in *Dark Age Ahead*, (2004) is not attempting ecocriticism, but cultural criticism, she understand the importance of an ecological view. On the subject of Rome's collapse she summarizes centuries of research by stating that the Romans forgot that, "everything is connected with everything else".[6] For her, China's insularity and North American paranoia is due to people forgetting that "everything was connected to everything else".[7] She says that there was no change even in the transition from agrarian to post-agrarian culture; in both cases, "everything connected with everything else".[8] In all cultures, she writes, "everything that happened connected with much else".[9] When a body of inquiry loses this sense of connection, it stagnates, she says.[10] And, when this happens, the "cherished but deformed paradigm is poison that harms everything it touches".[11] She goes on to say, that if

> "the rot of bad science continues to spread, to be tolerated, and even to be rewarded by corporations and centrally administered government grants, the heyday of scientific and technological achievement is inevitably drawing to its end... Try to imagine how demoralizing that deterioration will be for a culture that almost worships science".[12]

Thomas Kuhn, in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) tells us that fundamental to Scientism is the myth of progress.[13] Progress, is a presumptuous myth which—according to the historian Charles A. Beard (1874-1948)—appeared in the 1840s after "commerce, invention, and natural science emancipated humanity from thralldom to the cycle and to the Christian epic".[14] For Beard this was when progress overcame the "illusion of finality",[15] Western culture ceased to be a "Sisyphian enterprise",[16] and mankind was allowed to "rise above necessity into the kingdom of freedom".[17] (Notice the terms, 'necessity' and 'freedom' which are discussed at length below.) For J.B. Bury (1861-1927), in his seminal work *The Idea of Progress* (1920), this waxing of the myth of progress, which coincided with the waning of the Romantic Era, marked the end of an epoch extending back to the 5th century BCE.[18] Bury states, however, that novelty does not accord progress any special status: "Belief in it is an act of faith".[19] On progress seen

as evolution, Bury says, it "is a neutral, scientific conception, compatible either with optimism or with pessimism".[20] Bury's concluding statement situates progress as a fleeting moment in the kaleidoscope of human ideologies: "Must not it, too, submit to its own negation of finality? ...A day will come, in the revolution of centuries, when a new idea will usurp its place as the directing idea of humanity. ...And it too will have its successor".[21] Kuhn also states that progress is not a "process of evolution toward anything";[22] to think otherwise is to think within an illusion constructed upon a teleological "lacuna",[23] an illusion constructed by the victors in a scientific revolution for whom "the outcome of revolution must be progress".[24] Those, like the Shelleys, who witnessed the tragedies of early Industrialism knew better.

A deconstruction of scientistic ideology is easily made: how can there be a scientific basis for the belief that the future will be better than the past? This expands into an irresolvable double-logic—an aporia or 'perplexing difficulty"[25]—, when the we understand that the scientistic "monopoly of rationality" [26] makes resistance to scientism appear as "attacks on reason itself",[27] because any anti-scientistic arguments must appear to have scientific credibility.[28] Progress, in addition to being a "soothing expectation",[29] replacing that of salvation, is also 'soothing' from an economic point of view. Karl Polanyi (1886-1964; the person who inspired the founding of the Polanyi Institute at Concordia University) in *The Great Transformation* (1944), points out that, during the great transformation of 1795-1835, "the common-sense attitude toward change was discarded in favor of a mystical readiness to accept the social consequences of economic improvement, whatever they might be. The elementary truths of political science and statecraft were first discredited then forgotten".[30] The literary critic Abrams concurs, stating that "Romantic Period of the early nineteenth century was the turning point in the long Western tradition of human transcendence and domination over nature".[31] I believe that the presumption herein noted is criticized in the allegory of *Frankenstein*.

Buell points out, it is no coincidence that the term 'environment', as something separate from humanity and exploitable, came into use at roughly the same time as the Industrial Revolution.[32] Bury described this nineteenth-century ascendancy of technology—the "study of the industrial arts",[33] and the "supreme instrument of modern progress"[34]—as a "transformation of history (as a part of a wider transformation)",[35] the theme expanded upon by Polanyi, as *The Great Transformation*. The core of this great transformation is that, in the early nineteenth century, for the first time in human history, society became embedded within its economy,[36] rather than the traditional inverse. This means that social and environmental relationships as well as domestic affections became quantified and commodified under the new market liberalism as contracts of exchange. "After 1815", Polanyi states in his opening paragraphs,

> "the change is sudden and complete. The backwash of the French Revolution reinforced the rising tide of the Industrial Revolution in establishing peaceful business as a universal interest. [....] ...contemporaries were appalled at the seeming contradiction of an almost miraculous increase in production accompanied by a near starvation of the masses".[37]

Frankenstein was conceived in 1816. Shelley was fully aware of this transformation of culture brought about by Industrialism; in The Defence of Poetry (1820) he wrote:

> "The cultivation of those sciences which have enlarged the limits of the empire of man over the external world, has, for want of the poetical faculty, proportionally circumscribed those of the internal world; and man, having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave. To what but a cultivation of the mechanical arts in a degree disproportioned to the presence of the creative faculty, which is the basis of all knowledge, is to be attributed the abuse of all invention for abridging and combining labour, to the exasperation of the inequality of mankind?".[38]

Nor was Shelley alone in recognizing the threat inherent in such a transformation. Robert Southey (1774-1843) in *Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society* (1824), wrote that "Great capitalists become like pikes in a fish-pond who devour the weaker fish; and it is but too certain, that the poverty of one part of the people seems to increase in the same ratio as the riches of another".[39]

Arthur O. Lovejoy (1873-1962), author of *The Great Chain of Being* (1936), believed that the idea of ultimate value—the nature of the good—underwent a transformation during the Romantic Era. Lovejoy wrote that there have, "in the entire history of thought, been few changes in standards of value more profound and more momentous" than when the Platonistic ideal of an indivisible standard of excellence was rejected and, in ethics, "diversity itself is of the essence of excellence".[40] Lovejoy notes that this transformation manifested itself in Romantic-era literature as a new diversification in genres and verse-forms.[41] With the end of the eighteenth century and "the opening decades of the nineteenth"—the period when *Frankenstein* was written—, Lovejoy continues, the "assumptions of the traditional theology and metaphysics began to be reversed",[42] until "the Platonistic scheme of the universe is turned upside down".[43] In this transformation, the unifying concept of virtue—a sense of moral excellence acquired over a lifetime—was replaced by a pleasure/pain calculus based on the quantification of immediate sensations which could influence only short-term decision-making. The long-term virtues—justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude—were seen as "meaningless and absurd",[44] and were replaced by the economic values of sensations—pleasure and pain—as the "Springs of Action" in the Utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832).

Scientism, whether as a series of resolvable contracts, or equations, cannot be applied to the environment, for it is, as Midgely puts it, "bankrupt of suggestions for dealing with these non-human entities".[45] She calls the present-day "jubilant wave of crude scientism" [46] an "unbalanced fascination" [47] with the illusion of an "omnicompetent science" that was conceived without forethought, and which has become "a Frankenstein monster out of control".[48] Polanyi's thesis was that "the idea of a self-adjusting market implied a stark utopia. Such an institution could not exist for any length of time without annihilating the human and natural substance of society; it would have physically destroyed man and transformed his surroundings into a wilderness". Polanyi fixes 1795 [49]

as the birth of the self-regulating market, urbanization, and the beginning of this "social transformation of planetary range".[50] The historian Bernard Faÿ (1893-1978) stated bluntly in *Revolution and Freemasonry* (1935) that, by 1800, "Progress was the new god".[51] More recently, Jacobs tells us that ingenuity—progress—demarks the postagrarian (or industrial) from the agrarian societies,[52]—societies which had existed for more than 10,000 years and which now exist only in 'underdeveloped' countries. Commentators on Polanyi's thesis point out that it is in these 'underdeveloped' countries that the great transformation continues today.

Jacobs's prognosis for Western culture, is that, "destructive corporate cannibalism",[53] under the aegis of progress, may well carry us into a new dark age unless we adhere to some form of moral, rather than material incentive. We may not have quite entered a new dark age, but we have certainly entered an age within which 1 + 1 does not equal 2; East and West cannot coexist at a Western standard of living without destroying our planet. James Lovelock (1919-), the inventor of the Gaia hypothesis,[54] (name supplied by the novelist William Golding[55]) and author of *The Revenge of Gaia* (2006) writes:

> "When there were only one billion of us in 1800, these ignorant [liberal] policies were acceptable because they caused little harm. Now, they... will soon merge into a rocky path to a Stone Age existence on an ailing planet, one where few of us survive among the wreckage of our once biodiverse Earth".[56]

The ideological divide which demands examination is, as the Ecocritic Bate puts it, that of the

> "progressive severance of humankind from nature that has licenced, or at least neglected, technology's ravaging of the earth's finite resources. ...that writers in the Romantic tradition... have been especially concerned with this severance. [And] that our lives are diminished when technology and industrialization alienate us from those forms".[57]

Midgely puts it bluntly when she says that the hubris of the industrial revolution was based on an "enormous factual mistake" which saw the earth as our own "bottomless larder" rather than as a "living system... which is vulnerable and capable of failing".[58] It is because of this mistake, says Midgely that "the earth is now unmistakably sick".[59]

Scientistic ideology is based on the Utilitarian "Springs of action" defined in 1815 by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) as pleasure and pain.[60] Focussing on these short-term stimuli enables 'progress' by ignoring the long-term consequences. Progressive society appears to have adopted the short-sighted *carpe diem* antidote to the gloomy long-term future of scientism which William James (1842-1910) so vividly described in *Pragmatism* (1907; see note) as "utter final wreck and tragedy... of scientific materialism".[61] Rejecting the neutral sense of 'progress' used by his mentor, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), free-will, for James, is only meaningful when it is a doctrine of betterment by way of novelty—progress—which then "takes its place with other religious doctrines".[62] Again, scientism is depicted as a religion grounded in faith in progress. In James's black-and-white dilemma, the only possible alternative to progress would be if "necessity and impossibility between them rule the destinies of the world".[63] In an equally high-contrast vision—that of Beard—this alternative would only come to pass when "people prefer hunger rather than plenty, disease rather than health".[64] (Beard was writing before the pernicious effects of over-eating and the over-use of antibiotics became apparent.)

Lovelock thinks that we may have already passed a "tipping-point" on the road to ecological destruction and that the only reasonable response is a 'sustainable retreat' from our present degree of consumption.[65] He states, that it is unfortunate that we "are so obsessed with the idea of progress and with the betterment of humanity that we regard retreat as a dirty word".[66] Like the other modern-day visionaries, Lovelock situates the beginning of the present ecological decline at the end of the Romantic Era: "If we could

go back to, for example, 1840 and start again", he writes, "we might be able to reach a stable population of six billion if we were guided from the beginning by a proper understanding of the Earth".[67] Jacobs points out that, when economic interests dictate the direction of progress, it invariably leads to "bad science",[68] "internal rot",[69] and a fatal cultural turning which will ultimately lead to a "self-inflicted cultural genocide".[70] Jacobs is restating a sentiment intimately familiar to Shelley from; Plato's *Second Alcibades* (1749), where Socrates tells the presumptuous Alcibades that "possibly all the sciences without the knowledge of that which is very good, are seldom of use to those that possess them; nay, most commonly, are pernicious to them".[71] I believe that Shelley could see this danger. This dangerous attitude, with its poverty in foresight and alternatives, and its consequences, is I believe, the subject of *Frankenstein.*

In Midgely's account, the seductive enthusiasm for moral reductivism begins with Descartes [72]—who imagined his mind isolated from any ecological or social environment—, Locke [73]—for whom a short-term pleasure/pain, or 'felicific',[74] calculus trumps a lifelong accumulation of virtue as an incentive to act—, and Hobbes [75]—who first applied positivistic principles to government. This trend was continued in Comte's "gospel of positivism", so welcomed by the Victorians,[76] but which Midgely describes in terms reminiscent of Jacobs's 'bad science' calling it "a distortion that tends to discredit the whole idea of science by exploiting it to draw dubious political and moral conclusions".[77] Kuhn, had also warned us that, as a scientific society, our rejection of our unscientific past leads to "drastic distortion" and that we are "like the typical character of Orwell's 1984, the victim of a history rewritten by the powers that be".[78] The Ecocritic Bate states clearly that "if... the scientific mode of understanding is dangerous exactly because it is representational rather than presencing, because it presupposes a Cartesian subject challenging forth the world of objects, then the anatomy of the world in a language of scientific explanation is itself part of the problem".[79] Even in 1920 Bury

noted the dangers of blindness to a belief that had become "stereotyped" in a society where the "conjunctions of 'liberty and progress', 'democracy and progress', meet us at every turn".[80] Midgely tells us that the "Cartesian split is still rampant today".[81] Once generally accepted—on faith[82]—these views deeply influenced our thoughts and imaginations.[83] Romanticism was an early attempt to "correct this distortion" by reconnecting feeling to reason[84] and reuniting nature to humankind.[85] Literary intellectuals should be conscious of the dominance of science in forming the "shape of our moral attitudes and our value-systems".[86] An undistorted view comes only with an awareness of the history and sociology of science.[87]

In Enlightenment thought, psychology, philosophy and ethics suffered from "physics-envy";[88] the felicific calculus was modeled upon Newton's calculus. Midgely notes in *Science and Poetry*, however, that even physicists have now rejected rationalism, but the biological and social sciences have been slow to follow.[89] Though life is regarded increasingly as a phenomenon which emerges from complex interactions, reductivism dictates that biology—the study of life—is still considered to be subordinate to physics and chemistry. Paradigms in literary criticism typically lag behind even the most outmoded paradigms, such as Freudianism and Marxism. Midgely suggests that poets—invaluable as mankind's most articulate representatives—might yet be restored to their pre-Romantic status as 'legislators of the world' by using their skill to imagine and present alternative visions,[90] for example, that we are only a small part of a living system "a system on whose continued activity we are dependent, a system which is vulnerable and capable of failing".[91] Midgely suggests that the revival of this ancient and Romantic vision might be "a cure for distortions that spoil our current world-view".[92] I believe that *Frankenstein*, read as a Necessarian allegory, suggests the inescapability of this view.

Midgely also points out that the accepted definition of the word science has changed little since the failed Enlightenment enterprise within which it meant "the

opposite of blind tradition and superstition".[93] The anti-rationalist, Romantic-era definition of science, however is the "knowledge of universal, necessary, unchangeable, and eternal ideas",[94]—a definition containing no hint of progress or reductivism. The use of the word 'scientific'—as in 'the scientific method'—, she writes, implies "a powerful faith, devoutly preached by many people today" of scientific omnicompetence; "that the methods of the natural sciences are not just the best methods but the only ones that are intellectually respectable at all".[95] "It is," she says, "a judgement about what matters and what does not",[96] and it operates at a level of abstraction—ostensibly within a value-free ideology—which "simply cannot be used when we are talking about human affairs".[97] To do so, leads to the kind of 'value-free' individualism, or "moral minimalism",[98] that was obvious to Alexis de Toqueville (1805-1859) when he wrote *Democracy in America* (1832) in which he too warns his contemporaries that:

> "[s]elfishness [that] blights the germ of all virtue; individualism, at first, only saps the virtues of public life; but in the long run it attacks and destroys all others and is at length absorbed in downright selfishness. Selfishness is a vice as old as the world, which does not belong to one form of society more than to another; individualism is of democratic origin, and it threatens to spread in the same ratio as the equality of condition".[99]

Jacobs asserts that a dark age occurs when "the mass amnesia of survivors becomes permanent and profound [...and the] previous way of life slides into an abyss of forgetfulness".[100] Lovelock perceives a need for "a book of knowledge written so well as to constitute literature in its own right ...a manual for living well and for survival" [101] to preserve the present state of our knowledge, like those held by the monasteries in earlier dark ages, a book which, like the bible "set the constraints for behaviour and for health ...but acknowledge[s] science",[102] If we combine these ideas, it might give us an insight as to the need for an allegorical summation of wisdom and warnings in times imbued with a sense of resistance to an inevitable finality. Such was *The Phaedo*, which is Plato's recounting of Socrates' final overview of his philosophy. This is also what I believe was

the motivation behind the conception of much of Shelley's poetry as well as *Frankenstein* which, I believe, aspires to the same depth of allegory as Plato's dialogue. For Lovelock, such a book would be "the survival manual for our successors".[103] With one important difference, Jacobs and Lovelock voice almost the same concerns contained in *The Ruins* (1793), by Constantine Francis Chassebeuf De Volney (1757-1820):

> "since the experience of past ages is lost for the living—since the errors of progenitors have not instructed their descendants, the ancient examples are about to reappear; the earth will see renewed the tremendous scenes it has forgotten. New revolutions will agitate nations and empires; powerful thrones will again be overturned, and terrible catastrophes will again teach mankind that the laws of nature and the precepts of wisdom and truth cannot be infringed with impunity".[104]

The difference recognized by Jacobs, Lovelock and many Ecocritics is that our present error—the destruction of our ecosystem—cannot be repeated. Given this state of the world, my approach to this analysis of *Frankenstein* has something of the 'survival manual' interpretation behind it. The Romantic Era was the last time the important questions so easily dismissed by Dawkins were seriously and widely considered and debated. *Frankenstein* was written as a part of this debate and deals specifically with the issues raised above. Joseph E. Stiglitz points out in his Foreword to *The Great Transformation*, that Polanyi's analysis raises issues in the Romantic Era which are "consonant with the issues raised by the rioters and marchers who took to the streets in Seattle and Prague in 1999 and 2000 to oppose the international financial institutions".[105] *Frankenstein* was conceived in 1816 at the apogee of an epoch-shattering transformation and it too is replete with the tensions due to an awareness of the irreversibility of impending change.

This thesis revisits one of the most important myths of the present day—itself a revisiting of yet more ancient mythologies—and takes a bold step in its criticism of the dominant scientistic culture of the present day as seen from an Ecocriticical perspective, the present-day bastion of the Snow's 'literary intellectual'. What I hope to achieve is a

deeper contextual appreciation of a literary artifact from a culture as alien to our own as any artifact from a non-Western race. *Frankenstein* is essentially a moral allegory, but our interpretation of it is complicated. Foreshadowing Jacobs' idea of cultural amnesia, the moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre wrote in his study of ethics, *After Virtue* (1984), that our present-day ideas on morality are merely

> "the fragments of a conceptual scheme, parts which now lack those contexts from which their significance derived. We possess indeed simulacra of morality, we continue to use many of the key expressions. But we have-very largely, if not entirely-lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality".[106]

As an indication of this, what has commonly been labeled as eighteenth-century 'radical' morality is, in fact, better regarded as moral conservatism.[107] For these 'radicals', non-contractual social and environmental interactions were the cornerstone of their ethos.[108] There is evidence of this in Shelley's Preface to *Frankenstein* when he tells the reader that the novel is designed to exhibit the "amiableness of domestic affection, and the excellence of universal virtue".[109] There is no simple recalibration of our present-day moral compass that can aid us in understanding the past. We must rely on the fact that each culture, as a living system, develops its own autopoietic equilibrium, and that the equilibrium of the Romantic Era was upset and its web of complex interdependencies were transformed leaving only a fading afterimage. There are no 'correct' interpretations of a literary work, merely hypotheses which may, sooner or later, be proven more or less valid. The Shelleyan paradigm which I shall construct in order to revisit *Frankenstein* renders an interpretation that attempts to effect a gestalt shift in Frankenstein studies by providing a plausible alternative to the nebulous and inchoate Marian paradigm.[110]

Through its use of universality and ambiguity, the great advantage of allegory is its ability to transmit wisdom forward in time to readers living in a culture which the author could not possibly have imagined. Time is the test of all allegories—the further into the future any given allegory is projected, the more alien the culture will seem

compared to its native culture. Unless there is a return to a similar cultural ideology, only truly universal allegories, like *The Phaedo*, will survive. In the case of *Frankenstein*, a mere 200 hundred years has elapsed, and, if the "current surge of interest in ecocriticism",[111] noted by Nichols and many others, is any indication, then Western culture appears to be making a form of ideological return. This is to say that we are about to exit, one way or another, from the scientistic crisis that, I believe, *Frankenstein* was written to warn against.

2. THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

The Shelleyan Paradigm

This thesis presents an overtly 'Shelleyan' reading of *Frankenstein.* as seen through the lens of a Shelleyan paradigm. I use the term 'paradigm' consciously in the sense used by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). To paraphrase Kuhn, 'a paradigm is what the members of a literary community share, and, conversely, a literary community consists of those who share a paradigm'.[1] The Shelleyan paradigm which I construct is that matrix of thought shared by a community who believe that Shelley's poetry and prose emerge from his ethical project—his criticism of Industrialism and his Kantian attempt to reconcile natural science and metaphysics.

Knowing that Shelley's philosophy did not change significantly after 1812 (he died ten years later),[2] much of what he wrote of his beliefs in the years before, during, and after the years 1816-1818 has an important bearing for his influence on Mary Shelley's mind, and his own contribution to *Frankenstein.* The assertion of Shelley's influence throughout *Frankenstein* should not be read as an assertion of Shelley's sole authorship of the novel. Rather, as Jack Stillinger notes in *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (1991), the 'myth' of the solitary author "does not accord with the facts of literary production", and authorial collaboration is an "extremely common phenomenon".[3]

Here, however, I do feel obliged to acknowledge the debate over authorial contributions to *Frankenstein.* Many scholars (such as Murray, Small and Rieger) question the Marian paradigm and are of the opinion that Mary's disavowal in her Introduction to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein* intentionally misleads ("I certainly did not owe the suggestion of one incident, nor scarcely of one train of feeling, to my husband...".[4]) and, furthermore, that Shelley's amendments add to the text whereas

Mary's—made after Shelley's death—detract.[5] I shall not speculate upon other anomalies within the Marian paradigm such as the entry in *The Grove Diaries* for May 4, 1818 (*Frankenstein* was published anonymously on March 11, 1818) which states that "Bysshe's novel of Prometheus came".[6] Nor shall I explore the numerous autobiographical echoes of Shelley's early life in the novel.

I feel that a Shelleyan reading of *Frankenstein* is quite in keeping with the pluralistic tradition of ideological readings—Ecofeminist, Feminist, Freudian, Lacanian, Marxist, Scientistic and others—of the novel; I therefore feel no need to refute, contradict, or negate these readings. I simply point out that, rather than inventing questions which the text is required to answer, a Shelleyan reading, aside from its deeper ethical implications, provides plausible answers to questions which naturally arise from the text: Why Ingolstadt? Why Geneva? Why the Orkneys? Why 'the Modern Prometheus'? and Wherefore *Frankenstein*? The Shelleys shared their reading, their friends and, very likely, their convictions, and, I believe that their 'hideous progeny' is, one way or another, the issue of their corporate persona. Compared to the purely Marian paradigm, there is significantly richer support for conclusions drawn from *Frankenstein* seen through the lens of the Shelleyan paradigm. All conclusions drawn from the Shelleyan paradigm are compatible with a Marian paradigm which accepts that two authors living together exert influence over each other.

In his Preface (1818) to *Frankenstein* Shelley writes of the "rule" of the "truth of the elementary principles of human nature" which he has extracted from Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton. He goes on to say that "the most humble novelist... may, without presumption, apply to prose fiction a licence, or rather a rule" used by such eminent poets. I suggest that Mary might have been this 'most humble novelist' and that *Frankenstein* may have been the result of Shelley's tutelage. This might explain why, as David Ketterer puts it in *Frankenstein's Creation* (1979), when "everything else Mary Shelley wrote is at best secondrate, Frankenstein is a masterpiece".[7] In her own

Introduction (1831) Mary tells us quite plainly that, as a young woman, "Shelley urged me to develop the idea at greater length. ...and yet but for his incitement, it would never have taken the form in which it was presented to the world".[8]

The Shelleyan paradigm allows us, for example, to assess the influence of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) in *Frankenstein.* There appear to be many Kantian references in the novel, an aspect of it I have only just started to explore. We know that by early 1813 Shelley possessed Born's Latin translation of Kant's essay On a Newly Arisen Superior Tone in Philosophy in *Opera ad philosophiam criticam* (1796-1798). Also, Hogg tells us that Shelley was reading German by 1815;[9] Shelley was obviously interested in German thinkers. Kant's essay is an indictment of all forms of enthusiasm, fanaticism and illumination, including those of mystics, alchemists, Freemasons and those for whom reason is trumped by "intellectual intuition" which causes them to "look down on the former procedure with contempt".[10] The popularity of this form of enthusiasm, writes Kant, is due to "a natural propensity of human beings toward selfishness, which reason observes in silence". In other words, reason alone does not provide a categorical imperative and enthusiasm is reducible to opportunism. The categorical imperative—or moral Archimedian point—supplied by Kant is that one's "action harmonize with the final purpose of all things" as ends in themselves.[11] All types of enthusiast believe themselves to be superior to such a moral governor. In their presumptuous illumination Kant likens them to Prometheus who "has snatched the sparks for this fire directly from heaven".[12] Shelley also follows Kant's essay in rejecting the mystical aspects of Neo-Platonism and in rejecting the anthropocentric concept of God which, Kant writes, "corrupts all religion and turns it into idolatry".[13]

. Aside from the Promethean reference, Kant's influence in *Frankenstein* is clearly seen in the unusual use of the term 'series' in the novel, Victor tells Walton that "my tale conveys in its series internal evidence of the truth",[14] and that the "whole series of my life

appeared to me as a dream".[15] The Being, speaking of his own origins, tells Victor of "that series of disgusting circumstances which produced it".[16] Over Victor's corpse the Being tells Walton that "the miserable series of my being is wound to its close";[17] that nothing more is "needed to consummate the series of my being".[18] Ketterer draws our attention to the "semantically loaded", "idiosyncratic phrase"—"series of my being"—uttered twice, "rather oddly", by the Being in the concluding episode of *Frankenstein.*[19] Ketterer also observes that these phrases were "deliberately insinuated... during the typesetting process".[20] This means that they were most likely added by Shelley himself as Mary Shelley (1797-1851) had written to Shelley while he was dealing with the publisher, in a letter of September 24, 1817, "I give you carte blanche to make what alterations you please". Ketterer draws two weak, alternative conclusions: that the use of the term 'series' in a publisher's sense is an analogy to the authorial process;[21] or that the use of the term 'series' in a philosophical sense is an allusion to Locke's 'train of Ideas' and "implies that human reality also is time-bound, in the process of becoming and therefore finally unknowable".[22] For Peter Brooks, in his essay Godlike Science/Unhallowed Arts: Language and Monstrosity in Frankenstein (1978), the mathematical sense of 'series' in the phrase "series of my being" represents a "metonymic 'sliding' of the Monster's effort to reach satisfaction of desire".[23] For Susan Eilenberg, in her essay Nothing's Nameless--Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (2003), the Being's utterance of "series of my being" is a synecdochic self-reference to potential future generations of his species latent within him.[24]

In his own prose, Shelley uses the phrase 'the series of' in the sense of a particular 'causal series' or 'causal chain of events', for example, his use of the phrase "the series of calamity" instigated by the brutality of butchery and vivisection in his essay on vegetarianism, A Vindication Of Natural Diet (1811).[25] As circumstantial evidence, in this same essay we find the statement of a theme recognizable in *Frankenstein*, that it was "much better that a sentient being should never have existed than that it should have

existed only to endure unmitigated misery".[26] Also, in his fragmentary treatise on morals, Shelley uses the term "the series of our habitual conduct" as a function of mankind's material needs.[27] Shelley's use of the definite article in 'the series of' turns the remainder of the phrase into a variable name and the whole becomes a functional definition. This is plainly a mathematically interpretation of the term 'series' which recognises the mystery of induction whereby each term in a series is determined by the terms preceding it, and, in turn, determines the terms which follow it. Kant had been inspired by the 'chain of being' he found in *An Essay on Man* (1734) by Alexander Pope (1688-1744).[28] According to Martin Schonfeld in "Kant took Pope's 'chain of being' to the extreme. Creation as a whole is an interconnected system of subsystems...".[29] Each subsystem regarded in isolation became a 'series'. Muller's translation of Chapter II of Book II of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781; the chapter most concerned with Necessarianism) is replete with a limited number of specific functional phrases 'the series of causes', 'the series of phenomena', the 'series of conditions', 'the series of ancestors', 'the series of time', etc. Kant begins his explanation of the antecedents and consequences of the present moment with the sentence "Let us take the series, m, n, o, where n is given as conditioned by m, and at the same time as a condition of o".[30] My question is this: Why would Shelley have bothered to have made two emendations—which both include the idiosyncratic, highly specific, odd, and loaded phrase "the series of my being"—to a novel over which he not already exerted great influence?

Such an question would be very difficult to answer within the Marian paradigm which makes little or no acknowledgement of Shelley's influence. Within the Shelleyan paradigm, the answer almost jumps out of the page at the reader. Within the Shelleyan paradigm there is also abundant evidence to support a number of other interesting conclusions which I shall do my best to explain in the remainder of this thesis. Though it asserts Shelley's active collaborative role, in no way is the Shelleyan paradigm intended as "justification for eliminating Mary Shelley's active place in the construction of the

novel", as one reader has asserted. I simply note, however, that, due to the lack of supporting evidence for a credible interpretation of *Frankenstein* under the Marian paradigm, there is a veritable smorgasbord of interpretations, ranging from the ideological to the incredible, and that, if there is a consensus on the 'meaning' of *Frankenstein* in the literary community of those who adhere to the Marian paradigm, it is that it remains an enigma. My intention in proposing a Shelleyan paradigm for the interpretation of *Frankenstein* is to revive critical activity on a profound allegory with great relevance to our present times.

I shall not explore here the main claim of my thesis, that seen within the Shelleyan paradigm, at the anagogical and tropological level, *Frankenstein* becomes a Necessarian allegory—it is discussed at length below. But I shall touch on the case of Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713). According to Rebecca Tierney-Hynes in her essay Shaftesbury's Soliloquy—Authorship and the Psychology of Romance (2005), certain novels—those focused on a romantic or theological dialogue between two main characters—written after Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* (1711), deserve recognition as a "newly moral genre", not for their form, however, but for Shaftesbury's insistence upon the "development of the moral psyche of the author".[31] Again, Shaftesbury's influence in Frankenstein cannot be defended under the Marian Paradigm. There is a strong argument to be made for a reading of Shaftesbury's influence in *Frankenstein.* Anne K. Mellor, in *Mary Shelley--Her Life Her Fiction Her Monsters* (1988), suggests that the Shelleys were "influenced by Shaftesbury's philosophical argument".[32]

Christopher Small notes that Shaftesbury may have been known to the Shelleys because there seems to be "a direct connection with ideas in *Frankenstein*", the connection being the existence in both texts (explicit in Shaftesbury, implicit in *Frankenstein*) of Necessarian principles (the recognition of universal ordering principle; the humble admission of metaphysical ignorance; the advocation of prudence and

selflessness; the proscription of hubristic 'enthusiasm', selfish passion, and presumption). Small observes that, though it is "extremely tempting" to think otherwise, Mary only read Shaftesbury years after *Frankenstein* was published and he attributed the 'connection' to the "spirit of the age".[33] Small also chooses to gloss over Shaftesbury's denigrating use of the term 'modern Prometheus'. Ketterer notes as "conjectural" that Shaftesbury's philosophy was an influence upon the use of the Prometheus myth, 'denigratingly' in *Frankenstein*; because, as he points out, Mary had not read Shaftesbury until 1825.[34]

Similarly perplexed over the Promethean element in Frankenstein, Linda M. Lewis, in *The Promethean Politics of Milton, Blake, and Shelley* (1992), states that, if "Mary had read Shaftesbury, she would have known—as Percy knew—that Prometheus is often charged with having produced a flawed human species".[35] When interpreted through a Shelleyan paradigm, I believe that *Frankenstein* qualifies for inclusion in Tierney-Hynes' 'newly moral genre'. In his introduction to *Frankenstein* Shelley had written that "I am by no means indifferent to the manner in which whatever moral tendencies exist in the sentiments or characters it contains shall affect the reader".[36]

Another component of the Shelleyan paradigm involves the interpretation of *Frankenstein* as a Romantic allegory warning of the evils of Industrialism. Such a view is completely in keeping with Shelley's own views on Industrialism. In a personal communication, Ashton Nichols has suggested that *Frankenstein* might be better understood as 'Franklinstein.' As I shall show in a later chapter, Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) was most important for promoting Industrialism and its concomitant redefinition of prudence: MacIntyre tells us that Franklin regarded "the means-ends relationship as external rather than internal", such that it becomes secondary to utility.[37] MacIntyre explains that it is through this process of externalization of social values that we have arrived in a truly Hobbesian world. for "any society which recognized only external goods competitiveness would be the dominant and even exclusive feature".[38]

Here again, we see the substitution of external, material values (a felicific calculus) for the concept of internal, introspective values (virtue). It is no coincidence that the short-term ethos of Industrialism was best defined by Franklin, in his short and extremely influential essay *The Way to Wealth* (1758) which amounts to a compilation of saws for those who would know "how to achieve success in business",[39] for example: "God helps them that help themselves";[40] "Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry all easy";[41] "Industry need not wish, and he who lives upon hope will die fasting. There are no gains without pains";[42] "If we are industrious we shall never starve";[43] "Diligence is the mother of good luck, and God gives all things to industry";[44] "One today is worth two tomorrows";[45] and "industry gives comfort, and plenty, and respect. 'Fly pleasures, and they will follow you...'".[46] This short-term ethos—clearly based in Locke's pleasure-pain calculus of immediate sensation—was in sharp contrast with the traditional, long-term ethos, based on the concept of life-long virtue[47] with its corollaries of prudence and forethought. Industrialism met with resistance from, among others, William Godwin (1756-1836), in *Political Justice* (1793). Here Godwin states quite clearly his position on the felicific calculus:

> "We shall be more fully aware of the connection between virtue and knowledge if we consider that the highest employment of virtue is to propagate itself. Virtue alone deserves to be considered as leading to true happiness, the happiness which is most solid and durable. Sensual pleasures are momentary; they fill a very short portion of our time with enjoyment, and leave long intervals of painful vacuity".[48]

Setting aside tropological and anagogical interpretations, at the level of pure allegory my reading of *Frankenstein* is this: Victor, who has been the victim of blind scientistic enthusiasm, tells how he rediscovered his fore-thought (pro-metheus). While in the Orkneys engaged in the project of creating a female Being, his sense of exploitation and injustice caused him to stop and to "consider the effects of what I was now doing".[49] He extrapolated from his first experience of the horrors unleashed by his technology and decided not to proceed with a second act of technological creation. He decided to

exercise precaution by not creating a second Being "whose dispositions I was alike ignorant",[50] and which, as a "thinking and reasoning being",[51] might behave in unpredictable ways. Victor went though the exercise of imagining the varieties of disruption and destruction she might cause. Then he made the great pivotal statements in Frankenstein: "Had I a right, for my own benefit, to inflict this curse upon everlasting generations?... I shuddered to think that future ages might curse me as their pest, whose selfishness had not hesitated to buy its own peace at the price perhaps of the existence of the whole human race".[52] Following this statement the narrative makes a volta; the roles of the pursuer and the pursued are reversed.

Victor, had "in a fit of enthusiastic madness",[53] and with "almost supernatural enthusiasm",[54] created a technology which he neglected to manage through his self-interest. Initially the technology existed peacefully, operating as a labour-saving device for the De Lacey family, an "invisible hand",[55]—a term recalling On the Wealth of Nations [1776] which appears twice within as many pages—welcomed until the ugliness of its physical presence becomes unavoidably obvious. This technology's unnatural existence, its disconnection from the 'great chain of being', is immediately perceived as a threat. Though rejected, the technology begins to irresistibly oppress and "glut the maw of death" [56] with human lives. Furthermore, it demands the right to multiply, *laissez-faire*, while making empty promises not to bring further harm to mankind. It is then that Victor admits that "I was the slave of my creature".[57]

At this point in *Frankenstein*, the Being, takes on the role of Industrialist task-master. It peers through the window to supervise Victor's work, and a "ghastly grin wrinkled his lips... [which] expressed the utmost extent of malice and treachery".[58] Upon seeing this, Victor describes his reaction as that of a fearful employee: "I trembled, and my heart failed within me".[59] In protest at the unreasonable demands and the potentially catastrophic consequences for humanity, Victor tears his work to pieces—an act which has often been compared to those of the Luddites of 1812. Thus threatened, the

Industrialist then comes to 'negotiate' with Victor in terms which initially assume employer-employee condescendence in contractual negotiations—"Do you dare to break your promise?",[60] followed by a catalogue of his own 'suffering' incurred in the course of his selfish vocations—to 'help' humankind and in the persecution of Victor. When these pleas fail, the Industrialist attempts intimidation with the imperious command "Slave... You are my creator, but I am your master;—obey".[61] Finally, the Industrialist resorts to threats, saying, "the bolt will fall which must ravish from you your happiness for ever".[62] The technology which Victor created in his naive quest after personal glory has now made his own misery its primary objective and its single expression of power. Victor shudders at his own initial "mad enthusiasm",[63] again refuses the Industrialist's requests, and the stakes are raised—the domestic bliss of Victor's wedding night is threatened.

When these threats are enacted, Victor bemoans his personal catastrophe: "Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change. ...so frightful an event is single in the history of man.".[64] Indignant at the destruction of his nuclear family, Victor attempts to seek justice through conventional channels only to be told he is deluded in his sense of persecution, at which point he cries: "Man, how ignorant art thou in thy pride of wisdom!".[65] Victor surrenders himself to his fate when he states that "all voluntary thought was swallowed up and lost".[66] Helplessly compelled by the demands of his own creation to follow it, and hoping to achieve the ultimate solution to the evils that his technology had created, Victor continues his pursuit. His progress foreshadows the future of humanity, from urban settings, through the wilderness and eventually into the "immense deserts" of the frozen North. Even in the frozen wastes, his technology provides Victor with the minimal sustenance required so the pursuit to mutual destruction can continue. Victor tells Walton that, "Sometimes,... a repast was prepared for me in the desert, that restored and inspirited me".[67] In his final days Victor describes himself as a monster "a miserable spectacle of wrecked humanity, pitiable to others, and abhorrent to myself".[68] As he dies, frustrated in his monomaniacal quest, Victor's last speech is to tell

Walton to "avoid ambition, even if it be only the *apparently innocent* one of distinguishing yourself in science" (my emphasis).[69]

The community who share this Shelleyan paradigm has been few in number for historical reasons. It was in *Essays in Criticism* (1865), that Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) made public his famous and eloquent opinion which tainted Shelley's reputation for so long: "The man Shelley, in very truth, is not entirely sane, and Shelley's poetry is not entirely sane either. ... And in poetry, no less than in life, he is 'a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain.'".[70] Bury also appears to have misjudged Shelley when he wrote that "Shelley was the poet of perfectibility".[71] As I shall show, Shelley was anything but a Perfectabilist—a name used among the Bavarian Illuminati in Ingolstadt which Shelley distanced himself from. In *Frankenstein*, that Victor is educated in Ingolstadt is also an indictment of the Illuminati.

Sharon Rushton, in *Shelley and Vitality* (2005), is the most recent scholar to attempt to reconcile Shelley's prose and poetry to Romantic-era natural philosophy. Skewed by her focus on 'vitalism' Rushton forces an improbable philosophical alliance between Shelley and his surgeon, Sir William Lawrence (1783-1867; a participant in the Hunterian debate),[72] a paradigm which assumes an equally unlikely hypothesis—that of Shelley's atheism and materialism. As Hogg said of Shelley, "great deal of nonsense has been written and spoken about the irreligious opinions ascribed to my poor friend".[73] I shall show that Shelley was far from being either an atheist or a materialist. He was closest to Deism in his Necessarianism and his rejection of enthusiasm, though he argued with the anthropomorphism implied in the 'Being of Beings'. Deism was the source of eighteenth-century secular morality—and in my view it is this secular morality, most often attributed to Shaftesbury, which is allegorized in *Frankenstein* as well as in the similarly epistolic novels of Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778).

Though the errors in these opinions are readily apparent to those receptive to Shelley's ethical project, something of the stain remains as a culturally-conditioned predisposition to dismiss the Shelleyan paradigm along with Shelley's poetry and prose as shallow, his learning as a patchwork, and to interpret *Frankenstein* purely as a superficial metaphor.

3. THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

Popular Readings

'Transhistorical stability" is Greenblatt's term.[1] By it he means the continued response to a literary work across history. He points out that any analysis of response to a literary work must go deeper than the superficial similarities of 'popularity' in audiences separated by centuries where the "objects and sensations and meanings and practices by which [a response] is provoked and to which it is attached differs significantly".[2] 'Transhistorical' is defined as having significance "that transcends the historical; universal or eternal".[3] In my view, the historical transcendence of *Frankenstein* is not metaphysical but aetiological in that, as a myth, it "embodies and provides an explanation, aetiology, or justification for something" [4] essential in what it is to be human.

Shelley is explicit about this in his 1818 Preface to *Frankenstein* where he writes, "I have thus endeavoured to preserve the truth of the elementary principles of human nature".[5] Shelley was also fully aware of what it took to make a work 'transhistorically stable'. For him it meant that the artist's work bore "a defined and intelligible relation to the knowledge and sentiment and religion of the age in which he lived, and of the ages which followed it: developing itself in correspondence with their development".[6] To use Greenblatt's terms, the work must incorporate a "power of ready mutation".[7] I propose that *Frankenstein* survives as a metaphor because it was/is best adaptation of the Promethean myth to explain the flaws in the industrial ethos for two centuries until the present day. When the industrial ethos is superceded, *Frankenstein* will likely also be superceded by a myth with an aetiology better suited to the new age—if there is one.

As Greenblatt notes, the popular responses to a transhistorically stable work are simply the superficialities of a deeper aetiology. The *Oxford English Dictionary* tells us that 'Frankensteinian' is an adjective applied "allusively as a typical name for a monster who is a terror to his originator and ends by destroying him". The supporting quotations are examples given of hybridization, steam power, British colonialism, rogue robots, police states and racist regimes. The common element in all such metaphorical instances of the Frankensteinian metaphor is the surprise experienced by the 'originators' (or creators) once they realize that the forces that they have put into motion have reacted unpredictably and are suddenly beyond their control. The creators unexpectedly find themselves to be the victims. This is unexpected because, prior to their sudden inversion of perspective, these creators had operated from within an illusion of personal security, oblivious to any need for 'precaution' or "prudent foresight".[8] It is precisely such a lack of foresight which has led to the impending ecological catastrophe, and it is the blame for this global threat is fairly laid at the feet of the industrial monster by non-Western cultures.

As I shall show in a subsequent chapter, terms such as 'precaution' and 'forethought', long the keystones of ancient wisdom, were crushed under the pressure of the leviathan of economic 'efficiency' at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. The Promethean myth no longer suited the spirit of the times. The Christian virtues—prudence, moderation, temperance and fortitude—also lost their social significance at the end of the Romantic Era. They were made obsolete by the powerful illusion of progress which justified the creators' material acts of "seizure and occupation without right," of "forward or over-confident opinion or conduct," of "assuming or taking of something for granted," of adopting a false "ground or reason for presuming or believing"—all of which are definitions of 'presumption',[9] a term which also lost its ethical significance under Industrialism. The historian Lord Acton (1834-1902) made the most astute observation in his apothegm: "If there is any presumption, it is... about holders of power, increasing as the power increases. ...Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Great men are almost always bad men".[10] A familiar saw states that 'knowledge is power,' but power is rarely wielded for the general good. Since the eighteenth century we have separated ourselves from our ancestors by breaking the taboo of presuming to know the unknowable and turning it into a virtue.

The actions of Roger Bacon (1214-1294) in withholding the secret of gunpowder and its destructive potential, "in mercy to mankind",[11] were still debated by Southey in *Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society* (1824). On one hand, this was the finest "proof of foresight and true greatness of mind" because Bacon "desired the praise of knowledge, and yet was content to forego the honour of this discovery".[12] On the other hand, Southey argued, gunpowder shortens war and reduces its ferocity by increasing the distance between opponents. Southey was not against scientific exploration, he was against making public such dangerous discoveries. On the subject of newly discovered poisons, Southey wrote, that it was right

> "that such experiments should be made and carefully recorded, for the advancement of science, because we are justified in presuming that this must ultimately be for the benefit of mankind; but they should have been published in a language which would have confined the knowledge to that class of persons for whom it was designed. To render it accessible (the most important and fearful of these experiments, were copied into magazines and provincial newspapers!) to every one, was putting into the hands of the wicked more formidable means of mischief than had ever before been known".[13]

One hundred years before what is now considered the beginning of the Enlightenment, two-hundred and forty-five years before *Frankenstein* was conceived, Philip Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim (1493-1541), who adopted the name Paracelsus (pompously placing himself 'above Celsus') reports breaking Mediaeval 'taboos'—"total or partial prohibitions"[14]—, in particular that of animating inert matter. Paracelcus's *De natura rerum* (1572) describes the "secret above all secrets",[15] the alchemical recipe for the spontaneous generation of a human homunculus through palingenesis in a flask. This secret does not rely on any superstition such as spirits or

daemons;[16] in its way, it was unsuperstitious—a feature that the Shelleys would have admired. Of the generation of homunculi, Paracelsus writes:

> "...it has been kept in great secrecy and kept hidden up to now, and there was not a little doubt and question among the old philosophers whether it even be possible to nature and art that a man can be born outside the female body and [without] a natural mother. I give this answer—that it is by no means opposed to the spagyric art and to nature, but that it is indeed possible...".[17]

Unlike Roger Bacon, Paracelsus did publish his findings and was vilified for his lack of prudence and precaution and chastised for his presumption and the "sacrilegious, satanic, and dishonest elements in his work".[18]

Similar outrage erupted in the Romantic Era because of electrical demonstrations. The *Edinburgh Review* of 1803 ridiculed both the hypothesis of Giovanni Aldini (1762-1834), that "a peculiar ethereal fluid is continually generated in the animal economy; that it is connected with the functions of life" and his attempts to "demonstrate its relations to common electricity, and the electricity produced by metals." Aldini's human experiments, which involved eliciting convulsions from recently executed cadavers, they called "rather disgusting than instructive".[19] Many critics read of the antics of Victor Frankenstein with much the same sentiment. In 1820 Mrs. Piozzi described her reaction to *Frankenstein* as within "a hair's breadth of positive disgust".[20] That this sentiment discrediting the novel in certain circles, likely had more to do with those whose taboo-breaking economic interests it drew attention to, rather than those who recognized the novel as a subtle allegory promoting prudence and precaution. The immediate popularity of the novel attests to the timeliness of its subject-matter—the confrontation of scientism, its economic counterpart, Industrialism, and its political counterpart, liberal democracy. These defining elements of Western culture have simply become more virulent as present-day popular applications of the Frankensteinian metaphor suggest.

In a special issue which commemorated forty years of living with the bomb, *Time* magazine observed that 'The Age of Anxiety'—the title of W.H. Auden's 1948 Pulitzer Prize-winning poem—became personified in Boris Karloff's Frankensteinian monster: "Here was the atomic tale writ wild. Brilliant Dr. Frankenstein, tampering with nature... [...] the mad nuclear scientist".[21] *Time* noted that while "Americans do not really believe in the Apocalypse, no matter how many movies we watch," the bomb's social impact—similar to that of Copernicus, Darwin and Freud—engendered a "feeling of powerlessness ... [of] how small people are, how accidental their prominence, how subject to external manipulation".[22] Alongside the "duck and cover" lessons of the 1950s, populations were seduced by "Sunday supplements [which] were regularly salted with futuristic articles describing the 'New Tomorrow' that science promised—colonization of other worlds, personal 'fliers,' gold from the sea, robot servants, freedom from disease, unlimited energy from the atom, and so on".[23]

The *Time* article observes that the splitting of the atom illuminated the split in the human psyche revealed in 1818 in Frankenstein, a "divorce of human life from other natural phenomena," in which "Drs. Frankenstein and Strangelove are monsters to the Luddite sensibility" and Hiroshima and Nagasaki are "mirrors of what we did, and would probably do again." The *Time* article continues:

> "In the end we face a hard, self-evident fact: whether because we dropped the Bomb, or because we live in its shadow, or because we are able to use it, we have created an enormous handicap for ourselves, and we will have to learn to survive and endure in spite of that handicap. The handicap will not disappear. It only remains to be seen if we will disappear...".[24]

Gabrielle Hecht's essay, Globalization Meets Frankenstein?, in *Weapons of Mass Destruction and Terrorism* (2004), she describes the nuclear—first world—powers as forming a neo-colonial new world order in which the "Iraqi nuclear capability... has become one of France's Frankensteinian monsters", and Iraq a rogue state.[25] Similarly, Osama bin Laden's undermining of neo-Liberal hegemony by the audacious use of box-

cutters, passenger airliners and suicide pilots has led many in the USA to lay claim to his innovation while rejecting the horror of the terrorist act by pronouncing that bin Laden is the USA's own Frankensteinian monster—originally hand-picked and trained by the CIA to serve US foreign policy:

> "This contemporary Frankenstein [Washington] knew that by assembling the elements produced by the decomposition of various Muslim societies, it was creating and feeding a monster. It did this with a definite purpose: the monster was meant to do the dirty work that the creator itself was unable to carry out. Nevertheless, the demon still ultimately turned against the demiurge".[26]

A quick 'Google' search reveals that the Frankenstein/monster metaphor is used to describe: Kissinger/Pinochet; Reagan/the Taliban; the CIA/the Contras; US Foreign policy/Al-Qaeda; US Foreign policy/Saddam Hussein; US political economic leadership/the corporation; Pakistan/Islamic terrorists; the UN/Palestine; Israel/Hamas and Hezbollah; Columbia/FARC; etc. S.K. Ghosh's essay, Frankenstein of Terrorism—An Overview, in *Terrorism--World Under Siege* (1995), describes terrorism as the "monster" of 'democratic' governments—charged to defend the conflicting freedoms of self-interest and individual rights—which lose impartiality and fail to uphold the rule of law. The only means left for such corrupt governments is to counteract terrorism by raising the monster of state terrorism.[27]

But these popular applications of the Frankensteinian metaphor tend to be sensationalistic and superficial. Mis-readings and back-readings which, like the film industry, dredge the narrative for its entertainment value, and occlude the underlying ethical themes in *Frankenstein.* It was the ethical concerns of the turbulent Eighteenth Century which gave rise to *Frankenstein.* For Shelley and his coterie, for example, the fanaticism of Eleutherian societies lead to 'totalitarianism' (a word coined only in 1926[28]), and it was likely this form of 'freedom'—the freedom of the Inquisitor and Tyrant as practiced by Jupiter Eleutherius—which Demogorgon, acting as the agent of Necessity or the manifestation of Virtue, overthrew in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound.*

The underlying ethical themes in *Frankenstein* are more difficult to recover, but once recovered, these ethical themes deepen the aetiology of *Frankenstein* and make it clear why *Frankenstein* succeeded as a myth whereas competing metaphors, such as the Faustus/Faust, of Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), with their non-secular basis in Christian superstitions, did not survive the rise of scepticism.

Like the Promethean myth, *Frankenstein* retains its currency as a popular metaphor for situations which induce terror through the unpredictable consequences of acts made in blind hubris, flaws in the principles of human nature. The difference between the ancient Prometheus and the modern Prometheus lies in the difference between the sacred and the secular and the transformation in the popular mind of a faith-based ethos to a secular ethos. This is often occluded in the scientistic appropriation of the modern Prometheus. For example, Bernard E Rollin, author of *The Frankenstein Syndrome* (1995), holds that *Frankenstein* is an "archetypal myth, metaphor, or category that expresses deep concerns that trouble the modern mind", and, as such, it is a "Rosetta stone for deciphering ethical and social concerns".[29] Rollin points out, however, that these 'deep concerns' are rarely examined; most of us are satisfied with a "simplistic acceptance (or rejection) of the Frankenstein story" without ever considering the ethical "lacuna" which it addresses—between experts who believe they operate under the 'value-free' aegis of science and an ill-informed, easily-persuaded public.[30]

Writing from an anthropocentric perspective, Rollin's point is that decisions on ethics in science should not be left to scientists, but that the public should be involved. To do otherwise is to enter the 'Frankenstein syndrome' where the public's ignorance of science breeds fear, suspicion, and hostility. Rollin's concerns focus on the unjust rejection of benevolent science by the 'knee-jerk' reactions of a public horrified by the ugliness of animal experimentation and vivisection. what Rollin's solution is to convert

those members of the public who retain some vestige of a faith-based ethos and therefore resist and question the leviathan of scientific materialism. Rollin is actually distorting and capitalizing on the source of the deep discomfort aroused by witnessing the emotionally detached human manipulation of living tissue. Even in a secular ethos there is something referred to as the 'secular sacred'. My personal definition of the 'secular sacred' is 'that which deserves respect because, though we might destroy it, we cannot create or fully understand it'—a definition which includes all forms of life. But, for scientific materialists, such a view is a return to "Holy Darkness".[31]

In his speech given before the World Economic Forum in the early 1990s, the poet and statesman Vaclav Havel addressed the "defenders of scientism" and spoke of their "depersonalized objectivity" and "the cult of objectivity".[32] Havel went on to say that "[t]raditional science, with its usual coolness, can describe the different ways we might destroy ourselves, but it cannot offer us truly effective and practicable instructions on how to avert them".[33] He argued that it was not irrationality which gave rise to "Kaiser Wilhelm, Hitler, Stalin" but, rather, unchecked "rational, cognitive thinking".[34] Isaiah Berlin, in *The Roots of Romanticism* (1999), a book which addresses historical and present-day romanticism, notes that along with the rise of scientific scepticism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there rose a popular reaction taking the form of nostalgia and paranoia based in an instinctive awareness of the profound "unembraceability" and "irreducibility" of nature.[35] Berlin defines romantic nostalgia as one's awareness that your "relation to the universe is inexpressible, but you must nevertheless express it. This is the agony, this is the problem".[36] Romantic paranoia, on the other hand, concerns "something behind, there is something in the dark depths of the unconscious, or of history; there is something, at any rate, not seized by us which frustrates our dearest wishes".[37] It is to these persistently romantic components of human nature that *Frankenstein* appeals.

Rollin writes that *Frankenstein* automatically "rises to most people's minds when genetic engineering is mentioned".[38] Victor discovers the secret of life, by observing the changes "from life to death, and death to life" and is amazed that he "alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret... [becoming] capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter".[39] This is the telos of scientism. Rollin calls biotechnology, "the most monumental technological revolution in human history",[40] and provides a list of its dangers: human evolution may be put 'in the fast lane'; the gene pool may be narrowed; new diseases may evolve; ecosystems may be destroyed; there may be socioeconomic concerns; and then there will be the military applications.[41] If man, like a God, ever comes to know the secret of creation, there opens an ethical chasm of infinitely receding moral responsibility which mankind is demonstrably ill-equipped to cope with, as many commentators throughout history, including Shelley, have noted. It is this ultimate ethical question about which the narrative of *Frankenstein* revolves—that the knowledge of good is inseparable from the knowledge of evil, that the knowledge of creation is inseparable from the knowledge of destruction, and for mankind to presume to deal in such knowledge within a flawed ethical structure is to create a ethical instability which invites a paroxysm to restore a new ecological equilibrium.

A more subtle literary archaeology is required to restore luster to the original ethical aetiology of *Frankenstein* and to discover why it retains relevance in the present day; this is what the remainder of this thesis is intended to achieve. The method requires that the reader enter the Shelleyan paradigm with an open mind, be willing to become familiar with this reconstruction of the past, and, simultaneously, be prepared to reevaluate the assumptions (ideological distortions) which many accept uncritically today. Following Greenblatt's statement in *Learning to Curse* (1990), I am also "committed to the project of making strange what has become familiar, of demonstrating that what seems an untroubling and untroubled part of ourselves is actually part of something else, something

different".[42] This method—that of "making the familiar unfamiliar", of effecting a gestalt shift—echoes the method of the Romantic-era poets as Rushton has pointed out.[43] In his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), William Wordsworth (1770-1850) made it one of his objectives that "ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way".[44] And Shelley himself believed that a "mist of familiarity obscures from us the wonder of our being" [45] and held that the poetic mandate was that it "purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity",[46] in that it "lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar".[47] Though his method is allegorical, Shelly's intention might even be considered as a form of 'deconstruction' in the strict sense of being "directed towards exposing unquestioned metaphysical assumptions and internal contradictions in philosophical and literary language".[48]

Kuhn wrote that, the "temptation to write history backward is both omnipresent and perennial" because each discipline sees its "past developing linearly toward its present vantage".[49] Literature is no exception. As noted, the attempt to defamiliarize *Frankenstein* is to recontextualize it by constructing a web of 'pungent anecdotes and arcane documents'. The approach of James A. Harris—whose recent work *Of Liberty and Necessity* (2005) I have found invaluable—is that the canon (that "body of literary works traditionally regarded as the most important, significant, and worthy of study"—OED) is an ideological construct and that criticism which "concentrates only upon canonical texts is bound to produce a more distorted view of its period than the kind that juxtaposes the canonical with the almost forgotten".[50] Even Kant made the same point when he affixed Seneca's epigram to one of his earliest essays: "Nihil magis praestandum est, quam ne pecorum ritu sequamur antecedentium gregem, pergentes, non qua eundum est, sed qua itur".[51] My objective is to achieve the effect described by Theodore W Adorno, in The Essay as Form (1958), who imagines a stranger who learns to read without a dictionary, but because "he sees the same word thirty times in continually changing contexts, he will have ascertained its meaning better than if he had looked up all the meanings listed".[52]

4. PARADIGM CONSTRUCTION

The Cultural Context

The purpose of the first part of this chapter is to provide a selected cultural context for *Frankenstein*; I shall follow it with a selected literary context. The events and issues I have chosen to include (and exclude) are based on my readings of the Shelleys' poetry, prose, journals, and correspondence. As I am constructing a Shelleyan, and not a Marian, paradigm I have given priority to the events and issues in Shelley's life over those in Mary's. There are no dramatic conflicts between these two sets of records, but Shelley's generally appear less reserved and of a far wider range. Mary's records are, comparatively-speaking, a desert which many scholars have sifted through and eked out as well as they can. Cutting through Shelley's luxuriant wordage was a daunting task, initially, but once I had located his positions in contemporary debates—Deism, electricity, morality, Necessity—, these became landmarks by which I could navigate. In the following four chapters I give the general background to these debates including the events and personalities which I believe gave them special significance for Shelley.

For the seventy-five years preceding the appearance of *Frankenstein*, Europe's intellectual elite was abuzz with debate over the theological and practical implications of cataclysmic natural forces and new imponderables. These debates had immediate impact on Shelley in that they precipitated his rejection of Christianity and his subsequent adoption of the Deistic doctrine of Necessarianism. I believe that Shelley initially followed François-Marie Arouet Voltaire (1694-1778) because his early essays strongly resemble Voltaire's anti-Christian essays, and, of course, Shelley used the words "ECRASEZ L'INFAME!" with the citation "Corréspondance de Voltaire" as an epithet in Queen Mab (1811).[1] Voltaire, in turn, had been deeply influenced by the English

critical deists,[2] particularly in their use of ridicule in theological criticism, and he may be considered as refining that tradition.[3] Shelley wrote to J.J. Stockdale on November 11, 1810—shortly after taking up residence at University College, Oxford, and shortly before being expelled in March 2, 1811—requesting "a Hebrew essay demonstrating that the Christian religion is false." A footnote reveals the book to be *Chizzuk Emunah*, or *Faith Strengthened* (1593) by Isaac Ben Abraham Troki, translated by Moses Mocatta. This had, with other Jewish polemics, been recompiled and translated into Latin as *Tela ignea Satanae*, or *Satan's Fiery Arrows* (1681). Voltaire had made good use of these anti-Christian arguments,[4] but also ridiculed the Jewish faith while looking, as a Deist, for the moral content in all religions. Speaking of the allegory of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen., ii., 17), Voltaire wrote, "Does not this allegory, however, clearly teach us that knowledge, wrongly understood, is able to undo us?... how dangerous false science is, how it puffs up the heart, and how absurd a learned doctor often is".[5] In his essay We Must Take Sides (1772; "..whether there is or is not a God"[6]), Voltaire credits Baron Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) with the Deist creed that this is the best of all possible worlds (while rejecting Leibniz's dualism). Voltaire arrives at a definition of Deist Necessarianism which Shelley appears to have adopted completely:

> "Every present event is born of the past, and is father of the future... The great being who necessarily sustains it cannot let it hang uncertainly, nor change it... Hence, an inevitable destiny is the law of nature, as the whole of antiquity felt... The dread of depriving man of some false liberty, robbing virtue of its merit, and relieving crime of its horror, has at times alarmed tender souls; but as soon as they were enlightened they returned to this great truth, that all things are enchained and necessary... Man is free, we repeat, when he can do what he wills to do; but he is not free to will; it is impossible that he should will without cause".[7]

Necessarian determinism is not absolute in the sense that one is denied free-will; it implies merely that one's future is limited in scope by one's past and one's present. The past, present and future form a connected series, or chain. Voltaire insists that any Deist enlightened by this ancient wisdom should never accept the state of the world with

equanimity; they should be compelled to act as benevolent 'citizens' to make the future better. Voltaire cites examples of the 'evil' of religious sectarianism in the 'best of all possible worlds': the execution of Anne Bolyn, the Irish massacres, the "twelve millions of Americans who are being assassinated", and the massacre of St. Bartholomew.[8]

Perplexing natural catastrophes also served to remind the citizen of the incomprehensibility and ecocentricity of Necessity and the evil presumption of sectarian doctrines. On November 1, 1755, All Saint's Day, a cataclysmic earthquake and 12-meter tsunami had destroyed the city of Lisbon. This was the biggest earthquake in Western history and claimed 70,000 victims. Voltaire wrote his Poem On The Lisbon Disaster—Or an Examination of the Axiom, 'All is Well' (1755) to voice his disenchantment with the increasingly smug anthropocentrism of the Deists' natural theology—a presumption that the Industrialists of Shelley's day would inherit. Citing Shaftesbury as the one "who set the fashion in this", Voltaire proclaims that those "who have protested that all is well are charlatans".[9] The poem opens with this plaint:

> Unhappy mortals! Dark and mourning earth!
> Affrighted gathering of human kind!
> Eternal lingering of useless pain!
> Come, ye philosophers, who cry, "All's well,"
> And contemplate this ruin of a world.
> Behold these shreds and cinders of your race,
> This child and mother heaped in common wreck,
> These scattered limbs beneath the marble shafts—
> A hundred thousand whom the earth devours,
> Who, torn and bloody, palpitating yet,
> Entombed beneath their hospitable roofs,
> In racking torment end their stricken lives.
> ...
> 'Tis mockery to tell me all is well.
> Like learned doctors, nothing do I know.[10]

Four years later Voltaire used *Candide--Or Optimism* (1759) to ridicule the Portuguese Inquisition at Lisbon. He portrays them as, by inverting the tenets of retribution theology, conducting an auto-da-fe on the day after the disaster, to satisfy their bloodthirsty doctrine. Ironically, Dr. Pangloss is inexorably caught up in the bloodshed by voicing

Necessarian beliefs to an Inquisitor's agent which results in his arrest and execution. Pangloss begins amid the rubble:

> "...this is all for the best. Because, if there's a volcano in Lisbon, it couldn't be anywhere else. Because it's impossible that things would not be as in fact they are. Because everything is for the best."

The agent replies:

> "Apparently the gentleman is not a believer in original sin, since if everything is indeed for the best, there could neither have been a fall nor any punishment on that account."
>
> "I most humbly beg Your Excellency's pardon," said Pangloss even more politely, "since the fall of man and the resulting curse are necessary components of the best of all possible worlds."
>
> "Does the gentleman not believe in freedom of the will?"
>
> "Do please excuse me, Your Excellency," said Pangloss, "Freedom of the will can certainly co-exist with absolute necessity, because it was necessary that we be this free..".[11]

Here Voltaire, through Pangloss, highlights the Christian objections to the doctrine of Necessity, a doctrine which was to become so important to Shelley. In its opposition to Necessarianism, the alliance betwwen Christianity and Libertarianism becomes apparent. Voltaire's essay We Must Take Sides states that the First Principle (an ecocentric or panentheistic[12] entity rather than an anthropomorphic God) "has done all things necessarily because, if its works were not necessary, they would be useless. But does this necessity deprive it of will? Certainly not... Does this necessity deprive it of liberty? Not at all. Liberty can only be the power to act".[13] Necessarians might believe that the incomprehensible whole that they live in is the best of all possible worlds, but not that all is, or should be, well. At a local level, injustice appears because the webs of causation are so complex that the necessary compensations for imbalances elsewhere may have unpredictable and far-reaching consequences. For individuals living in such a world, benevolence is the best policy.

The earthquake of Lisbon was the paroxysm of a series of earthquakes which struck in Europe in the years immediately before and after 1755. Theologians could not be resolved to the fact that, in Lisbon, the "victims who died were mostly worshippers crushed by collapsing church spires. However, those who chose to sin on this festive day survived: the town brothels at the eastern outskirts of the city were spared".[14] Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) wrote three articles on the subject of the Lisbon earthquake in 1756 and concluded that explanations from retribution theology—that God's vengeance was deserved—were merely anthropocentrisms.[15] In his *Natural History* (1749) Georges Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788) suggested that the universe was essentially chaotic, that it was a "tumultuous, dangerous energy held in a benign overall balance".[16] It therefore deserved great respect and a philosophy which would not risk disturbing its equilibrium. We know that Shelley had read Buffon from his letter of July 24, 1816 to Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866).[17]

Prior to Lisbon, there had been earthquakes in London in 1750. The Reverend Dr. William Stukeley (1687-1765) presented a paper to the Royal Society in 1749, giving an account of a talk on electricity by Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), from which Stukeley inferred what was to become a popular theory, that, "if a non-electric Cloud discharges its Contents, upon any Part of the Earth, when in a high electrify'd State, an Earth quake must necessarily follow".[18] For Stukeley, this was proof of the connection between "earthly wonders" and "celestial monitions".[19] Joseph Priestly (1733-1804) published *The History and Present State of Electricity* in 1775 which also hypothesized that "electric matter escapes out of the earth" and makes its ascent to the higher regions of the air. He thought water spouts, whirlwinds, hurricanes, and earthquakes to be electrical in origin. According to Priestley, the "whole year [1750] had been exceedingly remarkable for fire-balls, thunder, lightning..."[20]

Coleridge, speaking of Franklin, states clearly that in the 1750s "a new light was struck by the discovery of electricity, and... it may be affirmed to have electrified the

whole frame of natural philosophy".[21] Horace Walpole (1717-1797) referred to these electro-seismic theories as "the fashionable cause, and everything is resolved into electrical appearances, as formerly everything was accounted for by Descartes' vortices, or Sir Isaac's gravitation".[22] David Hume (1711-1776) sceptically mocked these theories.[23] But though Shelley admired much in Hume, it seems he was not so sceptical on the significance of electricity and cataclysmic natural forces in the universe. He agreed with Hume that retribution theology, as theology, was 'superstition' because it presupposed an anthropomorphic God, but Shelley, like Buffon and unlike Hume, believed that there was a natural imperative of self-governance in all things which maintained the universal equilibrium. According to Necessarian beliefs, for a man to defy this imperative was an immoral act which had serious and unpredictable consequences.

As moral doctrines, the roots of both retribution theology and Necessarianism are traceable beyond Plato (427-347 B.C.E.) into ancient Greek mythology. William Godwin (1756-1836) held Necessarian beliefs. In his children's book, *The Pantheon—or Ancient History of the Gods of Greece and Rome* (1806; written under the pseudonym of 'Edward Baldwin'), he notes that Plato held the Fates to be "the children of Necessity" with powers "paramount to that of Jupiter" who originate in the "metaphysical or philosophical conceptions of men respecting the order of the universe".[24] Shelley had only to look around him to see the moral imbalance which accounted for natural disasters such as the earthquakes in London and the destruction of Lisbon. On March 14, 1812 Shelley wrote to Elizabeth Hitchener: "tho' then a silent spectator yet did I know that all was not as it ought to be; I looked with a fearful eye upon the vices of the great, & thought to myself 'twas better even to be a beggar or to be obliged to gain my bread with my needle than to be the inhabitant of those great houses when misery & famine howl around".

Frankenstein was conceived in 1816 amid cataclysmic natural forces which may have served to reinforce Shelley's predisposition toward the self-regulating complexity of the universe of the Necessarian. As John D. Post writes in *The Last Great Subsistence Crisis in the Western World* (1977), the years 1816-1819 "were marked by a crisis of hemispheric and, to some extent, world-wide proportions" which was not, as is commonly believed, the result of post-war economic disruption, but the result of "extraordinary volcanic activity" causing "dust veils in the stratosphere [which] decrease the absorption of incoming radiation by reducing the transparency of the atmosphere, which in turn produces lower surface temperatures".[25] This fact was first noted with respect to *Frankenstein* by Christopher Small in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1973).[26] As a result of the explosion of Mount Tambora in Indonesia, in 1815, the largest volcanic eruption in 10,000 years (10 times greater than Krakatoa, 100 times greater than Mount St-Helens), Europe had been plunged into the equivalent of what we would call a 'nuclear winter'. In the dawn of April 12, the Captain of a British vessel near Mount Tambuco wrote in his log that "the sky was very dark. By noon the heavens were so black and the air filled with so much fine ash that it appeared a realization of Milton's 'darkness visible'".[27]

1816 became known as 'The Year Without a Summer'.[28] One European eyewitness described the scene thus: "During the entire season the sun arose each morning as though in a cloud of smoke, red and rayless, shedding little light or warmth and setting at night behind a thick cloud of vapor, leaving hardly a trace of its having passed over the face of the earth".[29] In Europe, Switzerland was worst-hit. Post writes that, "true famine conditions prevailed... [and] produced numerous beggars and vagrancy on a massive scale".[30] When the Shelleys' party arrived in Switzerland on May 17, Mary described it in a letter to her half-sister as "sufficiently sublime to command our attention—never was scene more desolate".[31] This understatement hardly describes the situation in Switzerland in 1816 where brown snow fell every month of the year.

According to a local eye-witness account it was "horrible to see emaciated human skeletons with voracious appetites gulping down the most loathsome and unnatural foods—carcasses of dead animals, cattle fodder, leaves of nettles, swine food, and so forth".[32] Other accounts tell of people eating "sorrel, Iceland moss and cat flesh".[33] The weather and famine must have been hard to ignore; doubtless they were the inspiration for George Gordon Byron (1788-1834) to write his poem Darkness (July 20, 1816):

> The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
> Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
> Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth
> Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;
> Morn came and went--and came, and brought no day,
> And men forgot their passions in the dread
> Of this their desolation...
> ...
> a meal was bought
> With blood, and each sate sullenly apart
> Gorging himself in gloom: no love was left;
> All earth was but one thought--and that was death,
> Immediate and inglorious; and the pang
> Of famine fed upon all entrails--men
> Died, and their bones were tombless as their flesh;
> The meagre by the meagre were devoured.

Whether the Shelleys had read of Franklin's theory of 1784, of the volcanic origin of dust veils,[34] and of their effects,[35] is not known. Stukeley's theory of the necessary connection between lightning, earthquakes and a higher power was far more popular and was likely familiar to the Shelleys. Though the Shelley party seem oblivious to the suffering around them perhaps because, as Mary tells, us "We do not enter into society here",[36] the ominous presence of lightning in the "wet, ungenial summer"[37] in Switzerland is recorded a letter of June 1, where Mary writes:

> "The thunder storms that visit us are grander and more terrific than I have ever seen before. We watch them as they approach from the opposite side of the lake, observing the lightning play among the clouds in various parts of the heavens, and dart in jagged figures upon the piny heights of Jura, dark with the shadow of the overhanging cloud, while perhaps the sun is shining cherily upon us. One night we enjoyed a finer storm than I had ever before beheld. The lake was lit up--the pines on Jura made visible, and all the scene illuminated for an instant, when a

> pitchy blackness succeeded and the thunder came in frightful burst over our heads amid the darkness."

The Shelleys may have been tourists, like so many others, attracted to the Alps by their reputation as one of the European sites where natural forces were at their most terrifying. For Shelley, who believed in the Soul of the Universe, the Alps would be where this 'Power' was most approachable; his many poetic apostrophes might attest to this. Lightning, as electricity, was an imponderable, the vital fluid, through which this power acted as the 'second cause'. As the quotation above indicates, the Shelleys were fascinated with lightning and accounts of the mysterious ways in which it works.

As an aside: In the second volume of Priestley's *History* there is a quotation from James Wallace's *Ane Account off the Ancient & Present State of Orkney* (1684),[38] which is an account of bizarre lightning strikes on a steeple and in a byre where only every second cow was struck dead. Wallace's book would have been available to Shelley when it was republished in 1805 in Edinburgh. (Shelley may have picked it up in Edinburgh when he eloped there in 1811 with Harriet Westbrook. Hogg recalled that "Shelley got lots of good books whilst we were in Edinburgh".[39]) This account of the lightning-strike in Orkney may have a direct influence on the narrative of *Frankenstein* in that it explains why Victor "fixed on one of the remotest of the Orkneys"[40] as the setting for the creation of the female Being. Victor describes it as "a place fitted for such a work, being hardly more than a rock... On the whole island there were but three miserable huts", but, somehow, he still managed to find material for the "filthy process".[41] The mystery is resolved by Wallace when he writes that the women of Orkney are "generallie stronglie built & verie beautifull & Lovelie".[42] Wallace continues:

> "to the north & be east is Papawestra, a pleasant ile three mile in length famous for St Tredwells Chappell and Loch, off which manie strange things are reported be the Vulgar.... Likewise in the Links of Tranabie in westra, have been found graves in the sand (after the sand hes been blowin away with the wind)... Sometyme about this Countrey are seen these men which they call Finmen".[43]

While climbing the Alps at Chamounix on July 23, 1816, Shelley writes to Peacock that he was reading a book by Horace Bénédict de Saussure (1740-1799). As well as being author of author of *Voyages dans les Alpes* (1779-1796), Saussure was a geologist, botanist, inventor of the first electroscope (1766), and he made the third ascent of Mont Blanc in 1787. Saussure was widely read; *Voyages dans les Alpes* was reveiwed at length in *The Monthly Review* (1797).[44] John Wesley (1703-1791), in *A Survey of The Wisdom of God in the Creation--A Compendium of Natural Philosophy* (1810), gives this vivid description of Saussure's electrification while climbing in the Alps with a friend: They were "caught amongst thunder clouds: and to their utter astonishment, found their bodies so full of electrical fire, that spontaneous flashes darted from their fingers with a crackling noise, and the same kind of sensation as when strongly electrified by art".[45] Wesley himself believed electricity to be the Soul of the Universe as this passage from his book on electrotherapy *The Desideratum--or, Electricity made plain and useful* (1759) makes clear:

> "such is the extreme Fineness, Velocity, and Expansiveness of this active Principle, that all other Matter seems to be only the Body, and this the Soul of the Universe... there is but one Kind of Fire in Nature which Exists in all Places and in all Bodies. And this is subtle and active enough, not only to be under the Great Cause, the Secondary Cause of Motion, but to provide and sustain Life thro'out all Nature as well in Animals as in Vegetables".[46]

Saussure's own account of the character of this power—almost a tangible presence for those who lived among the Alps—is given in *Voyages dans les Alpes*; the inhabitants believed themselves damned by the 'Evil Mountains' for some crime their ancestors had committed.[47] Until conquered by Saussure, the Alps had long been regarded as terrifying, "their misshapen bleakness, instead of pointing to an ideal, seemed to betoken the limits of the Creator's omnipotence or even of God's love".[48] Walpole had described them in 1740 as full of "precipices, mountains, torrents, wolves and

rumblings".[49] The Alps were also the site of refuge for 60,000 of those who escaped Pope Innocent III's Albigensian crusade (1209).[50] These Cathars and Waldenses, who were, like other Christian mystics, believers in the True Religion, and were systematically persecuted by the Catholic Inquisition and thrown *en-mass* from mountain precipices in 1655. This act was deplored by Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), who proclaimed a national fast and collected £38,000 pounds to aid the victims, and by John Milton (1608-1674), who was moved to write a commemorative sonnet.[51]

Milton had been a school-friend of Charles Diodati (1609-1638),[52] whose descendants built the villa in 1710 which Byron had rented near Geneva.[53] When in Geneva in 1639, Milton stayed with Charles's uncle Jean Diodati (1576-1649). Through Eli Diodati (1576-1633; Charles's Parisian second cousin, once removed) Milton had been introduced to Galileo Galilei (1564-1642); Eli Diodati had been the "'agent' in Europe"[54] for both Galileo,[55] and the 'father of Deism,' Edward, Lord Herbert of Chirbury (1583-1648).[56]

There is a minor character in *Frankenstein* called Justine, who is framed (by the Being) for the murder of Victor's brother, William, and is subsequently executed for the crime. Many critics have speculated that the name 'Justine' is an allusion to the scandalous novel *Justine or the Misfortunes of Virtue* (1791) by Donatien-Alphonse-Francois Marquis de Sade (1740-1814).[57] This seems all the more likely as the novel opens and closes with images of lightning acting as the agent of a moral power. In the dedication to his wife de Sade writes:

> "The prosperity of Vice is but a proof to which Providence is pleased to put Virtue; it is like the lightning whose misleading fire embellishes the atmosphere for an instant only to plunge the unhappy individual whom it has dazzled into the abyss of death".[58]

Also, at the end of the novel, Justine (under her assumed name of Therese) is killed by a bolt of lightning: "a bolt of lightning knocked her into the middle of the room.

... The lightning had entered her right breast and after consuming her bosom and face, had re-emerged through the middle of her stomach. This miserable creature was hideous to behold".[59] Madame de Lorsange, who witnesses the death of Justine, comments that "[t]hese whims of the part of Heaven are enigmas which it is not our place to solve, but which should never lead us astray".[60] In *Frankenstein*, Justine herself appears to paraphrase de Sade's Justine—both girls are in jail, both submit to the will of a cruel priest. Justine tells Elizabeth "my confessor has besieged me; he threatened and menaced... What could I do?".[61] Given this connection between *Justine* and *Frankenstein*, it is also worth noting Sade's views on virtue (long-term patience) and vice (short-term pleasure): "The first is chimerical; the other is real. The one is based on prejudices; the other, on reason".[62] In both novels, the virtuous Justine is blinded and ultimately blasted by pure 'reason' unchecked by any higher power.

This forms the cultural and geographical setting for the conception of *Frankenstein*. Most of this history, though forgotten today, would have been present in the minds of the Shelleys as they planned to join Byron in Switzerland. It is well known that Shelley felt a deep connection to the power of the Universal Soul within the Alps which was so clearly expressed in his poem Mont Blanc (1816):

> ...how hideously
> Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare, and high,
> Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene
> Where the old Earthquake-daemon taught her young
> Ruin?... (69-73)
> ...
> Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,
> Remote, serene, and inaccessible:
> And THIS, the naked countenance of earth,
> On which I gaze, even these primaeval mountains
> Teach the adverting mind. (96-100)
> ...
> ...The secret strength of things
> Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
> Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee! (139-141)

Here Shelley imagines that the Alps are the devastated scene of demonic caprice on an enormous scale rather than the result of a great conflict. There is only a single power, the complex composite of lesser forces such as the Earthquake-daemon and her young. There is no cosmic struggle merely the self-regulating resolutions of internal stresses. On the scale of men and mountains the power appears capricious with little regard for the consequences of its actions. On the temporal scale, man has no teleological role in the unfolding of the universe: "...The race / Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling / Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream, / And their place is not known".[63] But this is not to say that the power is whimsical; at some incomprehensible level it maintains a serene balance. The lesson which Mont Blanc teaches the poet is one of humility, his insignificance in the universe, and that he also might easily end up ghastly, scarred and riven. This is one lesson that proud Victor Frankenstein learns too late.

Mont Blanc ominously overshadows many of the scenes in *Frankenstein.* Victor frequently 'adverts', or turns his attention toward the Alps.[64] The poem and the novel are intimately related. For example, in the poem Shelley describes how Mont Blanc's "*subject* mountains their unearthly forms / Pile around it" (62-3), in *Frankenstein* Victor describes Mont Blanc and how the glaciers "wound among its *dependent* mountains" (my emphasis).[65] There are many other instances of Victor's adversion to the 'Power' in *Frankenstein.* It is the lightning which "advanced from behind the mountains of Jura" that blasted the oak at the Frankenstein family home near Belrive,[66] the event which first inspires Victor to pursue Natural Philosophy—an image replete with Necessarian irony. When Victor returns home after the murder of his brother he is uncertain how to interpret his first view of "the palaces of nature" (a quote from Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, III [1816]): "Dear mountains!... Is this to prognosticate peace, or to mock at my unhappiness?". As night falls so do Victor's spirits, and he recalls how the "picture appeared a vast and dim scene of evil, and I foresaw obscurely that I was destined to become the most wretched of human beings". That same night, just before meeting the

Being, he watches the lightning of a "beautiful yet terrific" storm play atop the summit.[67] On the family excursion to Chamounix, in "uncommonly fine" weather,[68] Victor describes the Alps as "belonging to another earth, the habitations of another race of beings".[69] Mont Blanc, with its "rumbling thunder of the falling avalanche", he describes as a "supreme and magnificent" being which "raised itself from the surrounding aiguilles, and its tremendous dome overlooked the valley" and again he watches the "pallid lightning that played above Mont Blanc".[70] Here Victor has invested Mont Blanc with the same power that Shelley describes in Mont Blanc.

The Alps, in Victor's mind have not been domesticated but retain an unsettling alien character. The lightning which, according to retribution theology, is God's vengeance, simply 'plays' around the dome of Mont Blanc as around the head of Zeus. Victor is observing the tremendous forces of Nature without actually seeing his place among them. The "awful and majestic in nature" fills him with enthusiasm, "with a sublime ecstacy that gave wings to the soul and allowed it to soar from the obscure world to light and joy... causing me to forget the passing cares of life".[71] Victor does not see himself as 'subject' to or 'dependent' upon the forces that he observes. His inclination is to 'soar' like a God himself. It is the Being who 'adverts' Victor's mind by turning his domestic bliss into a ghastly, scarred, and riven landscape. It seems quite intentional, then, that upon his return to Geneva, the Being first appears to Victor in a flash of lightning, in a scene reminiscent of that recorded in Mary's letter cited above:

> "I quitted my seat, and walked on, although the darkness and storm increased every minute, and the thunder burst with a terrific crash over my head. It was echoed from Saleve, the Juras, and the Alps of Savoy; vivid flashes of lightning dazzled my eyes, illuminating the lake, making it appear like a vast sheet of fire; then for an instant every thing seemed of a pitchy darkness, until the eye recovered itself from the preceding flash... I stood fixed, gazing intently: I could not be mistaken. A flash of lightning illuminated the object... it was the wretch, the filthy daemon to whom I had given life".[72]

When Victor met the Being for the second time, on the glacier, it was also against the backdrop of the "awful majesty" of Mont Blanc.[73] The Being is arguably a creature of these natural forces—forces which Victor, godlike, believed he had mastered. Victor relates to Walton that part of the lecture by Professor Waldman which won him over to the creative potential of 'modern chemistry': "They [natural philosophers] have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, and even mock the invisible world with its own shadows".[74] As we see, lightening and rumbling earthquakes are also assumed to be connected in *Frankenstein.* The Being in *Frankenstein* is animated with "chemical instruments",[75] developed by Victor at the university of Ingolstadt and later called "instruments of life".[76] These instruments, analogous to Voltaic cells, had allowed Victor, as he tells Walton, to "infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing" he had created;[77] he comes to regard it later as "the spark which I so negligently bestowed".[78]

It is interesting to note that Victor switches from an indefinite article to a definite article. In the first case the effect is to put emphasis on his detached view 'of being'. His tools are instruments 'of life'. A spark is a "small remnant, fragment, piece, atom, or amount, of something" much greater.[79] It might be construed that it is Victor's utilitarian view of life which gives him the detachment required to abuse a greater being. His use of the definite article in the second case indicates that, due to the consequences of his actions, this detachment no longer exists. Like Prometheus, Victor is not actually creating, he is presuming (pretending[80]) to create; he is actually stealing. There has been much debate over which version of the Promethean myth—Prometheus plasticator or Prometheus pyrphoros—is the best model for *Frankenstein.* I believe that one solution is found in Godwin's version of the Promethean myth in *The Pantheon* which combines both:

> "Prometheus, who surpassed the whole universe in mechanical skill and contrivance, formed a man of clay of such exquisite workmanship, that he wanted nothing but a living soul to cause his to be acknowledged the paragon of creation:

> Minerva, the Goddess of arts, beheld the performance of Prometheus with approbation, and offered him any assistance in her power to complete his work: she conducted him to Heaven, where he watched his opportunity to carry off at the tip of his wand a portion of celestial fire, from the chariot of the sun: with this he animated his image: and the man of Prometheus immediately moved, and thought, and spoke, and became every thing that the fondest wishes of his creator could ask".[81]

As Greek mythology is discussed in detail in a following chapter, it is worth noting, that in Godwin's version, Athena (Minerva), should actively assist Prometheus.[82] Godwin notes that allegory is treacherous and that, in Greek mythology, the assistance of 'Minerva' might well represent the conviction in the hero's own mind;[83] that, deluded by glory, he believed he was acting wisely. In the case of Godwin's Prometheus and the Shelleys' *Frankenstein*, neither hero appears to 'know himself' in the sense of being in touch with his moral sense; both are deluded by glory. Victor tells Walton that his feelings push him forward "like a hurricane" and he, like Prometheus hopes to become a "father" to "many happy and excellent natures".[84]

Victor clearly sees himself as a pioneer. Initially, as an fledging alchemist he aspired to find the "elixir of life" that he might "banish disease from the human frame, and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death". Victor has already told us that his "occupations at this age were principally the mathematics".[85] When Victor makes his breakthrough as a chemist, he states that "life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through".[86] The term 'ideal bound' is a mathematical reference to the eighteenth-century debate in mathematics over the use of the calculus which was founded upon the paradoxical concept of 'infinite magnitude'.[87] Victor is clearly stating that that he has achieved a vision of the infinite and glimpsed the hidden order of the incomprehensible. Victor becomes "dizzy with the immensity of the prospect" and wonders that he "alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret".[88] As discussed in the final chapter, there is a tradition in mythology that requires that those

who momentarily grasp the full complexity of existence relinquish their mortality. The Shelleys would have been quite aware of this.

There are other implicit references in *Frankenstein* to contemporary debates on presumption. It was Victor's father who first explained electricity to him and "made also a kite, with a wire and string, which drew down that fluid from the clouds",[89] duplicating Franklin's 1753 experiment which led to the invention of the lightning rod.[90] Franklin is credited with the first (1747) modern use of the term 'electricity',[91] and in 1728 referred to himself as a "perfect deist".[92] A French opponent of Franklin, the Abbé Jean Antoine Nollet (1700-1770), is quoted as saying that it was "as impious to ward off God's lightnings as for a child to resist the chastening rod of the father" (1764).[93] Saussure and Voltaire, both living in Switzerland, were among the first Europeans (1771 and 1773 respectively) to install Franklin's lightning rods on their houses. Saussure was forced to publish a pamphlet to allay the fears of his neighbours who almost rioted in protest.[94] An important court precedent made in France in 1780, when M. de Vissery de Bois-Vale of Saint-Omer appealed against his neighbours' removal of his lightning rod. The case was won by a young M. Maximilien François Marie Isidore Robespierre (1758-1794).[95] In such cases Franklin had argued that an electrical discharge, far from being a sign of divine wrath (what did God have against trees, for example[96]) was simply the restoration of electrical equilibrium. He also argued that lightning proceeds from the ground towards the heavens, and thus cannot be an act of God's vengeance. (This is also the view taken in *Frankenstein* where the young Victor watches a "stream of fire issue *from* an old and beautiful oak".[97] My emphasis.) That lightning obeys Franklin's hypothesis in *Frankenstein*—an inversion of the beliefs as old as the history of man—points toward another, equally historic inversion, the inversion of the meaning of presumption.

Motivated by the lightning rod debate, the Philosophical Society that Franklin founded in America debated the question of scientific presumption in 1760 and decided

that curiosity was far from presumption. In fact they decided that it was presumptuous of a man *not* to take advantage of discoveries thus made to better insure himself and his family against disaster; thus the use of scientific investigation for utilitarian ends was endorsed.[98] Six years later, an advertisement for an electrical demonstration of lightning rods reads: "instead of having any just objection thereto, from a persuasion of its being presumptuous, we have the utmost reason to bless GOD for a discovery so important and eminently useful. 'A prudent man foreseeth the evil, hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.' Prov. xxii 3".[99] Shelley's own statement of 1816 has a diametrically opposed sense: "The good die first, / And those whose hearts are dry as / summer dust, / Burn to the socket!"

By reinterpreting the phrase 'prudent man' to mean 'he who advances without caution into unknown territory with unpredictable consequences with the blind hope of finding something to exploit', and with the weight of Franklin behind it, this decision turned the idea of presumption on its head—in favour of the Industrialists. It also undermined the "practical wisdom" of prudence, or "foresight",[100] as well as what we would today call 'the precautionary principle.' It is in this way that the Industrialists of Shelley's day inherited the anthropocentrism of the Deists. As Voltaire had pointed out, it is always in the interests of those invested in social institutions to advertise that 'all is well', meaning, in this particular manifestation, that all advancements in Industrialism are 'virtuous'—in the utilatarian sense.

Locke, Franklin, Priestley, and Wesley, were in constant trans-Atlanic communication. After the War of Independence, American efforts to achieve economic and material independence redoubled. By 1837 Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was telling students at Harvard that natural philosophy was in its infancy and that the school-boy "shall look forward to an ever expanding knowledge as to a becoming creator" and that "the ancient precept, 'Know thyself', and the modern precept, 'Study nature', become at last one maxim". Here Emerson has described the trajectory of thought across

the Romantic Era, from the domination of interior reflections to the domination of exterior reflections; from a cautious 'Should I?' to a presumptuous 'I should!'. Emerson continues to say that "the eyes of man are set in his forehead, not in his hindhead... if the man create not, the pure efflux of the Deity is not his. [....] ...for fear is a thing, which a scholar by his very function puts behind him. Fear always springs from ignorance".[101] (Emerson appears to forget that we cannot predict the future consequences of present-day actions.) For Emerson also, the presumptuous man was the thinker who was *not* applying his knowledge, but was "hiding his head like an ostrich in the flowering bushes".[102]

Here was the Industrialist's equivalent to the Colonialist's prerogative which Kipling described in 1899 in his poem The White Man's burden.[103] In Kipling's words Victor Frankenstein's delusion is to believe he "seek[s] another's profit / And work[s] another's gain" while in reality he seeks glory in the 'judgment of his peers'. We should not forget that the ironic sub-title of *Frankenstein* is *Or the Modern Prometheus*, and that 'Prometheus,' is derived from two Greek words, 'Pro' and 'metheus', meaning foresight.[104] (The name of Prometheus's brother, Epimetheus means 'hindsight'.) I believe this to be the Shelleys' play on the distinction between the ancient and modern idea of presumption. The irony lies in the substitution of 'ambition' for 'caution' as the function of the foresight of the modern Prometheus. (This is corroborated by eighteenth-century interpretations of the Promethean myth which I cover in a subsequent chapter.)

In 1816, however, the general population thought that atmospheric electricity and earthquakes were connected and that Franklin's lightning rods were to blame for the bizarre weather. The new technology presumed to interfere with the planet's subterranean electrical fields.[105] In *Frankenstein* Victor describes to Walton the apparently unjust, murderous actions of the Being leading to the destruction of his wife in a way analogous to the series of earthquakes which reached their paroxysm in the destruction of Lisbon. Such destruction marks a turning-point, or volta, in the lives of those who are witnesses to it. Victor's life, he tells Walton, "has been a tale of horrors; I have reached their

acme...".[106] For Victor, "nothing could appear to me as it had done the day before".[107] The "catastrophe" of the 'random' lightning strike which "utterly destroyed" the oak tree at the beginning of Victor's narrative,[108] and the Being's 'senseless' destruction of those who Victor loves, are both dispassionately restoring a necessary equilibrium that circumstance had disturbed. The analogy is reinforced when Victor meets the Being at the site of Williams's murder; it has been conveyed there in a lightning storm which "appeared to approach rapidly".[109] And, after destroying Elizabeth after a sudden "heavy storm of rain descended",[110] the Being runs away "with the swiftness of lightning".[111] Of course, the witness to the destruction of the oak tree by lightning and that of his friends and family by the Being, like the witnesses at Lisbon, would question his optimism. Victor's sentiment as he surveys the ruin of his life—"Could I behold this, and live? Alas! life is obstinate, and clings closest where it is most hated",[112]—has its match in Voltaire's lines as he surveys the ruins of Lisbon:

> When the eternal law that all things moves
> Doth hurl the rock by impact of the winds,
> With lightning rends and fires the sturdy oak,
> They have no feeling of the crashing blows;
> But I, I live and feel, my wounded heart
> Appeals for aid to him who fashioned it.[113]

It is Necessity which is the 'eternal law that all things moves'. On the family excursion to Chamounix, after William and Justine have been destroyed, Victor, climbing alone, reflects: "Alas! why does man boast of sensibilities superior to those apparent in the brute; it only renders them more necessary beings. If our impulses were confined to hunger, thirst, and desire, we might be nearly free; but now we are moved by every wind that blows, and a chance word or scene that that word may convey to us".[114] He begins to see the limitations of reason taken alone. The text then contains a fragment of Shelley's poem, On Mutability (1816), a poem which begins with the lines "We are as clouds that

veil the midnight moon; / How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver".[115] Reason and its accolyte, Scepticism, is a most mutable miasma.

These sentiments might be an echo of Voltaire's statement of Necessarianism: "Man is free, we repeat, when he can do what he wills to do; but he is not free to will; it is impossible that he should will without cause. If this cause is not infallibly followed by its effect, it is no cause. It would not be more absurd for a cloud to say to the wind: 'I do not wish to be driven by you'".[116] On Mutability was published in *Alastor or The Spirit of Solitude--And Other Poems* (1816), a volume of Necessarian poems which also includes The Daemon of the World, (an extract from Queen Mab, which I shall deal with in a subsequent chapter).[117]

After reaching his turning-point, or volta, Victor recognizes that his own vice—an excess of passion and presumption—has precipitated the web of necessary events which has brought about his disturbed and transitory state of mind. Victor defines "that passion, which afterwards ruled my destiny" a few lines later as "Natural philosophy".[118] His description of this passion bears a strong resemblance to the imagery of both Alastor and Mont Blanc: "I find it arise, like a mountain river, from ignoble and almost forgotten sources; but, swelling as it proceed".[119] A comparison between *Frankenstein* and Alastor is discussed in the chapters to follow; for now I simply note that Shelley, in his review of *Frankenstein* (1817) notes that "the story, like a stream which grows at once more rapid and profound as it proceeds, assumes an irresistible solemnity and the magnificent energy and swiftness of a tempest".[120]

Mont Blanc was written July 23, 1816, and published at the end of Mary's *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* (1817). In his Preface to that publication, Shelley described Mont Blanc itself as a passionate, "undisciplined overflowing of the soul".[121] The first stanza of Mont Blanc, in which the Arve symbolizes the mind, describes how the mind can become inflamed by passion, or divine inspiration; if it loses itself in contemplating its own mystery, it "ceaselessly bursts and raves". In the second stanza Shelley likens the power

of the bright glaciers to Phaeton, the presumptuous son of Apollo, as described by Godwin in *The Pantheon*, who would have destroyed the world had not Jupiter destroyed him with a thunderbolt. The glaciers' power comes "Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame / Of lightning through the tempest",[122] just as Phaeton's power fell from the stormy heavens, to lie, drowned in a river, surrounded by its "giant brood" of trees, "Children of elder time". In Godwin's myth the river is the Po, the trees are Phaeton's sisters "Lampetie, Phaethusn, and Lampethusa: these grieved so incessantly for his tragical fate, that Jupiter at length in pity turned them into poplars by the river-side, and their tears into amber, a beautiful, transparent and fragrant gum, exuding from the trees, and dropping into the stream".[123] These are the odours that Shelley's "chainless winds" come to drink. Their grieving is Shelley's "old and solemn harmony".

The power which inflames the Arve existed before the earliest religions, and "when the voices of the desert fail / Wraps all in its own deep eternity".[124] In the presence of this power the poet enters a "trance" like a votary of the Oracle of Trophonius (a Demogorgon-like "supernatural being"), which Godwin described as inhabiting a cave. The votary "entered it alone: he was first seized with a deep sleep: he saw terrible things: these sights produced such an effect upon his mind, that it is said no one was ever after seen to smile, who had at any time visited the cave of Trophonius".[125] It is here that the poet receives his vision, "...which passively / Now renders and receives fast influencings, / Holding an unremitting interchange / With the clear universe of things around".[126] Unlike Phaeton in Mont Blanc and the poet in Alastor, however, Victor does come to realize that he is entirely to blame for his own passionate presumption, he should have curbed his enthusiasm, and, he tells himself, he should have observed his father's principles, that a

> "human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind, and never to allow passion or a transitory desire to disturb his tranquillity. I do not think that the pursuit of knowledge is an exception to this rule. If the study to which you apply yourself has a tendency to weaken your affections, and to destroy your taste for those simple pleasures in which no alloy can possibly mix,

> then that study is certainly unlawful, that is to say, not befitting the human mind".[127].

Victor's enthusiasm was antithetical to the "domestic affection" which Shelley's Preface to *Frankenstein* tells us is the author's "chief concern".[128] Victor's actions were justified by the inverted, 'modern' sense of presumption, and, as I shall now show, this modern Prometheus's sense of prudence has taken a similar 'modern' twist—the substitution of 'ambition' for 'caution'.

In *The Ruins, Or, Meditation on the Revolutions of Empires: And the Law Of Nature* (1793, originally published as *The French Citizen's Catechism*), by Constantine Francis Chassebeuf (Comte) De Volney (1757-1820), the 'legislator' tells the reader that, contrary to Utilitarian principles, the fundamental precept for man should not be "happiness" but "self-preservation",[129] and that the difference between a learned and a wise man is that "the learned knows, and the wise man practices"—he practices prudence. *The Ruins* is the book which the Being hears Felix read to Safie. When Felix gets to Chapter XXIII with the Deistic title 'All Religions Have the same Object', and the Christians are criticized for justifying the colonial exploitation of the Americas, the Being notes the "hapless fate of its original inhabitants" and "turned away with disgust and loathing".[130]

Volney seems to borrow much from Voltaire. Volney sought to reunite "prudence with science" and advocated returning to the wisdom of the Greeks: "O Ruins! to your school I will return!".[131] As Victor, Shelley and Voltaire noted above, prudence occurs naturally in all creatures except man. For Volney, a Deist, "self-preservation" (which today we would call sustainability), attained through the practice of prudence is the Law of Nature,[132] and "the only means of establishing harmony is to return to nature, and to take for a guide and regulator the order of things which she has founded...".[133] Volney has this to say about prudence:

> "It is the anticipated perception, the foresight of the effects and consequences of every action; by means of which foresight, man avoids the dangers which threaten him, while he seizes on and creates opportunities favorable to him: he thereby provides for his present and future safety in a certain and secure manner, whereas the imprudent man, who calculates neither his steps nor his conduct, nor efforts, nor resistance, falls every instant into difficulties and dangers, which sooner or later impair his faculties and destroy his existence".[134]

There is a very important distinction between Volney's definition of prudence and that of the Industrialists and the Colonialists as defined by Emerson in his 1838 lecture, Prudence, to the brethren at the Masonic Temple in Boston:

> "Is there not (all men have a right to ask) a world of facts and objects in which we are all compelled to seek a sensual good as Health, Livelihood, Personal Safety, and Convenience in which we do not seek the beautiful nor the good but the profitable? It cannot be denied that we do: and no scheme of Culture can pretend to acceptance which leaves out so material a part of human Science. Prudence is that science; the virtue of the senses, the regard to the right order of external events. It consults for the outward well-being of the man".[135]

Emerson's downgrading of prudence—from the far-sighted concern for the preservation of 'man' the species, to the near-sighted concern for the preservation of 'man' the individual—cannot be overlooked. As I have illustrated above, an adherent of each version of prudence holds an inverted view of 'presumption.'

In 1799 Volney entered into a debate with Franklin's British acolyte, Priestley, a Unitarian minister and a member of the Lunar Society of Birmingham—a group of early Industrialists. Priestley's house, library and laboratory were destroyed in the 'Birmingham riots' of 1791.[136] and he subsequently emigrated to the Pennsylvanian backwoods in 1794.[137] From America, Priestley had accused Volney of being an atheist. Volney replied with a Deist sentiment, one echoed in Shelley's writing, that

> "when opening the book of nature, (a more authentic one and more easy to be read than leaves of paper blackened over with Greek or Hebrew,)... I am induced to believe that the universe is governed by laws of wisdom and justice, very different from those which human ignorance and intolerance would enact... I have concluded that there are but two great systems of religion in the world, that of good sense and beneficence, and that of malice and hypocrisy".[138]

For Volney, Deism, as the natural religion, was the solution for all human sectarian conflict.

In constructing the cultural context for *Frankenstein*, this chapter also illustrates the significance of the distinctions that need to be made in the types of Deism: the original form which adhered to Herbert's five tenets,[139] Voltaire's modification which rejected the anthropocentrism which was an artifact of the social standing of Herbert and Shaftesbury, and the Franklinian, Industrial or Utilitarian form. Shelley was clear in his mind about these distinction, and I feel that *Frankenstein* reflects Shelley's bias toward the moral organicism and Necessarianism of Voltaire's form of Deism, and his rejection of the self-interested materialism of the Industrialists. For example, the Industrialism was compatible with Christian Evangelicalism and Methodism—Shelley rejected all forms of Christianity—because their "fervent advocacy of quietude was balm to manufacturers".[140] Christian faiths had a certain utility to them. As Jane Aaron describes them, they "served usefully, from the industrialist's point of view, to promote a secular as well as spiritual law-abiding propriety, and to encourage the lower ranks of society to look for the rewards of a lifetime's self-subordination in the hereafter".[141] These forms of religion supported the new definitions of prudence and presumption.

Shelley's rejection of the exploitative aspects of materialism and superstition in no way dampened his enthusiasm for the latest discoveries in the proto-sciences that were subsumed under the general rubric of Natural Philosophy. But, for Shelley, these new hypotheses were always placed into a Necessarian moral perspective—the greater scheme of things—where prudence, precaution and presumption retained their ancient purposes and domestic affections were the best expression of benevolence.

5. PARADIGM CONSTRUCTION

The Literary Context

I believe that Shelley's early enthusiasm for philanthropical, elitist, and secret societies eventually subsided in favour of a less romantic, less revolutionary formulae of gradual political reformation—though his faith in Nessarianism did not falter. This transition—characteristically Romantic in its progression towards a more mature perspective—forms a keystone in my Shelleyean paradigm in that his first-hand experience with 'enthusiasm' better qualifies him to comment critically on the subject in his poetry, prose, and in *Frankenstein.*

Two distinct points in Shelley's process of philosophical maturation appears to be traced in the satirical parodies written by two of his close friends, the *Memoires of Prince Alexy Haimatoff* (1813), by Thomas Jefferson Hogg (1792-1862), and *Nightmare Abbey* (1818) by Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866). As I shall show, these works contain indications that Shelley's ideological transformation was brought about by Kant's transcendental moral philosophy which was both compatible with Shelley's secularism—"that morality should be based solely on regard to the well-being of mankind in the present life"[1]—in that it made no supernatural assumptions,[2] and that it accomodated Necessarianism. Coleridge had been reading Kant since 1802.[3] Shelley first requested a book by Kant "translated into Latin by some Englishman" from Hookham in a letter of December 17, 1812.[4] Hookham noted "Monthly Rev. 1797-8-9" on this letter.[5] An issue of The Monthy Review for 1798 states that "Professor Kant is by this time generally known to our readers".[6] Shelley's interest was obviously aroused by his first taste of Kant; in a letter to Hookham of January 26, 1813 he writes "I certainly wish to have all Kants [sic] works". According to Hogg, Shelley started to learn German in 1815.[7] Nine

years later, according to a letter of October 22, 1821 written to John Gisborne, Shelley was still reading Kant enthusiastically in Italy.

I regard Hogg's little-known *Memoirs* to be the naïve sister-novel to *Frankenstein*. The *Memoirs* deserves a brief recounting because it, in large part, defines the Shelleyan paradigm and establishes the literary and philosophical contexts for *Frankenstein* within the Shelleys' coterie of Godwin, Hogg, and Peacock. (I shall deal with the other Romantic poets—Byron, Coleridge, Lamb, Southey, and Wordsworth—as the occasion requires).

There are many parallels between the *Memoirs* and *Frankenstein*, such as the circumstances surrounding the arrival of Rosalie/Caroline into the narrators' respective domestic situations in Lausanne/Lucern, Switzerland.[8] (It is worth noting that Voltaire, as an old man living in Switzerland in 1776, also adopted a young, destitute noblewoman, rescuing her from a convent.) The *Memoirs* were initially published in November 1813 under the pseudonym of John Brown;[9] one year later it was reviewed by Shelley in nine pages of the *Critical Review* of December 1814;[10] and it doubtless provided some of the inspiration for Shelley's poem Alastor and for *Frankenstein*, both of which I believe to be partly attempts to distill and clarify the murky Platonic symbolism in Hogg's confessional narrative.

There are obvious indications that the *Memoirs* are part of an ongoing debate within the Shelleys' literary coterie. These writers shared a private vocabulary. For example, when Hogg's character Alexy makes reference to atheistic materialism as "that gloomy, that detestable doctrine",[11] and Shelley, in a letter to Peacock of July 24, 1816 from Chamounix, refers to the materialism of Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788), as a "sublime but gloomy theory". Here 'gloomy' has taken on the connotation of unenlightening materialism. Other examples are that of 'Eleutherism' and 'enthusiasm' which I elaborate upon below.

Prince Alexy Haimatoff is an unprincipled, gullible, self-confessed 'enthusiast' who careens unhindered by prudence and precaution from excess to excess: from ardent misogyny to passionate sensualism; from an obsession with rationalism to an infatuation with naturalism; from Stoicism to Epicureanism; from being a staunch emancipationist to becoming a lustful slave-owner. The strict definition of 'enthusiast' is "one who is under the influence of prophetic frenzy",[12] and the sense invoked by Hogg, that of a "visionary, self-deluded person",[13] is revealed when Alexy describes the "visionary wildness of my disposition".[14] Alexy is tutored by the ascetic Bruhle—dwarvish, deformed, and distant,[15] who "taught while he appeared to learn",[16]—modeled on Aesop (620-560 B.C.E.) and Socrates (470-399 B.C.E.).

Like the Traveler in Volney's *Ruins*, Alexy is attracted by the ruins of the world. He flits around the globe, blighting womanly blossoms and girlish buds, attracted by the one thing that he does not have, the capacity for self-reflection. He finds his first victim in the Parthenon, or Temple of Minerva,[17] (Pallas Athena), goddess of wisdom, and war. Following a Deistic tradition,[18] Alexy's universe is symbolically represented by the female form and he describes it in Spinozaic terms as "always the same, always new".[19] Alexy is driven mad both by lust and loss. His experience of this universe ranges from that of the "concentration of every soft delight"[20] to "diabolical malignity".[21] His description of the unpredictabilty of Nature which evokes such supplicant awe and sublime dread recalls a Wordsworthian 'spot of time':[22]

> "when, in a small boat at sea in a summer's evening, when all is still, not a breath of air ruffles the placid surface of the deep, which smiles upon one, and reflects the glowing tints of the cloudless heaven; on a sudden a squall of wind arises, the ocean sullenly rolls in immense masses without forming waves, and a pitchy cloud obscures the sky, and spreads a livid darkness over the water--in a few minutes it is calm, but there has been enough to convince us that it is a treacherous and tremendous element".

The imagery of troubled waters is taken from Plato. The confessional narrative follows Alexy in the acquisition of "the great truth... how to value self",[23] and thereby the

principles of disinterested benevolence and domestic affection. Early in the *Memoirs* Alexy defines 'knowing himself' when he states "I must only value myself, and all my faculties, in proportion as I was capable of promoting the happiness of my fellow-creatures".[24] But these are principles which Alexy admits he often neglected. He continues in his career of imprudence and impetuosity, proudly and repeatedly referring to himself as an "enthusiast",[25] prone to "madness",[26] and "excesses".[27] Alexy caroms from manic highs—from visions of himself as the God Apollo,[28]—to depressive and suicidal lows—visions of himself as a victim 'blasted' by a Voltarian bolt: "It was a deadly arrow, how has it wasted thee! Thou scathed oak, how has the red lightning drank thy sap!".[29] Alexy feels deserving of the epithet assigned to his friend Schwartz—who intentionally sacrifices his life to atone for impetuously violating his sisterly beloved, Viola—, "Monster! monster!".[30]

Bruhle the ascetic idealist, however, is conspicuously absent during Alexy's moments of moderation and domestic affection and, when present for Alexy's brutal and exploitative excesses, tolerates them as moral lessons with "an expression peculiar to himself"[31]—a suspicious inscrutability. At a university in an unnamed German town (perhaps Ingolstadt) Bruhle introduces Alexy to the "society" of Eleutheri who are, according to Bruhle, "friends of our way of thinking... men of talent and virtue".[32] This society of enthusiasts intends to work for universal 'liberty' through "ardent zeal, [and] by strenuous, unceasing exertions".[33] Black oak architectural ornamentation (perhaps symbolizing blasted oak—natural oak symbolizing the 'British oak' of Edmund Burke [1729-1797] in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, [1789-90][34]) are part of the "most noble" Eleutherian aesthetic.[35] Alexy recalls that the Eleutheri discussed "the misery which man inflicts upon his fellow men; and, finally, they hinted the necessity of a general reform".[36] Alexy is watched by the Eleutherarch whose piercing eyes have a mesmerizing effect though they caused a him to experience a "strange reluctance",[37] in that they reminded him of a debauched Sultana's eunuch whom he had previously

encountered, who was "accustomed to select victims for his mistress" and had lured Alexy with "insidious compliment[s]" to a Seraglio where he barely escaped with his life.[38]

Alexy observed that when he was introduced to the Eleutherarch, a student was orally translating Virgil's Æneid which the Eleutherarch elaborated upon with a penetrating interpretation which rendered intelligible the most "unintelligible principles of the human mind".[39] (Recall that the same phrase occurs in Shelley's Preface to *Frankenstein.*) The Eleutherarch informed Alexy that, before joining the Eleutheri, there was a probation period of one year.[40] Alexy vowed that he would accept were it a thousand years.[41] He swore an intimidating oath under many threatening swordpoints.[42] (The significance of these details will soon be revealed.) When, as part of his process of initiation Alexy is told that he must undergo three months of solitary confinement, the Eleutherarch adds that "I have too great confidence in your enthusiasm to suppose, for a moment, that it will deter you from advancing farther".[43] Afterwards, in order to communicate with his peers, Alexy must learn a secret language the structure of which was "purely metaphysical, and manifested a strict intimacy with the force of terms, the nature of the human mind, and the most philosophical principles of general grammar".[44]

Another reference to a secret language within the Shelleyean coterie is made by Peacock, the Shelleys' friend and neighbour, in *Nightmare Abbey* (1818)—a dramatic parody of the Shelley household—which was written at the same time *Frankenstein* was being written. Peacock reveals in *Nightmare Abbey* that this secret language is that of the "sublime Kant, who delivers his oracles in language which none but the initiated can comprehend".[45] Coleridge, who first read Kant in 1802,[46] though a great admirer, makes a reference, in *Biographia Literaria* (1817), to "the technical language of his school".[47] A contributor to The Monthly Review also writes of "the pedantic dialect of the school of Kant" (1797).[48] Kant's philosophy was notorious for its impenetrability, but it did–according to The Monthly Review—provide an alternative to the alternative doctrines of

atheism, theism, materialism, idealism, libertinism, fatalism, dogmatism, scepticism, although it was couched in the "disgusting dialect of scholasticism".[49]

It is likely in this Kantian 'language' that Alexy writes his confessions—which are presented to us by his translator, John Brown (Hogg's pseudonym). It is interesting to note that a review of Kant's *Project for a Perpetual Peace* in an issue of *The Monthly Review* (1797) discusses Kant's tracing of 'Konx Ompax', which was another of Shelley's favourite epithets, and the "formula of the Eleusinian mysteries[,] to the language of Thibet".[50] Hogg, while writing the *Memoirs* in 1813, was aware of Shelley's interest in Kant. In Hogg's disparaging account of Shelley's "ethereal, spiritualized, transcendent" philosophy, he writes that he found in Kant's "mystical dogmatism nothing attractive in any respect"; Hogg does note, however, that the "Kantian philosophy was much in vogue at that time [though] ...totally impossible to comprehend".[51] Hogg also notes the presence in Shelley's quarters of the multi-volume Latin edition of Kant which Shelley had requested from Hookham.[52] In my view, Hogg's unreliability as a biographer combined with his antipathy for Kant (along with the other evidence herein noted) undercut the veracity of his assertion that Shelley did not "read a single page of the transcendental philosopher".[53]

The final oath that Alexy must swear to join this secret society convened to defend liberty is "to submit to whatever the Eleutherarch and Eleutheri in council shall enjoin, and to do whatever they shall command".[54] Alexy relates that the contradiction implicit in this oath eventually "banished all sentiments of esteem and veneration I had formerly felt for the Eleutherarch and his colleagues".[55] Full of doubts that the Eleutheri were "incorporated for the most abandoned purposes",[56] Alexy cannot swear the oath, and is then banished to England.[57] There he discovers the Necessarian principle of determinism—that his feelings "were precisely similar to the feelings of other men, under the same circumstances" [58]—and is ultimately saved by his non-ascetic love of women (who symbolize the universe). When Alexy first sees the character Mary, his future life-

partner, Alexy exclaims: "I had never seen such beauty, I had never imagined aught so lovely; no, not even the ideal form of universal liberty, the dear delusion which I so fondly cherished".[59] The remainder of the novel is the story of how Alexy sublimates his fanatical ideals under force of Necessity to gain that which he cherishes. Initially frustrated in his pursuit of Mary, his conduct returns to the "moody madness" of a "maniac",[60] but, with his love requited, he subsides into benevolence and finally submits to that "great principle, that the end of man is to be subservient to the happiness of his fellow-creatures".[61] Alexy's final wish as an "old an infirm man" is that he may die "in the same moment" as his wife, Mary.[62] This last detail is taken directly from Godwin. In one of the stories of *The Pantheon*, an selfless old couple were preserved by the Gods while their selfish countrymen were destroyed when a "miraculous torrent... swept away all the houses and their inhabitants to the sea" (a tsunami?). The old couple were then granted their wish, that "at last we may die in the same hour".[63]

Taken as a whole, Hogg's *Memoirs* amounts to a repudiation of antisocial enthusiasms—the enthusiasm of ascetic fanaticism; and the enthusiasm of sensual obsession—while endorsing the social enthusiasm for domestic affection, but these delineations are blurred. As already indicated, the novel owes a great deal to Godwin. I disagree with Dr. Garnett's and Sidney Scott's assertion that the character of Dr. Gothon, Alexy's childhood mentor is modeled upon Shelley's Eton tutor Dr. Lind whom, Scott admits, Hogg had never met.[64] It is much more in keeping with the evidence (detailed below) for Hogg's depiction to be modeled on William Godwin whose *Political Justice* (1793) and *The Pantheon--or Ancient History of the Gods of Greece and Rome* (1806) were influences for both Shelley and Hogg. (Harriet Shelley wrote of Godwin to a friend in 1812, "Have you ever seen a bust of Socrates, for his head is very much like that?"[65]). Alexy tells us that Gothon taught him of Greece and Rome and had a "disinterested soul".[66] In *Political Justice* Godwin discusses the "hypothesis of disinterestedness".[67] In

Political Justice, Godwin also quotes at length from Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* where self-reflection is discussed.[68] The name 'Gothon' appears to be a contraction of the transliteration from the Greek 'Gnothi seauton' ('know thyself').

In *Political Justice* Godwin also discusses Stoicism and Epicureanism and situations of sensual obsession such as when a man is engaged in the sexual act and he "impatiently shuts out every consideration that may disturb his enjoyment; moral views and dissuasives can no longer obtrude themselves into his mind; he resigns himself, without power of resistance".[69] Scenes like this are portrayed by Hogg who justifies Alexy's moral 'biography' as an example of what not to do in the same way that chess is best studied by examining actual games played rather than dry rules.[70] The moral of the book is clearly stated on the first page in this comparison of life to a game of chess:

> "Chess has one grand object, to check-mate the adversary. Thus the great end of our existence is to be subservient to the happiness of our fellow-creatures; so to guard the principle of Self-interest, the monarch of the vices, that he may be incapable of moving. And, although perhaps we cannot destroy that baleful principle, it is certainly in our power to keep him in check by virtues, correctly and scientifically opposed to him".[71]

The use of the term 'the adversay' might well be an allusion to Satan, the 'principle of Self-interest' and the 'monarch of the vices' and, seen in this light, the *Memoires* take on the qualities of a *Dance Macabre*.

The symbolism common to Hogg's *Memoirs* and *Alastor*, (turbulent currents, swans, etc.) invites one to compare it to the allegorical symbolism used in *The Phaedo*—Plato's dialogue about Socrates's philosophical summation made to his friends immediately before taking his fatal draught of hemlock—, and the *Æneis* or *Æneid* by Virgil (70-19 B.C.E.)—which follows Æneas on his descent into the Underworld. Both *The Phaedo* and the *Æneis* contain allegorical representations of the elementary principles of the human mind. (In the discussion to follow I quote from the translation of *The Phaedo* [1793] by

Thomas Taylor 'The Platonist' [1758-1835]. For the *Æneid* I quote from the popular translation of 1697 by John Dryden [1631-1700]) The first thing to observe is the immediate relationship of Plato's sentiment in *The Phaedo* to Shelley's sentiment in his Review of *Frankenstein.* In *The Phaedo* we read, that

> "misanthropy is produced in us through vehemently believing without art in some particular person, and considering him as a man true, sincere, and faithful, whom, in the course of a short acquaintance, we find to be depraved and unfaithful; and that this is the case again with another. And when anyone often suffers this disappointment, and especially from those whom he considered as his most intimate familiars, and friends, at length, through finding himself thus frequently hurt, he hates all men".[72]

And, in Shelley's Review we find, "Treat a person ill and he will become wicked... He was an abortion and an anomaly... his original goodness was gradually turned into inextinguishable misanthropy and revenge".[73] But *The Phaedo* also contains many other important themes which were under heavy debate in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, and it might be considered a philosophical Rosetta stone for better interpreting Shelley's poetry and prose, as well as *Frankenstein.*

We know from Hogg's *Life of Shelley* (1858), that, while at Oxford, he and Shelley read *The Phaedo*; Hogg recalls that it was "the first book we had, and this we read together several times very attentively", and that Shelley was "vehemently excited by the striking doctrines".[74] In his preface, Taylor tells us that, in Plato's dialogues, "almost every word has a peculiar signification, and contains some latent philosophical truth",[75] so it is easy to see how such dense allegories might provide challenging puzzles and provide the material for on-going debate between two young Oxford scholars, the one raised as a Whig, the other raised as a Tory.[76]

In *The Phaedo* Socrates discusses pleasure and pain, saying, "if any person pursues and receives the one, he is almost always under a necessity of receiving the other, as if both of them depended from one summit".[77] Socrates, who had versified the *Fables* of Æsop,[78] then suggests that if Æsop (who was dwarvish and deformed, like Bruhle) had

made this observation he would have made a fable in which their heads (pleasure and pain) were fastened together.[79] When Alexy loses his beloved first wife (the Circassian slave Aür-Ahebeh) to smallpox, he relates that, having fallen asleep while she died, "I attempted to rise, but I was unable; she had bound my head to her own with her long hair".[80] This might be interpreted as representing the pain felt by one who is bound down by his senses—a version of The Fall in which Eve has died.

The *Memoirs* also make direct reference to Virgil. Recall that, in the Eleutherarch's office a boy is translating the *Æneis/Æneid*; the Eleutherarch elaborates for Alexy and in so doing "illustrated several of the most unintelligible principles of the human mind".[81] In Dryden's translation we are told that, in the underworld, Æneas asks the spirit of his father about the First Cause. His Father replies with what will become a familiar theme, that of a Universal Soul:

> Know, first, that Heav'n, and Earth's compacted Frame,
> And flowing Waters, and the starry Flame,
> And both the Radiant Lights, one Common Soul
> Inspires and feeds, and animates the whole.
> This Active Mind, infus'd thro' all the Space,
> Unites and mingles with the mighty Mass.[82]

In Virgil's myth, those who die are cleansed of sin and the few in which only "the pure Æther of the Soul remains",[83] are then admitted to the bliss of the Elysian fields for a thousand years before they drink their "Lethean draught"[84] (Hogg's term) to forget their past life (a fate that Alexy narrowly escapes in the Seraglio) and are reborn. This is the core of what Godwin refers to in *The Pantheon* as the rites of Ceres at Eleusis in Attica,[85] which are revealed to initiates only after a "novitiate or probation of one or more years: it was death for a profane person to intrude, and death for one who had been present to reveal what he had heard or seen".[86] It seems clear that Hogg derived the rites of the 'Eleutherarch' and 'Eleutheri—terms that Hogg is credited with inventing,[87]—from Romantic-era accounts of the "Eleusinian Mysteries", such as those written by Godwin

and Taylor, and interpreted in the rites of the Freemasons. Godwin continues, in his account, to reveal that the core of these mysteries is the doctrine of the Universal Soul:

> "the doctrine revealed by the high priest, was the fallacy of the vulgar polytheism, and the unity of the great principle of the universe: thus the religion of the common people was left undisturbed; and the enlightened were satisfied, while they joined on ordinary occasions in the exteriors of that religion, secretly to worship one God under the emblem of the various manners and forms in which he operates: it has even been supposed that Virgil, in the sixth book of the *Æneid*, where he describes the passage of Æneas into the regions of the departed souls, has given a correct outline of the Eleusinian Mysteries".[88]

Godwin pointed back to Virgil as did Hogg's narrative seven years later. Elsewhere in *The Pantheon* Godwin describes the temple of "Jupiter Eleutherius" which represents Jupiter as the "protector of political freedom".[89] This is an interesting link given Hogg's negative depiction of the Eleutheri and Shelley's negative depiction of Jupiter in *Prometheus Unbound* (discussed below). In his Review of the *Memoirs*, Shelley comments pointedly that Hogg's Eleutheri were merely a "sketch of a profounder project".[90] In his letter to Hogg of November 26, 1813, Shelley chides, "do not persevere in writing after you grow weary of your toil; 'aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus';[91] and the swans and the Eleutherarchs are proofs that you were a little sleepy". (In the *Memoirs* Hogg made the swans from *The Phaedo* part of an unsophisticated initiation rite and entirely lost Plato's symbolism of the swan as Apollo's oracle.[92]) With this in mind, Shelley's own conclusions as to Hogg's failure of purpose in the Memoirs are worth noting:

> "We are inclined to doubt whether the author has not attributed to his hero the doctrines of universal philanthropy in a spirit of profound and almost unsearchable irony: at least he appears biased by no peculiar principles, and it were perhaps an insoluble inquiry whether any, and if any, what moral truth he designed to illustrate by his tale".[93]

Shelley appears to naturally assume that Hogg's tale should contain a 'moral truth'. If Shelley is right, then Alexy's "often neglected" 'doctrines of universal

philanthropy' do win over the fanatical and contradictory 'enthusiasm' of the ascetic Eleutheri and the obsessive and fatal 'enthusiasm' of the Seraglio. Shelley's reading can be summed up when he states what he hopes is the message of the *Memoirs*, that "[d]omestic relations depend for their integrity upon a complete reciprocity of duties".[94] This idea is touched upon in his Preface to *Frankenstein* when he writes of the "amiableness of domestic affection". On the subject of Bruhle's implicit endorsement of immorality, Shelley's comment is that it "is our duty to protest against so pernicious and disgusting an opinion".[95] Perhaps Shelley, in his comment on Hogg's "unsearchable irony", is striking back at Hogg's *Memoirs* viewed as a personal attack against Shelley's own beliefs; he appears to have held extremely subtle opinions on the utility of philanthropic associations, so subtle that they were often misinterpreted.

Shelley often discussed with Hogg[96] the setting up of a society of Philanthropists, or 'lovers of men'[97] who believe in "practical benevolence".[98] In a letter of January 29, 1812 to Godwin, Shelley had offered Godwin his hospitality saying, "Philanthropy is confined to no spot". For Godwin, philanthropy and benevolence were the highest form of virtue because "the highest employment of virtue is to propagate itself".[99] In a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener of February 14, 1812 Shelley had discussed his pamphlet, Proposals for an Association of Philanthropists (1812), in which, as he writes to Hitchener, he proposed "instituting assoc[i]ations for bettering the condition of humankind. I even I, weak young poor as I am will attempt to organize them. The society of peace and love! Oh! that I [may] be a successful apostle of this only true religion, the religion of philanthropy". In another letter to Elizabeth Hitchener of February 27, Shelley writes that when in Wales he "shall attempt to organize one there, which shall correspond with the Dublin one. Might I not extend them all over England, and quietly revolutionize the country?".

Godwin, who felt that 'knowing thyself' was a solitary practice, sharply reprimanded Shelley for promoting such associations. Shelley argued back. Speaking of

Political Justice, he wrote to Godwin on March 8, 1812, that "nearly twenty years have elapsed since the general diffusion of its doctrines. What has followed? Have men ceased to fight, has vice and misery vanished from the earth?—Have the fireside communications which it recommends taken place?".

It seems that Shelley's coterie did not understand him. Hogg and Peacock often communicated among themselves. Peacock, in *Nightmare Abbey*, depicts Scythrop—his parody of Shelley—as "immersed in gloomy reverie" which might imply that Peacock erroneously thought Shelley to be a materialist. In Scythrop, Peacock mocks Shelley's "distempered ideas of metaphysical romance and romantic metaphysics... passion for reforming the world... secret tribunals, and bands of illuminati, who were always the imaginary instruments of his projected regeneration of the human species... venerable eleutherarchs and ghastly confederates holding midnight conventions in subterranean caves".[100] Both friends seem to associate Shelley and the Freemasons. Hogg's description of Alexy's initiation is decidedly Masonic. Hogg writes that:

> "Every man immediately drew forth a sword, which had been concealed under his gown. The Eleutherarch commanded me to kneel; I obeyed, and the men, crowding round me, as many as were able, touched my body with their drawn swords, which they held in that manner whilst the Eleutherarch read the oath in a slow, distinct voice, and I repeated it after him".[101]

This bears a striking resemblence to the Masonic ritual described by Janet Burke: "When they removed her blindfold after requiring that she swear a formidable oath, her first sight was of all the brothers facing her with their swords drawn and pointed toward her stomach".[102] @@

In his Introduction, Sidney Scott asks, "Was the writing of *Alexy* an exercise...?",[103] and I feel that this is what it seems to be, an attempt by Hogg to follow Socrates's suggestion and to emulate Æsop by creating a fable about pain and pleasure through adapting Plato's *Phaedo* to the novel format. Shelley seems aware of this in his Review and letter—stating

that "the book is far from faultless... [t]he author is proudly negligent of connecting the incidents of his tale".[104] Shelley seems personally aggrieved by Hogg's cavalier treatment of a "profounder project". Parts of his Review are scathing, referring to the "unconnected and vague narrative" which is "simply of a catalogue of events" which "appear trivial and common".[105] Also, Shelley seems too sensitive to Hogg's depiction of the character of Mary and appears to lose critical detachment when he writes in a vituperous tone that "Mary alone is the miserable parasite of fashion, the tame slave of driveling and drunken folly, the cold-hearted coquette, the lying and meretricious prude".[106] Hogg had flirted with Harriet Shelley and, at the time Shelley was writing his Review, was flirting with Mary Shelley.[107] One of Shelley's observations worth noting concerns Hogg's depiction of Bruhle, in which "the power of intelligence and virtue over external deficiencies is forcibly exemplified".[108] The allusion to the ethical hierarchy of Nature, Reason and Virtue links the *Memoirs* to another Platonic dialogue, *The Protagoras*, discussed below.

In conclusion, Shelley, it seems, subsequently sets out to show Hogg how one should create a moral fable which explores a 'profounder project'—in Alastor, in his contribution to *Frankenstein*, and perhaps in other works (such as *Laon and Cyntha*) which are beyond the scope of the present study to examine—in which the different types of enthusiasm are more clearly delineated. Shelley likely entered into this enterprise in much the same spirit as when, in 1820, he responded to Peacock's The Four Ages of Poetry by writing A Defence of Poetry. and telling Peacock that "Your anathemas against poetry itself excited me to a sacred rage. ... I had the greatest possible desire to break a lance with you".[109] That the *Memoirs* owes much to Plato's *Phaedo* there is no doubt. And there is little doubt in my mind that much of Shelley's prose and poetry—especially Alastor, and certain parts of *Frankenstein*—are responses to this Platonic dialogue. Plato and Virgil were doubtless part of an Etonian regime. Shelley's high opinion of Socrates never falters; he wrote a letter on November 3, 1819 to Leigh Hunt containing his response to an attack on the character of Socrates in the *Quarterly Review* of April 1819.

Shelley's retort ends by stating that Socrates's "sentiments are with me a kind of religion".[110]

We can use the characters of Alexy and Scythrop as points along Shelley's ideological trajectory as seen by his friends. By 1819 Shelley appears to have given up on reform through Philanthropic associations, and appears to have turned to the solitary exercise of poetry and prose as the best vehicles through which to effect reform. Initially, responding to Godwin's reprimand in a letter of March 8, 1812, Shelley stated that, in his opinion, the "state of society appears to me to be retrogressive" and "the eager activity of Philanthropists is demanded". These associations, stated Shelley, would be amicable gatherings of three or four individuals, and their "intentions are a facilitation of enquiry, and actually to carry into effect those confidential and private co[m]munications which you recommend... A remedy must somewhere have a beginning". By 1819, in the same letter to Hunt (quoted above), Shelley's views on society appear unchanged, "misrule has plunged its victims into a condition of ignorance so profound & abject... that they have been degraded below superstition". But now Shelley views reform as a necessary or fated event, whereby a "reaction of good is thus consequent upon the excess of evil", and, rather than intervening directly, Shelley, though suspicious of governments intentions in its educational reforms, waits for the natural outcome and hopes that the poor "from the instinct of self-preservation divide the nourishment from the poison in this incorporated mass of both". Shelley appears to have matured. The vision of his role has changed from that of an active revolutionary who places his faith in philanthropic acts to that of a passive Necessarian who places his trust in the innate power of benevolence and virtue.

As part of his ethical project Shelley adopts vegetarianism and turns to his 'confidential and private communications', his poetry and prose, to clarify the moral implications of his position on the murky distinctions in the debates over dualistic-deistic-atheistic beliefs, spiritual-imponderable-material fluids, and fanatical-social-scientistic enthusiasms (rejecting the rhetorical dilemma and taking a *tertium quid* in each

case). From his poetry and prose it seems that Shelley comes to believe that there is an Universal Soul operating through the principle of Benevolence which continually maintains an equilibrium through the necessary adjustment of events as they unfold in their mutability—this is the essence of Necessarianism.

In this switch, from an elitist to an anti-elitist stance, Shelley appears to have finally come to share Godwin's conclusions, but perhaps via Kant's philosophy. In his political writing Kant was very much against secrecy and advocated transparency and good faith on both sides of the political divide—the governors and the governed. According to Kant, there is a vicious circle here which must be avoided: on one hand it is opressive government that is "the effective cause of all secret societies";[111] on the other hand "no association which could influence the public welfare of society (publicum), such as an association of political or religious illuminati, may be kept secret".[112] For Kant, secret societies were a symptom of oppression, not a cure for it. He sums up his objection to secrecy in his two 'transcendental formulae of public right' which state: "All actions affecting the rights of other human beings are wrong if their maxim is not compatible with their being made public";[113] and "All maxims which require publicity if they are not to fail in their purpose can be reconciled both with right and with politics.[114] According to Kant, it is only by observing these formulae of public right that, through a process of gradual approximation, public harmony shall be eventually achieved. Kant made no assumptions about mankind's individual morality being perfected (i.e. Kant was not a Perfectibilist—an alternative name for the Bavarian Illuminati[115]), but insisted that an ideal government—which Kant saw as a Platonic Ideal [116]—must be vigilant against corruption and capable of inculcating a sense of duty, or virtue, within its citizens.[117]

Kant's views on secret societies, however, may have been misunderstood by many due to the difficulties of his terminology and the quality of the various translations. If Shelley was deeply immersed in understanding Kant while *Frankenstein* was being written and while he was Peacock's neighbour in Marlowe, it is hardly surprising that

Peacock would depict Scythrop as a *solitary* Illuminatus desperately seeking others that he might communicate with. A (paranoid?) contributor to The Monthly Review (1799) was of the opinion that the use of Kant's terminology was likely to initiate a rash of secret societies, destroy philosophy with its own weapon, and bring about a situation similar to that at Babel:

> "This can best be accomplished by enveloping with enigmatic jargon the topics of discussion; by employing a cloudly phraseology which may intercept from below the war-whoop of impiety, and from above the evulgation of infidelity; by contriving a kind of 'cypher of illuminism', in which public discussions of the most critical nature can be carried on from the press, without alarming the prejudices of the people or exciting the precautions of the magistrate. Such a cypher, in the hands of an adept, is the dialect of Kant".[118]

Clearly, this reviewer has completely misinterpreted Kant who, as quoted above, has dismissed secret societies such as the Illuminati. But, if such a misinterpretation was common, it is easy to see why Hogg and Peacock portray Alexy and Scythrop—both images of Shelley—as fluent in a 'language which none but the initiated can comprehend'. It is this misinterpretation which seems to have confused and mislead many who have attempted to interpret Shelley's poetry and prose. Once this misinterpretation is disposed of, the symbolism in Shelley's poetry and prose appears part of a coherent vision—a vision completely compatible with the symbolism in *Frankenstein.*

6. PARADIGM CONSTRUCTION

The Philosophical Context

Before proceeding to explore the philosophical context of *Frankenstein*, there are some other misconceptions about Shelley's beliefs which need to be dismissed if a credible Shelleyan paradigm is to be constructed. The most recent scholarly text to perpetuate these misconceptions is *Shelley and Vitality* (2005) by Sharon Rushton, who sets out to emphasize the "importance of [Shelley's] materialist thinking" by resituating his work within the context of the vitalist debate of the early 1800s when for "the first time, life was considered a universal state".[1] She tells us that Shelley's "'Necessity' can be likened to the principle of life" and that the more radical vitalist theories "offered Shelley a means by which to voice his own scepticism and atheism".[2] Though she states that both "Shelley and [Sir William] Lawrence found themselves at the mercy of Tory critics, labeled as atheists",[3] Rushton seems to assume that these labels were accurate.

David Lee Clark, the editor of *Shelley's Prose* (1988), would object to labeling Shelley a 'materialist' or an 'atheist': "Shelley was never a materialist in the philosophical use of the term, and his conception of Necessity always carried with it a belief in a spiritual or mental element. That is why he defined God as the Soul of the Universe, the animating principle in all forms of matter—both animate and inanimate".[4] Necessarian beliefs had most recently seen revival in eighteenth-century Deism, and, according to Sir Leslie Stephen (1832-1904)[5] in his authoritative account of "the deistical controversy",[6] in *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876), it was Deism that "gave birth to the romanticism of Scott, the nature-worship of Wordsworth, and the sentimentalism of Byron or Shelley".[7] (Whether Shelley was a pantheist or a panentheist—refined forms of Deism—is too fine a point for the present discussion. I shall return to the question of Shelley's 'Necessity' and 'atheism' later.)

Most of the confusion over Shelley's beliefs comes from the title of the text which resulted in his expulsion from Oxford, *The Necessity of Atheism* (1811). Sidney Scott, in his Introduction to Hogg's *Alexy Haimatoff*, writes that "the title of this pamphlet is the most—and indeed almost the only—really provocative thing about it".[8] Even in the advertisement Shelley qualifies his application of the term 'atheism' to himself by prefixing the phrase "Thro' deficiency of proof." In his opening statements Shelley writes "our knowledge of the existence of a Deity is a subject of such importance that it cannot be too minutely investigated",[9] which strongly implies some form of belief on his part. (I discuss *The Necessity of Atheism* in greater detail below in my section on the moral structure of *Frankenstein*).

In Romantic-era criticism the unqualified use of the term 'scepticism' is also dangerous; it might mean one who "doubts the possibility of real knowledge of any kind," or one who "doubts the validity of what claims to be knowledge in some particular department of inquiry (e.g. metaphysics, theology, natural science, etc.).[10] Shelley was not of the first kind, and was likely only a sceptic with respect to the comprehensibility of life and the existence of absolute freewill and of absolute determinism. Kantian scepticism is a third form which may have influenced Shelley. Immanuel Kant wrote of his 'sceptical method', that it is "totally different from scepticism, or that artificial and scientific agnosticism wich undermines the foundations of all knowledge, in order if possible to leave nothing trustworthy and certain anywhere. The sceptical method, on the contrary, aims at certainty...".[11] Kantian scepticism, which in its 'disinterestedness' owes a debt to Shaftesbury's dialogical method, proposes that for each body of credible transcendental doctrine (thesis) there exists another which is contradictory but equally credible (antithesis). This method gives rise to antinomies, the synthesis of which illuminates commonalities as either certainties or illusions. In Kant's Third Conflict of the Transcendental Ideas, he opposed Libertarianism (thesis) to Necessarianism (antithesis). Kant concluded that the

> "law of nature, that everything which happens has a cause... that therefore all events in the order of nature are empirically determined, this law, I say, through which alone phenomena become nature and objects of experience, is a law of understanding, which can on no account be surrendered, and from which no single phenomenon can be exempted; because in doing this we should place it outside all possible experience, separate from all objects of possible experience, and change it into a mere fiction of the mind, or a cobweb of the brain".

The phrase "cobweb of the brain" is taken from line 1339 of *Hudibras* (1663-78), by Samuel Butler (1612-1680), and is a denigrating allusion to spiritual revelation. Kant's solution to the Liberty vs. Necessity debate is to find a tertium quid within the categories of the knowable (phenomena, or appearances) and the unknowable (noumena, or things-as-they-are). In his extremely influential *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), Kant differentiates between the physical necessity (causality) which governs the material world of appearances and the moral necessity (reciprocal coercion)[12] of a 'categorical imperative' which regards every thing as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end. Though Shelley may, or may not be a Kantian sceptic, he is clearly Necessarian with all that the term implies; he was not an atheist nor a materialist.

Rushton, however, extrapolating on Marilyn Butler's already tenuous suppositions, in her Introduction to *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus--The 1818 Text*, about the relationship between Shelley and Lawrence, links Shelley (seen as a "materialist thinker"[13] and "openly atheist"[14]) and Lawrence (seen as "a materialist and an atheist"[15]) to a "subversive circle" who used the radical side of the vitalist debate to "attack the conservative and reactionary order".[16] She does this, despite her acknowledgement of Butler's comment that "Percy Shelley's intellectual association with Lawrence is in fact better hidden than his wife's".[17] Halfway through the book Rushton modifies her view, stating that Shelley only agreed with Lawrence politically and disagreed with him on the subject of the principle of life—agreeing with Lawrence's opponents that this principle might be the immaterial substance electricity.[18]

The terms 'material' and 'materialist' are not simply decoded. In contrast to those early-nineteenth-century thinkers who believed that the principle of life was an immaterial "something" infused into inert matter, Lawrence believed that there was no principle of life,[19] but that life emerged from the organization of matter. Though Shelley was not a materialist, he disagreed with the term 'metaphysics' because it "asserts a distinction between the moral and the material universe which it is presumptuous to assume", but he does not reject the term completely; characteristically, he subtly redefines it as a *tertium quid*: "as the science of all that we know, feel, remember, and believe inasmuch as our knowledge, sensations, memory, and faith constitute the universe considered relatively to human identity".[20] Thus defined, Shelley further distinguishes metaphysics as "the science of facts" from logic which is "the science of words".[21] To understand 'materialism' we must first understand 'monism'. Shelley was closest to monism.

In the eighteenth century the Cartesians (dualists) had lost to the Newtonians (monists), but the monists were divided—the materialist monists opposed the spiritual monists who tended to stray back into dualism. Rushton tells us that "the monist Lawrence... refused to see existence as determined by material and immaterial elements. Empiricism had led Lawrence to believe that there was only matter, that the body and the mind or spirit were inseparable".[22] Such material monists believed only what their senses told them and were regarded as theologically radical by the spiritualists who believed "that there may be, and are things, of the nature of which we can never entertain the least idea, from their having no correspondence to the objects of our senses".[23] The materialists developed their natural religion by reading the Book of Nature, whereas the mystics read the Book of Scripture; the materialists, because they drew much of their doctrine from France, were also viewed as politically radical. As an atheist materialist, Lawrence was seen by his opponents—spiritualists and dualists alike—as dangerous

morally and politically.[24] He was eventually forced to recant,[25] and became an "apostate" in the 1830s.[26]

Shelley was ambivalent with respect to the two types of monism. In a letter to Godwin of July 29, 1812 he wrote: "the doctrine which affirms that there is no such thing as matter, & that which affirms that all is matter appear to me, perfectly indifferent in the question between benevolence & self love". Rushton, because of her forced alignment of Shelley to Lawrence's views, reads *Prometheus Unbound* as promoting anthropocentric sovereignty—that man is "king / Over himself".[27] In her conclusion she appears to overlook that it was Demogorgon who was at the top of the political hierarchy in Shelley's poem;[28] Demogorgon deposed Jupiter, and Demogorgon advised man that "Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance, / These are the seals of that most firm assurance / Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength". Demogorgon's role is one among many other indications that Shelley was not of Lawrence's 'modern sceptics', but leaned more toward the spiritual version of monism. Because monism denies the existence of the soul as a feature which distinguishes man from other living creatures, it is inherently more ecocentric. Shelley did not share Lawrence's atheism, but held a belief in "cosmic necessity"[29] derived from Deism. Here I should note that the term 'Deist' "was originally opposed to atheist, and was interchangeable with theist even in the end of the 17th c.", after which 'secular' or 'pagan' Deism was distinguished from 'natural', 'primitive', 'rational', or 'True' theisms,[30] such as those of Arianism, Methodism, Protestantism, Socianism, or Unitarianism.

Rushton examines the 'vitalist' debate from 1814-19 and looks at the natural philosophers who might have influenced Shelley. Rushton sees a polarization between "Tory" or "conservative vitalists",[31] and those vitalists who were "radical thinkers".[32] But, as Rushton notes, radical science was practiced by theists, such as Priestley,[33] as well as atheists like the young Davy (24-5) and Deists like Franklin—scientist, American

revolutionary and ambassador to the French court.[34] Monists of all stamps vehemently rejected the dualists' orthodox view that there were two *materiae primae*.

Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), Deist and author of one of the most influential texts in Romantic-era natural philosophy, *Zoonomia—or, The laws of organic life* (1794), also believed that the vital force was 'something'—an immaterial additive—rather than 'nothing,' as was Lawrence's position. Deists like Darwin were aware that, compared to the atheists, their 'faith' in a First Cause related them to the spiritualists and "those who treat of revelation",[35] but they were careful to found their natural religion on empirical evidence alone. Darwin, for example, who studied the Book of Nature, believed that God, as the Great Cause, created the "original living filament, [which is] excited into action by the *necessities* of the creatures, which possess them, and on which their existence depends" (my emphasis).[36]

The Rev. John Wesley, by contrast, was a dualist for whom electricity was the second *materiae prima* and the essence of the soul. One of the founders of the "'enthusiastic' religious movement Methodism" in the 1730s,[37] The principles of materialism—profit wealth and utilitarianism—are not incompatible with Christian dualism. It is not surprising to discover, therefore, that Wesley was also a practicing electrotherapist and published *The Desideratum* on that topic. (Today he is credited with developing the forerunner of electro-convulsive shock therapy—also unsurprising given the desirability of convulsions among religious 'enthusiasts'). Wesley, like Franklin, was a proponent of material progress. Southey, in his *Life of Wesley* (1820), the book of which Coleridge wrote was "more often in my hands than any other in my ragged book-regiment",[38] quotes the Reverend as saying, "We ought not to prevent people from being diligent and frugal; we *must* exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich".[39] Shelley would also have known of Wesley's 'enthusiastic' reading of natural philosophy through his meeting with James Henry Leigh Hunt (1784-1859) of May 5, 1811, recounted in a letter to his school friend Thomas

Hogg of May 8: "he [Hunt] is a Deist despising J[esus] C[hrist] &cc &c yet having a high veneration for the Deity, the consequence of our acquaintance was a long argument... Mrs. Hunt is a most sensible woman, she is by no means a Xtian, & rather atheistically given,—It is a curious fact that they were married when they were both Wesleyan Methodists". This conversation with Hunt seems to have been pivotally important for clarifying Shelley's understanding of the terms 'atheism', 'deism', and the role of necessity, reason and virtue. It would be natural for Hunt, as a Deist, to have rejected Wesley's 'enthusiasm'.

Shaftesbury, who is generally regarded as having formulated the moral code of secular Deism, had written at great length against 'enthusiasm'. The term was derived from the Greek for 'possession by a god' and was defined in the Eighteenth Century as "a vain confidence of divine favour or communication", and a "passionate eagerness in any pursuit, proceeding from an intense conviction of the worthiness of the object"—definitions which apply equally well to the passion driving "prophetic or poetic frenzy".[40] Shaftesbury directed A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm (1708) against the "feigned zeal",[41] "fanaticism",[42] and 'infections panic'[43] of the French Prophets,[44] who considered themselves Illuminati. This sort of enthusiasm should be discouraged as presumptuous because it causes the "magistrate of necessity [to] give way to it", wrote Shaftesbury.[45] 'Enthusiasts' went to great lengths to appear politically conservative, ostensibly believing that "absolute obedience was due to all established governments".[46]

I have attempted to elucidate these terms because the distinctions between them are quite subtle and Shelley typically takes a third way, or *tertium quid* which the Oxford English Dictionary defines as "something (indefinite or left undefined) related in some way to two (definite or known) things, but distinct from both". Alan Richardson, in *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (2001) has indicated that there is "confusion regarding the terms 'vitalism', 'materialism', and 'mechanism', no two of which can be opposed—and no one of which can be defined—in any simple manner".[47]

Marilyn Butler was careful to distinguish between "spiritualised vitalism"—with its quasi-dualism—and the materialist's version.[48] But something better than this is required if sense is to be made of the Shelleys' philosophical position in the Romantic Era. Even today there is no generally accepted definition of 'life', other than the tautology of the "condition or attribute of living or being alive".[49] The term 'vital force' is still an "immaterial force or principle viewed as present in and animating living things and sustaining their life; (Biol.) such a force or energy regarded as distinct from ordinary chemical and physical forces".[50] Mary Brazier, a modern historian of neurophysiology, further confuses Romantic-era neural theory by contrasting 'vitalism'—with a 'sentient principle'—to 'materialism'—without a 'sentient principle'.[51] The term 'vital', however, dates back to Chaucer, and has a Neccessarian connotation, that of "Essential or *necessary* to life" (my emphasis).[52] And it bears remembering that the vitalist debate reached its crescendo in 1822, the year that Shelley died and four years after *Frankenstein* was published.

In discussing the Shelleys' work, the terms 'vitalism'—first used in 1822—and 'vitalist'—first used in 1860—,[53] are anachronistic terms from a later taxonomy which can only confuse us. That which became 'vitalist' in 1822 was a vestige of a much older, more profound debate, originally known as the *vis viva* (living force) debate which raged from the 1690s, when Baron Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) coined the term, to the 1740s, when mathematicians, physicists, and theologians abandoned it unresolved and it became a conversation-piece for literati.[54] Then, as Martin Schönfeld puts it in *The Philosophy of the Young Kant--The Precritical Project*, at "the end of the eighteenth century, living force and *vis viva* returned from their exile. The vitalists resurrected these terms but disconnected them from their origin in mechanics".[55] By 'mechanics' Schönfeld refers to physics as a the study of 'motion'—with its Aristotelian concept of the First, or Unmoved Mover—which originally linked physics to metaphysics.

Many conscientious natural philosophers, like Erasmus Darwin in *The Temple of Nature* (1803), continued to note perplexities, such as the principles of reproduction, which "is yet wrapt in darkness" and lightning "which cannot be accounted for on the mechanical theory of Dr. Franklin";[56] but many others yielded in the face of perplexity to a positivist, reductivist position which denied the utility of metaphysics. Coleridge expressed this tendency well in his essay Theory of Life (1816), written in response to the 'vitalist' or Hunterian debate. I must quote at length here to underscore the significance of Coleridge's sentiment which articulates the same Romantic reaction to scientism held by the Shelleys and its relevance to the argument in *Frankenstein*:

> "In short, from the time of Kepler to that of Newton, and from Newton to Hartley, not only all things in external nature, but the subtlest mysteries of life, organization, and even of the intellect and moral being, were conjured within the magic circle of mathematical formulae... The scientific world was prepared for a new dynasty; accordingly, as soon as Lavoisier had reduced the infinite variety of chemical phenomena to the actions, reactions, and interchanges of a few elementary substances, or at least excited the expectation that this would speedily be effected, the hope shot up, almost instantly, into full faith, that it had been effected. Henceforward the new path, thus brilliantly opened, became the common road to all departments of knowledge. And, to this moment, it has been pursued with an eagerness and almost epidemic ***enthusiasm*** which, scarcely less than its political revolutions, characterise the spirit of the age. Many and inauspicious have been the invasions and inroads of this new conqueror into the rightful territories of other sciences; and strange alterations have been made in less harmless points than those of terminology, in homage to an art unsettled, in the very ferment of imperfect discoveries, and either without a theory, or with a theory maintained only by composition and compromise. Yet this very circumstance has favoured its encroachments, by the gratifications which its novelty affords to our curiosity, and by the keener interest and higher excitement which an unsettled and revolutionary state is sure to inspire. He who supposes that science possesses an immunity from such influences knows little of human nature. How, otherwise, could men of strong minds and sound judgments have attempted to penetrate by the clue of chemical experiment the secret recesses, the sacred adyta of organic life, without being aware, that chemistry must needs be at its extreme limits, when it has approached the threshold of a higher power? Its own transgressions, however, and the failure of its enterprises will become the means of defining its absolute boundary, and we shall have to guard against the opposite error of rejecting its aid altogether as analogy, because we have repelled its ambitious claims to an identity with the vital powers" (my emphasis).[57]

Coleridge's condemnation of a selfish passion 'pursued with an eagerness and almost epidemic *enthusiasm*' which leads to a false and presumptuous belief in the potential of positivistic science, bears a strong similarity to the sentiment expressed by Shelley in his Preface to *Alastor*. Again, I cannot paraphrase, but must quote at length:

> "that Power... dooms to a slow and poisonous decay those meaner spirits that dare to abjure its dominion. Their destiny is more abject and inglorious as their delinquency is more contemptible and ***pernicious***. They who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse. They languish, because none feel with them their common nature. They are morally dead. They are neither friends, nor lovers, nor fathers, nor citizens of the world, nor benefactors of their country".[58]

The 'meaner spirits' Shelley refers to are those with a positivist outlook, "those who hearts are dry as / summer dust"[59]. The power abjured is that of Necessity or Virtue without which science becomes 'pernicious'. In *Frankenstein* Victor becomes infected with this 'epidemic enthusiasm'. In Shelley's system he is then "morally dead". This is why, in his unpublished Review of *Frankenstein*, Shelley describes Victor's pursuit of the Being as "terrible reanimation of a corpse and the supernatural career of a spirit";[60] The corpse is, arguably, that of Victor's morality which becomes reanimated when the novel makes a volta while Victor is in the Orkneys constructing the Being's mate.

Coleridge's adyta (the "innermost part of a temple; the secret shrine whence oracles were delivered"[61]) of organic life are where the imponderable perplexities of existence shimmer in the periphery of the mind. The term 'imponderable' was coined in 1794 likely as an attempt at clarification—as a secular *tertium quid*.[62] An 'imponderable' was defined as having "no weight; destitute of weight: applied formerly to light, heat, electricity, etc., [but] regarded as material substances...".[63] (We might understand this today as 'virtual', something that is "possessed of certain physical virtues", but which

consists of "particles and processes that cannot be directly detected"[64]). The eighteenth-century prototype for an 'imponderable' was Newton's aether [65] which 'explained' action at a distance. With the 'spark of being' in *Frankenstein* left as an imponderable, an oxymoronic enigma, 'immaterial material', the dualist-atheist-spiritualist debate might be avoided. This was definitely Darwin's intention in *Zoonomia*, where he writes that "I beg to be understood, that I do not wish to dispute about words, and am ready to allow, that the powers of gravity, specific attraction, electricity, magnetism, and even the spirit of animation, may consist of matter of a finer kind... [I] leave the consideration of the immortal part of us, which is the object of religion, to those who treat of revelation".[66] In this way the use of the key term 'spark' in *Frankenstein* did for literature what Franklin and Luigi Galvani (1737-1798) did for natural philosophy—it provides a focus for the convergence of theological, mythological, philosophical, and physiological debate.

Franklin demonstrated the necessary connection between atmospheric electricity (lightning) and artificial (static) electricity. In 1791 Galvani discovered that animal (neural) electricity, artificial (static) electricity, and atmospheric electricity (lightning) were the same. Here the Swiss electrophysiologist Emil Du Bois Reymond (1818-1896) describes how this was first received:

> "The storm which was produced... among philosophers, physiologists and physicians can only be compared to that which disturbed at that time (1791) the political horizons of Europe. It may be said that for ever wherever frogs were to be found and where two different metals could be procured everybody was anxious to see the mangled limbs of frogs brought to life in this wonderful way. The physiologists believed that at length they should realise their visions of a vital power".[67]

The term 'spark' embodies "celestial monitions" and "earthly wonders" and provides the "link between electrical and celestial fire".[68] This is how the 1818 edition of *Frankenstein* avoids the confusions of the vocabulary of the time—it does not use the term 'vital' or its cognates at all, but talks only of the "spark of being";[69] Mary Shelley only introduces the phrase "vital warmth" in her 1831 Introduction.[70]

Given the warmth of the 'vitalist' (or more properly, the Hunterian) debate during the period 1814-19, the omission of 'vital-' in *Frankenstein* was likely a conscious decision. William Empson, in *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, beautifully describes the power and type of ambiguity captured in the Shelleys' use of the term 'spark', as an "enormous conjunction, standing as it were for the point of friction between the two worlds conceived together".[71] The highest form of ambiguity occurs when:

> "two things thought of as incompatible, but desired intensely by different systems of judgements, are spoken of simultaneously by words applying to both; both desires are thus given a transient and exhausting satisfaction, and the two systems of judgement are forced into open conflict before the reader. Such a process, one might imagine, could pierce to regions that underlie the whole structure of our thought; could tap the energies of the very depths of the mind".[72]

Through the use of the term 'spark' *Frankenstein* takes on many of the contemporary controversies which existed when it was conceived, but without engaging them directly by retaining its ambiguity. This multidisciplinary ambiguity is what contributes greatly to its transhistorical stability. Taken alone, even without Shelley's direct refutations, his use of such *tertium quid* arguments, derived as they are from theological logic, amounts to his direct rejection of atheism and materialism.

Shelley's doctrine of Necessity binds the moral world of the conscious mind to the amoral world of material objects in a complex web of interdependence within which the total of all that impinges upon the existence of a state of mind or an object is simultaneously the reason or cause of its existence. Necessity encompasses all aspects of life for Shelley: "History, politics, morals, criticism, all grounds of reasoning, all principles of science".[73] Romantic-era thinkers believed that it was possible to construct a fully deterministic model of the mental and the material worlds, that there could be an ultimate moral and material accounting.

Godwin provides an amusing example of determinism or "what some religious writers have called Predestination" in *The Pantheon* when he describes the sequence of events leading to the creation of *Paradise Lost*: it first requires that Henry III, meet Anne Boolean at Wolsey's banquet; this gives rise to the Huguenots who are then persecuted; a Huguenot milliner escapes France and takes a coach to Oxford where she meets and makes a hat for Milton's mother who wears it to the ball where she met Milton's father.[74] As I shall show below, it is through Godwin that elements of Calvinism might be seen as having insinuated themselves into Shelley's interpretation of Necessity, though, as we have seen, Godwin was fully aware of the "complexity of human motives".[75]

We now know that in chaos theory, a complex, dynamic system—"which is governed by deterministic laws but is so unpredictable as to appear random"[76]—a determination of ultimate accountability is impossible. One consequence of this is what modern chaos theorists call the 'butterfly effect' whereby "a very insignificant change in a complex system can significantly alter an anticipated course of events".[77] But, at the same time, we have discovered that dynamic systems always tend toward states of equilibrium which we call 'attractors',[78] no doubt so-named for the same mystery of cohesion which binds the universe together and which so fascinated Newton. The doctrine of Necessity, though deterministic, also recognized this element of unpredictability in the consequences of an event, the result of unforeseeable adjustments required in a complex system to maintain an universal equilibrium, and the moral implications for man of the interdependence of all things. This was usually called the principle of benevolence or the Golden Rule—the responsibility of each for all and the recognition that the impact of one's own actions must be carefully considered before they are enacted.

By virtue of its humble acceptance of the incomprehensibility of the universe, the observation of prudence and precaution and the rejection of presumption are implicit in Necessarianism. Shelley explicitly states, however, that though the Universal Soul strives

for equilibrium, it is not a moral entity; to say that it is would be anthropocentric and he concludes that "there is neither good nor evil in the universe".[79] Such moral qualities, he states, "are such as only a human being can possess".[80] For many this was tantamount to atheism and made Necessarianism as dangerous as atheism because it was seen as intended to destroy the ordinary beliefs of ordinary people.[81] For Necessarians, however, human reason—which is what sets man apart from all other living creatures—is potentially pernicious in that it obscures the need for prudence and precaution; it requires a virtuous predisposition to keep its destructive potential in check. This is why, for Shelley, ethics is 'such as only a human being can possess'.

Necessarian determinism assumes, however, that, were it possible to 'replay' history, each event and action would recur exactly as it had because the 'chain of causes' in the material world, and 'motives' in the moral world, would be exactly the same. It was in a letter to Hookham of January 26, 1813 that Shelley wrote "The notes to Q.M. will be long & philosophical. I shall take that opportunity which I judge to be a safe one of propagating my principles, which I decline to do syllogistically in a poem". Shelley reiterates this point of Necessarian determinism in his Note to Queen Mab on Necessity:

> "Every human being is irresistibly impelled to act precisely as he does act: in the eternity which preceded his birth a chain of causes was generated which, operating under the name of motives, make it impossible that any thought of his mind, or any action of his life, should be otherwise than it is... Similar circumstances produce the same unvariable effects...".[82]

It is this hypothesis which allows Shelley to make such flatly deterministic statements such as that in his unpublished Review of *Frankenstein*:

> "the direct moral of the book consists, and it is perhaps the most important and of the most universal application of any moral that can be enforced by example—Treat a person ill and he will become wicked. Requite affection with scorn; let one being be selected for whatever cause as the refuse of his kind divide him, a social being, from society, and you impose upon him the irresistible obligations—malevolence and selfishness".[83]

This is the negative implementation of Necessarian doctrine in *Frankenstein.* The Necessarian's guiding principle, however, is his disinterested benevolence. Shelley defines 'disinterestedness' as "the quality which preserves the character of virtue distinct from that of either innocence or vice".[84]

In Greek allegory, disinterestedness is usually depicted as blindness, as in the figure of Justice. Godwin's *The Pantheon* tells us that Themis, or Necessity, one of the wives of Jupiter was the Goddess of Justice who the Romans worshipped as Justitia, "and this character has been represented in later times with... a bandage over her eyes". Themis/Necessity/Justice was also the mother of the Fates and of Nemesis.[85] According to Godwin, Themis/Necessity/Justice was intimately connected with the Golden Age of idyllic equilibrium, when Gods mingled with unpresumptuous men, and

> "all men were happy, and all were good: there were no quarrels, and there needed no law: all men loved and assisted each other: none wandered in search of distant climates, or in ships cut the unknown sea: the bowels of the earth were yet unransacked in search of the precious or the harder metals: spring and summer succeeded each other, without the intervention of winter: the earth brought forth all its fruits without the labours of the plough: cares, wants, wars and diseases were unheard of".

Godwin's criticism of Romantic-era Colonialism and Industrialism in this passage needs no elucidation. Themis/Necessity/Justice was one of the last of the Gods to abandon mankind when "the smell of the wholesome earth now steeped in human gore, could no longer be endured by her".[86]

In *Frankenstein* we encounter the blind De Lacey living in his humble cottage. De Lacey's blindness and his humble cottage might have been intended to represent the natural, disinterested, justice, benevolence, and hospitality of a Golden Age when mankind was immune to the positivistic superficialities of scepticism and materialism. The consequences of the Being's violent expulsion from the cottage, his "rage and revenge",[87] are necessary. It is on this scene that Shelley, in his review, wants the reader to linger when he writes that the "scene between the Being and the blind De Lacey in the

cottage is one of the most profound and extraordinary instances of pathos that we ever recollect".[88] It is here that the Being howls in his anguish, "Cursed, cursed creator! Why did I live? Why, in that instant, did I not extinguish the spark of existence which you had so wantonly bestowed?".[89] Both the Being and Victor might identify with the plaintive lines from Milton on the title page of *Frankenstein*: "Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay / To mould me Man? did I solicit thee / From darkness to promote me" (X.743-45). Significantly, these lines are spoken by Adam upon his expulsion from Paradise for his presumption, his exit from a Golden Age and entrance into a hostile reality, when prudence and precaution first become necessities:

> ...Thus began
> Outrage from lifeless things; but Discord first,
> Daughter of Sin, among the irrational
> Death introduced, through fierce antipathy:
> Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl,
> And fish with fish; to graze the herb all leaving,
> Devoured each other; nor stood much in awe
> Of Man, but fled him; or, with countenance grim,
> Glared on him passing (X.706-14).

This eighteenth-century model of Necessarianism did not originate with Shelley; it dates back to the 1704 Boyle lectures of Samuel Clarke (1675-1729). Ezio Vailati, in his Introduction to *Leibniz and Clarke* notes that "Clarke identified self-existence with necessary-existence, and embarked on obscure considerations about the necessity of the self-existing being in which, at times, this necessity seems to be some sort of entity antecedent in nature to God as the reason for God's existence".[90] Mid-eighteenth century courses in Pneumatology, such as those studied by Priestley between 1752-55, included many related contemporary subjects such as "the challenge of deism, the so-called atheism of Hobbes and Spinoza, the rise of Arianism, and the general problem of determinism and free will".[91] In this context 'determinism' reads as synonymous with 'necessarianism' and the debate is commonly referred to as that between 'Liberty and Necessity'.[92] The line of transmission of the doctrine of Necessity appears to follow that

of Deism, from Clarke to Shaftesbury, to Franklin, to Priestley (who, though Unitarian, held much in common with Deism and is thought to have coined the term 'Necessitarian'[93]), to Godwin and Coleridge, and, ultimately, to Shelley. It is no coincidence that many 'scientists' were Necessarians. James Harris, in *Of Liberty and Necessity—The Free Will Debate in Eighteenth-Century British Philosophy* (2005), tells us that "Necessitarians like to regard themselves as 'philosophical' reasoners: as, that is to say, followers of the methods of reasoning advocated by Bacon and Newton".[94] Harris also notes that Necessarians were more often than not associationists[95].

From an early age Shelley was familiar with all views of the controversial Liberty and Necessity debate—favouring Necessarianism even at the risk of alienating his family. In a letter of February 6, 1811 Shelley continues his attempts to "Deistify" his father, an intention he had described to Hogg in a letter of January 11—the same letter in which he noted his mother's fears that he will make a "deistical coterie of all my little sisters". He had read Voltaire, Kames, Hume, Rousseau, Smith, and Franklin—"all of whom were Deists", he told his father. His reading continued unabated over the next several years. Shelley must have been familiar with Priestley's works because of his youthful passion for electrical experimentation and because he identifies himself with Priestley as an ideological martyr in a letter of May 7, 1812 to Elizabeth Hitchener. He had read Reid's *Inquiry Into the Human Mind* (1764), a response to Hume and Priestly, before writing his letter of June 3, 1912 to William Godwin. Shelley had ordered Hartley's *Observations on Ma.* (1749) from Hookham on July 29, 1812. As the Collins-Clarke exchange had defined the terms of the debate over liberty and necessity in the early eighteenth-century, the Priestley-Reid exchange was the highpoint of the debate and defined the Necessarian-Libertarian polarization for the next forty years.[96]

Most of the authors Shelley was reading, notably Voltaire and Franklin, owe an intellectual debt to Shaftesbury's Deism. Shaftesbury, regarded as the father of secular

moral doctrine, was one of the earliest proponents of what eighteenth-century thinkers called the "sensitive philosophy"—an understanding of the mind based on the principle of benevolence, or selfless love as contrasted to selfish love.[97] For Shaftesbury, an excess of sensibility became a dangerously irrational and self-interested form of 'enthusiasm'; dangerous because it made precarious the equilibrium maintained by the complex interconnectedness of all things. Enthusiasm was wrong, in Shaftesbury's view, because it was a libertarian expression which contradicted the laws of moral necessity. Shaftesbury wrote in Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author, published as part of his *Characteristics* (1714), that "[e]very man... must of necessity hold his fancies under some kind of discipline and management... Either I work upon my fancies or they on me... And then, what difference between such a state and madness?".[98]

In general, Deists like Voltaire followed Shaftesbury's secular or natural morality which is based on a principle of benevolence and of a universal providence in which all things are interconnected in a complex way and which, therefore, lies beyond human comprehension and, thus, might appear to act viciously at a local level. Shaftesbury described the cosmic disinterestedness of the "general mind" as having "no particular interest; but the general good or good of the whole and its own private good must of necessity be one and the same".[99] (The connection between this and Shelley's view of morality as a human endeavour is readily made). Shaftesbury wrote in The Moralists—A Philosophical Rhapsody (1709), that there is a "supreme wisdom" in the "mighty union" that is the total of all things and their dependencies on each other, but that this wisdom is "not easily discovered" and that the justice of its necessity may not be apparent.[100]

Franklin, after becoming a religious sceptic through reading Shaftesbury and Collins, was converted to Deism at the age of fifteen.[101] He had written on liberty and necessity in 1725,[102] and was a strong influence on Priestly who, though not a Deist, but a Unitarian, wrote The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated, as part of his *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit* (1777). He is generally credited with having "rid

necessitarianism of its association with the supposed scepticism and libertinism of Hobbes, Spinoza, Collins, and Hume".[103] Priestley developed his own ontology and metaphysics based largely on Clarke's Newtonianism, the monism of the Cambridge Platonists, and necessarianism from the associationist philosophy of David Hartley (1705-1757).[104] Hartley had written in his *Observations on Man* (1749) that, for a man living by the rule of benevolent respect for others—for a man living virtuously—, free-will is not required because "these actions may be brought about mechanically" through Necessity.[105]

Priestley also held that the mind operates mechanically, and that to deny the laws of causation for the mind, is to deny the laws of Nature completely, that there is a "necessary connexion between all things past, present and to come, in the way of proper cause and effect, as much in the intellectual, as in the natural world".[106] It is therefore necessary that identical minds, under identical circumstances, shall necessarily act in the same way.[107] Priestley was reacting to attacks on necessarian doctrine but advocated a return to the concept of *tabula rasa*—first posited by John Locke (1632-1704)—, rejected sentimental intuitions, and insisted that all ideas can be accounted for by Hartley's doctrine of the association of ideas. Both Priestley and Hartley believed that all human actions were motivated by God. At the opposite pole of doctrine, even D'Holbach, the archetypal atheist materialist, venerated Necessity when he wrote the opening paragraph of his *The System of Nature--Or Laws of the Moral and Physical World* (1770):

> "Man... is the work of nature.—He exists in Nature.—He is submitted to the laws of Nature.—He cannot deliver himself from them:—cannot step beyond them even in thought. It is in vain his mind would spring forward beyond the visible world: direful and imperious ***necessity*** ever compels his return—being formed by Nature, he is circumscribed by her laws; there exists nothing beyond the great whole of which he forms a part, of which he experiences the influence" (my emphasis).[108]

For many living in the Romantic Era, Necessity seemed inescapable. Godwin had written a chapter called Inferences From The Doctrine Of Necessity, in *An Enquiry concerning Political Justice* (1793) in which he paraphrases many of the writers noted above: "In the life of every human being there is a chain of events, generated in the lapse of ages which preceded his birth, and going on in regular procession through the whole period of his existence, in consequence of which it was impossible for him to act in any instance otherwise than he has acted".[109]

William Hazlitt (1778-1830), in his *Lectures on the English Poets [and] The Spirit of the Age* (1818), tells us that shortly after 1793 Wordsworth advised students to "[t]hrow aside your books of chemistry and read Godwin on Necessity".[110] It seems that Shelley had listened to Wordsworth. In 1813 Shelley paraphrased Priestley and Godwin in his Note to Queen Mab on Necessity. In the same letter to Godwin cited above, Shelley writes that "I did not truly think & feel, however, until I read *Political Justice*, tho my thoughts & feelings after this period have been more painful, anxious and vivid, more inclined to action & less to theory." In his chapter Of Self-Love And Benevolence, Godwin cited Shaftesbury as one of the minority who advances the doctrine of a benevolence over that of self-love; he contrasts Shaftesbury to the traditional Christian view.[111] According to Harris, Godwin was not interested in theological implications of necessity but, like Shaftesbury, with its secular morality.[112] Godwin, had been raised a Calvinist and Calvinism remained, as Godwin admitted, "so deeply wrought into my mind in early life, as to enable these errors long to survive the general system of religious opinions of which they formed a part".[113] The inescapability of Necessarianism's determinism likely attracted Godwin to the doctrine especially because, "when properly understood, [it] has none of Calvinism's gloomy consequences".[114] If 'gloomy' is read as an allusion to materialism, then Godwin may have anticipated Weber; Necessarianism has no preordained castes of Elect and Reprobate required to 'earn' their salvation.

In *Political Justice* Godwin constructs his own theory of moral necessity to allow the influence of disinterested motives—which enable man's concern for his fellow man—to form part of the context which necessitates the resulting actions. Like Shaftesbury, Godwin believes in the complex interdependencies of all things, and he states that "The hypothesis of disinterestedness would never have had so many adversaries if the complexity of human motives had been sufficiently considered".[115] The Necessity implicit in the otherwise incomprehensibility complex universe is what Shelley describes when he writes in *Prometheus Unbound* that it is

> ...a mighty darkness
> Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
> Dart round, as light from the meridian sun,
> Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,
> Nor form, nor outline; yet we feel it is
> A living Spirit.
> ...
> ...the deep truth is imageless

Having now provided sketches of the cultural, literary and philosophical contexts within which *Frankenstein* was conceived, I hope also to have constructed the structure of a Shelleyan paradigm which revolves about Necessarianism. Following the next chapter I shall show how *Frankenstein* is a Necessarian allegory and, that interpreted in this way, *Frankenstein* fits comfortably within Shelley's 'profounder project' and how the novel is intimately related to Shelley's classical education, his poetry and his prose.

7. PARADIGM CONSTRUCTION

The Ethical Context

Arthur O. Lovejoy (1873-1962), author of *The Great Chain of Being* (1936), believed that the idea of ultimate value—the nature of the good—underwent a transformation during the Romantic Era when the simplistic Enlightenment rationalism—in ethics as (much later) in science—was discarded in favour of complex Romantic relativism and diversification.[1] The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century principles of plenitude and continuity, which were originally "designed to justify the belief in the rationality, the perfection, the static completeness, the orderliness and coherency of reality",[2] engendered resistance and revulsion which eventually transformed theology, philosophy, and the arts.[3] Lovejoy's theory misses the point that the idea of the *summum bonum* antedates the Enlightenment by several thousand years. This however, does not detract from his observation that it was "this transformation" which "perhaps, more than any other one thing has distinguished, both for better and worse, the prevailing assumptions of the mind of the nineteenth and of our own century from those of the preceding period in the intellectual history of the West".[4] The 'preceding period' was that dominated by the Platonic ethos of virtue as universal and indivisible.

We might find these concepts—virtue and the *summum bonum*—difficult to understand today. Alasdair MacIntyre, explains why in *After Virtue* (1984)—his study of ancient Greek, Romantic-era, and present-day ethics—where he observed that "the possession of the virtues may perfectly well hinder us in achieving external goods",[5] and notes that virtue is "continuously fractured" by materialism. In our present-day, material world, writes MacIntyre, we have lost all "conception of the telos of a whole human life, conceived as a unity" (virtue), and that, therefore, "our conception of certain individual virtues has to remain partial and incomplete".[6] It was this aspect of the great

transformation, this moral inversion, which Shelley resisted by refusing to abandon the ancient wisdom, while, in art and science, he fully endorsed the Romantic rejection of reductivism. It was Shelley's need to combine natural complexity with moral absolutism which led him along the less-traveled path to Necessarianism, a direction which was completely consistent with his preference for Kant's Romantic ethos and his rejection of Bentham's consequentialist ethos which were grounded in Enlightenment thought. Virtue was everything for Shelley. In his fragmentary Plan of a Treatise on Morals (1812-15), he wrote, that the "disposition in an individual to promote this object is called virtue; and the two constituent parts of virtue, benevolence and justice, are correlative with these two portions of the only true object of all the voluntary actions of a human being.".[7] It was Enlightenment reductivism which had insinuated its way into economics, politics, and the justice system since Locke which had redefined the virtues and presumption and paved the way for Industrialism.

The version of the Promethean myth which most likely influenced Shelley prior to 1816 appears in Plato's dialogues. Hogg tells us, that it "seems laughable, but it is true, that our knowledge of Plato was derived solely from Dacier's translation of a few of the dialogues, and from an English version of that French translation; we had never attempted a single sentence in the Greek".[8] A little later in his biography of Shelley, Hogg explains that the

> "English version of the French translation by Dacier of *The Phaedo*, and several other dialogues of Plato, was the first book we had, and this we read together several times very attentively at Oxford. We had a French translation of the Republic; and we perused with infinite pleasure the elegant translation of Floyer Sydenham. We had several of the publications of the learned and eccentric Platonist, Thomas Taylor".[9]

In the translations of Dacier (2v., 1701), and Sydenham & Taylor (5v., 1810), the most extended form of the Promethean myth appears in the dialogue known as *The Protagoras*. This dialogue discussed not only the Promethean myth, but also the concept

of virtue and how it cannot be divided or taught as the common people had been told by the Sophists. Socrates opposed the sophistry which eviscerated virtue to render it compatible with materialism. In *The Protagoras*, Socrates purpose is to "examine narrowly into all the parts of virtue, and to know well what virtue itself is".[10]

It is worth noting that Dacier, Sydenham and Taylor were Christianizing translators, given to interpreting Plato in ways that supported their faith. Shelley, who was not a Christian and therefore held more eccentric views, would have argued with many of their annotated interpretations. Dacier's copious footnotes and callouts, for example, equate Prometheus and Hermes (Mercury) with the "superior angels" and constantly tell us that by this or that Socrates intended us to understand 'God', or that 'this is a great principle' and 'that is false doctrine'. In the eighteenth century the Christianized (dualistic), anthropocentric transformation of the Promethean myth became more influential that the original and worked—in a way consistent with the thesis of Max Weber (1864-1920) in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904, see note [11])—to justify rather than vilify Promethean hubris. Thus began the myth of Prometheus as the god of the Industrial Revolution, a myth which survives to the present day.

David Landes, for example, in *The Unbound Prometheus—Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present* (2003), regards the Promethean myth as an apt symbol for the Industrial Revolution because, whatever the consequences might be, whether he was right or wrong, Prometheus got his way. The post-transformation world, Landes writes, "which has never before been ready to accept universally any of the universal faiths offered for its salvation, is apparently prepared to embrace the religion of science and technology without reservation".[12] It is worth quoting Landes materialistic reinterpretation of the Promethean mythological ethos at length:

> "Adam and Eve lost Paradise for having eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge; but they retained the knowledge. Prometheus was punished, and indeed all of mankind, for Zeus sent Pandora with her box of evils to compensate

> the advantages of fire; but Zeus never took back the fire. Daedalus lost his son, but he was the founder of a school of sculptors and craftsmen and passed much of his cunning on to posterity. In sum, the myths warn us that the wresting and exploitation of knowledge are perilous acts, but that man must and will know, and once knowing, will not forget. ... No one can be sure that mankind will survive this painful course, especially in an age when man's knowledge of nature has far outstripped his knowledge of himself. Yet we can be sure that man will take this road and not forsake it; for although he has his fears, he also has eternal hope. This, it will be remembered, was the last item in Pandora's box of gifts".[13]

This is a statement of pure anthropocentric hubris. According to Landes's, the task of reason is to shun virtue and to know and embrace the material world. Taylor's interpretation of the Promethean myth is not as anthropocentric as Landes's; it parallel's the story of Genesis. Prometheus/Lucifer is the cause the Fall by bringing the rational soul from heaven to the material world. Pandora/Eve is the bond—the irrational soul—which ties the fallen rational soul to the material world through the senses. For Taylor, Pandora also represents the rational soul because she finds illumination through the gifts she was given by the gods.[14] This is a Christianizing inversion of the original myth in which the gifts were necessary evils, hope was a cruel joke, and. everything should be done in moderation. In Taylor's reading the task of the rational soul "prior to any thing else, [is] to know itself", (to discover its virtue) but also to shun the material world, the "hated body".[15]

Similar transformations were occurring in other eighteenth-century institutions. Though Janet Burke, in Leaving the Enlightenment: Women Freemasons after the Revolution (2000), attributes the transformation of certain Masonic rites, such as the role of the symbol of the apple in the Garden of Eden, to a nineteenth-century feminization of the French Lodges, it might equally well be attributed to the moral transformation of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Burke writes that the transformed Masonic rite actually encouraged the eating of the symbolic Edenic apple: "Receive now the fruit of the tree of life as recompense due for your work. Bite into it, but be careful not to bite the seed; and when you have eaten it, you will become like us, knowing good and evil".[16]

The interpretation of the Promethean myth which Shelley adopted was more subtle in its treatment of virtue than the version which has come down to us. As noted, Shelley rejected both the Christianized version, and even Plato's own asceticism which had been appropriated by—as Shelley would have thought of them—the 'Christian' hypocrites who had extorted so much from so many for so long.[17] Before discussing Prometheus and virtue in the Protagoras, however, some more general comments on the Dacier and Taylor translations and their relevance to *Frankenstein* are in order.

Dacier introduces his translation by noting that the term 'philosophy' has been appropriated by the empirics and the avaricious who have emptied it of its original sense of 'a lover of wisdom'.[18] In his Life of Plato, Dacier summarizes Plato's views, stating that virtue, or 'moral excellence',[19] cannot be acquired through the arts and sciences, nor through sensual pleasures (which he calls the Daughters of Sorrow), nor through raw power.[20] In his Introduction to the *Second Alcibades*, Dacier draws particular attention to Socrates's observation that "the sciences without the knowledge of that which is very good, are seldom of use to those that possess them; nay, most commonly, are pernicious to them".[21] A few pages later Socrates is more explicit on the function of virtue:

> "Without this[,] the greater Fortune, men or states enjoy, the greater crimes they will commit, either to acquire riches, or to augment their power, or satiate their passions. He that possesses all the arts and sciences, and is destitute of this, will be driven about, and tossed by each of them, and be really battered with a furious tempest; and having neither helm nor pilot, it is impossible he should go very far, and his ruin must needs be near".[22]

As we shall see, such might be said to be the fate of Victor Frankenstein after his presumptuous act. In Dacier's translation/interpretation of *The Phaedo*, however, we find that the 'knowledge of that which is very good' or of virtue comes only through the use of reason to attain sudden illumination:

> "For one of these two things must be done, we must either learn the truth from others, or find it out ourselves. If both ways fail us, amidst all human reasons, we

> must pitch upon the strongest and most forcible, and trust to that as to a ship, while we pass through this stormy sea, and endeavour to avoid its tempests and shelves; til we find out one more firm and sure, such as a promise or revelation, upon which we may happily accomplish the voyage of this life as in a vessel that fears no danger".[23]

In other words, the way to transcendent truth is through immanent truth. The first ship, or system of belief, that Socrates tells us he clung to was that of natural philosophy, upon which he hoped to discover "wherein the particular good of every individual thing, as well as the common good of all things consists".[24] But he was disappointed—natural philosophy reveals only the 'how', or secondary causes, but not the 'why', or primary cause. Here Socrates gives a very interesting, anatomical analogy for the moral vacuity of such knowledge:

> "if a man... meaning to give a reason for all my actions, should say, for instance, today I am set upon my bed, because my body is composed of bones and nerves; the bones being hard and solid, are separated by the joints; and the nerves being capable to bend and unbend themselves, tie the bones to the flesh and the skin, which receives and includes both the one and the other; that the bones being disengaged at the joints, the nerves which bend and unbend, enable me to fold my legs as you see; and that forsooth is the reason that I sit in this posture. [...] If it be replied, that without bones and nerves, and other such things, I could not do what I mean to do; the allegation is true. But it favours of the greatest absurdity, to fancy that these bones or nerves should be the cause of my actions, rather than the choice of what is best; and that my intellect is employed on that score: for that were to sink the difference between the cause and the thing, without which the cause could not be such".[25]

Victor Frankenstein arguably employed absurd reasoning in the construction of the Being—he has actually created a body of bones, nerves, flesh, and skin, but without a role to play in the unfolding universe. The adult Being he creates cannot possess innate virtue without a childhood and an adolescence in which to osmotically imbibe social values. There is no justification for the Being's existence other than Victor's vain struggle for glory. The Being exists in a moral vacuum—it is isolated and does not belong to the great chain of being. The tragedy is that the Being is aware of this fact and refers to it as the "miserable series of my being",[26] 'miserable' because the series to

which he belongs consists of one term, himself. "I am solitary and detested",[27] he states, and, unlike the unfortunate Justine Moritz, he cannot, as she put it, examine the "whole series of my life".[28] It is this need to belong, to insert himself into a causal chain, to find a personal first cause other than the "disgusting circumstances" of his "accursed origin",[29] which motivates the being. He explains to Victor, that if

> "I have no ties and no affections, hatred and vice must be my portion; the love of another will destroy the cause of my crimes, and I shall become a thing, of whose existence everyone will be ignorant. My vices are the children of a forced solitude that I abhor; and my virtues will necessarily arise when I live in communion with an equal. I shall feel the affections of a sensitive being, and become linked to the chain of existence and events, from which I am now excluded".[30]

Outside of all causal chains other than that of Victor's vanity, the Being cannot possess virtue—the 'conception of the telos of a whole human life, conceived as a unity'. Given this, the Being, who is created *tabula rasa* has his moral scale calibrated entirely by Lockean sensationalism—as the Being puts it, through "pleasure and pain alone".[31] His desire for a female companion has selfish overtones of a desire for immediate sexual gratification: "I am alone, and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me. ...I demand a creature of another sex ...the gratification is small, but it is all that I can receive, and it shall content me".[32] By contrast, Walton, who is similarly self educated, despised, and lonely, is less concerned with immediate needs; he writes to his sister:

> "I have no friend... when I am glowing with the enthusiasm of success, there will be none to participate my joy; if I am assailed by disappointment, no one will endeavour to sustain me in dejection. ...I desire the company of a man who could sympathize with me; whose eyes would reply to mine. You may deem me romantic, my dear sister, but I bitterly feel the want of a friend. I have no one near me, gentle yet courageous, possessed of a cultivated as well as of a capacious mind, whose tastes are like my own, to approve or amend my plans. ...I greatly need a friend who would have sense enough not to despise me as romantic, and affection enough for me to endeavour to regulate my mind.[33]

As noted, *The Protagoras* is largely devoted to the analysis of virtue. In discussing the sentence attributed to Pinacus the Mitylenrean—"It is difficult to *continue* to be good", with its implication that virtue is the product of life-long endeavour—Socrates draws Protagoras's attention to the ancient guides to virtue inscribed in gold on the columns of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi: "Know thyself", and "Nothing too much".[34] The argument in both the Dacier and the Taylor translations is as follows: Protagoras, the Sophist, provides Socrates with his version of the Promethean myth. The two brothers, Epimetheus (over-sight) and Prometheus (fore-sight) are commissioned by Zeus to create the diversity of earthly life-forms. Prometheus allows Epimetheus the honour of executing Zeus's behest. Epimetheus assigns physical features, behaviours, habitats, and means of sustenance to all creatures and thereby creates the complex web of necessary interdependencies of predator/prey, production/consumption, and similar ratios. Epimetheus makes one great oversight, however, when he forgets to assign such qualities to mankind, thereby leaving mankind excluded from the great chain of being, defenceless and unable to sustain itself following the imminent day of animation.

Guilty by association and working under the pressure of meeting Zeus's deadline, cunning Prometheus remedies his brother's oversight by stealing the transformative power of fire from Hephaestus (Vulcan) and the manipulative power of reason from 'owl-faced' Athena (Minerva) and thereby provides mankind with the technology (practical arts) to defend and sustain itself thereby inserting itself into the great chain of being. But, with reason alone, unchecked by virtue, mankind sets about destroying itself and its environment by exploiting technology's ability to amplify the destructive potential of human passion to break the bonds of environmental and familial "necessity" without which men "cease to be men".[35] Zeus (Jupiter) observes this and intervenes by providing mankind with the virtue that human technology cannot supply but which it requires if it is not to become pernicious. This virtue, called Prudence, is that required for "good citizenship" in both domestic and state politics.[36]

It is for Prometheus's presumption—in providing mankind with the practical arts ***without the foresight to provide virtue***, without which mankind cannot employ them in a sustainable way—that he is punished.[37] If virtue is lacking, how then is it to be acquired? Protagoras maintains that virtue is teachable, Socrates maintains that it is not teachable but can only be acquired by a sudden illumination induced by the correct predisposition towards experience. If *Frankenstein* is read allegorically with Victor representing a demiurge, we might see that he initially operates as Epimetheus with a complete absence of foresight; subsequently he operates as Prometheus and attempts to correct his initial oversight; Only on his deathbed does Victor approach a transcendent moment in which he is "actuated... by reason and virtue", rather than by "selfish and vicious motives".[38]

Plato's dialogue continues with a long discussion on the nature of virtue, or prudence. Hermes, at Zeus's behest, distributes virtue evenly among mankind thus giving them all the ability to judge between good and evil; this is unlike Epimetheus's uneven distribution of physical necessities and Prometheus's distribution of the practical arts to certain elites. All of those who work against the moral sense of humility and justice become the "plague" of human society.[39] Thus, to live virtuously is not synonymous with acculturation to the system of law 'a la mode'.[40] Socrates make the point that to live virtuously, all aspects of life must be viewed as aspects of an indivisible whole; fortitude, justice, prudence, and temperance (the four virtues) cannot be had in isolation from each other.[41] It is not virtuous, for example, to consider an injustice prudent merely because it is profitable.[42] "However", says Socrates, this is "the opinion of the people".[43] The people believe that reason is weak and that individuals' passions dictate their actions so that they are "overcome by pleasure, or by sadness" (in Dacier's translation),[44] or "vanquished by pleasure or pain" (in Taylor's translation).[45] Though, as Socrates observes, there is a "Necessity that is stronger than the gods themselves", this does not deprive mankind of freewill in choosing not to do evil.[46] Necessity is defined as the "law of Nature" to distinguish it from the law of mankind.[47]

Socrates notes that when disagreeable things appear good, it is because of the pleasure they cause. Similarly, when agreeable things appear bad, it is because of the pain they cause. He concludes that constructing a pleasure/pain calculus is not a sure method to discover the greatest good:[48] certain short-term pleasures are evil in the long-term in that they "ingender diseases ...[and] throw you headlong into poverty";[49] similarly, some short-term pain is good in the long-term in that it "delivers you from certain anguishes that are greater than those which it occasions you, or when the pleasures that it procures are greater than its vexations".[50] Reason, says Socrates, insists that we balance good and evil, not by their appearances, for distant pleasures and pains only appear less than those more immediate, but by quantifying and calculating the result of all known pleasures and pains, immediate and distant. Dacier has Socrates's audience agree that these are "sensible truths" (Dacier, 321); Taylor, translating in a post-Kantian world, renders the same Greek phrase as "transcendent truths".[51]

A pleasure/pain calculus, however, works only within the realm of what can be *rationally* foreseen and calculated. This was Prometheus's oversight. But the forces of Necessity—the irresistible confluence of complex causation 'stronger than the gods themselves'—transcends reason and, therefore, rational foresight is limited. (Even in the present-day scientific enterprise, innovations cannot be foreseen without becoming invented; the process of invention depends upon unpredictable, 'happy' or 'unhappy' accidents.) Natural appearances deceive; judgement based on reason—the practical art of calculating, Prometheus's gift—is only as good as one's the ability to foresee. Carl Sagan (1934-1996) neatly summed up the limitations of human foresight in *The Demon-Haunted World* (1996), when he wrote that the "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence".[52] In a world of unknowns, the best guide to action is, as MacIntyre names it, "integrity or constancy",[53] 'the telos of a whole human life, conceived as a unity' which ultimately guides one until, at the end of one's life, one might be described as having lived virtuously. The art of calculating can certainly be taught, says Socrates, and

everyone would learn it if it was the *only* guide to sustaining life,[54] but it cannot take into consideration that of which we are ignorant—in encountering the unknown, the best preparation is a predisposition of humility.

In the unprecedented transformations of the Romantic Era, it became obvious that a compatibility between the quantifiable (and therefore commodifiable) sensations of pleasure and pain and the Industrial ethos that emerged from a society embedded within, and dictated to by, an economic engine, would come to displace the time-honoured ethos based on an intangible quality—virtue. Those, like Shelley, who retained a preference for the ancient wisdom, saw the inherent flaws in the new Industrial ethos—that it was founded upon immediate, material satisfactions, and rarely entered into the calculation of less immediate externalities (social costs), let alone the introspection required to 'know thyself' and discover what was virtuous. Clearly, in Socrates's examination of the source of virtue, Plato had already raised and dismissed the idea of pleasure/pain calculus, the reductivist concept which Locke subsequently used as the foundation of the felicific calculus he modeled upon Newton's fluxionic calculus. In Book II, Chapter XX of his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (4th Ed., 1700), Locke wrote that things are

> "Good or Evil, only in reference to pleasure or pain. That we call Good, which is apt to cause or increase Pleasure, or diminish Pain in us; or else to procure or preserve us the possession of any other Good or absence of any Evil. And, on the contrary, we name that Evil which is apt to produce or increase any Pain, or diminish any Pleasure in us: or else to procure us any Evil, or deprive us of any Good. By Pleasure and Pain, I must be understood to mean of Body or Mind, as they are commonly distinguished; though in truth they be only different Constitutions of the Mind, sometimes occasioned by disorder in the body, sometimes by Thoughts of the Mind".[55]

Locke dismissed the concept of the greatest good, or *summum bonum*, in a cavalier fashion, writing in Book II, Chapter XXI, that "the philosophers of old did in vain enquire, whether *Summum bonum* consisted in Riches, or bodily delights, or virtue, or contemplation: and they might have as reasonably disputed, whether the best relish

were to be found in apples, plumbs, or nuts ...the inference is certainly right, 'Let us eat and drink, let us enjoy what we delight in, for tomorrow we shall die'".[56] Earlier, in Book I, Chapter III, Locke had examined the writings of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury/Chirburg (1583-1648), the 'father of Deism', and had decided that virtue, as an innate principle whose existence is supported merely by the ancient wisdom, did not satisfy scientific examination—that is, he could not see how it could be reduced to a Newtonian calculus. Locke wrote that he cannot see how virtue "can be an innate Principle, when the name, or sound Vertue, is so hard to be understood; liable to so much uncertainty in its signification; and the thing it stands for, so much contended about, and difficult to be known". He continued on to say that "therefore this can be but a very uncertain Rule of Humane Practice, and serve but very little to the conduct of our lives, and is therefore very unfit to be assigned as an innate practical Principle".[57]

Very much under the influence of Locke, but also influenced by Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), published *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue with an attempt to introduce a mathematical calculation in subjects of morality* in 1725.[58] Here, he argues against the rationalists by demonstrating the need for a moral sense.[59] As is also apparent from the title, Hutcheson was the first to devise a felicific calculus. In the preamble to his algebraic formulae, he writes:

> "In comparing the moral qualities of actions, in order to regulate our election among various actions proposed, or to find which of them has the greatest moral excellence, we are led by our moral sense of virtue to judge thus: that in equal degrees of happiness expected to proceed from the action, the virtue is in proportion to the number of persons to whom the happiness shall extend..., and in equal numbers, the virtue is as the quantity of the happiness, or natural good; or that the virtue is in a compound ratio of the quantity of the good, and number of enjoyers".[60]

Clearly, Hutcheson has logically complicated the idea of virtue which cannot at the same time 'lead us by our moral sense to judge' and at the same time be defined as the 'compound ratio of the quantity of the good'—a *petito principi*. Hutcheson's theories

were ignored in Britain and France because of this problem with the quantification of virtue.[61] It was only after Hutcheson's felicific calculus had been rediscovered in a French translation by the Italian jurist, Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794), who incorporated it into his influential work *Dei delitti e delle pene* (1764), subsequently translated into French in 1766 and then into English in 1767, that a distorted version of Hutcheson's maxim re-entered the arena of British ethics.[62] The concept of virtue (and the algebra) had evaporated from the calculation leaving only the maxim 'the greatest happiness of the largest possible number'. Robert Shackleton, in his essay The Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number: The history of Bentham's Phrase (1972), writes that, in "the course of this journey it has gathered fame and momentum until it is ready to be an efficient propagandist weapon in the hands of Bentham"[63] It was in Beccaria's work that Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), now hailed as the "philosopher of the new industrial era",[64] discovered the maxim which became his 'principle of utility'.[65] It first appeared in *A Fragment on Government* (1776) where Bentham writes that it, "furnishes us with that reason, which alone depends not upon any higher reason, but which is itself the sole and all-sufficient reason for every point of practice whatsoever".[66] This statement effectively decapitates the ancient passion-reason-virtue hierarchy.

Shelley had read Bentham by March 16, 1814 when he wrote to Hogg while staying with friends, "I have forced myself to read Beccaria and Dumont's Bentham".[67] Étienne Dumont (1759-1829), of Geneva, was Bentham's European translator and disseminator.[68] Bentham's work was often first published abroad, and only much later in English.[69] Obviously, in reading Beccaria and Bentham, Shelley was exploring the idea of a felicific calculus. Having read Bentham in French, Shelley likely read him in English also. One year before *Frankenstein* was published, Bentham published *A Table of the Springs of Action* (1817). The *Springs of Action* restated Bentham's claims: Utility would brook no alternative, for whatever "is not under is opposite to it".[70] For Bentham, "calculation" was the core of his system; its antithesis was "ipsedixitism",[71] or an

"unproved assertion resting on the bare authority".[72] For Bentham, this became "the war of ipsedixit v. utility".[73] Calculation he defined as taking "an account of quantities of such pleasures and pains as seem likely to be the result of the line in question".[74] The 'unproved assertions' centered on the statement that virtue exists and requires the sacrifice of happiness according to a "moral sense".[75]

Bentham blames Shaftesbury for being the originator of the concept of 'moral sense' and notes that the idea was subsequently taken up by the 'common sense' philosophers of Scotland such as Dugald Stewart (1753-1828).[76] Bentham then cites poets as one of the main threats to the "only true and useful principle" of Utility,[77] because "explanations and calculations, are intolerable in poetry".[78] There was, he writes, an "alliance of the interests of poetry and despotism".[79] Without apparently detecting any contradiction,[80] Bentham states that Utilitarianism requires the "sacrifice of imagination and passion to judgment ...No sacrifices are called for from the Poet".[81] (Ironically, the term 'utilitarian' came to Bentham in a dream: "I dreamt t'other-night that I was a founder of a sect: of course a personage of great sanctity and importance. It was called the sect of utilitarians".[82]) Then Bentham sets up the 'straw man' argument that Utilitarianism is accused of selfishness—selfishness taken in a naive sense. In this way he effectively smothers the true objection to the principle of utility: that the selfishness that utilitarianism was accused of was in the selfish presumption of a man who believed that he could use a pleasure/pain calculus to determine the virtue, or lack of virtue, in an action (though, in fact, its consequences are unforeseeable).

In *Deontology—Or Morality made Easy*[83] (1829—which Shelley could not have read), Bentham couched his criticism of virtue in a derisory tone similar to Locke's. Bentham rejected the ancient wisdom stating that any virtue which requires that happiness be sacrificed is simply another word for asceticism.[84] This greatly expands the sense of asceticism. Shelley had rejected monastic asceticism, but he had also rejected hedonism; he advocated moderation. Bentham reinterprets the classical tenet of virtue to

mean 'mediocrity' rather than 'moderation'.[85] As happiness, for Bentham, is the satisfaction of immediate desires, he sets about redefining the terms 'prudence' and 'benevolence':[86] 'prudence' refers only to a man's "own interest";[87] 'benevolence' as a claim to act for a greater good, becomes "a mere act of fraud".[88] This is what Bentham calls Exegetical Ethics, or the ethics of self-interest;[89] it provides a guide—for any moral agent who is calculating whether or not to take a certain action—on "how to draw up the account of pleasure and pain considered as the probable consequence of this practice".[90] In a section titled Summum Bonum—Consummate nonsense, Bentham writes:

> "The *summum bonum*, wherein does it consist? Such was the question debated by multitudes, debated from generation to generation by men calling themselves lovers of wisdom, and by others, wise. The *summum bonum*, wherein does it consist? In this nonsensical question is implied an opinion of the existence of a something correspondent to and designated by this name. ...The *summum bonum*—the sovereign good wherein does it consist? The philosopher's stone, the thing that turns all metals into gold, the thing that cures disease in all its shapes, in what quarry is it to be found? Upon the same level in the scale of rationality stand both these questions. ...It consists in virtue, it consists in this and that and t'other: it consists in any thing rather than in pleasure".[91]

In *The Protagoras*, however, Socrates comes to the entirely opposite conclusion and ends his dialogue by stating that he prefers to be guided by Protagoras's Prometheus (the practical art of reasoning) than by his Epimetheus (natural appearances and passions), but only because it is through reason that mankind eventually attains the sudden illumination, or inspiration, which reveals the path towards the *summum bonum*, or virtue,[92] which is, ultimately, the gift of Zeus that checks reason. Thus rationality's natural tendency toward short-term self-interest is checked by a virtuous disposition which derives satisfaction from sacrificing immediate pleasure based on the faith that prudence will lead to a sustainable sense of personal and societal well-being *not* derived from the immediate experience of pleasure and pain.

Taylor corroborated Dacier's reading; he interpreted Prometheus to be the guardian of the rational soul and Epimetheus as guardian of the irrational soul.[93]

According to Taylor, Prometheus stole Hephaestus's "fabricative power" and Athena's "gnostic and intellectual" power. It is interesting to note that the *Oxford English Dictionary* cites an 1819 usage of 'gnostic' as meaning "adept in dishonest acts". Doubtless, in using this term Taylor is thinking of the Sophist's assertion that reason is all there is, that virtue is teachable. The sense of sophistry is close to the trickery of the 'mountebank', "a person who falsely claims knowledge of or skill in some matter, esp. for personal gain"—the term used by Shaftesbury in his definition of a 'modern Prometheus' (which is explored in a later chapter). It seems clear that readings of the Promethean myth prior to the those of the eighteenth-century, depict Prometheus's act as presumptuous because reason unchecked opens a Pandora's box of problems, and those who capitalize on teaching a rational calculus are therefore mountebanks. Theoretically, virtue had restrained reason for millennia. Enlightenment thought, however, in substituting short-term values derived from calculation for long-term values derived from faith, effectively demanded that reason should be 'unleashed'. The French term 'laissez-faire' (let it be) was first adopted into English in 1825, a mere seven years after *Frankenstein* was first published; the *Oxford English Dictionary* provides its meaning in English: that "government should not interfere with the action of individuals, esp. in industrial affairs and in trade".

There are two moral reading of the Promethean myth which may have influenced *Frankenstein*. The first is that of Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). This reading is entirely consonant with the Dacier and Taylor Christianized interpretations and thus serves to confirm the influence of the Christianized reading within the Godwinian circle (subsequently rejected by Shelley). Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* is largely concerned with a clarification of the definition of virtue—"the cause of virtue" [94]—to eliminate the gender-based distinctions in virtue and standards of morality which rendered women subordinate to men. In the 'cause of virtue'

she apostrophizes, "Oh! virtue thou art not an empty name! All that life can give—thou givest!".[95] In Wollstonecraft's version of the myth, mankind is "lawless planet darting from its orbit to steal the celestial fire of reason; and the vengeance of heaven, lurking in the subtile flame, sufficiently punished his temerity, by introducing evil into the world".[96] She sees "corrupt manners" as having opened a Pandora's "box of mischief" under the influence of which "morality becomes an empty name".[97] Rather than viewing the 'mischief' as a "curse" Wollstonecraft also sees it anthropocentrically as a means through which to attain virtue, that "godlike portion of happiness".[98]

For Wollstonecraft, man differs from the beast by his reason; man differs from man by his degree of virtue.[99] Virtue is the product of the exercise of reason over the passions; it provides "sufficient foresight, or resolution, to endure a small evil at the moment, to avoid a greater hereafter";[100] it arises with self-knowledge ('know thyself'),[101] and requires the kind of education which most eighteenth-century women were denied.[102] Wollstonecraft's premise is that "the more equality there is established among men, the more virtue and happiness will reign in society",[103] a sentiment which applies equally well to all disadvantaged minorities. Wollstonecraft agreed with Plato—Public and private virtue are co-related: A healthy public spirit emerges only in a society which celebrates private virtue.[104] Reciprocally, all private virtue must have a "common center" by converging on a healthy public spirit.[105]

The second reading of the Promethean myth was by William Godwin. Godwin married Woolstonecraft in 1797 when she was pregnant with Mary. In *The Pantheon*, Prometheus is portrayed as presuming to out-do Zeus in artifice by using his "mechanical skill and contrivance" to form a man of clay for whom he stole, from the chariot of the sun, a divine spark to animate his creation with a soul.[106] Zeus, who was exasperated by Prometheus's hubris, his mountebankery and charlatanism, and his lack of fore-thought in failing to anticipate how his actions might destabilize the existing order, created Pandora—like Prometheus, named ironically: 'Pandora' means "all-gifts", good *and*

evil—to "to tempt Prometheus to his ruin".[107] Along with alluring and talented Pandora, Zeus sent a final gift, a box sealed to hide its contents, which, when opened, "a multitude of calamities and evils of all imaginable sorts flew out, which dispersed themselves over the world, and from that fatal moment have never ceased to afflict the human race".[108]

The parallels between the Promethean myth and the Biblical myth, in which Eve brings Adam an apple from the tree of knwledge of good *and* evil, is often commented upon. In both cases, the moral is clear: the implications of all new knowledge must be considered carefully because it changes the order of things in unpredictable ways, establishing a new equilibrium within which benefits always have their price—externalities and collateral damage. Prometheus was undaunted by the calamities that befell the human race; it was only when his own person was directly afflicted by the consequences of his actions—when chained to Mount Caucasus—that his hubris abated.

As I shall show, it seems likely that, for Shelley, to have one's virtue 'overwhelmed' (Dacier) or 'vanquished' (Taylor) by a self-interested rationalization of one's passions was the equivalent of religious enthusiasm which also gave priority to immediate appearances—swoons, speaking in tongues, ranting, all called "outward signs" [109]—over any deeper introspection. According to Southey's *The Life of Wesley* (1820), the Reformation had been the cause of the rise of scepticism and the fall of virtue. Enthusiasts and Atheists had arisen in the ensuing moral void.[110] Religious enthusiasts were often millenarians, who might be regarded as seeking a more immediate ("typically imminent"[111]) salvation, or spiritual profit. Such "false piety or religiosity" was characteristic of religious mountebankery.[112] Before he embraced enthusiasm as a valid expression of worship, Wesley described the practice most clearly as an attempt "to attain the end without the means, which is enthusiasm properly so called",[113] the 'end' being virtue. Flattered by the 'desperate needs' of the (mainly female) enthusiasts in his

congregation, Wesley came to believe that he could "heal diseases and cast out devils".[114] Wesley became an enthusiast and a mountebank of the first water.

The cognates of the term 'enthusiasm' occur at ten key points in *Frankenstein* and 'enthusiasm' clearly forms one of the novel's important threads. The *Oxford English Dictionary* attributes the related adjective 'entheastic' to Thomas Taylor (1794); and noun 'entheasm' to the popular poem, Enthusiasm (1751), by John Byrom (1691-1763), which appeared in Chalmers' widely-read *The Works of the English Poets* (1810), a work Shelley is very likely to have explored. The related adverb, 'entheastically' (agitated by a divine fury; deific energy),[115] occurs in Taylor's *Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*,[116] which Shelley and Hogg would have read for Taylor's frequent references to the mysteries in his notes to *The Phaedo*,[117] as well as his frequent reference to *The Phaedo* in the *Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*. (Taylor maintains that the thrysus-bearers of the mysteries, who carry light in hollow reeds, are representations of Prometheus.)

Byrom, though a Fellow of the Royal Society, was against natural theology,[118] but was an advocate of the True Religion, and an admirer of the Christian mystic, Jakob Boehme (1575-1624).[119] Byrom appears to have been a member of a Behemenist sect within the Royal Society, a sect which included John Freke (1688-1756), a surgeon at St Bartholomew's Hospital, and Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), the Royal Society printer and a popular author. Fire was an important symbol for Boehme. Using Promethean imagery, Boehme tells how "I contemplated man's little spark... whereupon a remarkable light arose in my soul".[120] Boehme sought virtue through revelation rather than through reason. Spiritual fire was Boehme's symbol for virtue as is apparent from this Promethean description: "...the same divine fire which kindled life sustains it too. From fire came freedom; out of life's central passion came fulfilled stillness".[121]

Richardson, was deeply impressed by Byrom's poem and "at his own express desire, printed Byrom's *Enthusiasm: A Poetical Essay*".[122] (Unfortunately an analysis of this sect and a comparison of the fire imagery in Richardson's *Clarissa*, in Rousseau's

Julie, and in *Frankenstein* is beyond the scope of this study. As Rosemary Bechler points out, much "research needs to be done into the extraordinary circle with whom Richardson was intimate during the years in which he planned and penned Clarissa".[123]) Behemenism stressed the private pursuit of private virtue and, unlike Wesley—who publicly practiced electrotherapy—, Behemists were against public demonstrations of 'outward signs'. Byrom, for example campaigned with the Tory, Freke, "against the marketing of electricity":[124]

> "Freke reckoned that fire was God's agent, 'the immediate officer of God Almighty, which He seems to find in all Things living. Nay, this Power, according to my Conception, seems to be the Cause, under HIM, both of Life and Death'. For Freke, electrical fire was this element in its fallen, wrathful state, only visible when humans meddled with nature's balance".[125]

Though opposed to 'outward signs', Behemenists, as anti-rationalist mystics, were classed by rationalists and Deists as 'enthusiasts' along with the Methodists and the French Prophets. Byrom's poem, Enthusiasm, was a versification of a defense of enthusiasm by his friend and fellow-Behemenist, William Law (1686-1761). Their objection, as Byrom states it, is that "in one absurdity they chime / To make religious entheasm a crime". The term 'entheasm'—"ill-regulated or misdirected religious emotion" [126]—was coined as part of a stratagem by the Behemenists to create subclasses of enthusiasm; this allowed them to equate religious entheasm and the Deists' rational entheasm under the premise that no 'value-free' point of view exists and that "the greatest foes / To true religious earnestness are those / Who fire their wits upon a diff'rent theme, / Deep in some false enthusiastic scheme...". The Deists, Sceptics, and Atheists, therefore, according to the Behemists, were equally guilty of enthusiasm. Law held that, far from being a "horrid thing", enthusiasm was the "kindling of the driving desire or will of every intelligent creature".[127] Law directed his defense of enthusiasm towards the "sober-minded deist",[128] a description which, given his rejection of all forms of enthusiasm, might have fitted Shelley. In the preamble to Enthusiasm, Byrom states that

the rationalists' "indiscriminate use of the word has evidently a bad effect: it pushes the general indifferency to matters of the highest concern into downright aversion".[129] Taking Byrom's poem as the most succinct defense of enthusiasm, it becomes clear how the term was expanded to embrace all forms of passionate belief, as Byrom put it, that "there is a right enthusiasm, as well as a wrong one; and a man is free to admit which he pleases".[130]

Most important for Shelley, however, enthusiasts were Libertarian and, therefore, anti-Necessarian: the mystical entheasts, though they believed in virtue, also believed in revelation which, as Byrom put it, "must of all necessity be free"; the rational entheasts, on the other hand, had rejected the innate principles (necessary obligations) of virtue in favour of Locke's felicific calculus and Libertarianism. Shelley, however, while rejecting revelation as superstition retained the ancient wisdom which venerated virtue and implied the Necessarian connectedness of all things—in this he stayed closer to pure Platonism. It is, however, quite possible that Shelley was influenced by the positive mysticism, the veneration of wisdom/virtue and the inspirational fire imagery of Boehme. Forms of negative mysticism are defined by their asceticism and their exorcism of evil: flesh, self, matter, ignorance, suffering, etc. Positive mysticism, on the other hand, is a celebration of life. John Stoudt writes that Boehme "knew that his lily could become a perfect lily only because it welcomed the energies of earth, air, and sun, only if it grew to full individual perfection from within. To be a lily was not in itself evil. ...His was a world-redeeming not a world-escaping faith. ...It is not an ethic of renunciation..[131] A similar rejection of asceticism appears throughout Shelley's poetry and prose, for example, in The Defence of Poetry we read that poetry

> "is a sword of lightning, ever unsheathed, which consumes the scabbard that would contain it. ...Poetry is indeed something divine. ...It is the perfect and consummate surface and bloom of all things; it is as the odour and the colour of the rose to the texture of the elements which compose it, as the form and splendour of unfaded beauty to the secrets of anatomy and corruption. What were virtue, love, patriotism, friendship—what were the scenery of this beautiful universe which we inhabit; what were our consolations on this side of the grave—and what were our aspirations beyond it, if poetry did not ascend to bring light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation

dare not ever soar?".[132]

Notice Shelley's use of fire imagery, his celebration of the world and his rejection of "owl-winged... calculation"—the owl being the symbol for Athena/Minerva's unchecked rationalism as implemented in Bentham's calculus. Here poetry, like virtue, mediates between the human and the transcendent, rationally incomprehensible truth. "Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world. ...Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man".[133] Speaking of "scientific and economical knowledge", Shelley writes that the "poetry in these systems of thought, is concealed by the accumulation of facts and calculating processes ... our calculations have outrun conception".[134] As "hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration", inspired poets channel virtue and make it accessible to all—like Hermes/Mercury in *The Protagoras*; this is "the electric life which burns within their words".[135] The theme of the Promethean spark is continued when Shelley describes Dante as:

> "the Lucifer of that starry flock which in the thirteenth century shone forth from republican Italy, as from a heaven, into the darkness of the benighted world. His very words are instinct with spirit; each is as a spark, a burning atom of inextinguishable thought; and many yet lie covered in the ashes of their birth, and pregnant with a lightning which has yet found no conductor".[136]

Byrom's Enthusiasm is full of similar imagery. He echoes Plato and rejects any redefinition or division of virtue in these lines: "...when a selfish separating pride / Will break all bounds, and good from good divide, / 'Tis then extinguish'd, like a distant spark, / And pride self-doom'd into its joyless dark".[137] All entheasm, whether it be religious or rational is the result of a selfish disposition ("Self-love, in short, wherever it is found, / Tends to its own enthusiastic ground; / With the same force that goodness mounts above, / Sinks, by its own enormous weight, self-love—" [138]); this is the ancient wisdom which is "A fact, that fills all histories of old".[139] Echoing Milton's theme—a theme which also appears in *Frankenstein*—Byrom writes that entheasts, "Where'er they fall, where'er they love to dwell, / They kindle there their Heaven, or their Hell; / The

chosen scene surrounds them as their own, / All else is dead, insipid, or unknown.[140] In another poem critical of scepticism, Thoughts upon Human Reason, Occasioned by Reading some Extravagant Declamations in its Favour, Byrom foreshadows another theme in *Frankenstein*:

> Tho' all these reason-worshippers profess
> To guard against fanatical excess,
> Enthusiastic heat—their fav'rite theme
> Draws their attention to the cold extreme;
> Their fears of torrid fervours freeze a soul;
> To shun the zone they send it to the pole.[141]

Byrom's symbol of the eternal frozen waste beyond the temporality of pleasure and pain is also found in Book II of *Paradise Lost* where the "...frozen continent / Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms / Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land / Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems / Of ancient pile...".[142] In Greek mythology this frozen continent is known as Tartarus; In Homer it is the final resting place for the Titans. As Prometheus was a Titan and, as Victor Frankenstein is the modern Prometheus, it is no surprise that he ends up in the frozen wastes having crossed the emotional currents of hate (Styx), sorrow (Acheron), lamentation (Cocytus), and rage (Phlegeton), having been denied forgetfulness (Lethe) and abandoned in the domain of "atrocious guilt" (Tartarus) "from whence they [the guilty] are never dismissed". These descriptions are taken from Taylor's account of the rivers of Hell in his introduction to Plato's *Phaedo*,[143] and Milton's account of the "four infernal rivers" in *Paradise Lost*.[144]

In Shelley's Preface to *Frankenstein* he wrote that "*The Iliad*, the tragic poetry of Greece,—Shakespeare, in the *Tempest* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*,—and most especially Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, conform to this rule".[145] Given the telling omission of Homer's *Odyssey* from this list, the 'rule' appears to set *Frankenstein* among the context of works featuring human conflict and moral confusion, chosen by Shelley for

their depictions of the "elementary principles of human nature" [146]—passion, reason, and virtue.

8. FRANKENSTEIN RECONSTRUCTED

The Necessarian Structure

In English literature, the doctrine of Necessarianism originates with Edward, Lord Herbert of Chirbury (1583-1648), elder brother to the poet George Herbert (1593-1633). His project was to find a solution to the post-Reformation sectarianism which was dividing Britain. To do this he analyzed the tenets of the world's religions and philosophies in order to arrive at their core principles which he then held to be principles of human ethics. The elder Herbert is generally considered the originator of what came to be called common sense, or rational worship, the religion of reason, or natural religion, which became known collectively as Deism. Like his younger brother, Edward Herbert was also a poet who used vivid metaphysical metaphors. His Necessarianism—that when human desire would presume to cause an imbalance in the structure of things, equilibrium will be restored through a cosmic vengeance—can be inferred from the image of the Universal Soul in this sonnet:

> Innumerable Beauties, thou white haire
> Spredde forth like to a Region of the Aire,
> Curld like a sea, and like Ethereall fire
> Dost from thy vital principles aspire
> To bee the highest Element of faire,
> From thy proud heights, thou so comandst desire
> That when it would presume, it grows, dispare,
> And from it selfe a Vengeance, doth require,
> While absolute in that thy braue comand
> Knittinge each haire, into an awful frowne
> Like to an Hoste of Lightninges, thou dost stand
> To ruine all that fall not prostrate doune
> While to the humble like a beamy Croune
> Thou seemest wreathed, by some imortall Hande[1]

Shelley would have had a natural affinity to such 'electric' images of the Universal Soul and the intentions of Herbert's project. It is not unreasonable to assume that Shelley had read Herbert. If from no other source, Shelley was likely exposed to Deism through the institution of Freemasonry—many of his school-friends' fathers would have been members and his friends may well have been inducted while Shelley knew them. By 1700 Deism had become the "natural and universal religion" of Freemasonry, a belief which rejects all 'revealed religions' and took only what was common in systems of beliefs in the hope of creating "a superior institution capable of working for the mental and social unity of humanity".[2]

Following Herbert's lead, Shaftesbury subsequently wrote his influential book, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1714)—a book which was popular with Freemasons for more than a century.[3] Shaftesbury's book was immensely popular in its day. A contemporary account tells us that Shaftesbury's book of "sentimental philosophy"[4] was seen on shopkeepers' counters and was heard quoted frequently.[5] Though tutored by Locke himself, Shaftesbury rejected the elder philosopher's idea of 'tabula rasa' and Hobbesian innate selfishness and substituted for these the sentimental intuition of order in the world as well as the supposing existence of a supreme being. Shaftesbury's fame rests on his synthesis of classical and contemporary thought and his ability to "abstract from them what he considers to be the essentials of social benevolism".[6] Shaftesbury's philosophy was not based purely on reason, but on the sentiments that underpin reason. Acting 'disinterestedly' for Shaftesbury means acting as necessitated as a component of a deterministic natural order, and "describes a fundamental, sensory connection that already binds humanity together and has always provided an adequate moral base".[7] Shaftesbury recommended the use of ridicule against fanatical enthusiasm, but, long before Law's various entheasms, he defined the term 'Sociable Enthusiast' (the original title for his dialogue The Moralists) to describe one whose enthusiasm is for a selfless, sustainable view of one's self and one's society.[8]

Shaftesbury's work was also popular on the continent where, for example, Denis Diderot (1713-1784) translated it in 1745 as *l'Essai sur le merite et la vertu.*[9] Diderot's *Encyclopédie* entry (1755) for Sensibilité (morale) underscores the sentimentalists' rejection of pure Lockean rationalism: "Tender and delicate disposition of the soul which renders it easy to be moved and touched. Sensibility of soul, which is rightly described as the source of morality, gives one a kind of wisdom concerning matters of virtue and is far more penetrating than the intellect alone".[10] Though Voltaire and other thinkers, including Shelley, came to reject Shaftesbury's optimistic anthropocentric idea of the Being of Beings, after the destruction of Lisbon, Shaftesbury's moral imperative of social benevolence remained at the core of Deism.

In 1699 Shaftesbury published the "most important treatise on virtue" for the eighteenth century, his Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit.[11] Here, the passion contributing to natural virtue—selfless or disinterested benevolence—was its own reward and held society together. Unnatural, antisocial passions were seen as 'monstrous'.[12] James A Steintrager, in Perfectly Inhuman--Moral Monstrosity in Eighteenth-Century Discourse, demonstrates that Shaftesbury's Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit "provides all of the elements by which the field of moral monstrosity would be delimited in the decades to follow". Subsequent texts "are distinguished precisely by a lack of originality".[13] Steintrager concludes his analysis with the statement that for the eighteenth-century moralists, "benevolence accorded with rationality and that malevolence and irrationality went hand in glove".[14] Towards the second half of the eighteenth century, Shaftesbury's sentimentality had reemerged in the writing of Richardson, Rousseau and Godwin in whose writings the sentiments of natural virtue are oppressed by corrupt social institutions,[15] and virtue is its own reward without consideration of earthly or heavenly profit.[16] Recall that, for Godwin, philanthropy and benevolence were the highest form of virtue because "the highest employment of virtue is to propagate itself".[17] As Andrew Curran and Patrick Graille point out in *The Faces of*

Eighteenth-Century Monstrosity (1997), Deists like Shaftesbury, could not explain the contradiction posed by the presence of natural monstrosity in a universe governed by a benevolent, anthropocentric God, but placed it "outside the bounds of God's dominion".[18] In Shaftesbury's view, the universal complex within which mankind was embedded was innately benevolent and reason dictated that mankind should respect itself and the environment of which it was only a small part; to do otherwise would be presumptuous. (It was Benjamin Franklin, a leading Freemason, inverted this position when he decided that it was presumptuous *not* to benefit from inventions and that questions of ultimate cause were not important.[19])

As was noted in detail in my Preface, there is a strong argument to be made for the reading of Shaftesbury's influence in *Frankenstein.* From this and the foregoing opinions I conclude that Mary did not share Shelley's greater Deistic vision. This would be quite in keeping with Mary Poovey's thesis in *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer* (1984) where she states that Mary's "early work shows her 'monstrous' desire for autonomy at war with the norm of propriety, her later works primarily reveal the guilt that [Mary] Shelley came to associate with those adolescent desires".[20] I read this as strong evidence for the influence of Shelley convictions on Mary's young mind, an influence impossible to maintain after Shelley's death, especially for a single mother on a limited income under the scrutiny of an overwhelmingly patriarchal culture.

In his introduction to *Frankenstein*, Shelley makes a statement replete with Shaftesbury's values: "I am by no means indifferent to the manner in which whatever moral tendencies exist in the sentiments or characters it contains shall affect the reader; yet my chief concern in this respect has... the exhibition of the amiableness of domestic affection, and the excellence of universal virtue".[21] It is partly this enthusiasm for social benevolence—hard to discern in the action of the narrative but for Shelley drawing our attention to it in his Preface—which qualifies *Frankenstein* for membership in Tierney-

Hynes's 'newly moral genre'.[22] In Shelley's statement, 'affection' simply means "feeling as opposed to reason".[23] 'Domestic affection' combines this with "belonging to what concerns oneself", and "attached to home".[24] 'Excellence' may be read as an honourific and 'universal virtue' as the name of an allegorical entity which transcends the human scale. (The justifications for these two latter assertions follows.) Consistent with this view, in the next sentence Shelly proceeds to distance himself from Victor's reprobate character in the first part of the novel (prior to the volta in the Orkneys): "The opinions which naturally spring from the character and situation of the hero are by no means to be conceived as existing always in my own conviction".[25]

Shaftesbury's influence can also be found in the dialectical structure of the novel. Michael Prince, in *Philosophical Dialogue in the British Enlightenment—Theology, aesthetics, and the novel* (1994), suggests that if we extend the meaning of dialogue to a "debate [which] occurs among competing voices",[26] then it embraces many eighteenth-century novels including, in my opinion, *Frankenstein.* A soliloquy, staged as an interior dialogue, was Shaftesbury's ideal method of self-reflection, or 'knowing thyself'. Only a wise poet or author could create a disinterested dialogue between the two well-defined main characters. Only then, writes Shaftesbury—using phraseology foreshadowing that of Roland Barthes in The Death of the Author (1968),[27]—"the author is annihilated, and the reader, being no way applied to, stands for nobody. The self-interesting parties both vanish at once. The scene presents itself as by chance and undesigned".[28] In *Frankenstein,* Victor and the Being are the opposed voices competing for the attention of Walton who represents the intended audience—eager young explorers willing to sacrifice everything, and who, like Walton, "preferred glory to every enticement that wealth placed in my path".[29]

In his analysis of Shaftesbury, Prince explains another of his contributions to literature: "The special kind of mimesis Shaftesbury postulates becomes attractive to moral philosophers and theologians of the early eighteenth century (even those who did

not write dialogues) because it allows them to identify the plot of transcendental dialectic with a realizable fact of human experience".[30] In *Frankenstein*, the transcendent dialectic works in this way: the intended reader, like Walton, initially identifies with Victor until morally repulsed; then the reader's sympathy is transferred to the victimized Being until it also becomes morally repulsed, and finally sympathy returns to Victor, but to a Victor transformed. By the end of the novel, the reader is deftly manipulated into identifying with an anti-hero—the readers have transcended their original positions.

Prince described a further effect of Shaftesbury's format—of a philosophical dialogue nested within an epistolary framework:

> "Instead of a staged performance taking place in the present, dialogue is now the object of a character's memory. A dialogue narrated retrospectively strains credulity somewhat less than a work presented as a virtual stage drama. More importantly, the letter frame permits narrative interruptions, commentary, and changes of setting. These additions adjust for the forced formality of the philosophical exchange. [...] The most important effect of the letter frame is to invert temporal sequence".[31]

This technique is implemented in *Frankenstein* in the following manner: we are introduced to Victor *after* his terrible experiences—which colour and direct his entire retrospective—and shortly before his death. In epic poetry, this would be known as placing the reader *in media res* (in the middle of things). Victor's recollections, including his moral dialogues with the Being, are nested within Walton's letters to his sister, Mrs. Saville.[32] Victor's part of the dialogue is fully aware of the volta in the narrative and is consciously 'setting-up' the reader by using the momentum of the narrative to negotiate the turn in a blur of events without the reader realising it until it is accomplished. An additional 'set-up' is in Walton's ambivalence in his dialogues with Victor—his shifting position between sincere domestic affection (his love for his sister) and the schadenfreude required by his scientistic enthusiasm (the willingness to sacrifice his crew in his hope to win a pioneer's glory)—which provides additional moral instability and dramatic tension and thus further diverts the reader's attention.

In his Soliloquy, Or Advice to an Author, Shaftesbury recommends dialectic (the "investigation of truth by discussion"[33]) as the best course to 'Recognize yourself!', which is his translation of the Delphic inscription (otherwise translated as 'Know thyself!'). He follows John Dryden (1631-1700) who wrote of the form in 1668 that it "was Sceptical according to that way of reasoning which was used by Socrates, Plato, and the Academiques of old, which Tully and the best of the Ancients followed, and which is imitated by the modest Inquisitions of the Royal Society".[34] The only form of truth is that found in dialogue with oneself. Thomas Stanley (1625–1678), a founding Fellow of the Royal Society (1663), was also aware of this irreducible component of knowing when he wrote that "the Judgment arises from the Sense, yet the judgment of Truth is not in the Senses".[35] Even members of the Royal Society, today regarded as the bastion of quantitative science, at one time regarded truth as a quality one recognized within one's self rather than something one evaluated by quantitative methods.

In Shaftesbury's interpretation, all internal dialogue implies the imperative "'Divide yourself!' or 'Be two!'".[36] He refers to the ancient authors who knew, he tells us, that "we have each of us a daemon, genius, angel or guardian-spirit, to whom we were strictly joined and committed from our earliest dawn of reason or moment of our birth".[37] Godwin interprets Greek and Roman mythology in this way in *The Pantheon*, when he tells his readers that many deities "represent the faculties and conceptions of the mind".[38] Rieger also notes that "psychomachia and theomachia are metaphors of each other".[39] Switching to a surgical metaphor, Shaftesbury interprets this to mean that "we had each of us a patient in ourself" and "were properly our own subject of practice"; only a 'knave', a 'rascal', or a 'fool' would be deaf to his self-reflexive internal dialogue and could be truly solitary.[40] Victor Frankenstein, in his presumtion, is the perfect example of one initially deaf to his own conscience.

At the opposite pole of Shaftesbury's extremes, mystics, lovers, and authors are so given to pleasing their gods, beloveds, and publics that they cannot distinguish their

internal dialogue from the clamour of self-interests in which "the chief interest of ambition, avarice, corruption and every sly insinuating vice is to prevent this interview and familiarity of discourse".[41] As a 'lover' of knowledge, the hero/anti-hero of Alastor is the perfect example of the sensualist (and, as in *Frankenstein*, there is a moral volta in Alastor also). Shaftesbury's 'advice to an author' is that "He who deals in characters must of necessity know his own, or he will know nothing. And he who would give the world a profitable entertainment of this sort should be sure to profit, first, by himself. For, in this sense, wisdom as well as charity may be honestly said 'to begin at home'".[42] To judge from his poetry and prose, Shelley had taken this very much to heart. Only a 'modern' like Arnold whose 'disinterestedness'[43] was deeply invested in an industrial culture could say of Shelley's anti-industrial criticism that he was 'a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain'.

It was Franklin's morally eviscerated Deism which prepared the way for an industrial culture. This was the context for Shelley's A Refutation of Deism, and, in much of his poetry and prose, he argued against the positivistic, anthropocentic form of Deism because it lead to the same amoral ('value-free') scepticism as atheism. Shelley sought to reconnect Deism to its moral origins in Necessarianism. As noted above, Shelley was not an atheist. A glance at *The Necessity of Atheism* reveals, that the term 'necessity' in this context is not an adjective, but a noun referring to a metaphysical entity, as in the apostrophe in *Queen Mab* (1813): "Necessity, Thou Mother of the World," a line taken from the *Systeme de la Nature* by Paul-Henri Thiry, Baron d'Holbach (1723-1789).[44] But, though Shelley borrowed the line, he left d'Holbach's atheistic materialism behind, writing in a letter of July 29, 1912 that it was "too obnoxious to accusations of sensuality & selfishness". In the note to *Queen Mab* (1813) for the line just quoted, Shelley writes that the "doctrine of Necessity tends to introduce a great change into the established notions of morality and utterly to destroy religion".[45] For those whose moral sense was invested in religion, this statement would put Shelley in

the same class as atheists and sceptics, but, as is apparent from his prose, such a classification was far from the way he saw himself. Shelley took a *tertium quid*: there was religion and there was atheism—both evil—, and then there was Shelley's Necessarianism. Here I shall briefly trace the development of Shelley's moral doctrine for its relevance to *Frankenstein.*

In a series of letters written in 1811 Shelley argues with his atheist friend Hogg. In these letters Shelley is clearly arguing from a Deistic and not an atheistic point of view. On January 3 he writes that the "word 'God' has been [and] will continue to be the source of numberless errors until it is erased from the nomenclature of Philosophy.—it does not imply 'the Soul of the Universe the intelligent & necessarily beneficent actuating principle'—This I believe in..." This point is underscored in a letter of January 6 where Shelley writes:

> "I consider your argument against the non-existence of a deity. Do you allow that some *supernatural* power actuates the organization of physical causes, it is evident so far as this, that if *power, wisdom* are employed in the continual arrangement of these affairs that this power &c is something out of the [common *cancelled*] comprehension of Man as he now exists, at least if we allow that the soul is not matter. Then admitting that this actuating principle is such as I have described, admitting it to be finite, there must be something beyond this which influences its actions and all this series advancing as if it does in one instance, it must to infinity, must at last terminate, if it can terminate in the existence which may be called a Deity; and if this Deity thus influences the actions of the Spirits (if I may be allowed the expression) which take care of minor events (supposing your Theory to be true) why is it not the soul of the Universe..."

And the letter of January 11 he states that "if you clear up some doubts which yet remain... I will willingly submit to the System [atheism] which at present I cannot but strongly reprobate." And then, just six months later, writing to a wavering Christian (his friend Elizabeth Hitchener) on June 11, Shelley writes: "In this sense I acknowledge a God, but merely as a synonime [sic] for the existing power of existence. I do not in this, nor can you do I think [sic] recognise a Being which has created that to which it is

confessedly annexed as an essence, as that without which the universe wd. not be what it is, it is therefore the essence of the universe, the universe is the essence of it—it is another word for the essence of the universe". This is clearly Shelley's *tertium quid*; an entity which transcends human comprehension while 'annexed' to the universe.

In his Essay on Life (1812), Shelley explicitly rejects atheistic materialism as a "seducing system to young and superficial minds. It allows its disciples to talk and dispenses them from thinking. But I was discontented with such a view of things as it afforded".[46] To support her case for Shelley's materialism, Rushton quotes the sentence preceding this ("The shocking absurdities of the popular philosophy of mind and matter, its fatal consequences in morals, and their violent dogmatism concerning the source of all things, had early conducted me to materialism"[47]) and conspicuously omits this one to make his words better suit her purpose. Shelley is a 'materialist', says Rushton, because he has a "preoccupation with the bodily, the physical".[48] I shall not pursue Rushton's point further; *caveat lector*. The 'influence of Lawrence's atheistic materialism on Shelley in 1811' which Rushton perceives, is nothing more that an illusion brought about by the change in perspective in Shelley's arguments when writing, first, to a confirmed atheist and, second, to a wavering Christian. This context cannot be ignored. Earlier in the letter to Hitchener of June 11, Shelley had written:

> "To a belief in Deity I have no objection on the score of feeling, I would as gladly perhaps with greater pleasure admit than doubt his existence. I now do neither, I have not the shadow of a doubt. My wish to convince you of his non-existence is twofold : First on the score of truth, secondly because I conceive it to be the most summary way of eradicating Christianity. [...] Dismiss then Christianity, in which no arguments can enter—passion & reason are in their nature opposite—Christianity is the former, & Deism (for we are now no further) is the latter. What then is a God, it is a name which expresses the unknown cause, the supposititious origin of all existence".

Following Rushton's excerpt from Shelley's Essay on Life, he continues:

> "You recognise not in this an identical Being to whom are attributable the properties of virtue mercy, loveliness—Imagination delights in personification; were it not for this embodying quality of eccentric fancy we should be to this day

> without a God. Mars was personified as the god of war, Juno of policy &c. but you have formed in your mind the Deity of virtue; this personification, beautiful in Poetry, inadmissible in reasoning[,] in the true style of Hindoostanish devotion, you have adopted. I was against it for the sake of truth. There is such a thing as virtue, but *what who* [sic] is this Deity of virtue? Not the Father of Christ... Did I now see him seated in gorgeous & tyrannic majesty as described, upon the throne of infinitude—if I bowed before him, what would virtue say?"

Carl Grabo, in *A Newton Among Poets* (1968), notes (but does not expand upon) this deification of virtue when he states that the "name for this God or Law is commonly, in the school of d'Holbach, Necessity. A modern scientist probably is unable to feel a warm personal attachment to this deity, but the eighteenth-century sceptics found it a palatable substitute for the God of the Church. It is addressed with a devotional fervor".[49] Shelley's letter continues with the refrain which appears in most of his later poetry and prose, that "virtue's voice is almost inaudible, yet it shakes upon the brain, upon the heart. The howl of self interest is loud—but the heart is black which throbs solely to its note". Here is a clear, early statement of Shelley's main literary theme, the opposition of the self-less or disinterested virtue—Necessity—to that of the selfish or self-interested vices—Liberalism.

The following point cannot be stressed too strongly. Necessarianism is ecocentric in that it considers the consequences of any actions upon the whole—Necessarianism acts with classical prudence and precaution. Liberalism is anthropocentric, *laissez-faire*, or progressive, in that it ignores the consequences of its actions—Liberalism acts with classical presumption. (As noted 'presumption,' 'prudence', and 'precaution' took on scientistic interpretations to suit Industrialism, and the term 'progressive' was no longer exclusively associated with the course of a disease.) In the fragment of Shelley's A Treatise Upon Morals (1812-15) we find a clear exposition of this opposition:

> "Selfishness is thus the offspring of ignorance and mistake; it is the portion of unreflecting infancy and savage solitude, or of those whom toil or evil occupations have [blunted and rendered torpid]; disinterested benevolence is the product of a cultivated imagination and has an intimate connection with all the arts which add ornament, or dignity, or power, or stability to the social state of man".[50]

Almost exactly one year after the letter to Hitchener quoted above, in another letter to Hitchener of January 2, 1812, Shelley reveals that Hogg had failed to convert him to the 'System' (atheism) when he wrote of a conversation with the poet Southey "which has elicited my true opinions of God—he says I ought not to call myself an Atheist, since in reality I believe that the Universe is God. ... Southey agrees in my idea of Deity, the mass of infinite intelligence. I, you, & he are constituent parts of this immeasurable whole." Clark points out that Shelley's opinion had not changed during the previous year, and concludes that he had arrived at a life-long conviction and no longer debated the issue because there are "no significant references to a deity in the letters after 1812".[51] To conclude this point, there decidedly was a period when Shelley was confused by terms and referred to himself as an atheist, but he was never in deed an atheist, as Southey pointed out to him.

To illustrate his confusion, in Shelley's note to the line in *Queen Mab* 'There is no God', he wrote "The consistent Newtonian is necessarily an atheist",[52] when it was commonly accepted that most Newtonians were Deists. In the same note Shelley slightly modifies the argument from The Necessity of Atheism, stating that there "is no creative god. This negation must be understood solely to affect a creative deity. The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit, co-eternal with the universe remains unshaken",[53] and this is clearly a Deist position.

Shelley's sympathies toward Deism are still clear six years later in his defence of Richard Carlisle (1790-1843)—a Deist printer tried for publishing the works of Thomas Paine (1737-1809)—in a letter of November 3, 1819 to Hunt from Florence, for publication in the Examiner: "It is the privilege of an Englishman to be tried, not only by a Jury, but by a Jury of his peers. [...] Who were Mr. Carlisle's peers? Mr. Carlisle was a Deist accused of blaspheming the religion of men professing themselves Christians. Who were his peers? Christians? Surely not. [...] Who are the peers of the Deists? Deists, to be

sure. 'No' objects the Christian 'they will assuredly aquit him.' But the Christian would condemn him right or wrong...". Carlisle had been fined £1,500 and jailed for three years.[54]

Shelley's reference to Deism as somehow lacking ('for we are now no further', in the letter to Hitchener June 11, 1811, quoted above) indicates that Shelley's form of Deism is modified from the more common versions of the time. The clarification of this point was the purpose of his essay A Refutation of Deism (1813). In this dramatic dialogue Eusebes (a Christian) states that Deists have a "love of paradox" though the mind "is truly incommensurate to so vast a purpose" as understanding God, but that if there is no foundation for belief in the Christian God, neither is there a foundation for a "moral governor of the universe".[55] Shelley's Necessitarian purpose is precisely this: to demonstrate his belief in the Soul of the Universe while refuting its anthropocentric role as 'moral governor'. This had also been Voltaire's position. As David Lee Clark notes, in A Refutation of Deism, "Shelley states the arguments of the deists, from Locke to Hume, for the existence of God".[56] Shelley clearly rejects gloomy atheism as a system which contains no moral imperatives and then touches upon the doctrine of Necessity in his view of an intelligent, benevolent universe:

> "The atheist is a monster among men. Inducements which are omnipotent over the conduct of others are impotent for him. [...] This dark and terrible doctrine was surely the abortion of some blind speculator's brain, some strange and hideous perversion of intellect, some portentous distortion of reason. There can surely be no metaphysician sufficiently bigoted to his own system to look upon this harmonious world and dispute the *necessity* of intelligence; to contemplate the design and deny the designer; to enjoy the spectacle of this beautiful Universe and not feel himself instinctively persuaded to gratitude and adoration" (my emphasis).[57]

Then Shelley proceeds to demolish the Deists' 'argument from design' and expounds upon the principles of the doctrine of Necessity:

> "If we find great difficulty from its admirable arrangement, in conceiving that the Universe has existed from all eternity, and to resolve this difficulty suppose a Creator, how much more clearly must we perceive the *necessity* of this very Creator's creation whose perfections comprehend an arrangement far more accurate and just. [...] The greatest, equally with the smallest, motions of the Universe are subjected to the rigid *necessity of inevitable laws*. These laws are the unknown causes of the known effects perceivable in the Universe. Their effects are the boundaries of our knowledge; their names, the expressions of our ignorance. [...] The system of the Universe, then, is upheld solely by physical powers. The *necessity* of matter is the ruler of the world. It is vain philosophy which supposes more causes than are exactly adequate to explain the phenomena of things. Hypotheses non fingo...".[58]

The Latin phrase, *Hypotheses non fingo*, 'I feign no hypotheses' is taken from Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727)—who was addressing the 'cause' of gravity and attraction—and was intended to means that he was unwilling to speculate on that which is beyond the limits of sense and reason. This phrase is crucial in Western history because it marks a watershed between science and Scientism. Alexandre Koyre, in *Newtonian Studies* (1965) tells us that this phrase is that to which "frequently the whole Newtonian epistemology is reduced". Shelley had used a longer quote from Newton in his note to the line in *Queen Mab*, 'There is no God', and, in a paragraph opening with "God is an hypothesis", he adds "we merely know [hypotheses'] effects; we are in a state of ignorance with respect to their essences and causes".[59] It is useful to note also, that here again Shelley effectively rejects atheistic materialism, such as that of Marquis Pierre Simon Laplace (1749-1827) who, when asked by Napoleon where God fitted into his system replied, "I do not need that hypothesis".[60] (Shelley had told Hogg in a letter of November 26, 1813 that "I am now studying Laplace, Système du Monde".)

Adherents of Scientism read Newton's statement positivistically (translating 'fingo' incorrectly as 'frame' and not 'feign'[61]), and this, as Betty Jo Teeter-Dobbs points out in *The Janus Face of Genius: The role of alchemy in Newton's thought* (1991), is to "misread Newton".[62] Newton's view of gravity was that of a Second Cause, the First

Cause being "a powerful ever-living Agent, who being in all Places, is more able by his Will to move the Bodies within his boundless uniform Sensorium, and thereby to form and reform the Parts of the Universe, than we are by our Will to move the Parts of our own Bodies".[63]

On the subject of God, Shelly, like Newton, was unwilling to 'feign' or presume to speculate, admitting of his ignorance rather than hubristically diminishing it, like Laplace. Shelley then goes on to discuss the 'subtile fluids' or 'imponderables' as a *tertium quid* between immateriality and materiality:

> "Matter, such as we behold it, is not inert. It is infinitely active and subtile. Light, electricity, and magnetism are fluids not surpassed by thought itself in tenuity and activity; like thought they are sometimes the cause and sometimes the effect of motion; and, distinct as they are from every other class of substances with which we are acquainted, seem to possess equal claims with thought to the unmeaning distinction of immateriality".[64]

Shelley then states that morality is not inherent in matter, but only emerges with consciousness. Human morality is relative, the individual having emerged from individual human consciousness.

> "Order and disorder are expressions denoting our perceptions of what is injurious or beneficial to ourselves. [...] All this is abstractedly neither good nor evil, because good and evil are words employed to designate that peculiar state of our own perceptions resulting from the encounter of any object calculated to produce pleasure or pain".[65]

The 'morality' which emerges from forms of consciousness transcending human consciousness cannot be understood by humanity. The terms 'good' and 'evil', or even 'true' and 'false', are meaningless outside of the human mind. Shelley concludes from this that "we can have no evidence of the existence of a God from the principles of reason",[66] but that it is "from the evidence of revelation alone that this belief derives the slightest countenance".[67] When he writes of "the necessity of this very Creator's

creation" (quoted above), Shelley demonstrates that he is closer to the spiritualist interpretation of monism rather than the materialist interpretation in that he sees the "necessity of a revelation".[68] Shelly makes explicit the need for the seed of revelation in Deistic rationalism—a need which many positivist Deists glossed over.

The key point of Shelley's moral sense is this: that the Soul of the Universe (an inconceivable, non-anthropomorphic God) is also amoral ("not within the sphere of moral sense; not to be characterized as either good or bad; non-moral"[69]) and permeates all matter as a 'subtile fluid', or 'imponderable'. This is Shelley's modified form of Deism. That the doctrine of Necessity is in Shelley's mind is also attested to by his use of the term 'power' which is at the root of the Necessarian-Libertarian debate in Locke's chapter Of Power in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690; 4th Ed. Bk II, Ch XXI). In A Refutation of Deism Shelley writes:

> "To deny that power is the attribute of being is to deny that being can be. If power be an attribute of substance, the hypothesis of a God is a superfluous and unwarrantable assumption. [...] The distinction, therefore, between the Universe and that by which the Universe is upheld is manifestly erroneous. To devise the word God that you may express a certain portion of the universal system can answer no good purpose in philosophy; in the language of reason, the words God and universe are synonymous".[70]

An earlier essay, the Essay on Life (1812), describes the "one mind" that is the universe where Shelley states with humility that, "I am but a portion of it... It is difficult to find terms adequate to express so subtle a conception... We are on that verge where words abandon us, and what wonder if we grow dizzy to look down the dark abyss of how little we know".[71] Shelley appears to have held these beliefs for the rest of his life. We hear an echo of this sentiment in Prometheus Unbound (1821), when Demogorgon can reply to Asia's request for information about the ultimate Being only in vague *non sequiturs*: "If the abysm / Could vomit forth its secrets...But a voice / Is wanting, the deep truth is

imageless".[72] It is Shelley's conviction that the human mind is limited in its ability to comprehend and that there are levels of complexity which therefore remain incomprehensible. It is only when the comprehension of the human mind is seen as limitless that hubris and presumption create the illusion of 'progress' which assumes that human ingenuity can render inconsequential the consequences that its headlong pursuit of glory creates. Here we begin to see the moral structure which supports *Frankenstein.*

Even in his Deism, Shelley's refusal to be constrained by dogma or trammeled by convention leads to fecund ambiguities. Again I am reminded of Empson's words, that "the machinations of ambiguity are among the very roots of poetry" and that the highest form of ambiguity deals with "fundamental antinomies" which, in order to consider them, we "too must now stand upon our heads, and are approaching the secret places of the Muse".[73] In Shelley's Necessitarian poetry and prose, the relative, non-absolute, meanings of the terms 'good' and 'evil', 'true' and false', forces his readers to think for themselves. I feel that this is the foundation of Shelley's famous statement in his Preface to *Prometheus Unbound* that "Didactic poetry is my abhorrence".[74] The paragraph that opens with these words also says that dogmatic "principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust".

This anti-didactic approach is exactly that taken in *Frankenstein*: overall, the reader's sympathies are more or less evenly divided between Victor and the Being—in much the same way that certain readers of Milton's *Paradise Lost* have their sympathies divided between Heaven and Hell. Shaftesbury, in his Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author specifically cites the "moral genius so naturally prevalent" in Milton's epic.[75] Milton's disinterestedness did not prejudge his characters, though he does state his moral objective, to "assert Eternal Providence, / And justify the ways of God to men" (l.25-6). To lead the fallen masses through a transcendent dialectic using the momentum of a gripping narrative was the something "unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" (l.16) which

Milton sets out to accomplish with *Paradise Lost*. This is another reson why Shelley pays tribute to Milton, Homer, and Shakespeare in his Preface to *Frankenstein*.

Not only does *Frankenstein* appear to be directly influenced by Shaftesbury, but Shelley was also influenced by two other notable examples of this 'newly moral genre' influenced by Shaftesbury. These epistolary novels are regarded as early implementations of Shaftesbury's 'sentimental philosophy' and also involve the consequences of infatuation, obsession and 'enthusiasm'. These novels are Clarissa Harlow (1748) by Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), and *La Nouvelle Heloise* (1761) by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), as translated by William Kenrick in 1803. In my view, these two novels are both examples of a Shaftesbury-like transcendent dialectic which carries the reader across a moral volta by the momentum of the narrative.

Shelley first makes reference to *Clarissa* in a letter of June 1812. Richardson noted that his intention in *Clarissa* was anti-didactic, to conceal its purpose, to "properly mingle Instruction with Entertainment, so as to make the latter seemingly the View, while the former is really the End".[76] Recall that Richardson was part of a Behemenist sect who protested against public demonstrations of religious enthusiasm, electricity, and even theatre. Here Richardson explains the narrative technique he used to write *Clarissa*: "All bad nature was endeavoured to be set forth in the characters of the principal Men: All good in those of the two principal Women: So that the whole compas of human nature, as far as Capacity would allow, or the Story admit, was aimed to be taken into it".[77] Mary notes that, on the boat-trip with Byron around the shores of Lake Geneva, Shelley "occupied himself during this voyage, by reading the *Nouvelle Heloise* for the first time".[78] But, Shelley's letter to Hogg of November 16, 1811 had stated that "I am not jealous, I perfectly understand the beauty of Rousseau's sentiment; yet Harriet is not an Heloisa, even were I a St. Preux", which makes me question Mary's note.

Kenrick's translation of the *Nouvelle Heloise* (the version Shelley was reading with Byron) opens with Rousseau's grudging acceptance—one that Richardson would

have endorsed—of the expediency of using a tainted (public) medium to communicate to a fallen world: "Great cities require public theatres, and romances are necessary to a corrupt people. I saw the manners of the times, and have published these letters. Would to heaven I had lived in an age when I ought rather to have thrown them in the fire!".[79] This is the same sentiment that Shelley expresses in his Preface to *Frankenstein* when he wrote that "my chief concern in this respect has been limited to the avoiding the enervating effects of the novels of the present day".[80] What the authors of *Clarissa*, the *Nouvelle Heloise*, and *Frankenstein* have in common is the need to depict 'enthusiasm' in order to discredit it, a project which contains within it the dangerous potential to have precisely the opposite of the intended effect.

Though both Small and Ketterer point out that Mary Shelley had not recorded her reading of Shaftesbury until after *Frankenstein* was published, the Shelleys will have known of Shaftesbury if, for no other reason, because William Wordsworth (1770-1850) mentions him as "an author at present unjustly depreciated" in his Essay, Supplementary to the Preface of 1815, a Preface in which Wordsworth also quotes from Mercutio's description of Queen Mab,[81] and quotes the exact same eight lines from Tintern Abbey[82] which appear in *Frankenstein*.[83] The mention in Shaftesbury, of Queen Mab, and the lines quoted from Tintern Abbey in the same text are bound to have caught the Shelleys' interest.

The Preface developed Shaftesbury's idea of enthusiasm, which Wordsworth calls a "sublime notion",[84] and equates "enthusiastic and meditative Imagination" with the 'poetic imagination', and states that his poetry gives "evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of Man, his natural affections, and his acquired passions".[85] This supports his original Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) in which he states that his principal purpose—so similar to Shaftesbury's and Kant's complaints against scientistic and religious

'enthusiasm'—is to combat "causes, unknown to former times, [which] are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor".[86] These causes he listed as political events, industrialism, and mountebankery, which produce "a craving for extraordinary incident" in literature.[87] Wordsworth advocates only a moderate enthusiasm conjured by ordinary words, because the effusive evocation of pain—such as that in the "distressful parts of Clarissa Harlowe"—risks the "danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds".[88] It seems clear from this that Wordsworth too is aware of the risks inherent in Richardson's project.

Wordsworth's own project might be seen as attempting a somewhat less morally profound reconciliation between the dull industrial mind and the sublime wonder of nature. Wordsworth was familiar with the science or natural philosophy of his day to the extent that he had read in the *Zoonomia or, The Laws of Organic Life* (1794) of Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802) from which he took the story of Goody Blake and Harry Gill,[89] an example of how "human imagination is sufficient to produce such changes even in our physical nature as might almost appear miraculous".[90] Wordsworth is likely referring to a passage in *Zoonomia* where chills are accounted for as "a disease only of those of the temperament of associability".[91] Wordsworth would also have encountered in *Zoonomia* Darwin's negative use of the Promethean myth as the bringer of alcoholism to the masses who consequently suffer from cirrhosis of their livers! (see note).[92] Alcoholism was a common problem among the newly urbanized proletariat.

Of the Preface of 1800, Wordsworth tells us in the Preface of 1815, that he "transferred it to the end of the second Volume".[93] There the Shelleys would have found Shaftesbury's philosophy applied to two subjects: a poet and a scientist. Wordsworth first paraphrased Shaftesbury's image of a moral universe in which a poet considers "man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure". But then Wordsworth diverges from the line of

thought followed by Shaftesbury, Kant, Coleridge, and Shelley. Wordsworth proceeds to justify the torture of nature "wherever we sympathize with pain it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure"[94] This 'subtle combination' of pleasure and pain differs from that discussed by Plato in *The Protagoras*. Wordsworth's words appear to be a definition of schadenfreude, literally 'harm-joy in German', (a sense also found in Greek as 'epichaerecacia', or 'upon-joy-evil'). This word was first coined in English in 1852, shortly after the Romantic Era, as part of the new vocabulary required by the Industrial ethos, and it is defined as the "malicious enjoyment of the misfortunes of others", with the example that, "the 'joys of the Laboratory', are very real 'joys' to the vivisector".[95]

A clue as to why Wordsworth might have repositioned the pleasure/pain argument lies in the fact that Wordsworth had the young, atheistic, Humphry Davy (1778-1829) proofread *Lyrical Ballads*.[96] (Davy also wrote poetry and maintained a scientific correspondence with Coleridge.[97]) Here Wordsworth appears to endorse the anthropocentric project of extorting the secrets from Nature through torture, by 'putting Nature on the rack,' an idea is commonly—but erroneously—attributed to Francis Bacon (1561-1626),[98] who Shelley greatly admired. (To be clear, Bacon's intention was simply to "examine and dissect the nature of this very world"[99]—through the process of induction.) True enough, the use of Baconian induction did lead to empiricism and scepticism, but this was not Bacon's intention and only came about through this scientistic misinterpretation of his meaning. As with the misinterpretation of Newton's *hypothesis non fingo*, this is yet another indication of the Romantic-era watershed in Western moral development.

In complete contradiction to Wordsworth, Shelley held that "I think that the leaf of a tree, the meanest insect on wh. we trample are in themselves arguments more conclusive than any which can be adduced",[100] i.e., they are arguments of intelligent design which imply the existence of the Soul of the Universe. The definition of intelligent

design is that of "design or creation in nature or the universe by an intelligent entity".[101] It must be stressed that the theory of evolution had not yet been formulated and Shelley's arguments must not be read as a contradiction of evolutionary theory. Also, that this 'intelligent entitty' is not an anthropomorphic 'god', but a panentheistic—and therefore ecocentric—interpretation of the 'universe itself'. Writing in his Essay on the Vegetable System of Diet, Shelley deplores the insensitivity—or loss of "vivid sensibility"—of the vivisectionist as a danger to society; he asks: "Who that is accustomed to the sight of wounds and anguish will scruple to inflict them when he shall deem it expedient?"; callous action leads to a "series of calamity" [102] which, in *Frankenstein*, might be compared to the Being's self-repudiation of "the series of my being".[103] In a passage sharing many sentiments with Frankenstein, Shelley is quite explicit on this point:

> "It is evident that those who are necessitated by their profession to trifle with the sacredness of life and think lightly of the agonies of living beings are unfit for the benevolence and justice which is required for the performance of the offices of civilized society. They are by necessity brutal, coarse, turbulent, and sanguinary. Their habits form admirable apprenticeship to the more wasting wickedness of war, in which men are hired to mangle and murder their fellow beings, that tyrants and countries may profit by thousands".[104]

Wordsworth, in his Preface, goes on to relate the Poet's love of Nature to that of the Scientist and states that "The Man of Science, the Chemist and Mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the Anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge".[105] Having justified vivisection, Wordsworth then states that the scientist's enthusiasm is unlike that of the poet in that he "seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude".[106] Wordsworth concludes by saying that "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science".[107] At this time the word 'science' was beginning to leave behind the ancient connotation of 'wisdom' and to take on the

modern connotation of empirical knowledge. Based on what is to follow, I suspect Wordsworth was intending the more modern connotation.

The next part of Wordsworth's Preface appears to directly address the subject-matter of *Frankenstein*; here Wordsworth seems to *explicitly endorse the scientific creation of an artificial Being*! Having justified vivisection, Wordsworth then continues on to relate the poet and the scientist as creators: "If the time should ever come when what is now called Science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and *will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man*" (my emphasis).[108] Aside from the purely literary details, it is quite possible that the Shelleys were distressed and horrified by Wordsworth's distortion of Shaftesbury's philosophy and his corruption of Necessarian ecocentrism: to embrace both the poet's and the vivisectionist's view of nature simultaneously confounds benevolence with an implied need for schadenfreude. As I shall discuss below, the Shelleys appear to structure *Frankenstein* around the poles of 'schadenfreude' (I use the anachronism for its efficiency) and 'domestic affection'.

It is likely that it was Wordsworth's moral recision that prompted Shelley to write his sonnet To Wordsworth, which was published in 1816 in the same volume as Alastor and the Daemon of the World. The sonnet, which begins "Poet of Nature...", ends with these two lines: "Deserting these [poverty, truth, liberty], thou leavest me to grieve, / Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be". This sonnet also apparently chastizes Wordsworth for giving up on his beliefs of 1800 that "the evil will be systematically opposed, by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success", where Wordsworth had named the 'evil' as Industrialism and its evil effect being that, in the concentration of urban populations within which the "invaluable works of our elder writers... are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse".[109]

The inspiration for Alastor, the Daemon of the World, and *Frankenstein* may have been partly in the Shelleys' outrage at Wordsworth's comparison of poetic and scientific forms of enthusiasm and the juxtaposition of benevolence and vivisection. Additionally, there is the affront of Wordsworth's audacious image of the anti-social solitary scientist and the presumptuous suggestion of the creation of a Being by mankind. Wordsworth, originally Nature's advocate, turned to endorse her torture!

As a corollary, I suggest that schadenfreude ('mischief-joy', 'harm-joy') is the essence of the reader's experience of Gothic literature (where 'Gothic', for Shaftesbury, was synonymous with 'Teutonic barbarity') and that a connection between this Gothic element and the early ninteenth-century advances in natural philosophy is exactly what was established when the Shelley-Byron party merged the ideas of "Dr. Darwin, and some of the physiological writers of Germany" with "German stories of ghosts".[110] Shaftesbury equates that which came to be known as schadenfreude to irrational barbarism and moral monstrosity. Perplexed by the popularity of Gothic literature he asks

> "whether there remains not still among us noble Britons something of that original barbarous and Gothic relish [schadenfreude] not wholly purged away, when, even at this hour, romances and gallantries of like sort, together with works as monstrous of other kinds, are current and in vogue, even with the people who constitute our reputed polite world. [...] ...nothing is so common as wheels, racks and gibbets properly adorned, executions decently performed, headless bodies and bodiless heads exposed to view, battles fought, murders committed, and the dead carried off in great numbers".[111]

Like Richardson and Rousseau who depict sensual enthusiasm in order to make a moral case against it, Shelley, in his Preface to *Frankenstein*, had to distance the novel—which depicts scientistic enthusiasm in order to make a moral case against it—from the Gothic dross (including his own juvenilia) by "avoiding the enervating effects of the novels of the present day".[112] Shelley, it seems, could no longer dismiss 'moral

monstrosity' as simply an illogical aberration and a source of entertainment because it had become endorsed by and flourished within the new industrial state.

There are three notable examples of schadenfreude in Frankenstein. In the first two, schadenfreude becomes possible only under the moral anaesthesia induced by a perverse and perverting enthusiasm. (I use the term perverse specifically because, in addition to the sense of its common usage it has a geometrical sense: "A mirror image of a figure or object, in which the transverse directions of the original are reversed"[113]). Like a mirror, perverse enthusiasm distorts the perceptions of the enthusiast with the difference that, instead of 'right' appearing to be 'left', good appears to be evil, and vice versa. This is made clear in Victor's description of making his 'discovery', an experimental method which involves vivisection:

> "Unless I had been animated by an almost supernatural *enthusiasm*, my application to this study would have been irksome, and almost intolerable. [...]The astonishment which I had at first experienced on this discovery soon gave place to delight and rapture... this discovery was so great and overwhelming, that all the steps by which I had been progressively led to it were obliterated, and I beheld only the result. [...] No one can conceive the variety of feelings which bore me onwards, like a hurricane, in the first *enthusiasm* of success. [...] Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil, as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave, or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? My limbs now tremble, and my eyes swim with the remembrance; but then a resistless, and almost frantic impulse, urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. [...] During my first experiment, a kind of enthusiastic frenzy had blinded me to the horror of my employment; my mind was intently fixed on the sequel of my labour, and my eyes were shut to the horror of my proceedings. [...] I remembered shuddering at the mad *enthusiasm* that hurried me on to the creation of my hideous enemy..." (my emphasis).[114]

I draw the reader's attention to Victor's perverse enthusiasm which drives him to destroy in order to create. As noted, Victor recounts his story with the hindsight of having made his moral volta and having seen the error of his ways. Similarly, the Being is driven to destroy in order to redress the moral disequilibrium that his creator has initiated. In justifying himself to Walton, the Being describes his experience of schadenfreude:

"...then I was not miserable. I had cast off all feeling, subdued all anguish to riot in the excess of my despair. Evil thenceforth became my good. Urged thus far, I had no choice but to adapt my nature to an element which I had willingly chosen. The completion of my demoniacal design became an insatiable passion".[115] The parallel between this passage and Satan's schadenfreude in *Paradise Lost* is often commented upon. ("Farewell, remorse! all good to me is lost; / Evil, be thou my good",[116] and "nor hope / Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste / Of pleasure; but all pleasure to destroy, / Save what is in destroying; other joy / To me is lost"[117]). Unlike Victor, however, the Being makes no moral volta, his path was not that of a deluded moral being, but was the inevitable result of his exclusion from the chain of being. The Being is a purely "rational creature".[118]

In an eighteenth-century Necessarian worldview, excess enthusiasm and schadenfreude will always be redressed; their consequences cannot be avoided but may have unexpected impacts on innocent victims—lightning destroying trees, the Being destroying Elizabeth—thus benevolence, prudence, and precaution are advised. On the other hand, scientistic enthusiasts never look back at the costs of progress; to do so would be to doubt their faith in the "omnipotence of scientific knowledge and techniques".[119] In *Frankenstein*, catastrophe, as Victor discovers, is a natural consequence of tampering with the natural order of things. Victor knows that Walton's own enthusiasm ("I feel my heart glow with an *enthusiasm* which elevates me to heaven"[120]) will lead to the destruction of his crew, possibly even to the death of his sister through some unforseeable consequent to his actions. Only after he has been humbled and everything he loves has been destroyed around him can Victor advise Walton to

> "Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge, and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow. [...] In a fit of *enthusiastic* madness I created a rational creature, and was bound towards him, to assure, as far as was in my power, his happiness and well-being. This was my duty; but there was another still paramount to that. My duties towards my fellow-creatures had greater claims to my attention, because they included a greater proportion of happiness or misery" (my emphasis).[121]

Victor advised Walton to avoid the seductions of glory and the hubris which leads to enthusiasm. More than this, Victor advises Walton to observe his duties to his family and his community. Shelley had drawn our attention to this in his Preface when he wrote, "yet my chief concern in this respect has been limited to ...the exhibition of the amiableness of domestic affection, and the excellence of universal virtue".[122]

9. FRANKENSTEIN RECONSTRUCTED

The Mythological Structure

Like many readers of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, I have been drawn the use of the phrase 'the modern Prometheus' as the subtitle of *Frankenstein* and wondered what this phrase was intended to signify. Certainly it was not chosen lightly and I suspect that the interpretation of this term will further elucidate the allegory of *Frankenstein.* We have already examined the ethical subtleties of the Promethean myth in Plato's *Protagoras* and *Phaedo* as translated by Taylor and Dacier. Now I shall examine the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century readings of the myth.

In Shelley's own exposition on Prometheus in his notes to *Queen Mab*, he begins by stating that the myth "has never been satisfactorily explained" and, offer us the opinion of John Newton (1770-?1827) in his *Return to Nature, or Defence of Vegetable Regimen* (1811), which, in Shelley's words, states that Prometheus "represents the human race".[1] To support this, Shelley cites Hesiod and Horace—as had Newton—who agree that Prometheus's presumptuous act precipitated mankind's fall from a Golden Age, an age in which "mankind were exempt from suffering; that they enjoyed a vigorous youth, and that death, when at length it came, approached like sleep".[2] In the excerpt provided by Shelley, Newton writes that the Gods were "amused or irritated at the short-sighted devices of the newly-formed creature, and left him to experience the sad effects of them". In the light of the philosophies of Plato and Bentham already examined, it the term 'short-sighted' may well refer to a the rationalist's pleasure/pain calculus.

Shelley summarizes the post-Promethean age as an age in which mankind's "vitals were devoured by the vulture of disease... All vice arose from the ruin of healthful innocence. Tyranny, superstition, commerce, and inequality, were then first known, when reason vainly attempted to guide the wanderings of exacerbated passion".[3] Here, the

limitations of passion and reason—without virtue—are cited as pernicious elements of the human mind. This passage also recalls Darwin's version of the myth in which "Prometheus was painted as stealing fire from heaven, which might well represent the inflammable spirit produced by fermentation... [and] the after punishment of those, who steal this accursed fire, is a vulture gnawing the liver; and well allegorizes the poor inebriate lingering for years under painful hepatic diseases".[4]

Shelley stated that versions of a mythological fall occur in all religions, including the "allegory of Adam and Eve eating of the tree of evil".[5] He likened the "supereminence" of mankind to that of Milton's fallen Satan "a supereminence of pain; and the majority of his species, doomed to penury, disease and crime, have reason to curse the untoward event".[6] Shelley accepted that the fall is "irrevocable" and noted that this fallen state is also the cause of mankind's perplexity over the conflicts between Liberty ("the advantages of intellect and civilization") and Necessity ("natural life"). For Shelley, the "whole of human science was comprised in [that] one question".[7] The first step of Shelley's program leading toward a solution for this question was the "abstinence from animal food and spirituous liquors".[8] Other "mistakes cherished by society" which should be addressed include: the repression of women, the forms of education, the "putrid atmosphere of crowded cities", and "the exhalations of chemical processes".[9]

Small, however, is dissatisfied by Shelley's 1813 interpretation of the Promethean myth and speculates that "other and more heroic aspects of Prometheus had doubtless become more important for him".[10] Small's speculation appears to be grounded in the anthropocentric vision of 'progress' within which Prometheus becomes the 'bringer' of technology. Within my Shelleyan paradigm, however, I see no reason for such speculation; In my view Shelley's 1813 reading of the Promethean myth, like the vegetarianism from which it was derived, were essential to his outlook on life and both permeate *Frankenstein.* (Many scholars have already written on the significance of the Being's vegetarianism.) I have already noted Clark's observation that Shelley's

philosophy underwent no significant revisions after 1812. Clark also notes that Shelley's vegetarianism also commenced in 1812 and was observed for the remainder of his life.[11] In the remainder of this section shall support the hypothesis that Shelley's 'vegetarian' reading of the Promethean myth was consistent with his Necessarianism and the allegory in *Frankenstein.*

There are two commonly referenced eighteenth-century sources for the phrase 'the modern Prometheus', Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713). Perhaps the commonest source for the eighteenth-century use of the phrase 'modern Prometheus' was thought to have been made by Kant in reference to Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), America's "Electrical Ambassador" to France, of whom it was said his "electric wand has accomplished all this revolution".[12] For example, Carl J. Richard, in *The Founders and the Classics--Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (1994) states that in "1756 Immanuel Kant called him [Franklin] 'the modern Prometheus'";[13] Walter Isaacson, in *Benjamin Franklin—An American Life*, (2003) states that "Kant called [Franklin] the 'new Prometheus';[14] and Bernard I. Cohen, in *Benjamin Franklin's Science* (1990) states that "Kant called [Franklin] 'the modern Prometheus'".[15]

According to Martin Schönfeld, author of in *The Philosophy of the Young Kant* (2000), in a personal communication, the only reference in Kant's work to Prometheus, occurs in a footnote to Kant's discussion of Plato in his essay On a Newly Arisen Superior Tone in Philosophy (1797) This was available to Shelley as De tono quodam illustri ac sublimi in philosophia nuper instituto in v.IV, p.397, of the Latin translation of Kant—by Frederick Gottlob Born (1796-8)—which he acquired from Hookham early in 1813. In this essay Kant also refers to Plato as "the father" of mystical 'enthusiasts',[16] for not using introspection to rigorously ground reason in the *a priori* of space and time,[17] and for relying on something "intuited in the soul and by the soul in which, for its part, as

from a jetting spark of fire, a light ignites on its own".[18] Plato, says Kant, is responsible for "secret intuition",[19] mystical explanations such as those of the alchemists, the Freemasons (or 'club mystogogue'),[20] and the religious enthusiasts who experience "supernatural communication (mystical illumination), which is then the death of all philosophy".[21] Kant says of Plato's tautological definition of "luminous reason",[22] that "it is self-evident that he—another Prometheus—has snatched the sparks for this fire directly from heaven",[23] which is to say that Plato relies on revelation. But the tone of Kant's phrase is decidedly derogatory. Here Kant may be obliquely paraphrasing the famous Latin epigram created in 1778 by the French economic reformer Anne Robert Jacques Turgot (1727-1781) for Franklin, "He seized fire from the heavens and the sceptre from tyrants".[24] But those who say that Kant used the term 'modern Prometheus', or applied it to Franklin, must have access to obscure sources inaccessible to me.

Nevertheless, Kant's use of the Promethean myth is interesting with respect to the subtitle of *Frankenstein.* We know that the Jesuit, l'Abbé Augustin Barruel (1741-1820), may have heightened Shelley's interest in Kant, in February 1812,[25] when he wrote of Kant in his *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobism* (1797), a book which received a lengthy article in *The Monthly Review* (1797).[26] Barruel wrote that "it is easy to see that the system of Kant, at present Professor at Königsberg, ultimately leads to the same end as that of Weishaupt, heretofore Professor at Ingolstadt. The same hatred for revelation is to be found in both, as well as the same spirit of impiety".[27] (Adam Weishaupt [1748-1830] led a lodge of 'Illuminati', or 'Perfectibilists', at Ingolstadt which is the setting for Victor's creation of the Being in *Frankenstein*). Barruel's 'spirit of impiety' likely included all forms of nondenominational Deism such as that practiced in most Freemason lodges and by many natural philosophers.

Even assuming that Kant did apply the term 'modern Prometheus' to Franklin, he would hardly have intended it as an honour. Whereas Kant argued deductively, a priori, from causes to effects, Franklin argued inductively, *a posteriori*, from effects to causes,

and his positivism did not motivate him to discover First Causes; he considered it not of much importance to know "the manner in which nature executes her laws; it is enough if we know the laws themselves".[28] (Franklin obviously assumed the scientistic interpretation of Newton's '*hypotheses non fingo*', 'I frame no hypotheses'.) For Kant, such pragmatism would be as bad as religious revelation in that it "makes all research into synthetic *a priori* knowledge unnecessary" which constitutes "the lack of a critique of reason itself".[29] It is this that Kant blames for the

> "certain spirit of domination (of presumed preference and privilege) [which] has recently been raging: a spirit of domination over the free and public use of merely theoretical reason which threatens to cut off not only thinking out loud but also does so in order not to think (in a certain way and, in this way, to confiscate reason)".[30]

This 'newly arisen superior tone in philosophy' is the spirit of presumption in Industrialism. Kant is clearly pointing to the shortcomings of 'merely theoretical reason'. (Jane Jacobs, when she talks of 'bad science', sounds remarkably like Kant in this regard.) We have encountered these two types of presumption or enthusiasm above—religious and scientistic. In his essay, Other Enthusiasms (1800), Kant's solution to the moral dilemma of enthusiasm is to cite Shaftesbury's lesson from A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm (1708) of not debating with irrational enthusiasts but of using ridicule to discredit them.[31] Shaftesbury's philosophy is considered to be an immediate precursor to Kant's own "disinterested aesthetic reflection".[32]

Shaftesbury is the second commonly cited source for the term 'modern Prometheus' and Kant uses the term in precisely Shaftesbury's sense. The key phrase, 'modern Prometheus', occurs in an excerpt from Shaftesbury's dialogue The Moralists, a Philosophical Rhapsody (1711), which depicts the philosophical conversion of a sceptic to theism. For Shaftesbury, Prometheus, who broke the moral code of the ancient Greek gods, became a scapegoat for the ancient Greeks who could not accept that something as imperfect as mankind could have been the result of divine inspiration. Prometheus had

presumed, the result was flawed, and Prometheus had been punished. For Shaftesbury, "our modern Prometheuses, [are] the mountebanks".[33] In Shaftesbury's day the term 'mountebanks' was a collective term for "corrupt clergy and others assuming false piety or religiosity",[34] such as the presumptuous groups of 'enthusiasts' like the Antinomians (who "avowed rejection of the moral law"[35]), the Anabaptists (who were "rejecters of Anglican doctrine"), and the Familists (who saw themselves above all moral and religious systems"[36]).

Shaftesbury's objection is to the charlatanism of such groups, who, in order to gain converts from the gullible, would perform curative 'miracles' on those who merely feigned illness. The 'empiric'—an "untrained practitioner in physic or surgery; a quack"[37]—fell into the same category for Shaftesbury. (The Empirici were an ancient sect of physicians who "drew their rules of practice entirely from experience, to the exclusion of philosophical theory".[38]) It is this positivistic sense that was carried over into the eighteenth-century term 'empiricism', the "doctrine which regards experience as the only source of knowledge".[39] In the eighteenth-century, empiricism was classed with scepticism. It was the scepticism and empiricism of David Hume (1711-1776), which awakened Kant from his 'dogmatical slumbers' and prompted him to attempt his "precritical project, the reconciliation of natural science and metaphysics".[40]

Hume had voiced his sceptical views in his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), writing that, "If we take in our hand any volume of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance: let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion".[41] (Stafford Beer, in his Preface to *Autopoiesis and Cognition* (1980) was of the opinion that, by "the time Kant was devoting his prodigious mind to sorting all this out, the battle was lost".[42] I tend to agree). Until now, critics have been unable to unravel the riddle of what interpretation to give Shaftesbury's

moralistic, clearly derogatory use of the term, 'modern Prometheus,' with respect to how it applies to *Frankenstein*. To conclude, both Kant and Shaftesbury use the term 'modern Prometheus' in a derogatory sense to refer to enthusiasts and charlatans—including sceptics and empirics.

The form of irrational enthusiasm found in *Frankenstein* is discussed by Shaftesbury in his Letter Concerning Enthusiasm (1708) and in his Review of Enthusiasm (1714). Paula McDowell in Enlightenment Enthusiasms and the Spectacular Failure of the Philadelphian Society, called enthusiasm the 'antiself of the Enlightenment',[43] a view supported by Kant's use of the German term for enthusiasm, 'Schwarmerei', which, as a modern editor tells us, "derives from the swarming of bees",[44] and might be understood as equivalent to the irrational 'hive mind' of social insects. Bernard Du Mandeville (1670-1733) had written an essay, Fable of the Bees (1714)—a rejection of any innate systems of ethics in favour of a Hobbesian world driven by blind egoism and self-interest—, in response to Shaftesbury's Inquiry concerning Virtue or Merit (1711).[45]

From Shaftesbury's perspective, the light of enthusiasm was a false illumination, and Prometheus, as the bearer of this light, had tricked the 'Illuminati' and was therefore a 'mountebank'. Shaftesbury wrote in his Letter that "inspiration is a real feeling of the Divine Presence and enthusiasm a false one".[46] Shelley appears to make a similar distinction. But, to confuse things, from the point of view of the Catholic church, as represented by Barruel, Kant's transcendentalism in Königsberg and Weishaupt's Illuminism in Ingolstadt were lumped together as threats. Shelley's views on Christianity are well known, and, as a moralist, he would have supported the points of view of Shaftesbury and Kant: excess 'enthusiasm', from whatever source, was destructive. The Shelleys would not have admired Weishaupt's Illuminati; the situating of Victor at Ingolstadt amounts to a reprobation of Victor's scientistic enthusiasm.

Weishaupt's Illuminati were not the only 'enlightened ones'. Another sect of 'Illuminati'—in the form of a group of Huguenot exiles living in London and known as the 'French Prophets'—were the focus of Shaftesbury's Letter. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1706, the French Prophets, or Camisards, were received by the London-based Philadelphian Society for the Advancement of Divine Philosophy, a millenarian group of Behemenist mystics under the initial guidance of John Pordage (1607-1681). Whereas Kant and Shaftesbury advocated private self-reflection, these mystics preferred to exhibited the "extraordinary stirring of the divine spirit".[47] From 1695-1703 the Philadelphians, led by Jane Lead (1623-1704), produced a deluge of pamphlets and books advertising universal love and the international unification of all Christian sects.[48] Shaftesbury's essay and popular ballads, which ridiculed the mystics, drove them from public view. (It would be interesting to discover how the Philadelphians were regarded by Richardson and his Behemenist associates at the Royal Society.)

A later group, the Methodists, would also have fallen into the category of 'enthusiasts.' One of their founders, John Wesley, was also a practicing electrotherapist. Wesley's book, *The Desideratum--or, Electricity made plain and useful--by a lover of mankind and of common sense* (1759), would also have classified him as a 'mountebank'. (A 'desideratum' is something miraculous "for which a desire or longing is felt".[49]) By the above reasoning, this would make Wesley a good candidate for the title of 'modern Prometheus.' As noted, the Shelleys would have known of Methodism through the Hunts' experience. In his Preface to *The Desideratum*, having acknowledged his debt to Franklin, Wesley paraphrases the American's pragmatism in these lines: "I am not greatly concerned for the philosophical Part, whether it stand or fall. Of the Facts we are absolutely assured... I am much more concerned for the Physical Part...".[50] As noted, Wesley thought that electricity was the 'Soul of the Universe'; he also believed that 'the Nervous Juice itself, be a Fluid of this Kind".[51] Wesley gives many accounts of electricity's curative effects. He begins with the cure of a young boy who was "taken

blind suddenly in both his Eyes".[52] This is exactly the kind of 'miracle' that Shaftesbury was so critical of. Wesley also follows the course of the irrational mystics identified by Kant. I mention him again because he illustrates the potential for an alliance between Christianity and Industrialism in effecting the transformation of the meanings of 'presumption', prudence', and 'precaution'.

How do these readings of Shelley's Necessarianism and the Promethean myth help us interpret *Frankenstein*? To answer this question I believe that a third element is required—Nemesis. The myth of Nemesis also saw a revival in the Romantic Era along with the myth of Prometheus. I suggest that Nemesis was invoked by the Necessarians as the antithesis of Prometheus seen as the standard-bearer of the new Industrialism. In *Frankenstein*, the Being appears to act as the agent of Necessity playing opposite Victor who appears to act as the agent of Presumption.

Godwin's *The Pantheon* provides a clue: Godwin tells us that, according to Plato, the Fates, "are the *children of Necessity*" (my emphasis).[53] Shelley's unpublished *Review Of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1817), refers to the same allegory: "the crimes and malevolence of the single Being... flow irresistibly from certain causes fully adequate to their production. They are the *children, as it were, of Necessity* and Human Nature" (my emphasis).[54] David Lee Clark makes the obvious comment in a footnote, "Let those who think that Shelley relaxed his belief in Necessity ponder this statement".[55] From this we can conclude that Victor Frankenstein is a presumptuous enthusiast.—this much I have illustrated—, and that the Being in *Frankenstein* is, simultaneously, the 'rational creature' *sans virtue*, as well as the agent of Necessity acting to negate the chain of complex causation beginning in Victor's act of presumption. As it is impossible for the Being to become a link in the chain of being, he must eradicate that which gave rise to his existence. The Being becomes Victor's personal version of the Furies; its 'work' is 'Fated'. This is well illustrated by the Being's final speech to Walton:

> "I have murdered the lovely and the helpless; I have strangled the innocent as they slept, and grasped to death his throat who never injured me or any other living thing... My work is nearly complete. Neither your's nor any man's death is needed to consummate the series of my being, and accomplish that which must be done; but it requires my own... I shall die... Some years ago, when the images which this world affords first opened upon me... I should have wept to die; now it is my only consolation... my ashes will be swept into the sea by the winds. My spirit will sleep in peace; or if it thinks, it will not surely think thus".[56]

The Being clearly sees his 'work' as redressing a disequilibrium—the work of Necessity. The 'series of his being' is a Kantian reference to the chain of causation set into inexorable motion towards its inevitable conclusion by Victor's act of presumption. The acts of indiscriminate violence against Victor's friends and family are indications of Necessity's amorality which gives the impression of local injustice. The scale of the apparent evil is simply a measure of the magnitude of the presumption in the original act. That the Being, initially so determined to live, is content to die after completing his 'work', is an echo of Socrates's statement in Plato's *The Phaedo* (wherein Socrates also justifies his own suicide), that "a man ought not to kill himself, before divinity lays him under a certain necessity of doing so".[57] When the Being states that "I shall collect my funeral pile, and consume to ashes this miserable frame, that its remains may afford no light to any curious and unhallowed wretch",[58] he addresses the issue raised in *The Phaedo*, that "the remaining parts of the body of each person must subsist for a long time, till they are either burnt or become rotten".[59] But Shelley did not swallow Plato whole; just as he adopted the 'negative' argument in Barruel, so he appears to adopt the 'negative' argument in *The Phaedo*.

Barruel had criticized Kant but Shelley had adopted Kant's position. In keeping with his Kantian alignment, Shelley is also critical of Plato—stating that his "elementary laws of moral action are not always correct".[60] In the line about souls quoted above, Socrates, is actually restating his opponents' argument—an argument which he does not believe. Of the things that Socrates does believe, there are many that Shelley would

disagree with. To support his case, Socrates recites lines from the Eleusian rites which differentiate between the few "initiated", or philosophers ('lovers of wisdom', 'inspired mystics',[61] or 'enthusiasts') and the masses of the "uninitiated", or "lover[s] of body",[62] who desire "riches and honours",[63] who indulge in "gluttony, arrogant injuries, and drinking",[64] and who study the "history of nature" or purely empirical natural philosophy.[65] For Plato, however, to be a philosopher is to be a dualist and believe that man is "on the one hand body, and on the other soul";[66] that the soul is immortal and existed prior to and continues to exist eternally after its union with the body is dissolved.

For Shelley, dualism was a superstitious fanaticism (Kant's term) which had led to so many human atrocities. Shelley's world-redeeming love of life would have been anathema to Socrates's advocation of asceticism whereby the philosopher's life is a preparation for the afterlife—for death, when the soul is finally released from the prison of the body and is no longer "compelled to speculate things through this, as through a place of confinement".[67] Socrates states that, for true philosophers, "the whole of their study is nothing else than how to die and be dead", that, by rejecting the sensual world through their asceticism, they actually "desire death" and "mediate how to die";[68] Their lives are spent 'practicing dying'.[69] This monastic repudiation of life was exactly what Shelley objected to in the practice of the enthusiast who inflicted suffering in the present life ostensibly justified by the possibility of a better future, but often with the true purpose of immediate personal gain. Shelley's frequent condemnations of the atrocities committed in the name of the Christian faith agree completely with his rejection of Plato's doctrine on this point.

Shelley would, however, have agreed with Plato's criticism of natural philosophy in the *Phaedo*, in Socrates's admission that, as a youth, "it appeared to me to be a very superb affair to know the causes of each particular, on what account each is generated, why it perishes, and why it exists... [But] I then became so vehemently blind, with respect

to things which I knew before very clearly".[70] Eventually, says Socrates, he tired of natural philosophers, such as Anaxagoras, and stated that

> "I thought that in rendering the cause common to each particular, and to all things, he would explain that which is best for each, and is the common good of all... [But] I was forced away, when, in the course of my reading, I saw him make no use of intellect, nor employ certain causes, for the purpose of orderly disposing particulars, but assign air, aether, and water, and many other things, equally absurd as the causes of things... neglecting to adduce the true cause".[71]

Here Plato has Socrates repeat the lesson of *The Protagoras* where he explains that his nerves, bones and skin cannot explain why his sits. This recognition of the moral/causal limitations of natural philosophy would have been welcomed by Bacon and Newton, but dismissed by Franklin and Wesley. Newton would say, for example, that gravity is the agent of, but not the cause of the attraction of bodies; Franklin would say, pragmatically, that he doesn't care. Without some ultimate cause, without metaphysics, science becomes detached from human morality and 'value-free'. Socrates abandoned natural philosophy because, he says he, "was afraid lest my soul should be perfectly blinded through beholding things with the eyes of my body, and through endeavouring to apprehend them by means of the several senses".[72]

But for Shelley as for Kant there was a third way—an *a priori* principle: there was no soul as a separate *materiae primae*, but the body was perfused with an immaterial, imponderable, intangible fluid as most natural philosophers of the Romantic Era believed. Shelley believed, additionally, that this fluid was, like artificial electricity (static), and natural electricity (lightning), animal electricity was also part of the Soul of the Universe, that mankind was, like everything else, subject to the disinterested justice of Necessity. Mankind held no elevated position such as 'caretaker' or 'steward' of the universe. In death, the materials of life are not lost, they simply return to their origins and universal harmony is thereby sustained. This conflicted with Plato's dualistic dichotomy, that, by its very nature, "harmony, which is perfectly such, can never participate of

discord".[73] Shelley's Necessarian view is that the perception of discord simply arises from the distortions inherent to a limited perspective, that, at the universal level, equilibrium is preserved. In *Frankenstein*, Victor's act of creation creates a perturbation which triggers a wave of destruction and the two forces cancel each other out. In Greek mythology, the destructive force was often known as Nemesis.

Interpreted in this way, *Frankenstein* fits neatly into Shelley's philosophical program alongside *Prometheus Unbound* and Alastor. As I have shown, Godwin's *The Pantheon* (1806) appears to have been an inspirational source for the Shelleys. Godwin's description of the Furies, for example, might be a prototype for the description of the unnamed Being in *Frankenstein*:

> "Furies are attendants upon Nemesis... these were the most deformed and horrible of all the Grecian deities: their faces were emaciated, ghastly... they were the bearers of celestial vengeance against offending nations, and carried with them war, pestilence, and famine: Terror, Rage, Paleness and Death followed in their train: they also struck remorse and frensy into the hearts of enormous offenders... when they fixed upon a guilty person, they followed him night and day; walking or sleeping, he saw them; they haunted him in solitude; they pursued him in feasts; the gloomiest cavern could not hide, and the most sumptuous palace could not defend him from their assault. [...] The Greeks regarded these deities with such insurmountable terror, that they scarcely dared pronounce their names".[74]

The function of the Furies is made clear in Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound.* In the translation by Herbert Weir Smyth (1926) "The three-shaped Fates and mindful Furies" are "the helmsman of Necessity".[75] These roles are, in my view, essentially unchanged by Shelley in *Prometheus Unbound* where we encounter the force of Necessity in the shape of Demogorgon, Shelley's enigmatic analogue to the Being in *Frankenstein.* Rieger notes that "critics have never agreed on the significance of Demogorgon, the central fire of the allegory... the one character in *Prometheus Unbound* whose symbolic function has never been interpreted to general satisfaction".[76] It seems that the same might be said of the Being in *Frankenstein.* Chris Baldick recounts, in The Monster speaks: Mary Shelley's

Novel (1987), how *Frankenstein* was considered to contain "no lesson" until after the stage version bowdlerized the narrative and this 'proper'[77] moral was reincorporated into the third edition of the novel by Mary.[78] Here was the source of the superficial readings of *Frankenstein* which obscured the aetiology of *Frankenstein* as a Necessarian myth was. In my view, both the Being and Demogorgon are manifestations of Nemesis.

Shelley was likely familiar with the *Book of Emblems* (1523) by Andrea Alciato (1492-1550), a mnemonic resource for the allegorist. Alciato based his book of engravings on the *Greek Anthology*, a collection of the wisdom of 2000 years of Western culture in the form of epigrams, which was translated into English as verse *Translations chiefly from the Greek Anthology* (1806), by Robert Bland (1779-1825), a friend of Byron's from Harrow.[79] Byron gave Bland's translations high praise in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* in 1808. In the *Book of Emblems* we find another strand of the ancient tradition of Nemesis as the agent of Necessity acting to redress the consequences of presumptuous enthusiasm. For example, Emblem 46 tells us that "Hope and Nemesis are together at the same time upon our altars, clearly that you may not hope for that which is not lawful". Emblem 106 carries a warning about unintentionally evoking a power more powerful than passion.[80] In Emblem 108 we find that that "The winged god has broken the winged lightning-bolt. Now Love shows that there is fire stronger than fire". A new name for Nemesis is coined in Emblem 110—"Anteros, which is the love of virtue" (ant- 'against', eros)—which describes a second Cupid, but one without any darts or arrows which rejects enthusiasm and embraces wisdom.[81] In Emblem 111, entitled "the love of virtue overcoming the other Cupid", Nemesis is named as "the winged enemy of winged Love", and is shown to be the ultimate power by reducing Love so that he "suffers what he's done to others" and "weeps wretchedly... A marvelous thing, fire is burned by fire, and Love hates the madness of Love". Prometheus is cited as the curse of human curiosity in Emblem 103 because the "breasts of wise men—those who seek to know the conditions

of heaven and the gods—are gnawed by divers cares". Emblem 104 warns the astrologer to "beware of predicting anything".[82] Emblem 105 warns of the ironic oversights of ambition, and so "the man dies, who looks to the stars with drawn-back bow, untroubled by the destiny that lies before his feet". The ancient wisdom clearly states that there is a love stronger than passion—the self-regulating love of the universe for itself—and the agent of this love of virtue is Nemesis.

J.W. Mackail translates an epigram by Meleager (c.100 B.C.E.) entitled Nemesis into these words: "Thou saidst, by the Cyprian, what not even a god might, O greatly-daring spirit... and thou wilt not quake even before the flaming thunderbolt of Zeus. Wherefore lo! indignant Nemesis hath set thee forth to see, who wert once so voluble, for an example of rashness of tongue".[83] Clearly, here presumption is being punished. Mackail's summary of the role of Nemesis in antiquity is also illuminating:

> "the strength of Fate was not otherwise to be contended with, and its irony went deeper than human reach. Nemesis was merciless; an error was punished like a crime, and the more confident you had been that you were right, the more severe was the probable penalty. But it was part of Fate's malignity that, though the offender was punished, though justice took care that her own interests were not neglected nor her own majesty slighted, even where a humane judge would have shrunk from inflicting the full penalty, yet for the wronged one himself she provided no remedy; he suffered at his own risk. For falseness in friendship, for scorn of poverty, for wanton cruelty and torture, the wheel of fortune brought round some form of retribution, but the sufferers were like pieces swept off the board, once and for all".[84]

The comparison to a board-game being cleared by an invisible hand is worth comparing to Hogg's chess metaphor in the *Memoirs* (noted above)—teaching by example is more effective than teaching by rules. But what is most interesting is that Nemesis is completely disinterested and has no motivation to preserve the innocent. The Being in *Frankenstein* sees its 'work' to be to destroy those innocents whom Victor loves: William, Justine, Clerval, and, eventually, Victor's bride destroyed on their wedding night. In Bland's translation of another epigram by Meleager entitled Clarissa, when she loos'd her virgin zone ('Clarissa' means 'famous'—sure to attract the attention of the

gods), we find the line "Death claimed the bridegroom's right",[85] a prominent element in *Frankenstein.* Bland comments in a note that this "turn of thought recurs continually in the ancient writers",[86] and then he cites lines from Achilles Tatius ("The tomb, my child is thy bridal bed... malignant destiny has extinguished the torch of Hymen, and now lights up that of thy funeral"), lines from Ovid, and the lines spoken by Shakespeare's Capulet:

> "Oh son, the night before thy wedding day
> Hath death lain with thy wife; see there she lies
> Flower as she was, deflowered now by him.
> Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir,
> My daughter has hath wedded. I will die
> And leave him all".[87]

The similarity of theme is further extended by the idea of the despondency and death of the victim's father. Recall that, in *Frankenstein*, Victor describes his father after he told him of Elizabeth's death: "excellent and venerable old man! his eyes wandered in vacancy, for they had lost their charm and their delight—his niece, his more than daughter, whom he doated on... He could not live under the horrors that were accumulated around him; an apoplectic fit was brought on, and in a few days he died in my arms".[88] These parallel themes speak strongly for the classical foundations of *Frankenstein.* For example, where Tatius refers to 'malignant destiny,' Shelley in his Review refers to the 'malevolence of the single Being'.

Nemesis, in Godwin's account, is the Goddess of Vengeance, also known as the Vengeance of Heaven, as the child of Necessity, and is closely allied with Justice. In Godwin's words, Nemesis was "severe and inexorable in her proceedings", and "her hand was heavy, and its inevitable blow crushed the guilty into dust".[89] Godwin also tells us that, in ancient Athens, there was a painting of a composite being by Zeuxis (c.468 B.C.E.), the artist who presumed to best Nature in depicting beauty. Zeuxis's painting depicts Aphrodite, Helen, Venus or Nemesis—depending on which account one reads.[90] In Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* there is also mention of Zeuxis's presumptuous study of

beauty which was the "combined medium of the real beauty of the [five] virgins of Crotona".[91] Zeuxis also appears in *The Protagoras*,[92] in both the Dacier (4th ed. 1749) and Taylor (1804) translations of Plato's works that Shelley is known to have possessed. (*The Protagoras* also contains Plato's account of the Promethean myth.) Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE) recorded that Zeuxis "did not believe that it was possible to find in one body all the things he looked for in beauty, since nature has not refined to perfection any single object in all its parts".[93] In 1501, following Zeuxis's example, but attempting instead to form a composite image from the rules of proportion of competing schools of Renaissance theory, Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) created a graphic monstrosity which he entitled 'Nemesis'. Dürer demonstrated that only a presumptuous artist would attempt to rationally define beauty—reason alone generates an ugly abortion. Dürer concluded that "There lives no man upon earth who can give a final judgment upon what the most beautiful shape of a man may be; God only knows that...".[94] Finally, Shaftesbury, in his essay Sensus Communis (1709; 'Common Sense') also wrote of Zeuxis's technique, saying that, like Michaelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), he tended toward the "gigantic".[95] Like Zeuxis, Victor Frankenstein also attempts to better Nature by assembling a composite Being of "gigantic stature; that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionably large" and, like Dürer, he recoils from the repulsive result of his attempt, saying that its "limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! -- Great God!".[96]

These Classical and Renaissance antecedents to *Frankenstein* would have been well known to the Shelleys and indicate that the Being was an allegorical representation of Nemesis, the nemesis of the presumptuous, the agent of Necessity. Nemesis was in the spirit of the times. In 1808 Goethe composed a sonnet entitled Nemesis which tells of the retribution earned by the enthusiasts and the solitary.[97] At the same time *Frankenstein* was conceived (1816) Byron was writing Canto III of *Childe Harolde* in the boat on lake

Geneva with Shelley. In Canto IV, written after M.G. 'Monk' Lewis arrives at villa Diodati and there is translation/discussion of Goethe's *Faust Part I* (1808;),[98] Byron also invokes the agent of the 'dread Power / Nameless', Nemesis, to redress an imbalance.[99] Byron employs Nemesis in a similar role in Manfred (1817).

Nemesis was also allegorized by Shelley as Demogorgon, as Mary Shelley clearly stated in her genealogical Note On The Prometheus Unbound (1839): "Shelley adapted the catastrophe of this story to his peculiar views. The son, greater than his father, born of the nuptials of Jupiter and Thetis [sic], was to dethrone Evil, and bring back a happier reign than that of Saturn".[100] According to Godwin, Themis was the Goddess of Justice and Righteousness,[101] also known as Necessity,[102] who bore Astrea, the Fates, and Nemesis to Jupiter. (In Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*, Adrasteia, "the inescapable," is Nemesis, who "punished presumptuous words and excessive happiness".[103]) Linda M Lewis, in *The Promethean Politics of Milton, Blake, and Shelley* (1992), gives a succinct overview of the critical interpretations of Demogorgon as Nemesis, Necessity, Retribution, and Justice, but, in my view, makes Demogorgon an evil power based on Milton's Christian view of a Pagan "dense, foul obscurity".[104] Shelley was not a Christian so his Demogorgon is not likely to have invoked a "Christian Satan".[105]

In *Prometheus Unbound*, it is the chthonic Demogorgon who, animated by the chain of causation beginning in Prometheus's act of presumption, overthrows the tyrant Jupiter and who restores natural order in Shelley's reworking of Aeschylus's drama. (We find exactly the same use of Nemesis in *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776), by Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) where he writes "The tyrants, who would have disgraced the society of gods and men, were thrown headlong, by the inexorable Nemesis, into the Tartarean abyss".[106]) But Shelley aims to avoid Aeschylus's ideological compromise of a reconciliation between oppressed and oppressor. We know that Shelley rejected the false 'freedom' of Jupiter Eleutherius and the contradiction implicit in Eleutherism (that one must surrender one's freedom to be free). David Lee Clark's view

is that the role occupied by Demogorgon is clear: "Although [Shelley's] God is still the soul of the universe, that animating force in all nature, Shelley considers that this God is subject to the Principle of Necessity—a mysterious and omnipotent Power that sustains and governs all life".[107] As early as 1811 Shelley writes of a "mysterious principle which regulates the proceedings of the universe" in his Essay On A Future State.[108] We have already encountered some of Shelley's arguments for Necessity as a Power superior to any God. He is explicit in his Note to Queen Mab (on the line 'Necessity! Thou Mother of the World!') that, even assuming "the existence of this hypothetic being [God], he is also subjected to the dominion of an immutable Necessity".[109] The same formula appears in *Prometheus Unbound* when Asia asks of Demogorgon, "Who is the master of the slave?" (where the slave is Jupiter).[110] Speaking of Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change, Demogorgon replies, "To these / All things are subject but eternal Love".[111] As noted in the section on emblems, the 'love of virtue' is another name for Nemesis.

10. FRANKENSTEIN RESITUATED

The Being as the Great Alastor

"Nemesis of Greece" hails the "great Alastor ... of Persia" as "king of the world",[1] so Peacock tells us in a footnote to *Nightmare Abbey*. The opening of Alastor also contains an invocation of Necessity as the Poet's muse: "Mother of this unfathomable world!" (18). Peacock writes in his *Memoirs of Shelley* that it was he who proposed to Shelley the Greek word 'Alastor' for the title of the poem, in the sense of "an evil genius, ...spirit of solitude as a spirit of evil".[2] It is this, the dark spirit of Nature, who seeks vengeance by giving "A vision to the sleep of him who spurned / Her choicest gifts" (204-5). This might serve as a description of the Being in *Frankenstein* viewed as a facet of Victor's self-centered and secluded mind—as "an evil spirit".[3] As I shall show, Alastor is so closely linked to Plato's *Phaedo*, that it must be Shelley's response to Hogg's *Memoirs*. Alastor is also closely related to *Frankenstein*, and, I believe, both works are, conceptually, part of Shelley's "profounder project" and perhaps also responses to Wordsworth's praise for the new science.

Victor Frankenstein reiterates Socrates's statements about natural philosophy in *The Phaedo* when he tells Walton that "None but those who have experienced them can conceive of the enticements of science". This is the reason he gives for the two years' self-centered solitary existence "during which I paid no visit to Geneva".[4] The Poet of Alastor tells us that his "self-centered seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin".[5] In both Alastor and *Frankenstein* the hero becomes obsessed with searching for a "single vision" (a phrase reminiscent of Blake's "Single vision & Newtons sleep"), or a "prototype of his conception".[6] Both are filled with "mad enthusiasm",[7] and both are consequently and necessarily 'blasted'.[8] The term 'blasted',[9] is significant for its allegorical association to destructive natural forces:

the wind in Alastor and the lightning in *Frankenstein*. In *Frankenstein*, Victor describes being blasted as being "seized by remorse and the sense of guilt, which hurried me away to a hell of intense tortures... [where] solitude was my only consolation—deep, dark, death-like solitude".[10] Here we are reminded of how, in Gibbon, tyrants are "thrown headlong, by the inexorable Nemesis, into the Tartarean abyss". This is where psychomachia and theomachia meet. In the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound* we find that the creative spirit or inspiration of "extraordinary intellects" is described as the "uncommunicated lightning of their own mind".[11] For Shelley, it seems, genius is blasted by its own excesses.

Shelley published *Alastor or, The Spirit of Solitude—And Other Poems* in February, 1816, before the trip to Geneva. Peacock notes that 'Alastor' is not the hero of the poem.[12] The 'antihero' is the Poet who, writes Shelley, is one of the "luminaries of the world", like Victor, one of "those who attempt to exist without human sympathy... [and] perish through the intensity and passion of their search... who love not their fellow-beings live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave".[13] The parallels between Alastor, *Frankenstein* and the myth of Prometheus are often commented upon—usually in terms of 'over-reaching'. Stephen C. Behrendt, in his Introduction to *Zastrozzi—a Romance, and, St. Irvyne—or, The Rosicrucian—a romance* (2002) notes that obsession was a favorite theme of Shelley's "powerful moral conscience", and the "hallmark of all his work".[14] The modern sense of the word 'obsession' (the "tormenting of a person from without by an evil spirit"[15]) conveys much that was in the Romantic-era condition of an 'enthusiast' (one "who is—really or seemingly—possessed by a god"[16]). For Shelley, the selfishness of enthusiastic obsession, whether of the poet or the scientist, is the most heinous of crimes, it "is the portion of unreflecting infancy and savage solitude, or of those whom toil or evil occupations have 'blunted and rendered torpid'".[17]

Obsessive enthusiasm appears in both of Shelley's early Gothic novels, which "imply in the fates of numerous characters that a preoccupation with an idealized lover bears with it its own dangers, for when these idealized unions cannot be attained (or maintained) what follows is a rush to the moral and physical opposite".[18] The blasted landscape of the Gothic novel functions as an allegory for the destructive forces unleashed by the blind pursuit of revolutionary idealism—industrial or political.[19] Shelley concludes his early novel, *St Irvyne*, with this moral:

> "Let then the memory of these victims to hell and malice live in the remembrance of those who can pity the wanderings of error; let remorse and repentance expiate the offences which arise from the delusion of the passions, and let endless life be sought from Him who alone can give an eternity of happiness".[20]

In *St. Irvyne*, the character Ginotti makes a "choice between a wholly natural bond with his fellow humanity and a repudiation of that bond by an unnatural pursuit of arcane metaphysics and speculative science. The former choice is selfless, the latter selfish; the former is social and integrative, the latter anti-social and isolationistic". The same pattern, Behrendt notes, is replayed in *Frankenstein.*[21] Shelley's earlier novels were as much influenced by his early interest in alchemy as his later poetry and prose were influenced by his interests in natural philosophy.

As an aside: Obsessive enthusiasm was also the subject of Shelley's lost 200-page novel entitled *Hubert Cauvin*, in which Shelley likely associated religious zealotry with revolutionary terror. In a letter of January 7, 1812, Shelley writes to Elizabeth Hitchener that

> "Southey says Expediency ought to [be] made the ground of politics but not of morals. I urged that the most fatal error that ever happened in the world was the separation of political and ethical science. ...You will see in my 'Hubert Cauvin', the name of the tale that I have spoken of, expediency, insincerity, mystery, adherence to which I do not consider the remotest occasions of violence and blood in the French revolution; indeed their fatal effects are to be traced in every one instance of human life where vice and misery enter into the features of the portraiture."

Based on Shelley's fascination with accounts of Christian atrocities and his fascination with pioneers of natural philosophy, it is my speculation that Shelley's lost novel was a fictionalized account of the 1533 burning in Geneva (which was part of France from 1798-1815) of the Spanish reformer, Michael Servetus (1511-1553; Pantheist, proto-Unitarian, Socinian and 'scientist' who discovered the circulation of the blood through the lungs), by John Calvin (1509-1564; whose family name was originally Cauvin). Servetus, in Coleridge's opinion, was a "rabid enthusiast" who had "thrust himself into the fire";[22] his execution as a heretic was supported by all German, Swiss and English Protestant churches. But, from Shelley's note to Hitchener it is clear that Shelley is against 'expediency' in that it is opposed to 'necessity'. Expediency is a quality associated with short-term considerations, meaning those considerations which ignore prudence and precaution and implicitly accept whatever 'collateral damage' might be incurred in the course of 'progress'. For Shelley, it is expediency which is the cause of "vice and misery".

The Poet of Alastor compares himself to an Æolian harp, wishing that his "long-forgotten lyre/ .. / May modulate with murmurs of the air" (42). He is seeking inspiration while ignoring those about him who love him. In the terms of *The Phaedo*, he is 'practicing death' by ignoring the here-and-now for the illusion of future reward. The Poet then dreams a charmed dream of his ideal and becomes enamoured of the "veilèd maid" (151) who sings of "Knowledge and truth and virtue" (158) and plays her "ineffable tale" (168) on a "strange harp" (166). This is the gift of the Great Alastor to he who had "spurned" Nature's "choicest gifts". The maid exposes the Poet to the "warm light" (174) of Life. But, when the Poet attempts to embrace the ineffable, "blackness veiled his dizzy eyes" (188) and so he becomes obsessed, dead to the world, and the pursuit of his own death begins. The obvious parallel in *Frankenstein* is when Victor discovers the secret to life

and "a sudden light broke in upon me—a light so brilliant and wondrous, yet so simple... I became dizzy with the immensity of the prospect".[23]

In *The Phaedo* we are told that Man's nature is insufficient "for such an elevated survey"[24] of the ineffable. In Plato's metaphor of the Cave we are told that, once exposed to such brilliant knowledge, there is no turning back because the uncomprehending masses would "kill anyone who tried to release them and take them up".[25] (Modern interpretations of Plato's Cave metaphor, like modern interpretations of the Promethean myth, however, veer towards the view that favours the glory-seeker).

Shelley would have sided with Socrates's opponents in *The Phaedo*, believing that the 'soul' comes into being with the body, like the harmony of a "well-modulated lyre",[26] such that "when our body suffers either intention or remission, through diseases and other maladies, the soul must from necessity immediately perish... but the remaining parts of the body of each person must subsist for a long time, till they are either burnt or become rotten".[27] This in keeping with Shelley's monistic understanding of the life-force as an immaterial material, or imponderable. The image of the lyre's harmony performs a similar function of a *tertium quid* between materialism and spiritualism. Life as 'harmony' is defined as a "combination or adaptation of parts... so as to form a consistent and orderly whole", and as "peaceableness, concord".[28] At the individual and at the universal scale, harmony is the equilibrium which Necessity preserves by banishing disharmony or disequilibrium—today we might call this a self-regulating, homeostatic, or autopoietic function.

In his Defence of Poetry Shelley writes that "there is a principle within the human being, and perhaps within all sentient beings, which... produces not melody alone, but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds or motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them".[29] One of Shelley's examples of harmony is the "wonderful adaptation of substances which act to those which are acted upon; of the eye to light, and of light to the eye; the ear to sound, and of sound to the ear".[30] The eye is

commonly used as an example of intelligent design in nature. But man's reason sets him apart from other living creatures that retain their natural prudence. Harmony only exists at the societal level through an effort of will: "Man in society, with all his passions and his pleasures, next becomes the object of the passions and pleasures of man... The social sympathies, or those laws from which, as from its elements, society results, begin to develop themselves from the moment that two human beings coexist".[31] Here Shelley describes how a man coevolves with his social environment. The all-encompassing harmony of the universal level is Shelley's 'Soul of the Universe' which David Lee Clark describes as the "soul of goodness pervading life; he is the charity men feel in their hearts; he is the principle of harmony throughout nature; he is the music heard in the heart of man; he is Intellectual Beauty. And finally he is not a person or a thing, nor has he a local habitation or a name".[32]

Under the influence of their cupidities,[33] Victor and the Poet of Alastor both become "divine wanderer[s]",[34] 'hurried away' from harmonious coexistence—Victor from the "amiableness of domestic affection",[35] the Poet from the "spirit of sweet human love".[36] Both antiheroes are seeking the secret of life, initially in "charnel houses".[37] Both antiheroes travel to the mountains where Prometheus was chained in most versions of the myth—"Caucasus",[38] otherwise known as "Tartary".[39] Both of their journeys are to their deaths: in Alastor the Poet cries "I have beheld / The path of thy departure. Sleep and death / Shall not divide us long";[40] in *Frankenstein* Victor cries "Never will I omit my search, until he or I perish; and then with what ecstasy shall I join my Elizabeth".[41] The message of Alastor is that those who "love not their fellow-beings live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave".[42] The rule for a happy life which Victor transmits to Walton is that no man should allow "any pursuit whatsoever to interfere with the tranquillity of his domestic affections".[43] To do otherwise is to disturb the natural order and thereby incur Necessity's wrath.

Volney tells us that preserving the "domestic virtues", the most important of which are "paternal tenderness" and "conjugal love",[44] are the key to self-preservation. The models for paternal tenderness in *Frankenstein* are Victor's father, Alphonse (good), and Victor himself (very bad). Victor is constantly recalling his father's advice in times of adversity, though it fails to govern his actions which, since he witnessed the destruction of the oak at Belrive by lightning, were directed by his enthusiasm to understand the power of the universe. In this he greatly resembles Hogg's Alexy who constantly neglects the principle he discovers early in life, that "I must only value myself, and all my faculties, in proportion as I was capable of promoting the happiness of my fellow-creatures"—the principle of benevolence which is missing from Bentham's formula.

The models for conjugal affection in *Frankenstein* and Alastor are also related: Elizabeth and the swan. Once these depart from the antiheroes there is nothing worth turning back for. In *Frankenstein* the Being wreaks its revenge on Victor by breaking the necks of his victims—Elizabeth's last of all. In Alastor, the Poet's toxic presence which has left his "cold fireside and alienated home" (76) alienates the swan which flies away to where its "sweet mate will twine her downy neck / With thine",[45] in domestic bliss. The coarse "dying notes" of the swan is a word-play on 'swansong', the departure of the bird—the symbol of all poets[46]—and the Poet's isolation. This is Shelley's revision of the myth in *The Phaedo* where Socrates refers to swans as the servants of Apollo, like the oracles, gifted with the ability to utter prophecies. When the time comes for swans to die, holds Socrates, they sing joyously at the prospect of rejoining their master.[47] For Shelley, Socrates's 'practice of death' would have appeared ridiculous; he would more likely have supported Socrates's opponents who held of the swans that, "in consequence of their being afflicted at death, their song is the result of grief",[48] in regret of leaving the world for some uncertain future state.

That Alastor is part of Shelley's "profounder project" is indicated by his implementation of Plato's swan symbol as an improvement over the trivial treatment that Hogg had given it. In Hogg's *Memoirs*, Alexy, who was standing guard over a corpse in a ruined church at night as part of his initiation into the Eleutheri, was accosted by 'spectres' which the Eleutherarch confesses to be a trick involving specially trained swans.[49] None of Plato's allegory is preserved in Hogg's fictionalized version of *The Phaedo*. Shelley's other complaint of Hogg's 'trivialization' of *The Phaedo* had concerned Hogg's use of the 'Eleutherarchs'. Plato's equivalent are the ascetics who 'practice death', but, in Hogg's *Memoirs*, the Eleutherian worship the Soul of the Universe. The Eleutheri are also an 'association'. As Godwin had pointedly brought to Shelley's attention, Necessarianism relies upon self-reflection, not group action. Perhaps Hogg was mocking the core of Shelley's Necessarianism. If so, Shelley used Alastor to show that asceticism is evil and shall incur the wrath of Nemesis. The same ethical message is contained in *Frankenstein.*

In the Preface to *Alastor*, Shelley explains that it is the crises experienced by the "pure and tender-hearted" which constitute the "most interesting situations of the human mind".[50] These crises occur when, like the young Socrates, they are blinded by natural philosophy until "the vacancy of their spirits suddenly makes itself felt".[51] The pivotal point, or volta, in Alastor (after the swan departs, and when the Poet embarks on a one-way journey in the unseaworthy "little shallup") is reached when the Poet is "startled by his own thoughts he looked around. / There was no fair fiend near him",[52] and the Poet sees the 'vacancy of his spirit'. Similarly, just before Victor embarks on his one-way journey in his "little skiff", he tells Walton, that "I now felt as if a film had been taken from before my eyes, and that I, for the first time, saw clearly",[53] and he also sees the 'vacancy of his spirit'.[54] It is generally accepted that the Shelleys' trip up the Thames in "a little skiff",[55] with Peacock, in August of 1815 had a great influence on Shelley, a

similar form of revelation perhaps. This trip on the Thames, with its water currents, skiff, and swans, would have had a deep Platonic resonance for Shelley. As already noted, Hogg had also made use of the setting of a skiff on a "treacherous and tremendous element" in the 'spot of time' in his *Memoirs* which was likely based on Plato's *Phaedo*. And, as I have noted above, *Frankenstein*, Mont Blanc, and Alastor all use metaphors for powerful currents sweeping their protagonists' minds through the narrative. The prototype for this might be found in *The Phaedo*[56] where the soul "is driven by necessity to an abode accommodated to its nature",[57] in one of the "concavities... perforated into one another under the earth... through which a great quantity of water flows into the different hollows of the earth".[58] *The Phaedo* makes mention of the same four rivers—allegories for the mind—described by Milton in Book II of *Paradise Lost*:

> Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
> Into the burning lake their baleful streams--
> Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
> Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
> Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
> Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegeton,
> Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage. (575-581)

Shelley's Review of *Frankenstein* also clearly relates the novel to Alastor. Shelley notes that there "is only one instance [in *Frankenstein*], however, in which we detect the least approach to imitation, and that is the conduct of the incident of Frankenstein's landing in Ireland".[59] (Shelley himself had experienced a stormy landing in Northern Ireland in 1812,[60] before he had met Mary) A comparison of pages 168-170 of *Frankenstein* reveals that they do indeed bear more than a strong similarity to pages 23-26 of Alastor, and at these points both works resemble the description in Plato's *Phaedo* of the "ocean of life".[61] The antiheroes in both *Frankenstein* and Alastor enter the second phase of the narrative with the stepping aboard a "little skiff", or a "little shallup". I believe that this allegorical element comes from Plato. In *The Phaedo* we are told by Socrates's opponents that "it is necessary... by receiving the best of human reasons, and

that which is the most difficult of confutation, to venture upon this as on a raft, and sail in it through the ocean of life".[62] This duty is ignored by Victor and the Poet who, blindly following their enthusiasm, blunder onto the waters of life in their leaky boats. The Poet of Alastor cries out "O stream! / Whose source is inaccessibly profound, /.../ Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome stillness, / Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulfs, / Thy searchless fountain, and invisible course / Have each their type in me". Victor also uses a water metaphor to describe his enthusiasm: "I find it arise, like a mountain river, from ignoble and almost forgotten sources; but, swelling as it proceeded, it became the torrent which, in its course, has swept away all my hopes and joys".[63] In *The Phaedo* and in Alastor, the torrent plunges into the center of the landscape, allegorical of the mind, as into a vortex of infinite regression—the centre of self-centeredness. In *Frankenstein*, the Being Victor made with "infinite pains and care",[64] lures him into the "frozen ocean".[65]

The Poet of Alastor was initially, like Victor, "pure and tender-hearted" but made the "generous error"[66] of presuming to transcend the world by seeking "self-centered seclusion".[67] Victor had "begun life with benevolent intentions",[68] but his presumption in attempting to transcend Nature forced him into his "deep, dark, death-like solitude".[69] The Being also states that "I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend".[70] These are the misguided souls who started out benevolent. But, for Shelley, there are other, "meaner spirits", the tyrants and demagogues who in the Preface to *Alastor*, are

> "deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse. They languish, because none feel with them their common nature. They are morally dead. They are neither friends, nor lovers, nor fathers, nor citizens of the world, nor benefactors of their country".[71]

These are the ones who are materially self-interested rather than idealistically self-interested. Part of the "instruction to actual men"[72] contained in Alastor is that there are two types of evil: that brought about by the self-centered intentions of Plato's school of idealists; and that brought about by the self-centered intentions of materialists—also mentioned in *The Phaedo* as those "addicted to gluttony, arrogant injuries, and drinking, and this without any fear of consequences".[73] The moral is that one can become too absorbed in metaphysics or one can totally ignore metaphysics—the 'enthusiasms' of mysticism and materialism—, and both routes lead to one's demise. But there is a third way, a *tertium quid*, the selfless, socially sustaining way of "domestic affection",[74] or "sweet human love",[75] in which the first principle is benevolence. For the Necessarian, it is a vain endeavour for the human mind to attempt to comprehend the complexity of the world which sustains and transcends it—to attempt to do so is an invitation to solitude and madness; one's objective should be to participate benevolently in the world and gain one's wisdom of it in that way.

This is well illustrated in *Frankenstein* when Victor tells of a temporary recovery he made under the influence of his friend, Clerval; he observes that a "selfish pursuit had cramped and narrowed me, until your gentleness and affection warmed and opened my senses; I became the same happy creature who, a few years ago, loving and beloved by all, had no sorrow or care".[76] This speech is, of course, made by a blasted and dying Victor, recently rescued from the frozen ocean, and long after the Being has destroyed Clerval. As in *Frankenstein*, the first part of Alastor relates the progress of the antihero from curiosity to 'mad enthusiasm' for a Being that he too creates; in Alastor, however, this Being arises solely in the Poet's mind. The inspired Poet opens his mind to wait for revelation—"thy breath, Great Parent",[77] who is the "Mother of this unfathomable world"[78] (a reformulation of the line from *Queen Mab*, "Necessity! Thou Mother of the World")—"till meaning on his vacant mind / Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw / The thrilling secrets of the birth of time".[79] The Poet falls victim to his own Being which

holds him "suspended in its web",[80] like a "fierce fiend",[81] and, by comparison, the "mystery and Majesty of Earth" becomes an "empty scene".[82] In both *Frankenstein* and Alastor the 'fiend' serves the same purpose.

Victor's simple statement that "Natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated my fate",[83] has its equivalent in the Preface to *Alastor* where Shelley explains that the Poet's "adventurous genius [is] led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe".[84] This idea of an enlightening 'genius', or spirit, connects Alastor and *Frankenstein* through another work; the Poet, in his quest for the universal secret, covers exactly the same geography as that covered in Chapter II, The Reverie, in *Volney's Ruins* (1791; see note),[85] the same book that the Being in *Frankenstein* learns from—when Felix reads it aloud to Safie in the old man's cottage—and which makes the Being turn "away with disgust and loathing"[86] at man's violence to man. Volney writes of a Traveler within the ruins of an ancient empire who covers his head in despair and complains that a

> "fatal necessity rules with the hand of chance the lot of mortals! But no: it is the justice of heaven fulfilling its decrees!—a God of mystery exercising his incomprehensible judgments! Doubtless he has pronounced a secret anathema against this land: blasting with maledictions the present, for the sins of past generations. Oh! who shall dare to fathom the depths of the Omnipotent? [...] Alas! I have wandered over the earth, I have visited cities and countries; and seeing everywhere misery and desolation, a sense of the evils which afflict my fellow men hath deeply oppressed my soul".[87]

In a temple ruin he meets with a Phantom—"an apparition, pale, clothed in large and flowing robes"; this is the "Genius of tombs and ruins"[88]—who tells him that: "No, the caprice of which man complains is not the caprice of fate; the darkness that misleads his reason is not the darkness of God; the source of his calamities is not in the distant heavens, it is beside him on the earth; it is not concealed in the bosom of the divinity; it dwells within himself, he bears it in his own heart".[89] (Here, following Voltaire, was another antecedent of Shelley's definition of morality as an uniquely human trait).

'Caprice' or presumption is redressed by a natural, primordial justice which Volney calls the 'legislator'. (Shelley, the Necessarian, likely took the concept of the "legislators of the world"—the closing words from his unfinished A Defense of Poetry [1820][90]—from Volney). In *The Ruins* the Genius provides a new perspective for the reader. Laying his hand on the head of the Traveler, the Genius says "I will reveal to thee the science of ages and the wisdom of the tombs," but, again, enlightenment is possible only if the Traveler abandons his mortal body:

> "'Rise, mortal, and extricate thy senses from the dust in which thou movest'. Suddenly a celestial flame seemed to dissolve the bands which held us to the earth; and, like a light vapor, borne on the wings of the Genius, I felt myself wafted to the regions above. Thence, from the aerial heights, looking down upon the earth, I perceived a scene altogether new".[91]

From this enlightened perspective the Traveler witnesses a global revolution from which "a legislator arose" and delivers the following speech:

> "Here is the primordial basis, the physical origin of all justice and of all right. [...] Whatever be the active power, the moving cause, that governs the universe, since it has given to all men the same organs, the same sensations, and the same wants, it has thereby declared that it has given to all the same right to the use of its treasures, and that all men are equal in the order of nature. [...] And, since this power has given to each man the necessary means of preserving his own existence, it is evident that it has constituted them all independent one of another; that it has created them free; that no one is subject to another; that each one is absolute proprietor of his own person. [...] Equality and liberty are, therefore, two essential attributes of man, two laws of the Divinity, constitutional and unchangeable, like the physical properties of matter".[92]

Here Volney appears to paraphrase the *American Declaration of Independence*: "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness..." (1776). Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), a Deist, a Freemason, the author of the *Declaration*, and President of the U.S. (1801-9), had originally called for a rebellion every twenty years to prevent the accumulation of capital and thereby maintain equality

between people.[93] Jefferson was inspired by the uncomplicated lives of the Iroquois and his belief in a Deistic Soul of the Universe had much in common with Indian beliefs. Jefferson had made the following famous statement in his *Notes on Virginia* (1783-84):

> "...let our work-shops remain in Europe. It is better to carry provisions and material to workmen there, than bring them to the provisions and materials, and with them their manners and principles. The loss by transportation of commodities across the Atlantic will be made up in happiness and permanence of government. The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body".[94]

Initially, Jefferson had not wanted the Americas to experience the same problems of Industrialism that he had witnessed in Europe. He wrote in a letter of January 16, 1787 to Edward Carrington that, "I am convinced that those societies (as the Indians) which live without government enjoy in their general mass an infinitely greater degree of happiness than those who live under European governments".[95] Volney blames mankind's loss of a sustainable equilibrium on "ignorance and cupidity... [as] the twin sources of all the torments of man"—patriarchal traits.[96] It is the same message in all three literary works examined here, *The Ruins*, *Alastor* and *Frankenstein*—that man is the author of evil in the world and should take responsibility for his individual duties, rather than delegate responsibility to positive institutions such as those of the church and the state which, because they are human institutions, become forms of despotism, and the domain of tyrants and demagogues. This, for Shelley, is also the point of Godwin's *Political Justice* which was "the first moral system explicitly founded upon the doctrine of the negativeness of rights and the positiveness of duties".[97]

Continuing on from his discussion of *Political Justice*, in his Review Of William Godwin's Mandeville (1817), Shelley adds that Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794) is easy to misinterpret, in that a superficial reading of the character of Falkland might conclude that this "is an extraordinary mind, and undoubtedly was capable of the very sublimest enterprises of thought".[98] The same might be said of superficial readings of the characters

of Victor and the Poet of Alastor. I have already commented on a similar reading of Plato's Cave metaphor. The allegory in the second part of Alastor—the pursuit of the evil spirit of solitude—is as obscure as is the allegory of the second part—the pursuit of the evil Being—in *Frankenstein.* Both have their parallel in *Caleb Williams*, who likens his experience to what might be another manifestation of Necessity, "the eye of Omniscience, pursuing the guilty sinner, and darting a ray that awakens him to new sensibility, at the very moment that, otherwise, exhausted nature would lull him into a temporary oblivion of the reproaches of his conscience".[99] But an analysis of Necessarianism in Godwin's oeuvre is beyond the scope of the present study. The blasting vision of omniscience, however, also appears in The Daemon of the World (published with Alastor) and in *Prometheus Unbound.*

11. FRANKENSTEIN RESITUATED

The Being as Daemon and D-m-g-rg-n

For Shelley, any form of enthusiasm which isolates individuals from society is a source of evil in the world. In the poem which immediately follows Alastor in the 1816 edition, elsewhere entitled To Coleridge[1] (possibly written to accompany the sonnet To Wordsworth[2] fifteen pages later on), Shelley chastises Coleridge for his superstitions (his dualism), his self-imposed solitude, and his love misspent in philosophical pursuits. The consequence of such selfishness is that:

> Thine own soul still is true to thee,
> But changed to a foul fiend through misery.
> This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever
> Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,
> Dream not to chase: the mad endeavour
> Would scourge thee to severer pangs.
> Be as thou art. Thy settled fate,
> Dark as it is, all change would aggravate. (25-36)

Perhaps Shelley was thinking of Coleridge when he wrote Alastor. The nature of the power "which strikes the luminaries of the world [...and] dooms ... those meaner spirits" is not to be controlled by Man—it acts to maintain a greater equilibrium which "all change would aggravate". The fear of non-existence sets limits on the degree of change which will be tolerated. This power is illustrated by the *Other Poems* which accompanied Alastor in the 1816 volume, particularly in The Daemon of the World, which is a slightly modified fragment from *Queen Mab*. The Daemon of the World opens with a quotation from Book V of Lucan's *Pharsalia* (another account of the Roman civil war): "...for into one vast mass / All time was gathered, and her panting chest / Groaned 'neath the centuries" (208-210). In a letter to Hogg written at the "end of August",[3] 1815,

Shelley had noted that he was reading Lucan in which we discover that this suffering is the effect of a "mystic power" (106), or "breath divine" (154), "Breathed from the living rock" (194), which inspires a Delphic priestess, the Cumaean Sibyl, Phemonoe, and "Drove out her former mind" (198):

> Caught in a virgin's breast, this deity
> Strikes on the human spirit: then a voice
> Sounds from her breast, as when the lofty peak
> Of Etna boils... (109-113).

The invocation of mad enthusiasm—the exposure to knowledge too vast for human comprehension—is always accompanied by the 'fatal aspect' of disinterested, amoral Necessity which dictates how the imbalance should be restored, rewarding benevolence and punishing presumption only incidentally as these are human perceptions. The words "Fatal Aspect!" are the opening words of Herbert's opening sonnet of a series which celebrate Necessity as the Soul of the Universe in a female form (see note).[4] For the oracle, enthusiasm, or possession by a God, has the consequence of an "untimely death" (see note).[5] As we have seen, for Shelley, the power, which also inhabits the 'luminaries of the world', has similar fatal consequences. In Phemonoe's case, after she has uttered her oracle to the Roman Appius, she collapses when "...by a Stygian draught / Of the forgetful river, Phoebus [Apollo] snatched / Back from her soul his secrets; and she fell / Yet hardly living" (258-61).

Recall that, in Hogg's *Memoirs*, Alexy is barely saved from the fatal "Lethean draught" which was administered for having experienced the forbidden pleasures of the Seraglio.[6] Godwin gives the archetypal account of the fatal effects of exposure to the 'face of the universe' in the myth of Semele retold in *The Pantheon*. The demigoddess Semele was seduced by Jupiter in mortal form but jealous Juno convinced her to ask Jupiter to reveal himself to her in the radiation of his full glory, whereupon, "Semele was reduced to ashes in a moment".[7] An English libretto of this myth was adapted by George Frederick Handel

(1685-1759) into his famous oratorio, *Semele* (1743). Coleridge's friend and fellow poet, Charles Lamb (1775-1834), also mentions Semele in his parody of evangelical ballads, Satan in Search of a Wife (1831).[8]

This scene, that of a deity snatching back its secrets, is the opening of The Daemon of the World (Lucan's Phemonoe becomes Ianthe in *Queen Mab*). The Daemon's chariot appears with a "rushing sound" that "sweeps / Around a lonely ruin" (84) like the sound of the Phantom/Genius appearing in Volney's *Ruins*. The Daemon is likened to electricity reminiscent of Herbert's sonnet (see Ch. 6),[9] "A shape so wild, so bright, so beautiful... / .../ Hung like a mist of light" (86). The Daemon tells the unconscious Ianthe that she has experienced a great gift, that of seeing "The truths which wisest poets see / Dimly" (87). Then, just as Volney's Phantom had commanded the Traveler, Shelley's Daemon commands Ianthe's spirit to abandon its mortal form, to "leave for mine and me / Earth's unsubstantial mimickry!" (88). They leave Mt. Parnassus in an electrical storm:

> From the swift sweep of wings
> The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew;
> And where the burning wheels
> Eddied above the mountain's loftiest peak
> Was traced a line of lightning (90).

The Daemon, accompanied by the spirit of Ianthe, rises over the ocean until "Earth's distant orb appeared / The smallest light that twinkles in the heavens" (92). Here, in a "wilderness / of worlds" (93), a "wilderness of harmony" (98), they find a "fitting temple" for the "Spirit of Nature" (93), the "mightiest Daemon" (95). Here, in a scene reminiscent of the revelations experienced by both the Poet of Alastor and Victor Frankenstein, Ianthe enters the temple with the Daemon and they view the "boundless universe" (98) where she pauses "in ecstasy" (99). As the Earth rolls by she sees the truth of human history:

> And they did build vast trophies, instruments
> Of murder, human bones, barbaric gold,
> Skins torn from living men, and towers of skulls
> With sightless holes gazing on blinder heaven,
> Mitres, and crowns, and brazen chariots stained
> With blood, and scrolls of mystic wickedness,
> The sanguine codes of venerable crime (99-100).

And finally she sees the Christian God wearing a "threefold crown", who secretly "did gnaw / By fits, with secret smiles, a human heart" (100). The followers of this anthropomorphic God are described in the final lines of the Daemon of the World:

> Brooking no eye to witness their foul shame,
> Which human hearts must feel, while human tongues
> Tremble to speak, they did rage horribly,
> Breathing in self-contempt fierce blasphemies
> Against the Daemon of the World, and high
> Hurling their armed hands where the pure Spirit,
> Serene and inaccessibly secure,
> Stood on an isolated pinnacle.
> The flood of ages combating below,
> The depth of the unbounded universe
> Above, and all around
> Necessity's unchanging harmony. (280-291).

The Daemon of the World is the "pure Spirit... Necessity's unchanging harmony" which rules above any other God. It is exposure to this pure Spirit—Necessity, the Soul of the Universe—which, we are told in the Preface to *Alastor*, "strikes the luminaries of the world with sudden darkness and extinction by awakening them to too exquisite a perception of its influences".[10] We have already seen how the Poet and Victor are similarly awakened. Here, in "Necessity's unchanging harmony" we find the deeper interpretation of Shelley's Preface to *Frankenstein* where he wrote of "the excellence of universal virtue".[11]

In his essay on Necessity (1813), Shelley wrote that when "contemplating the events which compose the moral and material universe, he beholds only an immense and uninterrupted chain of causes and effects, no one of which could occupy any other place than it does occupy, or act in any other place than it does act".[12] Necessity continually acts to preserve this 'unchanging harmony' of the universe, constantly redressing any presumptuous acts which might cause the sustainability of its equilibrium to become precarious. In this respect 'nothing changes' and 'everything changes', an ambiguity which combines Parmenidean and Heraclitean views respectively, where 'being *is* becoming', and existence is best described as a 'permanent transience'. In his Preface to *Prometheus Unbound* Shelley describes this as when the "mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change".[13]

Today we hear echoes of such a philosophy in Buddhism, Bergson, and in Nietzsche. But, in English Literature, the source is found in Herbert's Deism. R.D. Bedford's insightful analysis of Herbert's philosophy, *The Defence of Truth* (1979), tells us that because the spirit of the universe perfuses everything, instinct and intuition naturally lead to 'peace of mind' and harmony. This concept was previously and most famously articulated by Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677). In Herbert's metaphysics this becomes "the agent of life's conservation and continued evolution".[14] All animals except man look naturally to their self-preservation, will-to-live, or *conatus*.[15] In the second part of his *Ethics* (1677), the Nature and Origin of the Mind, Spinoza explains the source of *conatus* by imagining a series of beings: a second-order being composed of first-order beings, and then a third-order being composed of second-order beings which "can be affected in many other ways without any change of its form". Spinoza continues: "And if thus still further we proceed to infinity, we can easily conceive that all nature is one individual whose parts, that is, all bodies, vary in infinite ways without any change of the individual as a whole".[16] A universal being possesses universal *conatus*, and as the "more

each one endeavours successfully... to preserve his being, the more he is endowed with virtue",[17] the universe must have "universal virtue", and "unchanging harmony"—the terms used in *Frankenstein* and *Prometheus Unbound* as noted above.

Spinoza specifies that there are necessary limits to *conatus*, that the "force with which man persists in existing is limited, and is far surpassed by the power of external causes",[18] or universal virtue which is identified with Necessity. It is this interaction of limited beings which leads to a complex web of interdependence within which the total of all that impinges upon the existence of a state of mind or an object is simultaneously the reason or cause of its existence. Human instincts, intuitions or 'common notions' in Herbert's terms, however, are often overridden by reason and discredited as too close to revelation or superstition. "Man alone", says Herbert, "has the misfortune, through his tendency to discursive reflection, to be the frequent victim of indecision. At one moment he is rooted in his own prejudices; at the next he is enslaved to those of another; scarcely ever does he succeed in thinking with freedom and candour, nor in listening with humble heart to the voice within him".[19]

Spinoza's composite being owed an intellectual debt to Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), but Deists distanced themselves from Hobbes's pessimism in Leviathan (1651) in which the natural life of mankind is described as "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short".[20] For Hobbes the "Multitude so united in one Person... the Generation of that great Leviathan, or rather of that Mortall God", was the Common-Wealth.[21] Shaftesbury's response, for example, was to detach himself from all pessimistic views, including that of Christian thought, and to promote the morality of the 'true' religion— benevolence.[22]

In the Enlightenment, Spinoza's idea of complex interactions had competed against Descartes's idea of simple mechanism. In popular opinion, Spinoza's *ecocentric* view of imbued matter lost to Descartes's *anthropocentric* view of inert matter. The Christian churches were invested in dualism and hostile to monism, so Spinoza was often accused of the atheist-materialist heresy (a common Christian strategy). We do not know

whether Shelley actually read Herbert—nor is it important to prove this point because Herbert's thought permeated all Deistic writing—, but we do know that he read Spinoza as early as January 12, 1811, from the same letter to Hogg in which he bemoans the 'loss' of his sister. David Lee Clark is of the opinion that it was "Spinoza who gave direction to Shelley's thought about Necessity",[23] but I like to think that Shelley had more deeply researched the subject of Deism.

Spinoza's concept of *conatus* is, according to Stuart Hampshire, "exactly the concept which biologists have often demanded as an essential to the understanding of organic and living systems".[24] Many have considered Spinoza's universal system as more 'complete' than Descartes' in that it embraces and respects all forms of life. It is only recently that cognitivists have 'rediscovered' Spinoza's view, that "cognition and the operation of the living system—its nervous system included when present—were the same thing".[25] Furthermore, Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco J. Varela, the authors of *Autopoiesis and Cognition* (1980), through their biological understanding of cognition, have arrived at an even more Shelleyan, more Necessarian definition of *conatus* which they call 'autopoiesis', whereby,

> "the identity of a system may stay invariant while its structure changes within limits determined by its organization. If these limits are overstepped, that is, if the structure of the system changes so that its organization cannot any more be realized, the system loses its identity and the entity becomes something else, a unity defined by another organization. [....] Therefore, the emergence of a phenomenal domain as the result of the operational distinction of a composite unity as a simple unity, makes phenomenal reductionism (and, hence, explanatory reductionism) impossible".[26]

In other words, the definition of life precludes any rational explanation of First Causes, First Movers, Ultimate Principles, or other Absolutes. In their later book, *The Tree of Knowledge* (1987), Maturana and Varela virtually paraphrase Spinoza (quoted above): "metacellulars are second-order autopoietic systems... But are some metacellulars autopoietic unities? That is, are second-order autopoietic systems also first-order

autopoietic systems? [....] In the case of metacellulars, we are still ignorant of the molecular processes that would constitute those metacellulars as autopoietic unities comparable to cells".[27] In the last sentence these leading biologists admit that the emergent property of self-identity which we call Life is still an imponderable. To say that Absolutes do exist is dangerous dogma and tends towards fundamentalist attitudes and conflict. This is why in the Shelleyan paradigm—that blend of Ancient wisdom, Enlightenment scepticism, and Romantic-era panentheism—Necessity steps in periodically to deflate human hubris, and why also those gifted with transcendent revelations must sacrifice their mortality. And here, I feel, is another part of the deeper aetiology which *Frankenstein* has for many in the present-day world—it conveys a sense of innate *conatus* in the dynamic interplay between the enthusiasts' passion, the sceptics' rationalism, and the Necessarians' virtue, the three "elementary principles of human nature",[28] which Shelley notes in his Preface to *Frankenstein*. The counterpoint to equilibrium was the pernicious effect of presumption.

In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756), Edmund Burke (1729-1797) relates sublimity to self-preservation: "The passions which belong to self-preservation turn on pain and danger; they are simply painful when their causes immediately affect us; they are delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger, without being actually in such circumstances... Whatever excites this delight, I call sublime".[29] Similarly, in volume I of *Zoonomia*, Darwin acknowledges the limitations of the human mind when he quotes Malebranche: "Our senses are not given us to discover the essences of things but to acquaint us with the means of preserving our existence".[30] Again we are told that it is beyond the capacity of the individual to comprehend the inexorable Necessity of universal self-preservation. It is the ineffable—unspeakable, unutterable, inexpressible[31]—nature of cosmic order which makes it

terrible, or, as Burke inverts it, "to make anything very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary".[32]

In Shelley, sublimity reaches new heights as there are two levels of self-preservation: that of the moral human, and that of the amoral universe, where the fate of the individual is subordinate to the survival of the universal. It is against the Soul of the Universe that the Poet in Alastor and Victor Frankenstein acted in their selfish presumption, and they are punished (their presumption is redressed), by being tortured by their own daemons just as Prometheus's entrails were devoured. The selfless devotion of Phemonoe and Ianthe, and Semele's misdirected anticipations on the other hand, have their innocence rewarded when the Soul of the Universe reveals to them the incomprehensible, secret of the universe, but this happens only after they have left their mortal remains behind.

Shelley knew that to name something is to make it familiar; that to have no name or many names serves the same purpose. Of the many names of 'God', Shelley writes that they "agree only in considering it the most awful and most venerable of names, as a common term devised to express all of mystery or majesty or power which the invisible world contains". Shelley continues, "not only has every sect distinct conceptions of the application of this name but scarcely two individuals of the same sect who exercise in any degree the freedom of their judgment, or yield themselves with any candor of feeling to the influencings of the visible world find perfect coincidence of opinion to exist between them".[33] Justice as equality is the essence of Shelley's harmony: "The wisest and most sublime of the ancient poets... represented equality as the reign of Saturn and taught that mankind had gradually degenerated from the virtue which enabled them to enjoy or maintain this happy state".[34]

In *Prometheus Unbound* Jupiter is deposed and Saturn's reign is restored by Demogorgon (literally "demons' terror"[35]), yet another name for the power of universal self-preservation elsewhere called Necessity, the Spirit of Nature, and the Daemon of the

World. "A Necessarian", Shelley writes, "is inconsequent to his own principles, if he indulges in hatred or contempt; the compassion which he feels for the criminal is unmixed with a desire of injuring him; he looks with an elevated and dreadless composure upon the links of the universal chain as they pass before his eyes".[36] C.M. Bowra, in *The Romantic Imagination* (1961), correctly states that Demogorgon is Jupiter's offspring (by Themis/Justice/Necessity),[37] but, assuming that there was no greater force at work, Bowra says of Shelley—for Prometheus's act of forgiving Jupiter—that "he was wrong to apply this belief to an enemy who is not a person but the very principle of evil... the result is a confusion in the scheme of the poem". And this leads to Bowra's "second difficulty" whereby "it is not clear whether Shelley speaks literally or symbolically".[38]

In a Necessarian reading of the poem, Prometheus was simply acting without foresight, and in accordance with his self-preservation, but also fully aware that Necessity wields the ultimate power. We have already seen that, when Asia asks Demogorgon "Who is the master of the slave?", referring to Jove, he replies that "a voice / Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless; / For what would it avail to bid thee gaze / On the revolving world?".[39] Here Demogorgon reminds Asia of the fate of Phemonoe/Ianthe and all of those exposed to such an ineffable revelation. The same situation was clearer in Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*:

CHORUS: Who then is the helmsman of Necessity?

PROMETHEUS: The three-shaped Fates and mindful Furies.

CHORUS: Can it be that Zeus has less power than they do?

PROMETHEUS: Yes, in that even he cannot escape what is foretold.

CHORUS: Why, what is fated for Zeus except to hold eternal sway?

PROMETHEUS: This you must not learn yet; do not be over-eager.[40]

Bowra assumes that, because Demogorgon inspires "truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy"[41] he must be a positive "spirit of life",[42] and he is right, but only in a negative sense—Demogorgon is best personified (if it should be personified) as the agent of Necessity, or as a manifestation of Nemesis. Shelley appears to pointedly avoid such a naming; we can only infer it from Mary Shelley's notes and other sources. But 'Demogorgon', as the 'terror of Gods' has a great significance for *Frankenstein.* Coleridge explains in his essay On the Prometheus of Aeschylus (1825), that the Greek and Hebrew natural God "was not personal—not a unity of excellence, but simply an expression of the negative—that which was to pass, but which had not yet passed, into distinct form", and that this "idea will be the key to the whole cypher of the Aeschylean mythology".[43] Only Gods can grasp the full significance of non-existence—though the 'luminaries of the world' make the (fatal) attempt. In Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound,* Prometheus asks the Oceanides, "Why should I fear since I am fated not to die?" (299), but tells them that "I caused mortals to cease foreseeing their doom [death]. ...I caused blind hopes to dwell within their breasts" (237-9).

As we have seen when the question of suicide arose for Victor and the Being, Shelley, in his Essay on Life, is quite clear that the fear of non-existence is an important component of what it is to be human: "man is a being of high aspirations...; incapable of imagining to himself annihilation; ... Whatever may be his true and final destination, there is a spirit within him at enmity with nothingness and dissolution".[44] In *Prometheus Unbound* Demogorgon is found in a rocky cleft, much like that at Delphi where are inscribed the age-old maxims of self-preservation: "know thyself", and "nothing in excess".[45] In the following lines, *conatus*, autopoiesis, or harmonious self-preservation, are expressed as "Demogorgon's law" which, if followed unquestioned, is associated with harmony.

> There those enchanted eddies play
> Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,

> By Demogorgon's mighty law,
> With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
> All spirits on that secret way;
> As inland boats are driven to Ocean
> Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw.[46]

But, the consequence of contradicting "Demogorgon's law" is to risk the terror of non-existence; a concept so alien to human thought that even naming it is a risk. As a non-Christian, Shelley was following a long tradition of being non-specific about non-existence. The Christian definition of Demogorgon is as a "mysterious and terrible infernal deity".[47] Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) has his Faustus use "Demigorgon" to invoke the Christian Satan.[48] John Milton (1608-1674) refers to "the dreaded name / Of Demogorgon",[49] in the Christian epic *Paradise Lost*. But Mary, in her Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, describes Demogorgon only through periphrasis as "the Primal Power of the world".[50] Volney tells us that "the Persians always wrote the name of Ahrimanes inverted".[51] The Shelleys' friend Hogg wrote in 1818 of a "profound secret & no more to be divulged without dread than the name of D-m-g-rg-n".[52] In a commentary on Spenser's *Faery Queene* in *Imagination and Fancy* (1845), Leigh Hunt, Shelley's Deist friend, quotes that it was a "bold bad man, that dar'd to call by name / Great Gorgon, prince of darkness and dead night".[53] Hunt goes on to tell us that

> "Ancient believers apprehended such dreadful consequences from the mention of him, that his worst and most potent invokers are represented as fearful of it; nor am I aware that any poet, Greek or Latin, has done it, though learned commentators on Spenser imply otherwise. In the passages they allude to, in Lucan and Statius, there is no name uttered. The adjuration is always made by a periphrasis" (83-4).

Another example of such periphrasis occurs, as we have seen, in Demogorgon's evasive replies to Asia in *Prometheus Unbound*. There is yet another in Book V of Lucan's *Pharsalia* when, in a passage reminiscent of that key passage in *Frankenstein* and of the *Edinburgh Reviews* 1808 accounts of Aldini's 'reanimations',[54] the Witch of

Thessalia is also attempting to reanimate a corpse to have it utter prophecies by threatening to invoke 'D-m-g-rg-n':

> ...Do ye hear?
> Or shall I summon to mine aid that god
> At whose dread name earth trembles; who can look
> Unflinching on the Gorgon's head, and drive
> The Furies with his scourge, who holds the depths
> Ye cannot fathom, and above whose haunts
> Ye dwell supernal; who by waves of Styx
> Forswears himself unpunished?
>
> Then the blood
> Grew warm and liquid, and with softening touch
> Cherished the stiffened wounds and filled the veins,
> Till throbbed once more the slow returning pulse
> And every fibre trembled, as with death
> Life was commingled. Then, not limb by limb,
> With toil and strain, but rising at a bound
> Leaped from the earth erect the living man.
> Fierce glared his eyes uncovered, and the life
> Was dim, and still upon his face remained
> The pallid hues of hardly parted death (882-899).

Recall Shelley was likely reading Lucan while writing *Queen Mab*, in 1813. He attached the lines from *Pharsalia* to the Daemon of the World in 1816, when *Alastor* was published. This imagery would have been in his mind when *Frankenstein* was conceived in the summer of 1816, in Geneva. I believe that the Shelleys continued this Pagan tradition of not naming the 'most terrible' in *Frankenstein* and that this explains why, as an agent of Necessity, the reanimated Being has no name. Not only does the Being gain in sublimity as a fictional creature, but it also points toward something ineffable—that which "cannot be uttered or pronounced"[55]—the absolute resolution of the irresolvable in that 'being is becoming'. What we are exposed to in *Frankenstein* are the minute details (in actions) of the moral accounting which first leads to Victor's moral bankruptcy and then annihilation of that debt by an equally painful account of the Being's suffering. As

the agent of universal virtue, *conatus* or Necessity, the Being might be called Nemesis, or the Spirit of Nature, or the Daemon of the World, or Demogorgon. Victor's example acts as a premonition of that Power which spoke through the oracle Phemonoe—which "...loves the just. ...hath turned their steps Aright"—and persuades Walton to turn back. Walton has not quite transgressed 'Demogorgon's law' and can be saved. Victor's crime was to "infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing",[56] an act of presumption which rent the fabric of the universe. Though Victor experiences genuine remorse when he wished that he "may extinguish the spark which [he] so negligently bestowed",[57] his doom cannot be avoided; just as the Being, who wished that he could "extinguish the spark of existence which [Victor] had so wantonly bestowed",[58] is compelled by Necessity to play his role until his 'work is complete'. In the universal order, the Being's un-natural spark must annihilate Victor's natural spark, like an electrical charge is annihilated when its poles are brought together; as the Christian metaphysician Coleridge notes in his poem Limbo (1817), to "Be pulveris'd by Demogorgon's power... 'tis positive Negation!" (4,38).[59]

* * * * * * *

CONCLUSION

My main conclusion is that *Frankenstein* was written from within an ecocentric paradigm and is a secularization of the Promethean myth to better fit it for the anthropocentric ethos of Western Industrialism in which Virtue and Necessity—aspects of an older, ecocentric worldview—have been displaced by a felicific calculus which 'furnishes us with that reason, which alone depends not upon any higher reason'. *Frankenstein* is therefore a Necessarian allegory which was intended to be deeply critical of positivism, progressivism, reductivism, and Industrialism. The allegory of *Frankenstein* illustrates the potential for adverse consequences resulting from the redefinitions of presumption, prudence, and precaution. These redefinitions—part of the cultural transformation which occurred at the end of the Romantic Era—have never been completely accepted and are frequently re-examined whenever the consequences of new technologies are feared to be pernicious. In providing a secular version of the Promethean myth, *Frankenstein* does indeed, as Shelley put it, 'preserve the truth of the elementary principles of human nature'. It is this aetiology which is at the core of the transhistorical stability of *Frankenstein* and which sustains its currency as a metaphor for decision-making in the practical arts, in economics, politics, science, and in war.

As corollaries to my main conclusion, I suggest:

- that as a Necessarian, Shelley was a major force in constructing the allegory of *Frankenstein* and that this allegory fits neatly within his authorial program which was likely a response to the criticisms of Godwin, Hogg, and Peacock, and a reaction to statements made by Coleridge and Wordsworth.

- that *Frankenstein* was written at a time of cultural crisis when the main principles of society were undergoing transformations in order to accommodate the evolving Industrial ethos. *Frankenstein* was an invitation to re-examine the ancient sources of wisdom to see how the pitfalls inherent in applying new knowledge might be avoided.

- that *Frankenstein*, a recasting of the myths of Prometheus and Nemesis, was inspired by environmental disasters such as ecological destruction, tsunamis and a volcanic winter which were seen as the consequences of mankind's presumptuous interference with the incomprehensible complexity of the forces of Nature.

- that the Being in *Frankenstein* remains nameless not only because it is alienated from human society, but also because of a long-standing pre-Christian tradition whereby the naming of the agents of Necessity was a presumptuous act best avoided for fear of suffering the unpredictable consequences of attracting their attention.

- that, as part of Shelley's 'profounder project', *Frankenstein* was intended to be the tale of a solitary scientist, and Alastor the tale of a solitary idealist. Both died close to symbols of irrationality, infinite regression—a modern Tartarus: Victor died amid the "eternal frosts", the Poet of Alastor died beside an "immeasurable void".

- that as a Necessarian, Shelley was neither an atheist nor a materialist as is commonly believed. On questions which divided over either-or logic, Shelley typically took a *tertium quid*, or third way. His was a qualitative philosophy which accepted paradox, oxymorons, and tautology (i.e. the imponderables) as being vital ethical currency.

- that Shelley and Hogg were likely not expelled from Oxford for their atheism, as is commonly believed, but for their Necessarianism which would have resisted the

direction insisted upon by the invisible hand of economic imperative. They would have been seen as dealing in "exploded systems, and useless names. Good God!"

- that Ingolstadt was chosen as a major setting for *Frankenstein* because, as the location of Weishaupt's Illuminati, it represented for the Shelleys all that was bad and hypocritical in idealist, elitist, ascetic, and Philanthropic associations. This is in keeping with Godwin's social philosophy in *Political Justice*.

- that the Orkneys were chosen as a minor setting for *Frankenstein* because they are noted in Joseph Priestley's *History* in reference to James Wallace's account of the bizarre lightning strike of 1684. Wallace's account also describes where Victor Frankenstein would have found the materials with which to construct a female Being.

That a form of the ecocentric paradigm is being revived in the present day is attested to by James Lovelock, one of the fathers of the modern Ecological movement who refers to our planetary ecosystem as Gaia, one of the names of the ancient goddess, Earth. In Greek mythology, Gaia ruled with Kronos over the ancient Golden Age.[1] In *The Revenge of Gaia* (2006) Lovelock likens Gaia to Nemesis, who, he tells us, "is nurturing but ruthlessly cruel towards transgressors, even when they are her progeny".[2] Lovelock tells us what we already know, that, since the end of the Romantic Era, Western culture has "made this appalling mess of the planet and mostly with rampant liberal good intentions",[3] and, furthermore, that "Gaia grows angry, and if they do not mend their ways she will evict them".[4] Lovelock's sentiments are completely Shelleyan and are generally dismissed just as easily. But the time has come when such warnings can no longer be disregarded as if they were the utterances of 'ineffectual angels, beating in the void their luminous wings in vain.' It is time we acknowledged the significance of the Necessarian lesson in *Frankenstein*, which is, as Lovelock puts it, that Gaia/Nemesis

"will do the culling and eliminate those that break her rules. We have the choice to accept this fate or plan our own destiny within Gaia. Whatever we choose to do we have always to ask, what are the consequences?".[5]

The consideration of consequences requires more than forethought (pro-metheus), or rational calculation. One of the important lessons in *The Phaedo*, *The Protagoras*, and in *Frankenstein*, is to avoid confusing rational or mystical enthusiasm with the satisfaction that comes with virtue. In *The Phaedo* Socrates speaks out explicitly against the commodification/quantification of human values, saying that "this is by no means the right road to virtue, to change pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains, fear for fear, and the greater for the lesser, like pieces of money: but that alone is the proper coin, I mean wisdom, for which all these ought to be changed".[6] Virtue, as an act of faith in the ecocentric view, has always defied quantification. Scepticism, in denying all acts of faith, effectively eradicated both ecocentrism and virtue. The great transformation replaced them with the ideals of anthropocentrism and materialism. As the ancient wisdom ('Know thyself', and 'Everything in moderation') had no commercial value, it was forgotten. Taylor contrasted these two views when he prefaced his translation of *The Phaedo*, stating "that magnificence of thought and a contempt of wealth are essential characteristics of the philosophic genius; [but] to toil in the same dull round from year to year, merely to acquire a fortune, can be borne by none but slaves".[7]

> The good die first,
> And those whose hearts are dry as
> summer dust,
> Burn to the socket!
>
> —P.B. Shelley, Preface to *Alastor* , December 15, 1815.

Notes for the Preface.

[1] Abrams (2005), 190.
[2] Ryan, xvi.
[3] Veeser, 4.
[4] Abrams (2005), 192.
[5] Abrams (2005), 194.
[6] Abrams (2005), 191.
[7] Ryan, xi.
[8] Althusser, 171.
[9] White, 12.
[10] Abrams (2005), 192.
[11] Abrams (2005), 193,196.
[12] Ryan, xiii.
[13] Abrams (2005), 71.
[14] Ryan, xiv.
[15] Ryan, xiv.
[16] Ryan, 2.
[17] Ryan, xviii.
[18] Abrams (2005), 71.
[19] Ryan, xi.
[20] Veeser, 11.
[21] OED.
[22] Abrams (2005), 73.
[23] Abrams (2005), 72.
[24] Ryan, xv.
[25] Veeser, 3.
[26] Veeser, 19.
[27] Veeser, 4.
[28] Frankenstein, 14.
[29] Nichols, 20.
[30] OED.
[31] Midgley, 1.
[32] Frankenstein, 52.
[33] I use the term 'Being' for the main character in *Frankenstein*, and the term 'female Being' for its mate. The term 'Being' is that used most often by Shelley in his Review of *Frankenstein*. It also has philosophical interest.
[34] Frankenstein, 168.
[35] Nichols, 1,19.
[36] Bate (2000), 37.
[37] Bate (2000) 266.
[38] Bate (2000), 50,52,54.
[39] Bate (2000), 266.
[40] Dawkins, 1.
[41] Dawkins, 2.
[42] Frankenstein, 115,117.
[43] Bate (2000), 266.
[44] Buell, 699.
[45] Buell (1999), 709-10.
[46] Buell (1999), 709.
[47] Hitt, 125.
[48] Bate (2000), 149.
[49] Bate (2000), 199.
[50] Bate (1991), 37,103.
[51] Bate (2000), 24-5.
[52] Midgely, 187.
[53] Bate (2000), 25-6.

Notes for Chapter 1.

[1] Snow, 4.
[2] Snow, 17.
[3] Snow, 30.
[4] Nichols, 7.
[5] Wilson, 192-3.
[6] Jacobs, 22.
[7] Jacobs, 23.
[8] Jacobs, 166.
[9] Jacobs, 61.
[10] Jacobs, 69.
[11] Jacobs, 79.
[12] Jacobs, 99-100.
[13] Kuhn, 160-2.
[14] Bury, xi.
[15] Bury, 351.
[16] Bury, xxvi.
[17] Bury, xl.
[18] Bury, xv.
[19] Bury, 4.
[20] Bury, 335.
[21] Bury, 352.
[22] Kuhn, 170.
[23] Kuhn, 171.
[24] Kuhn, 166.
[25] OED.
[26] Midgely, 36.
[27] Midgely, 60.
[28] Midgely, 119.
[29] Midgely, 200.
[30] Polanyi, 35.
[31] Abrams (2005), 75.
[32] OED; Buell, 62.
[33] OED
[34] Bury, xxii.
[35] Beard, xvi.
[36] Polanyi, 60.
[37] Polanyi, 7,84-5.
[38] Shelley (1988), 293.
[39] Southey (1831), 194.
[40] Lovejoy 293.
[41] Lovejoy, 293
[42] Lovejoy, 317.
[43] Lovejoy, 325.
[44] Bentham qtd. McMahon, 217.
[45] Midgely, 185.
[46] Midgely, 150.
[47] Midgely, 2.
[48] Midgely, 47.
[49] Polanyi, 85,103.
[50] Polanyi, 5.
[51] Fay, vii.
[52] Jacobs, 163.
[53] Jacobs, 170.
[54] "James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis postulated in the early 1970s that life on Earth actively keeps the surface conditions always favourable for whatever is the contemporary ensemble of organisms. When introduced it was contrary to the conventional wisdom that life adapted to planetary conditions as it and they evolved in their separate ways. We now know that both the hypothesis as originally stated and the conventional wisdom were wrong. The hypothesis evolved into what is now Gaia theory and the conventional wisdom into Earth System Science" (Lovelock, 162).
[55] Midgely, 190.
[56] Lovelock, 3.
[57] Bate (2000), 245.
[58] Midgely, 171.
[59] Midgely, 179.
[60] McMahon, 220.
[61] "That is the sting of it [scientific materialism], that in the vast driftings of the cosmic weather, tho many a jewelled shore appears, and many an enchanted cloud-bank floats away, long lingering ere it be dissolved—even as our world now lingers, for our joy--yet when these transient products are gone, nothing, absolutely NOTHING remains, of represent those particular qualities, those elements of preciousness which they may have enshrined. Dead and gone are they, gone utterly from the very sphere and room of being. Without an echo; without a memory; without an influence on aught that may come after, to make it care for similar ideals. This utter final wreck and tragedy is of the essence of scientific materialism as at present understood." (James, 54).
[62] James, 60-1.
[63] James, 61.
[64] Bury, xxiv.
[65] Lovelock, 51,7.
[66] Lovelock, 7.
[67] Lovelock, 140.
[68] Jacobs, 99.
[69] Jacobs, 14.
[70] Jacobs, 160.
[71] Plato (1749), 248.
[72] Midgely, 128.
[73] Midgely, 54.

[74] This is Bentham's term. Such a calculus was ultimately rejected by Mill, but not before it had justified the principles of the Industrial Revolution. (McMahon, 181,204)
[75] Midgely, 67.
[76] Midgely, 116.
[77] Midgely, 3.
[78] Kuhn, 167.
[79] Bate (2000), 231.
[80] Bury (1920), vii.
[81] Midgely, 138.
[82] Midgely, 74.
[83] Midgely, 73.
[84] Midgely, 55.
[85] Midgely, 57.
[86] Midgely, 77.
[87] Midgely, 49.
[88] Midgely, 132.
[89] Midgely, 12.
[90] Midgely, 38-9.
[91] Midgely, 171.
[92] Midgely, 172.
[93] Midgely, 149.
[94] Taylor (1875), 174.
[95] Midgely, 144.
[96] Midgely, 146.
[97] Midgely, 147.
[98] Midgely, 159.
[99] Qtd. Midgely, 152.
[100] Jacobs, 7.
[101] Lovelock, 157.
[102] Lovelock, 157.
[103] Lovelock, 158.
[104] Volney, 41.
[105] Polanyi, vii.
[106] MacIntyre, 2.
[107] MacIntyre, 47.
[108] MacIntyre, 51.
[109] Frankenstein, 7.
[110] Charles E. Robinson, editor of The Frankenstein Notebooks (1996), states that the "critical understanding of Mary Shelley's conscious aims and artistry, as discoverable in the contemporary documentary evidence of the novel's creation and revision, has advanced surprisingly little" (vii).
[111] Nichols, 1.

Notes for Chapter 2.

[1] Kuhn, 176.
[2] P.B. Shelley (1988), 8, fn.11.
[3] Stillinger, v.
[4] Frankenstein, 229.
[5] Rieger xxii.
[6] Hawkins, 137.
[7] Ketterer, 6.
[8] Frankenstein, 229.
[9] Hogg (1906), 122.
[10] Kant (1993), 51-2.
[11] Kant (1993), 60.
[12] Kant (1993), 72 fn.
[13] Kant (1993), 64 fn.
[14] Frankenstein, 24.
[15] Frankenstein, 175.
[16] Frankenstein, 126.
[17] Frankenstein, 217.
[18] Frankenstein, 220.
[19] Ketterer, 12,100.
[20] Ketterer, 12.
[21] Ketterer, 13,62.
[22] Ketterer, 100.
[23] Brooks, 603.
[24] Eilenberg, 182.
[25] Shelley (1988), 96.
[26] Shelley (1988), 96.
[27] Shelley (1988), 192.
[28] Schonfeld, 110.
[29] Schonfeld, 117.
[30] Kant (1966), 298.
[31] Tierney-Hynes, 609.
[32] Mellor, 108.
[33] Small, 51-2.
[34] Ketterer, 26.
[35] Lewis, 171.
[36] Frankenstein, 7.
[37] MacIntyre, 185-6.
[38] MacIntyre, 197.
[39] Franklin (1986), 7.
[40] Franklin (1986), 11.
[41] Franklin (1986), 12.
[42] Franklin (1986), 13.
[43] Franklin (1986), 13.
[44] Franklin (1986), 14.
[45] Franklin (1986), 14.
[46] Franklin (1986), 16.
[47] According to the OED, virtue is the "conformity of life and conduct with the principles of morality". The four Cardinal 'Natural' Virtues are justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude.
[48] Godwin (1946), 311.
[49] Frankenstein, 163
[50] Frankenstein, 163.
[51] Frankenstein, 163.
[52] Frankenstein, 163.
[53] Frankenstein, 214.
[54] Frankenstein, 46
[55] Frankenstein, 108,110. The 'invisible hand' was originally used to describe the effects of gravity and was then used by Adam Smith (1723-1790) in his book *On the Wealth of Nations* (1776) to edscribe the effects of 'laissez-faire' policies: "...by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain; and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest, he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good".
[56] Frankenstein, 94.
[57] Frankenstein, 151.
[58] Frankenstein, 164.
[59] Frankenstein, 164.
[60] Frankenstein, 165.
[61] Frankenstein, 165.
[62] Frankenstein, 165.
[63] Frankenstein, 181.
[64] Frankenstein, 195.
[65] Frankenstein, 198.
[66] Frankenstein, 198.
[67] Frankenstein 201.
[68] Frankenstein, 151.
[69] Frankenstein, 215.
[70] Arnold, 184-5.
[71] Bury, 233.
[72] It was Marilyn Butler, in her 1993 Introduction, in *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus--The 1818 Text* who first suggested that Lawrence "has a significant, previously unnoted part to play in the gestation of Frankenstein" p.xii.
[73] Hogg (1906), 14.

Notes for Chapter 3.

[1] Greenblatt (1990), 9.
[2] Greenblatt (1990), 10.
[3] OED.
[4] OED.
[5] Frankenstein, 6.
[6] Shelley (1988), 290.
[7] Greenblatt (1990), 11.
[8] OED.
[9] OED.
[10] Qtd. Peters, 273.
[11] Southey (1831), 203.
[12] Southey (1831), 203.
[13] Southey (1831), 205.
[14] OED.
[15] Qtd Newman (2004), 205.
[16] Newman (2004), 208.
[17] Qtd. Newman, 203.
[18] Newman, 108.
[19] Ed. Rev. (1803) 195-6.
[20] Small, 21.
[21] Time, 55-6.
[22] Time, 58.
[23] Rollin, 3-4.
[24] Time, 58-9.
[25] Hecht, 38.
[26] Achcar, 30. *
[27] Ghosh, 461.
[28] OED.
[29] Rollin, 2.
[30] Rollin, 5.
[31] Holton, 11.
[32] Qtd. Holton, 10-11.
[33] Qtd. Holton, 11.
[34] Qtd. Holton, 10-11.
[35] Berlin, 103.
[36] Berlin, 105.
[37] Berlin, 106.
[38] Rollin, 1.
[39] Frankenstein, 47.
[40] Rollin, 107.
[41] Rollin, 108-136.
[42] Greenblatt (1990), 8.
[43] Rushton, 12.
[44] Wordsworth, 71.
[45] Shelley (1988), 172.
[46] Shelley (1988), 295
[47] Shelley (1988), 282.
[48] OED.
[49] Kuhn, 138.
[50] Harris, viii.
[51] "Nothing is more important than to go where one ought to go, instead of following the herd, like cattle, and go where they went." Seneca, De vita beata, chapter 1.
[52] Adorno, 13.

Notes for Chapter 4.

[1] Écrasez l'infame—"Crush the infamous thing"; Voltaire (1912), ix.
[2] Torrey writes that "the critical deists may be distinguished from the later rationalists because of their unbounded faith in the light of nature for the solution of religious and metaphysical problems, thus avoiding the universal skepticism of Hume and later thinkers" (Torrey, 2).
[3] Torrey, 99.
[4] Troki, x,xiii fn.22.
[5] Voltaire, 107.
[6] Voltaire, 207.
[7] Voltaire, 228.
[8] Voltaire, 233-4.
[9] Voltaire, 232.
[10] Voltaire (1912), 255.
[11] Voltaire (2005), 17.
[12] Panentheism differs from pantheism in that the God who encompasses and interpenetrates the universe is also greater than and independent of it.—OED.
[13] Voltaire (1912), 215-6.
[14] Schönfeld, 74.
[15] Schönfeld, 74-6.
[16] Uglow, 150.
[17] All of Shelley's letters are taken from the two-volume set edited by Frederick L. Jones (1964).
[18] Cohen (1990), 146.
[19] Schaffer, 491.
[20] Priestley, 429,438,447,448.
[21] Coleridge, 498-9.
[22] Qtd. Schaffer, 490.
[23] Schaffer, 490-1,
[24] Godwin (1984), 140-1.
[25] Post, x-xiii.
[26] Small, 33-4.
[27] Stommel, 5.
[28] Cf. Stommel's title.
[29] Post, 25-6.
[30] Post, 75.
[31] All of Mary's letter are taken from the two-volume set edited by Betty T. Bennett (1980).
[32] Qtd. Knapton, 170.
[33] Stommel, 47.
[34] Post, 25.
[35] Stommel, 119.
[36] M.W. Shelley (1817), 96.
[37] From Mary's 1831 Introduction; Frankenstein, 224.
[38] Priestly, II. 274.
[39] Hogg (1906), 265.
[40] Frankenstein, 161.
[41] Frankenstein, 161-2.
[42] Wallace, 68.
[43] Wallace, 10, 25.
[44] The Monthly Review, v.XXIII, 512.
[45] Wesley, ??.
[46] Wesley, 9.
[47] Saussure, 130. "Le petite peuple de notre ville et des environs donne au Mont-Blanc et aux montagnes couvertes de neige qui l'entourent le nom de Montagnes maudites; et j'ai moi-même ouï dire dans mon enfance à des paysans que ces neiges éternelles étaient l'effet d'une malédiction que les habitants de ce montagnes s'étaient attirée par leurs crimes. Jusqu'à ce que l'on ait connu ces bonnes gens comme on les connait aujourd'hui, cette opinion superstitieuse, toute absurde qu'elle est, a fort bien servir de fondament à une idée désavantageuse, qui s'était accréditée même parmi des gens fort au-dessus de pareils préjugés". Here is my translation: "The humble people of our city and the surrounding area give Mont-Blanc and the snow covered mountains around it the name of The Evil Mountains, and in my childhood there were peasant rumors that the eternal snow is the result of a curse that the inhabitants of these mountains brought upon themselves though their crimes. Until you get to know these good people as we know them today, this superstition, as silly as it is, has dominated life here and has been accepted as credible even among people well above such prejudices."
[48] Haller, 22.
[49] Haller. 9.
[50] Comba, 84.
[51] Wylie, 486-488. Here is Milton's sonnet:

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered Saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway

The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who having learned Thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

[52] Dorian, 101.
[53] Ketterer (1979), 23.
[54] Herbert (1996), 44.
[55] Dorian, 172.
[56] Herbert (1996), 11; Dorian, 340.
[57] Brooks, 601; Huet, 294 fn.5; Praz, 115-16;
[58] de Sade, xxvii.
[59] de Sade, 289.
[60] de Sade, 290.
[61] Frankenstein, 82.
[62] Sade, xviii.
[63] Lines 117-120.
[64] OED
[65] Frankenstein, 93.
[66] Frankenstein. 35.
[67] Frankenstein, 69-70.
[68] Frankenstein, 89.
[69] Frankenstein, 90.
[70] Frankenstein, 90-1.
[71] Frankenstein, 92.
[72] Frankenstein, 71.
[73] Frankenstein, 93.
[74] Frankenstein, 42.
[75] 'Chemical' in the early 1800s is the equivalent to our 'electro-chemical' because it was electricity that was used to break the molecular bonds to isolate the new chemical elements, such as boron and pottasium, mentioned in Frankenstein. (Frankenstein, 36).
[76] Frankenstein, 46,52.
[77] Frankenstein, 52.
[78] Frankenstein, 94.
[79] OED.
[80] OED.
[81] Godwin (1984), 76-7.
[82] It is also interesting to note that a 'Minerval' was a "level or grade of the Illuminati"—OED.
[83] Godwin (1984), 9.
[84] Frankenstein, 49.
[85] Frankenstein, 36.
[86] Frankenstein, 49.
[87] Kline, 150.
[88] Frankenstein, 47.
[89] Frankenstein, 35.
[90] Cohen (1990), 125.
[91] OED.
[92] Franklin, 79.
[93] Cohen (1990), 158.
[94] Cohen (1990), 249 fn.44.
[95] Riskin, 12-13.
[96] Cohen (1990), 143
[97] Frankenstein, 35.
[98] "in Reason's Eye Lightening or Thunder is no more an Instrument of Divine Vengeance than any other of the Elements... This then being the Case and (thanks to God) it having been discovered that Metal is the best Conveyance and that while it can get that it will follow it without damaging any thing else tho' in the nearest contact with it, so far is it from being Presumption to use this Invention that it appears foolhardiness to neglect it. And if to neglect preventing an Evil when it is in one's power is in some measure to be accessory to the bringing it on, it is hard to say how those persons who are so unfortunate as to have their Houses struck or any of their family hurt by Lightening can acquit themselves of being in some measure guilty. It might be mentioned with what Care we endeavour to guard against the bad Effects of other Elements, what means are used both to prevent & remove Disorders of the Body Plagues & Sickness of every sort, and this without any Imputation of Presumption; why then should it be imagined more presumptious in the present Case?" (Cohen 142-3).
[99] Qtd. Cohen (1990), 144-5.
[100] OED
[101] Emerson, 50,58.
[102] Emerson, 58.
[103] Kipling, 136.
[104] Aeschylus, 225.
[105] Stommel, 117.
[106] Frankenstein, 195.
[107] Frankenstein, 195.
[108] Frankenstein, 35.
[109] Frankenstein, 70.
[110] Frankenstein 192.
[111] Frankenstein, 194-5.
[112] Frankenstein, 193.
[113] Voltaire, 257-8.
[114] Frankenstein, 92-3.
[115] P.B. Shelley (1975), 59.
[116] Voltaire, 227-8.
[117] M.W. Shelley (1996), 274.
[118] Frankenstein, 32.
[119] Frankenstein, 32.
[120] P.B. Shelley (1988), 308.
[121] M.W. Shelley (1817), vi.
[122] lines 18-19.
[123] Godwin (1984), 164-66.
[124] Lines 28-29.

[125] Godwin (1984), 29.
[126] Lines 37-40.
[127] Frankenstein, 51.
[128] Frankenstein, 7.
[129] Volney, 183.
[130] Frankenstein 115.
[131] Volney, xvi,2.
[132] Volney, 183,189.
[133] Volney, 175.
[134] Volney, 189-90.
[135] Emerson (1964), 310-11.
[136] Schofield, 359.
[137] Schofield, 364.
[138] Volney, 218-19.
[139] "By Mind the ancients understood nothing less than right reason.... First, there are principles of religion which derive from the Mind or from right reason, such as; 1: There is a Supreme God; 2: He ought to be worshipped; 3: Virtue is the most important aspect of his worship; 4: We ought to repent from our sins; 5: There are rewards and punishments both in this life and in the hereafter. Others derive only from the authority of the priests" (Herbert, [1996], 304).
[140] Uglow, 465.
[141] Aaron, 20-1.

Notes for Chapter 5.

[1] OED.
[2] Kant (1970), 118.
[3] Coleridge (1983), 153.
[4] This turns out to be Born, F.G.: Immanuelis Kantii Opera vertit Latine, 1797, 3 vol.
[5] The editions of Kantian interest referred to in this journal for the years 1797-9 were Nitsch, F.A.: *A general and Introductory View of Professor Kant's Principles Concerning Man, the World, and the Deity*, 1776 (MR v.XXII, 15); Kant, Immanuel: *Project for a Perpetual Peace*, Vernor and Hood, 1796 (MR v.XXII, 114); Observations on the Sentiment of the Beautiful and of the Sublime, Dulau and Co., Paris, 1796 (MR v.XXV, 585); New small Writings of I. Kant, Berlin, 17?? (MR v.XXVI, 559); An Idea of what Universal History might become in the Hands of a Cosmopolite, De Boffe, 1798); Willich, A.F.M.: Elements of the Critical Philosophy: containing a concise Account of its Origin and Tendancy; a View of all the Works published by its Founder, Professor Immanuel Kant; and a Glossary of its Terms and Phrases, Longman, 1798.
[6] The Monthly Review, v.XXVI, 559.
[7] Hogg (1906), 373.
[8] Hogg, 31; Frankenstein, 28.
[9] Hogg, 7.
[10] Hogg, 15.
[11] Hogg, 117.
[12] OED.
[13] OED.
[14] Hogg, 60.
[15] Hogg, 54.
[16] Hogg, 109.
[17] Hogg, 60.
[18] Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648), the 'father of Deism', wrote metaphysical poetry depicting the universe as a woman. Cf. Herbert, Edward, Lord of Cherbury: The Poems English and Latin, G.C. Moore Smith, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968.
[19] Hogg, 86.
[20] Hogg, 85.
[21] Hogg, 72.
[22] I believe this term to be coined by Jerome McGann. (McGann, 159).
[23] Hogg, 43.
[24] Hogg, 44.
[25] Hogg, 90.
[26] Hogg, 93.
[27] Hogg, 57.
[28] Hogg, 65.
[29] Hogg, 91.
[30] Hogg, 102.
[31] Hogg, 62.
[32] Hogg, 110.
[33] Hogg, 114.
[34] Burke, 75.
[35] Hogg, 110.
[36] Hogg, 111.
[37] Hogg, 113.
[38] Hogg, 75.
[39] Hogg, 114.
[40] Hogg, 115.
[41] Hogg, 114.
[42] Hogg, 116.
[43] Hogg, 122.
[44] Hogg, 123.
[45] Peacock (1896), 143.
[46] Coleridge (1983), 153.
[47] Coleridge (1983), 154.
[48] The Monthly Review, v.XXIV, p.525.
[49] The Monthly Review, v.XXVIII, p.62-3. The 'scholasticism' likely refers to Kant's use of the Gothic structuring of *The Critique of Pure Reason* which resembles that of a Mediaeval summa or conspectus.
[50] The Monthly Review, v.XXII, 114; Kant (1970), 106.
[51] Hogg (1906), 445.
[52] Hogg (1906), 445.
[53] Hogg (1906), 445.
[54] Hogg, 127-8.
[55] Hogg, 145.
[56] Hogg, 128.
[57] Hogg, 129.
[58] Hogg, 130.
[59] Hogg, 132.
[60] Hogg, 137.
[61] Hogg, 146.
[62] Hogg, 146.
[63] Godwin (1984), 211-12.
[64] Hogg, 17.
[65] P.B. Shelley (1964), 327.
[66] Hogg, 29.
[67] Godwin, I.430.
[68] Godwin (1946), 60-3.
[69] Godwin (1946), 73.
[70] Hogg, 26-7.
[71] Hogg, 25.

[72] Plato, 130.
[73] Shelley (1988), 307-8.,
[74] Hogg (1906), 72.
[75] Plato, xxi.
[76] Hogg (1906), 13.
[77] Plato, 98.
[78] Plato, 98.
[79] Plato, 98.
[80] Hogg, 89.
[81] Hogg, 114.
[82] Virgil, VI. 980-5.
[83] Virgil, VI. 1012.
[84] Hogg, 75.
[85] Godwin (1984), 25.
[86] Godwin (1984), 24.
[87] OED.
[88] Godwin (1984), 24-5.
[89] OED.
[90] Hogg, 155.
[91] 'Sometimes even good Homer dozes'—Horace, Ars Poetica.
[92] Plato, 125.
[93] Hogg, 150.
[94] Hogg, 143.
[95] Hogg, 150.
[96] Holmes, 52.
[97] OED.
[98] OED.
[99] Godwin, I.311.
[100] Peacock (1896), 142-3.
[101] Hogg, 116.
[102] Burke (2000), 262.
[103] Hogg, 16.
[104] Hogg, 149.
[105] Hogg, 150-1.
[106] Hogg, 154.
[107] Holmes, 91,271.
[108] Hogg, 150.
[109] Shelley (1988), 275.
[110] "I conceive him to have been the author of some of the most elevated truths of ethical philosophy; to have been to the science of the conduct of men in their social relations, what Bacon was to the science of the classifications of the material world, & metaphysics; I conceive him personally to have presented a grand & simple model of much of what we can conceive, & more than in any other instance we have seen realized, of all that is eminent & excellent in man. I conceive that many of those popular maxims which under the name of Christianity have softened the manners of modern Europe are channels derived from the fountain of his profound yet overflowing mind. These sentiments are with me a kind of religion..."
[111] Kant (1970), 85.
[112] Kant (1970), 149.
[113] Kant (1970), 126.
[114] Kant (1970), 130.
[115] OED
[116] Kant (1970), 187.
[117] Kant (1970), 187.
[118] The Monthly Review, v.XXVIII, pp.65-6.

Notes for Chapter 6.

[1] Rushton, 3.
[2] Rushton, 3.
[3] Rushton, 182.
[4] P.B. Shelley (1988), 109.
[5] Sir Leslie Stephen was the father of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell.
[6] Stephen, i. vii.
[7] Stephen, ii. 457.
[8] Hogg (1952), 8.
[9] P.B. Shelley, (1988), 37.
[10] OED.
[11] Kant (1966), 305.
[12] Kant (1970), 135.
[13] Rushton, 10.
[14] Rushton, 86.
[15] Rushton, 18.
[16] Rushton, 6.
[17] Butler, xlvi.
[18] Rushton, 103.
[19] Rushton, 18.
[20] Shelley (1988), 185.
[21] Shelley (1988), 185.
[22] Rushton, 22.
[23] Abernethy, qtd. Rushton, 55.
[24] Rushton, 18.
[25] Rushton, 19-20.
[26] Rushton, 73.
[27] Rushton, 17.
[28] Rushton, 181.
[29] OED.
[30] OED.
[31] Rushton, 53,68.
[32] Rushton, 20.
[33] Rushton, 27-8.
[34] Rushton, 183.
[35] Darwin, (1974), 109.
[36] Darwin (1974), 505.
[37] McDowell, 528.
[38] Southey, ix.
[39] Southey, II.264.
[40] OED.
[41] Shaftesbury, 5.
[42] Shaftesbury, 26.
[43] Shaftesbury, 10.
[44] Shaftesbury, 15.
[45] Shaftesbury, 10.
[46] Cf. OED for 'Familists', and 'family of love'.
[47] Richardson, 192.
[48] Butler, xix.
[49] OED.
[50] OED.
[51] Brazier, 135.
[52] OED.
[53] OED.
[54] Schonfeld, 26,29.
[55] Schonfeld, 35.
[56] Darwin (1803), 38,48.
[57] Coleridge (1995), 498-500.
[58] P.B. Shelley (1975), iv-vi.
[59] It is worth noting that Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) refers to the "summer dust and solitude of London" in his *Memoirs* which Shelley had recently read. (Gibbon, 151) Shelley admired Gibbon for turning Christianity "into a bye word & a joke" (Letter November 3, 1819.) The year after Alastor was published Shelley and Byron visited Gibbon's house in Lausanne, Switzerland (1816).
[60] P.B. Shelley (1988), 308.
[61] OED.
[62] "Something (indefinite or left undefined) related in some way to two (definite or known) things, but distinct from both"—OED.
[63] OED.
[64] OED.
[65] Schofield, 53.
[66] Darwin, (1974), 109.
[67] Qtd Williams, 2000.
[68] Schaffer, 491.
[69] Frankenstein, 52.
[70] Frankenstein, 227.
[71] Empson, 226.
[72] Empson, 226.
[73] P.B. Shelley (1988), 110.
[74] Godwin (1814), 140.
[75] Godwin, I.430.
[76] OED.
[77] OED.
[78] OED.
[79] P.B. Shelley (1988), 112.
[80] P.B. Shelley (1988), 111.
[81] Harris, 15.
[82] P.B. Shelley (1988), 110.
[83] P.B. Shelley (1988), 307-8.
[84] P.B. Shelley (1988), 66.
[85] Godwin (1984), 138-9, 144.
[86] Godwin (1984), 144.
[87] Frankenstein, 132.
[88] P.B. Shelley (1988), 308.
[89] Frankenstein, 132.
[90] Vailati, xv.

[91] Schofield, 48.
[92] Schofield, 46.
[93] Harris, 7. I prefer to use Shelley's term, 'necessarian'.
[94] Harris, 9-10.
[95] Harris, 18.
[96] Harris, 17.
[97] Harris, 89.
[98] Shaftesbury, 144.
[99] Shaftesbury, 21.
[100] Shaftesbury 164-5.
[101] Franklin, 21,79.
[102] Harris, 110.
[103] Harris, 216.
[104] Schofield, 46,50,54,56-7.
[105] Qtd. Harris 161.
[106] Qtd. Harris, 168.
[107] Harris, 168-9,72.
[108] D'Holbach, 11.
[109] Godwin (1946), 384.
[110] Hazlitt, 183.
[111] Godwin (1946), 422 fn.2.
[112] Harris, 217.
[113] Qtd. Rieger, 41.
[114] Harris, 178.
[115] Godwin (1946), 430.

Notes for Chapter 7.

[1] Lovejoy, vii-viii.
[2] Lovejoy, 288.
[3] Lovejoy, 293.
[4] Lovejoy, 293.
[5] MacIntyre, 196.
[6] MacIntyre 202.
[7] Shelley (1988), 187.
[8] Hogg (1906), 72.
[9] Hogg (1906), 121.
[10] Taylor, 327.
[11] Weber wrote: "If we now ask further, by what fruits the Calvinist thought himself able to identify the true faith? the answer is: by a type of Christian conduct which served to increase the glory of God. ...In practice this means that God helps those who help themselves. ...The God of Calvinism demanded of his believers not single good works, but a life of good works combined into a unified system. There was no place for the very human Catholic cycle of sin, repentance, atonement, release, followed by renewed sin" (Weber, 114-17). Clearly, in the eighteenth century, a 'life of good works', or a virtuous life, fell into a corrupted form as 'a life of accumulation'. Weber quotes the Methodist, John Wesley as representative of the consciousness of the situation: "For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionately increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away. Is there no way to prevent this—this continual decay of pure religion? We ought not to prevent people from being diligent and frugal; *we must exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich*" (Wesley's emphasis, qtd. Weber, 175).
[12] Landes, 554.
[13] Landes, 555.
[14] Taylor, 428.
[15] Taylor, IV.427,IV.309.
[16] Burke (2000), 259.
[17] Shelley (1988), 200.
[18] Dacier, I.1-2.
[19] OED.
[20] Dacier, I.90.
[21] Dacier, I.233,248.
[22] Dacier, I.250-1.
[23] Dacier, II.132.
[24] Dacier II.152.
[25] Dacier II.153-4
[26] Frankenstein, 217.
[27] Frankenstein, 126.
[28] Frankenstein, 175.
[29] Frankenstein, 126.
[30] Frankenstein, 143.
[31] Frankenstein, 125
[32] Frankenstein, 140-2.
[33] Frankenstein 13-14.
[34] Taylor, V.132.
[35] Dacier, 232.
[36] Dacier, 253.
[37] Dacier, 259.
[38] Frankenstein, 215.
[39] Dacier, 261.
[40] Dacier 266.
[41] Dacier, 274.
[42] Dacier, 280.
[43] Dacier, 275.
[44] Dacier, 311-12.
[45] Taylor, V.141.
[46] Dacier, 300.
[47] Dacier, 301.
[48] Dacier, 309.
[49] Dacier, 313-15.
[50] Dacier, 315.
[51] Taylor, V.145.
[52] Sagan, 213.
[53] MacIntyre, 203.
[54] Dacier, 319-20.
[55] Locke, 229.
[56] Locke, 269.
[57] Locke, 77-78.
[58] Shackleton, 1466.
[59] Hutcheson, 3-4.
[60] Qtd. Shackleton, 1466-7.
[61] Hutcheson, 8.
[62] Shackleton, 1472.
[63] Shackleton, 1473.
[64] Baumgardt, 7.
[65] Shackleton, 1474.
[66] Qtd. Shackleton, 1475.
[67] Bentham, Jeremy: Théorie des peines et des récompenses / ouvrage extrait des manuscritsde M. Jérémie Bentham, jurisconsulte anglais ; rédigée en français, d'après les manuscrits, par Et. Dumont., Paris, 1811.
[68] Bentham xv.
[69] Shackleton, 1473.
[70] Bentham, 31.

[71] Bentham, 30.
[72] OED.
[73] Bentham, 58.
[74] Bentham, 43.
[75] Bentham, 32,45.
[76] Bentham, 48.
[77] Bentham, 50.
[78] Bentham, 51.
[79] Bentham, 52.
[80] The contradiction, as I see it, is that the necessity of sacrificing happiness (imagination and passion) for a greater good is the essence of Bentham's own attack on virtue.
[81] Bentham, 52.
[82] Qtd. Baumgardt, 549.
[83] Today *Deontology*... would probably be entitled 'Morality for dummies'.
[84] Bentham, 121-2,188.
[85] Bentham, 160.
[86] Bentham, 122-3.
[87] Bentham, 127 fn.1.
[88] Bentham, 167.
[89] Bentham, 128.
[90] Bentham, 199.
[91] Bentham, 134.
[92] Dacier, 328.
[93] Taylor, V.112.
[94] Wollstonecraft, 85.
[95] Wollstonecraft, 229.
[96] Wollstonecraft, 93.
[97] Wollstonecraft, 86,88.
[98] Wollstonecraft, 95.
[99] Wollstonecraft, 91.
[100] Wollstonecraft, 205.
[101] Wollstonecraft, 222.
[102] Wollstonecraft, 103.
[103] Wollstonecraft. 96.
[104] Wollstonecraft, 256
[105] Wollstonecraft, 262.
[106] Godwin (1984), 76-7.
[107] Godwin (1984), 77.
[108] Godwin (1984), 78.
[109] Southey (1858), 177.
[110] Southey (1858), 197-8.
[111] OED.
[112] OED.
[113] Southey (1858), 170.
[114] Southey, 182.
[115] OED.
[116] Taylor (1875), 51.
[117] Confirming this, Hogg wrote of Shelley's frequent use of the Eleusinian invocation 'Konx ompax, and it is finished!' while at Oxford (Hogg [1906], 140). (The term is noted as 'Conx Om pax' in Taylor's *Mysteries* [Taylor (1875) xi]). Given Shelley's interest in Kant, it is interesting to note that that philosopher attributes 'Konx Ompax' (Hogg's useage) to Tibetan sources and translates it as "holy (Konx), heavenly (Om) and wise (Pax) supreme being who pervades the whole world" (Kant [1970] 106). Kant adds that "it may well have signified monotheism to the epopts, as distinct from the polytheism of the uninitiated mass" (Kant [1979] 106), a note which bears a marked resemblance to Godwin's observation in his explanation of the Eleusinian mysteries in *The Pantheon* that this "doctrine revealed by the high priest, was the fallacy of the vulgar polytheism, and the unity of the great principle of the universe" (Godwin [1984] 24).
[118] Shaffer 503.
[119] It is interesting to note that Boehme's first editor was called Franckenberg.
[120] Qtd. Stoudt, 58-9.
[121] Stoudt, 115.
[122] Shuttleton, fn.44.
[123] Bechler 94.
[124] Schaffer 490,502.
[125] Shaffer 495.
[126] OED.
[127] Spurgeon, 326.
[128] Byrom 425.
[129] Byrom, 425.
[130] Byrom, 425.
[131] Stoudt, 302.
[132] Shelley (1988), 291,293-4.
[133] Shelley (1988), 294-5.
[134] Shelley (1988), 293.
[135] Shelley (1988), 297.
[136] Shelley (1988), 291.
[137] Byrom, 426.
[138] Byrom, 427.
[139] Byrom, 426.
[140] Byrom, 427.
[141] Byrom, 445.
[142] Milton, II.587-591.
[143] Taylor (1975), 93-4.
[144] Milton, II.575.
[145] Frankenstein, 6.
[146] Frankenstein, 6.

Notes for Chapter 8.

[1] Herbert (1968), 97.
[2] Fay, 111.
[3] Jacob, 154.
[4] Todd, 24.
[5] Boulton, lxv.
[6] Tierney-Hynes, 606.
[7] Zias, 104.
[8] Tierney-Hynes, 615.
[9] Boulton, cxxi.
[10] Qtd. Brodey, 111.
[11] Wells, 132.
[12] Todd, 24-25.
[13] Steintrager, 114,118.
[14] Steintrager, 122.
[15] Todd, 81; Wells, 138 fn9.
[16] Eaves, 555.
[17] Godwin, I.311.
[18] Curran, 6.
[19] Cohen, 143.
[20] Poovey, 46.
[21] Frankenstein, 7.
[22] Tierney-Hynes, 609.
[23] OED.
[24] OED.
[25] Frankenstein, 7.
[26] Prince, 25.
[27] Barthes, 142: "As soon as a fact is narrated no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself, this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins."
[28] Shaftesbury, 90.
[29] Frankenstein, 12.
[30] Prince, 62.
[31] Prince, 66.
[32] Michael Eberle-Sinatra has pointed out to me that Mrs. Margaret Walton-Saville shares the same initials as Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and Mrs. Saville has, by implication, effectively acted as an editor in bringing her brother's letters to print. If it suggests anything at all, this suggests to me that Mary might actually have performed this role in the writing of *Frankenstein.*
[33] OED.
[34] Qtd. Prince, 23.
[35] Qtd. Prince, 58.
[36] Shaftesbury, 77.
[37] Shaftesbury, 76.
[38] Godwin (1984), 135.
[39] Rieger, xxxi.
[40] Shaftesbury, 77.
[41] Shaftesbury, 79.
[42] Shaftesbury, 85.
[43] Hocter, x.
[44] P.B. Shelley, (1988), 9, fn.13
[45] P.B. Shelley (1988), 111.
[46] P.B. Shelley (1988), 173.
[47] Qtd Rushton, 152.
[48] Rushton, 152.
[49] Grabo, 19.
[50] P.B. Shelley (1988), 189.
[51] P.B. Shelley (1988), 8.
[52] P.B. Shelley (1988), 102.
[53] P.B. Shelley (1988), 97.
[54] P.B. Shelley (1964), II.136.
[55] P.B. Shelley (1988), 119-20
[56] P.B. Shelley (1988), 129 fn.40.
[57] P.B. Shelley (1988), 129.
[58] P.B. Shelley (1988), 131-2.
[59] P.B. Shelley (1988), 98.
[60] Koyre, 21.
[61] Cf. Koyre, 35.
[62] Teeter-Dobbs, 188.
[63] Qtd. Teeter-Dobbs, 209.
[64] P.B. Shelley (1988), 133.
[65] P.B. Shelley (1988), 134.
[66] P.B. Shelley (1988), 137.
[67] P.B. Shelley (1988), 135.
[68] P.B. Shelley (1988), 137.
[69] OED.
[70] P.B. Shelley (1988), 136-7.
[71] P.B. Shelley (1988), 174.
[72] PU, II, iv, 2, 114-116.
[73] Empson, 3,223,196.
[74] Shelley (1988), 328.
[75] Shaftesbury, 124.
[76] Qtd. Schaffer, 510.
[77] Richardson, iii.
[78] M.W. Shelley (1996), 297.
[79] Rousseau, i.
[80] Frankenstein, 7.
[81] Shakespeare, R&J I.iv.56-7.
[82] Wordsworth, 76-83; 189.
[83] Frankenstein, 154.
[84] Wordsworth, 81.
[85] Wordsworth, 183-4.
[86] Wordsworth, 72-4.
[87] Wordsworth, 73.

[88] Wordsworth, 84.
[89] Wordsworth, 67 fn.4.
[90] Wordsworth, 86.
[91] Darwin (1974), 372.
[92] Darwin, I.352-3: "I shall conclude this section on the diseases of the liver induced by spirituous liquors, with the well known story of Prometheus, which seems indeed to have been invented by physicians in those ancient times, when all things were clothed in hieroglyphic, or in fable. Prometheus was painted as stealing fire from heaven, which might well represent the inflammable spirit produced by fermentation; which may be said to animate or enliven the man of clay: whence the conquests of Bacchus, as well as the temporary mirth and noise of his devotees. But the after punishment of those, who steal this accursed fire, is a vulture gnawing the liver; and well allegorises the poor inebriate lingering for years under painful hepatic diseases"
[93] Wordsworth, 188.
[94] Wordsworth, 79-80.
[95] OED.
[96] Rushton, 37, Nichols, 200.
[97] Nichols, 5.
[98] Pesic, 81.
[99] Bacon, 23.
[100] Letter to Hogg, January 3, 1811.
[101] OED.
[102] Shelley (1988), 96.
[103] Frankenstein, 217,220.
[104] Shelley (1988), 96.
[105] Wordsworth, 80.
[106] Wordsworth, 80.
[107] Wordsworth, 80-1.
[108] Wordsworth, 81.
[109] Wordsworth, 73-74.
[110] Frankenstein, 7.
[111] Shaftesbury, 446-7.
[112] Frankenstein, 7.
[113] OED.
[114] Frankenstein, 46,47,49-50,162,181.
[115] Frankenstein, 218.
[116] PL. IV.109-10.
[117] PL. IX.475-9.
[118] Frankenstein, 214.
[119] OED.
[120] Frankenstein, 10.
[121] Frankenstein, 48,214-5.
[122] Frankenstein, 7.

Notes for Chapter 9.

[1] Nichols, 299.
[2] Nichols, 299.
[3] Nichols, 299.
[4] Darwin, I.352-3
[5] Nichols, 298.
[6] Nichols, 300.
[7] Nichols, 300.
[8] Nichols, 300.
[9] Nichols, 301.
[10] Small, 334, fn.6.
[11] Shelley (1988), 81.
[12] Qtd. Schama, 44.
[13] Richard, 68.
[14] Issacson, 145.
[15] Cohen, 157.
[16] Kant, x-xi, 62.
[17] Kant, 54fnK1,69.
[18] Kant, 63.
[19] Kant, 105.
[20] Kant, 63.
[21] Kant, 51,62.
[22] Kant, 104.
[23] Kant, 72.
[24] Schama, 44.
[25] P.B. Shelley (1964), 264.
[26] The Monthly Review, v.XXIII, 528.
[27] Barruel, 802.
[28] Qtd. Issacson, 144.
[29] Kant, 105.
[30] Kant, 104-106.
[31] Kant, 104.
[32] Prince, 26.
[33] Prince, 51,54.
[34] OED.
[35] OED.
[36] OED.
[37] OED.
[38] OED.
[39] OED.
[40] Schönfeld, 10-11.
[41] Qtd. Schönfeld, 13.
[42] Maturana, 63.
[43] McDowell, 528.
[44] Kant, xi.
[45] Todd 25; Maas 344.
[46] Shaftesbury, 27.
[47] McDowell, 515-516.
[48] McDowell, 516.
[49] OED.
[50] Wesley, iii.
[51] Wesley, vi.
[52] Wesley, 44.
[53] Godwin (1984), 141.
[54] P.B. Shelley (1988), 307.
[55] P.B. Shelley (1988), 307, fn.1.
[56] Frankenstein, 219-221.
[57] Plato, 100.
[58] Frankenstein, 220.
[59] Plato, 127.
[60] P.B. Shelley (1988), 336.
[61] This is W.H.D. Rouse's translation of the same phrase in *The Phaedo* (1950), 472, fn.3.
[62] Plato, 106.
[63] Plato, 106.
[64] Plato, 121.
[65] Plato, 137,141.
[66] Plato, 118.
[67] Plato, 122.
[68] Plato, 102,106.
[69] This is W.H.D. Rouse's translation of the same phrase in *The Phaedo* (1950), 470.
[70] Plato, 137.
[71] Plato, 139-140.
[72] Plato, 141.
[73] Plato, 135.
[74] Godwin (1984), 145-6.
[75] Smyth, 261.
[76] Rieger, 17,129.
[77] Cf. Poovey's *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*
[78] Baldick, 58.
[79] Rieman, v.
[80] "See how the boy Love, unconquered charioteer, engraved on a gem-stone, overcomes the power of the lion. See how with one hand he holds the whip, with the other he directs the reins. See how in the face of this boy there is much beauty. May the dreadful affliction be kept far off. Would he, who overpowers such a beast, ever restrain his hand with us?"
[81] "Nothing in me welcomes the common Venus, and no form of pleasure has captivated me. But I kindle in the uncorrupted minds of men the fires of learning, and draw their spirits to the lofty stars. And out of that very virtue I weave four garlands, of which the first, that of Sophia, decks my temples."
[82] "Icarus, you who were carried off through the heights and air, until the melted wax gave you headlong to the sea, now the same wax and raging fire revive you, that by your example you might

teach us sure lessons. Let the astrologer beware of predicting anything. For the impostor will fall headlong, so long as he flies above the stars."

[83] Mackail, 235.
[84] Mackail, 66-7.
[85] Bland, 3.
[86] Bland, 101.
[87] Romeo and Juliet, Act IV., sc. v.
[88] Frankenstein, 195-6.
[89] Godwin (1984), 144.
[90] Newman, 17-18, 34, 82.
[91] Peacock (1818), 212.
[92] Plato, vol. V., 109.
[93] Qtd. Newman, 18.
[94] Qtd Clarke, 41.
[95] Shaftesbury, 66, fn.48.
[96] Frankenstein, 49,52.
[97]

When through the nations stalks contagion wild,
We from them cautiously should steal away.
E'en I have oft with ling'ring and delay
Shunn'd many an influence, not to be defil'd.
And e'en though Amor oft my hours beguil'd,
At length with him preferr'd I not to play,
And so, too, with the wretched sons of clay,
When four and three-lined verses they compil'd.
But punishment pursues the scoffer straight,
As if by serpent-torch of furies led
From hill to vale, from land to sea to fly.
I hear the genie's laughter at my fate;
Yet do I find all power of thinking fled
In sonnet-rage and love's fierce ecstasy. (Goethe [1885], 225.)

[98] Holmes, 344.
[99]

And thou, who never yet of human wrong
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!
Here, where the ancients paid thee homage long -
Thou, who didst call the Furies from the abyss,
And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss
For that unnatural retribution—just,
Had it but been from hands less near—in this
Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust!
Dost thou not hear my heart?—Awake! thou shalt, and must (cxxxii).
...
--Now welcome, thou dread Power
Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here
Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight hour
With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear:
Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
That we become a part of what has been,
And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen (cxxxviii)

[100] M.W. Shelley (1996), 278.
[101] Godwin (1984), 138.
[102] Godwin (1984), 144.
[103] Smyth, 301.
[104] Qtd. Lewis, 186.
[105] Lewis, 186 fn.66.
[106] Gibbon (1974), 505.
[107] P.B. Shelley (1988), 9.
[108] P.B. Shelley (1988), 176.
[109] P.B. Shelley (1988), 112.
[110] PU, II, 2, vi, 115.
[111] PU, II, 2, vi, 119-20.

Notes for Chapter 10.

[1] Peacock (1896), 159, fn.2
[2] Peacock (1970), 60.
[3] Frankenstein, 85.
[4] Frankenstein, 45-6.
[5] P.B. Shelley (1975), iv.
[6] P.B. Shelley (1975), iv.
[7] Frankenstein, 181.
[8] P.B. Shelley (1975), iv; Frankenstein, 86.
[9] "balefully or perniciously blown or breathed upon; stricken by meteoric or supernatural agency, as parching wind, lightning, an alleged malignant planet, the wrath and curse of heaven; blighted". (OED.)
[10] Frankenstein, 86.
[11] P.B. Shelley (1988), 327.
[12] Peacock (1970), 60.
[13] P.B. Shelley (1975), iv.
[14] Behrendt, 32.
[15] OED.
[16] OED.
[17] P.B. Shelley (1988), 189.
[18] Behrendt, 17.
[19] Behrendt, 19.
[20] P.B. Shelley (2002), 252.
[21] Behrendt, 32.
[22] Coleridge, TT I:272
[23] Frankenstein, 47.
[24] Plato, 151.
[25] According to the translation by W.H.D. Rouse (1950), 315.
[26] Plato, 126.
[27] Plato, 127.
[28] OED.
[29] P.B. Shelley (1988), 277.
[30] P.B. Shelley (1988), 130.
[31] P.B. Shelley (1988), 278.
[32] P.B. Shelley, (1988), 10.
[33] Cupidity: defined by Johnson in 1755 as "unlawful or unreasonable longing" (OED).
[34] Frankenstein, 24.
[35] Frankenstein, 6.
[36] P.B. Shelley (1975), 15.
[37] P.B. Shelley (1975), 3; Frankenstein 47
[38] P.B. Shelley (1975), 25.
[39] Frankenstein, 200.
[40] P.B. Shelley (1975), 26.
[41] Frankenstein, 202.
[42] P.B. Shelley (1975), vi
[43] Frankenstein, 51.
[44] Volney, 199.
[45] P.B. Shelley (1975), 20.
[46] The swan became the "insignia of the poets" as depicted emblem 184 in the book of Alciato's Emblems (1577) by Giovanni Andrea Alciato (1492-1550).
[47] Plato, 125.
[48] Plato, 125.
[49] Hogg (1952), 121-2.
[50] P.B. Shelley (1975), iii.
[51] P.B. Shelley (1975), v.
[52] P.B. Shelley (1975), 21.
[53] Frankenstein, 168.
[54] In *The Phaedo*, it is mankind's "imbecility and sloth" which prevents him from 'seeing' clearly (Plato, 151).
[55] Peacock, 59.
[56] "And of this Homer thus speaks: "Far, very far, where under earth is found / A gulf, of every depth, the most profound". Which he elsewhere, and many other poets, denominate Tartarus. For into this chasm there is a conflux of all rivers, from which they again flow upwards... The other rivers, indeed, are many, great, and various: but among this abundance there are certain streams, four in number, of which the greatest, and which circularly flows round the earth the outermost of all, is called the ocean. But that which flows opposite, and in a contrary direction to this, is Acheron... The third river of these hurls itself forth in the middle, and near its source falls into a mighty place, burning with abundance of fire, and produces a lake greater than our sea, and hot with water and mud... And this is the river which they still denominate Pyriphlegethon... But the fourth river, which is opposite to this, first falls as it is said into a place dreadful and wild, and wholly tinged with an azure colour, which they denominate Styx... But its name, according to the poets, is Cocytus." (Plato, 154-155.)
[57] Plato, 150.
[58] Plato, 153-154.
[59] P.B. Shelley (1988), 308.
[60] In a letter to Godwin of February 24, 1812, Shelley writes, "We were driven by a storm completely to the North of Ireland on our passage from the Isle of Man.—Harriet (my wife) and Eliza (my sister in law) were very much fatigued after 28 hours tossing in a Slate-galliot during a violent gale".
[61] Plato, 125.

[62] Plato, 125.
[63] Frankenstein, 32.
[64] Fankenstein, 52.
[65] Frankenstein, 204.
[66] P.B. Shelley (1975), v.
[67] P.B. Shelley (1975), iv.
[68] Frankenstein, 82.
[69] Frankenstein, 86.
[70] Frankenstein, 95.
[71] P.B. Shelley (1975), v.
[72] P.B. Shelley (1975), iv.
[73] Plato, 121.
[74] Frankenstein, 6.
[75] P.B. Shelley (1975), 15.
[76] Frankenstein, 65.
[77] P.B. Shelley (1975), 4.
[78] P.B. Shelley (1975), 2.
[79] P.B. Shelley (1975), 9-10.
[80] P.B. Shelley (1975), 11.
[81] P.B. Shelley (1975), 16.
[82] P.B. Shelley (1975), 14.
[83] Frankenstein, 32.
[84] P.B. Shelley (1975), iii.
[85] Compare the geographical locations listed in these two exerpts:

His wandering step,
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited
The awful ruins of the days of old:
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange,
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk
Or jasper tomb or mutilated sphinx,
Dark Æthiopia in her desert hills
Conceals. (P.B. Shelley [1975], 8-9.)

"Ah! whither have flown those ages of life and abundance?--whither vanished those brilliant creations of human industry? Where are those ramparts of Nineveh, those walls of Babylon, those palaces of Persepolis, those temples of Balbec and of Jerusalem? Where are those fleets of Tyre, those dock-yards of Arad, those work-shops of Sidon, and that multitude of sailors, of pilots, of merchants, and of soldiers? Where those husbandmen, harvests, flocks, and all the creation of living beings in which the face of the earth rejoiced? Alas! I have passed over this desolate land! I have visited the palaces, once the scene of so much splendor, and I beheld nothing but solitude and desolation" (Volney, 6).

[86] Frankenstein, 115.
[87] Volney, 8,13.
[88] Volney, 13.
[89] Volney, 11.
[90] P.B. Shelley (1988), 297.
[91] Volney, 14.
[92] Volney, 68-9.
[93] Mazlish, 52.
[94] Qtd., Marx, 214.
[95] Jefferson, 48-9.
[96] Volney, 33.
[97] P.B. Shelley (1988), 309.
[98] P.B. Shelley (1988), 309.
[99] Godwin (1988), 316.

Notes for Chapter 11.

[1] P.B. Shelley, (1975), 53-5.
[2] P.B. Shelley, (1975), 67-8.
[3] There is no exact date for this letter.
[4] Herbert (1968), 5.:

Fatal Aspect! that hast an Influence
More powerful far than those Immortal Fires
That but incline the Will and move the Sense,
Which thou alone contrain'st, kindling Desires
Of such an holy force, as more inspires
The Soul with Knowledge, than Experience
Or Revelation can do with all
Their borrow'd helps: Sacred Astonishment
Sits on thy Brow, threatning a sudden fall
To all those Thoughts that are not lowly sent,
In wonder and amaze, dazling that Eye
Which on those Mysteries doth rudely gaze,
Vow'd only unto Love's Divinity:
Sure Adam sinn'd not in that spotless Face.

[5] Lucan, 127-8.:
Though free to all that ask, denied to none,
No human passion lurks within the voice
That heralds forth the god; no whispered vow,
No evil prayer prevails; none favour gain:
Of things unchangeable the song divine;
Yet loves the just. When men have left their homes
To seek another, it hath turned their steps
Aright...
...
Our centuries have lost, since Delphi's shrine
Has silent stood, and kings forbade the gods
To speak the future, fearing for their fates.
Nor does the priestess sorrow that the voice
Is heard no longer; and the silent fane
To her is happiness; for whatever breast
Contains the deity, its shattered frame
Surges with frenzy, and the soul divine
Shakes the frail breath that with the god receives,
As prize or punishment, untimely death.(116-23, 130-39).

[6] Hogg (1952), 75.
[7] Godwin (1984), 176.
[8] Aaron, 129.
[9] Herbert (1952), 97.
[10] .B. Shelley, (1975), iv.
[11] Frankenstein, 7.
[12] P.B. Shelley (1988), 109.
[13] P.B. Shelley (1988), 327.
[14] Bedford, 73. As for Herbert's concept of 'evolution', he held that "every faculty in turn adapts itself to external conditions by degrees under the spur of necessity" (Herbert [1937], 123).
[15] Bedford, 109.
[16] Spinoza, 53.
[17] Spinoza 154.
[18] Spinoza, 144.
[19] Herbert (1937), 233.
[20] Hobbes, 186.
[21] Hobbes, 227.
[22] Shaftesbury, xxix.
[23] P.B. Shelley (1988), 109.
[24] Hampshire, 60.
[25] Maturana (1980), xvi-xvii.
[26] Maturana (1980), xx-xxi.
[27] Maturana (1987), 87-8.
[28] Frankenstein, 6.
[29] Burke, 45.
[30] Darwin, 108.
[31] OED.
[32] Burke, 50.
[33] P.B. Shelley (1988), 200.
[34] P.B. Shelley (1988), 211.
[35] OED.
[36] P.B. Shelley (1988), 111.
[37] Bowra, 108.
[38] Bowra, 121.
[39] PU 2.4.
[40] Smyth, 261.
[41] PU 2.3:6.
[42] Bowra, 110.
[43] Coleridge (1967), 91.
[44] P.B. Shelley (1988), 173.
[45] In *Biographia Literaria* (1817) Coleridge, by this time a dualist, had written to remind "Hume, Priestley, and the French fatalists or necessitarians" that "as long as there are men in the world to whom the *Gnothi seauton* ('know thyself') is an instinct and a command from their own nature, so long will there be metaphysicians and metaphysical speculations" (Coleridge [1983], 291).
[46] PU 2.2:41-47.
[47] OED.
[48] Marlowe, 691.
[49] PL II 964-5.
[50] M.W. Shelley (1996), 278.
[51] Volney, 133.
[52] M.W. Shelley (1995), xciii-xciv.
[53] Spenser, Qtd. Hunt, 79.

[54] ER, 196.
[55] OED.
[56] Frankenstein, 52.
[57] Frankenstein, 94.
[58] Frankenstein, 132.
[59] Coleridge (1912), 429-431.

Notes for the Conclusion

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[1] Godwin (1984), 32-34.
[2] Lovelock, 147.
[3] Lovelock, 147.
[4] Lovelock, 47.
[5] Lovelock, 141.
[6] Plato, 107.
[7] Plato, xxiv.

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