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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Katherine Richardson Powers entitled "The Influence of William Godwin on the Novels of Mary Shelley." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.

Kenneth Curry, Major Professor

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Galen Broeker, Edward W. Bratten, Bain T. Stewart

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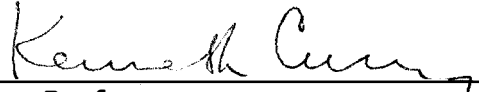
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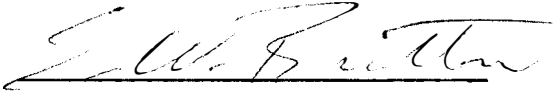
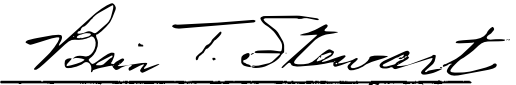

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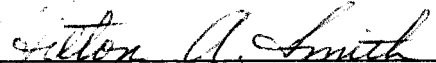
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Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Chancellor for
Graduate Studies and Research

THE INFLUENCE OF WILLIAM GODWIN ON
THE NOVELS OF MARY SHELLEY

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
The University of Tennessee

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Katherine Richardson Powers

August 1972

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ABSTRACT

The past few decades have seen a revival of interest in the social philosophy of William Godwin and a reevaluation of his works. Although Godwin has been viewed as a powerful influence on the works of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, little notice has been taken of his influence on the work of his daughter, Mary Shelley. It has, on the contrary, been popular to attribute Mary's Frankenstein to the influence of her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley. Many critics have recognized a close connection between the works of Godwin and Mary, but the comments are limited and general; and most studies of Mary's novels use a biographical or critical approach.

The primary purpose of this study of Mary Shelley's novels, however, is to trace the influence that her father and his works had upon her writing. A writer and his work are so closely intertwined that it is not always possible to separate the one from the other. This is especially true of Godwin and Mary because the novels of both are filled with autobiographical and biographical elements which must be accounted for in order to reveal the influence they had on each other. For this reason, the study begins with a biographical sketch of the father and daughter with emphasis placed upon those events and circumstances in their lives which had an effect on their writing of fiction.

The present-day reader who is not familiar with Godwin's philosophy would not notice the most prevalent similarity between the two: the ideas--the philosophies--run very nearly parallel

throughout their novels. The comparison between the two thus begins with Godwin's ideas and shows how they are carried out in his novels and also in Mary's. The major source used for determining Godwin's ideas is his formal treatise, Enquiry concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness (1793). Their aesthetic techniques are next analyzed by widely known and used critical criteria. In conclusion, the study reveals a striking similarity between both their ideas and techniques, thereby substantiating the claim of the author of this work that Godwin's ideas, as set forth in Political Justice, and the literary techniques of his fiction form the foundation on which his daughter's novels rest.

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CHAPTER I

GODWIN AND HIS AGE

William Godwin lived most of his life during the reign of George III, who came to the throne in 1760. In the year of the accession of George III, Thomas Gray and Samuel Johnson were at the zenith of their literary careers; Hume was attempting to distinguish between sentiment and judgment; Burke had just written his Origin of Our Ideas concerning the Sublime and the Beautiful; and Rousseau, having completed his Nouvelle Heloise, was soon to publish his Contrat Social. Walpole, Percy, Goldsmith, Sterne and Sheridan were shortly to contribute their major works. In America Franklin had discovered electricity, Jonathan Edwards had presented his discourses on Freedom of the Will and the Doctrine of Original Sin, while William Bartram was exploring the American wilderness and observing its inhabitants. Such was the intellectual spirit of the times as Godwin grew to manhood and began to conduct his own investigations of his age.

But there were other forces at work which were closer to the common man and to the everyday experiences of Godwin and his contemporaries. It was these conditions that challenged Godwin and other like-minded individuals to attempt to reform their age.

At its beginning, the eighteenth century is described as "a brutal, bawdy, filthy, stinking age . . . in which life was terribly uncertain. . . ." The death rate was so high that the population of London in 1700 was 674,350 and in 1750 only 676,250. The number of infant deaths was staggering and terrible. Thomas Gray (1716-1771),

the poet, for example, was the only surviving child of twelve. Epidemics swept away the poor by the thousands. Workhouses for the poor and indigent are described by George Crabbe as containing orphans, parents separated from their children, forsaken wives, unwed mothers, widows, the aged, the lame, the blind, and by far, the happiest of the lot, "The moping idiot and the madman gay."¹ The poor were considered indispensable to the nation as workers and were to be granted only a subsistence level of life since more would demoralize them. This attitude was rooted in the helplessness of the unpropertied, who could not vote, and the dominance of the privileged classes. The exploitation of labor was a vital part of the English system of economics. The Church was atrophied and decadent, offering a religion of elegance and learning to the upper classes, but to the new industrial population thronging in the cities it offered nothing. More than two hundred crimes were punishable by death. If an offense became common, an attempt was made to stop it by making it capital. The man who stole twelve and a half pence from a pocket, or cut down trees in an avenue or garden, or counterfeited coin was hanged. On the other hand, manslaughter was merely a felony until 1822 and an attempt to commit murder only a common law misdemeanor. Conditions in the prisons continued to be bad throughout the century, even though the Gaol Distemper Act, passed in 1774, required that prisons be cleaned and ventilated and that each prison have a warm and cold bath and separate rooms for the sick. This act, nevertheless, was seldom observed.

¹Oscar Sherwin, "Crime and Punishment in England in the Eighteenth Century," American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 5 (1945-46), 169-199.

By the middle of the century, however, many improvements were under way. Progress of this sort was slow, but it gave hope and was the inspiration for new reforms. The Gin Act of 1751 has been hailed as a turning point in the social history of London after the incredible orgy of gin-drinking during the thirty years preceding the act, since it imposed restrictions on the sale of liquor and made small tipling debts irrecoverable by law. The death-rate began to fall, crimes of violence declined, the brutality of the lower classes decreased, and London became a healthier, safer place than it had ever been before. Some care for the sick, the young, and the old was being provided by hospitals, even though the sanitary conditions were frequently so poor that many died as infectious diseases swept through them. The appointment of the novelist Henry Fielding in 1749 as chief magistrate for Westminster was another turning point in English social history. Five years later he was succeeded by his brother John. Between them, the police court became an organ of social reform. Juvenile offenders were treated as cases to be cured rather than as criminals to be hanged. John also laid the foundations for a permanent, salaried police force to replace the swarm of informers and bullies who instigated crime in order to reveal it. With the spread of education and the civilizing influence of evangelical religion there was a growing sense of responsibility on the part of the ordinary citizen. On rare occasions, punishment was meted out to the aristocrat who attacked a commoner. In 1760 Lord Ferrers was publicly hanged for the murder of his steward.²

²R. J. White, The Age of George III (London: Heinemann, 1968), pp. 18-19.

When George the Third became King of England in 1760, London was the richest and most progressive capital in the Western world, though it was, at the same time, a city of crude and tragic contrasts. The government considered its function to be mainly judicial and executive rather than legislative, and it took very little part in instituting welfare legislation or social services. Children worked in mills, such as the silk mill Godwin described in Fleetwood, for fourteen hours a day, and were often killed or maimed by the machines when they fell asleep on their feet. And in some areas not fortunate enough to have magistrates like John and Henry Fielding, lawlessness was rampant.

Finally, in the 1780's, a long overdue reform movement was begun. Under Rockingham and Pitt, corruption in government was reduced and its exploitative financial policies curtailed. Much agitation and debate arose to alleviate the conditions of slaves, prisoners, and paupers. But with the eruption of the French Revolution in 1789, the reform movement came to a complete halt. As the Terror spread in France, anarchy and even change were repressed in England. From 1688 until about 1760 the majority of British politicians held no political convictions or doctrines for which they were willing to fight. Their main concern was to maintain the status quo, to keep themselves in lucrative offices. It was this status quo that Godwin hoped to shake with his Political Justice. His message was a cry for the rights of the average man to engage in argument with the aristocracy, to have a voice in the government. Godwin must have hoped that enfranchisement for the middle classes was near, for his hero in Cloudesley (1830) was a man of the middle classes to whom he frequently refers as "the

English yeoman." Also published the same year was Mary's Perkin Warbeck, whose hero was executed as the son of a Dutch money-lender. The Great Reform Bill of 1832 disenfranchised the "rotten" boroughs, it almost doubled the electorate, and it gave the majority vote to the middle classes. A great victory for the people of England had been won. From this point on, all of England's Catebs could hope for a fair chance in court against the Falklands of the land.

The idea of perfectibility flourished among the "enlightened" men of the eighteenth century; it was part of the century's concept of progress. Scientific development during the eighteenth century had contributed greatly to man's welfare, and the eighteenth century looked to the improvement of his moral and spiritual state. Two new methods for achieving this improvement were well under way by 1750: the first was religious and the second was philosophical. The term Methodist was the name given to a group of Oxford men including John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield, who began meeting for religious exercises in 1729. Since they resolved to conduct their lives and religious study by "rule and method," they and their societies, which began to spread throughout England, were given the name Methodists. Their object was salvation, continuing self-improvement, and evangelism. John Wesley insisted that reason had a valid but very restricted role in integrating the scattered forces of a man's personal life. But if the individual wished to be a "whole" man and improve in the Christian virtues, he must look to his faith in God and the support of his Christian brethren for help. Under the influence of Methodism the Church of England began to reform itself. By 1790 nearly five hundred clergy supported Wesley,

whereas only six or seven had done so in 1750.³ Thousands of people, especially from the new working classes produced by the Industrial Revolution, had been converted to Methodism. One of the particular tenets of their belief was that man should continually strive to improve in Christian love and benevolence and avoid standing still, or even worse, "backsliding." Such was the new religious method for attaining a more advanced state of perfectibility.

Several philosophical schemes aimed at the improvement of man emerged during the century, but the most ardent and persistent advocate of such a scheme was William Godwin. The ostensible function of the Church has always been more limited in scope than the function of the government since the Church proclaimed perfectibility and salvation for the individual, while government proclaimed perfectibility and preservation of society as a whole. Godwin felt that since the Church had failed in its mission to improve individuals, not only had the individuals become corrupt, but they had allowed their institutions to become corrupt as well. He therefore looked to a philosophy dominated by reason to accomplish what faith had not been able to achieve. The sources of Godwin's philosophy have been carefully examined by a number of scholars; but to describe them briefly, they resemble nothing so much as a brightly colored patchwork quilt whose pieces are fitted together from the writings of such men as Locke, Hume, Helvétius, Rousseau, Hartley, Holbach, and Robert Sandeman. The great, gold star of Reason gleams from the quilt's center, and all is encircled

³ A. E. Rodway, ed., Godwin and the Age of Transition (London: George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., 1952), p. 19.

by the pristine white border of Christian brotherly love. Godwin had drawn from the usual sources of his day, but his synthesis of them was systematic and unusual. Education, the first step in his system, prepared man to use his reason--that is, to carefully consider and understand the underlying causes of a given situation. Once reason was applied, benevolent action would follow, and the man would be able to deal justly with others and himself. This chain of mental and physical endeavor would inevitably lead man into a more advanced stage of perfectibility. In the pages of Godwin we see faith in the perfectibility of man shining at its brightest and pushed to its utmost limits. No politician in a state of perfectibility would be able to hold his seat in Parliament without accepting the responsibility of bringing justice to all the people in England. With his Political Justice (1793) Godwin hoped to rouse the thinking men of England to action against the injustices of a government that had remained relatively unchanged for more than a century.

In his discussion of government, society, and the individual in Political Justice, Godwin attempts by the process of close analysis to expose the defects in the traditions, laws, and opinions that have controlled man and his world, and in so doing to compel the reader to see his world not through a film of illusion and prejudice but as it appears to a man of reason who clearly sees "things as they are." Government and society as a whole he despairs of. Since he can think of no form of government that is without serious faults, he recommends that society maintain as little government as possible. But the individual who acquires knowledge and whose voluntary actions and

considered opinions are controlled by reason will eventually be led to hold benevolent attitudes which will enable him to act justly toward his fellowman. It is only as more and more members of a given society become benevolent and just that any real advancement can be made within that society.

The basis for this proposed plan of personal development is knowledge. Indeed, in writing Political Justice, Godwin's purpose was to contribute to the knowledge of his readers by showing them, as his title indicates, how government and politics affect not only the morality and happiness of men but also their chances for survival. It is truly a sociological and psychological document as well as a political and philosophical one.

Given the proper sort of education or knowledge, the individual will then be capable of reason and will refuse to be misled by emotion or harmful passion. His judgments and opinions will be founded in fact and influenced by those thinkers who have been proved through the ages to be the most able, the most nearly correct, and the most nearly just. Under this influence, he will be imbued with a spirit of disinterested benevolence. His principal aim in his contacts with others will be to do no evil (cause no pain) to any one and to do good (give pleasure) to as many as possible. He is "to love his neighbor as himself." He is not to be benevolent from any ulterior motive or because of personal ties or preferences, and he is not to expect good in return. It is only as he seeks to attain this high degree of development that he will become more able to deal justly with other men and with himself. Thus he will find himself in a happy state of perfectibility which will

continue day by day, and year by year, and will not cease until the day of his death.

The continuous protection and improvement of the individual was for Godwin the only justifiable reason for government. When government failed in this purpose, it should be changed. Men who conduct their affairs in a state of perfectibility will constantly inspect and analyze their government to detect any necessity for change that may be approaching. In so doing they avert anarchy and revolution by a slow and judicious introduction of the required change. It was this function that Godwin hoped to perform for his country--to show the need for change and point the way to it.

Upon completing Political Justice, Godwin next turned to fiction in order to support himself financially and to lend further support to his ideas in Political Justice. In writing Caleb Williams Godwin achieved something very difficult in the novel. "He . . . found a human situation to parallel the impersonal issue of revolution: not a replica of it in miniature, but a psychological analogue. Something which, unlike the abstract issue, does not frustrate our sympathies at every turn."⁴ His aim in this novel as in all his others was to give living reality to his theories and in so doing point the way to perfectibility, an aim which his daughter Mary came, in time, to share with him.

⁴P. N. Furbank, "Godwin's Novels," Essays in Criticism, 5 (July, 1955), 218.

CHAPTER II

THE LIVES OF WILLIAM GODWIN AND MARY SHELLEY

William Godwin was born in 1756 into a respectable middle-class family residing near Norwich, a city which had long been an important ecclesiastical and commercial center and had enjoyed the same liberties as London since the time of Richard I. A concern for the rights of the working man became a part of its tradition because of the unsuccessful peasant revolts of 1381 and 1549, and the right of religious dissent was established when groups of its citizens with ardent Puritan convictions migrated to America early in the seventeenth century. During Godwin's day it was a thriving cultural, religious, and industrial center, and it continued to be noted for religious and political unrest.

William's father, John Godwin, was a dissenting minister and a devout Calvinist, and the prevailing tone of the Godwin home was pious and religious. The family was frequently forced to move from one parish to another because of the father's involvement in theological disputes. Before the age of eight William was not only possessed by a desire for knowledge, but he showed a marked interest in moral and spiritual problems and was determined to become a dissenting minister, like his father. One dominant trait which all his biographers stress is his extreme desire to excel, to make some worthwhile contribution to society for which he would be recognized by his contemporaries and revered by posterity. Every Sunday afternoon he mounted a child's

highchair and preached in his mother's kitchen, indifferent to the persons present and undisturbed by their coming and going.¹

When he was eleven years of age, his schoolmaster advised his parents that their child was precocious and in need of a more learned teacher. After those observations of his abilities, the parents sent "the little Solomon," as his mother called him, to Norwich, where he became the sole pupil of Samuel Newton, the minister of the Independent congregation. Newton was a religious bigot and a Sandemanian. Sandemanians, a small Presbyterian sect, followed the example of the early Christian church in believing that all possessions were common property to be shared by all members of their faith. They were opposed to national churches and civil interference in religious matters since neither was authorized by the Scriptures. Many years later Godwin used Newton as one of his models for the Reverend Hilkiah Bradford in Mandeville, whom he treated in a satiric manner softened by occasional pathetic passages. After four years of classical studies with Newton and a year as assistant to his former schoolmaster, young Godwin, at the age of sixteen, was able to chart his own life with greater freedom because of the death of his overbearing father in 1772. In 1773 he enrolled at the fine liberal Dissenting academy at Hoxton where, under the influence of Dr. Andrew Kippis, a famous philologist and classical scholar, he began to question the doctrines of Calvin. Throughout his youth and most of his adult life he was an indefatigable scholar, and in later years he dated the years at Hoxton as beginning his search

¹George Woodcock, William Godwin, a Biographical Study (London: The Porcupine Press, 1946), pp. 3-9.

for truth. His formal education came to an end when he left Hoxton.²

His career as a minister lasted less than four years. When he accepted his first appointment at Ware, he was a Sandemanian in theology and a Tory in politics. But his religious and political convictions began to undergo such a change that he resigned from his second appointment at Stowmarket in Suffolk and took up residence in London, where he began to write, partly "spurred by the want of money" and partly urged by his liberal friend the Reverend Joseph Fawcet.³ After this time, 1782, he had no connection with any church and earned his living solely by his pen. In politics he was no longer a Tory, but he was not a thorough going member of any political party. He moved freely in political circles, especially radical ones, and even went so far as to draft an address of congratulations from English Republicans to the French Revolution on the fall of the Bastille. His first publications date from 1783, when he was twenty-seven years of age, and include Damon and Delia, Italian Letters, and Imogene--three short novels; The History of the Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham; and essays on various historical subjects. In 1785 he contributed articles to the new Whig review, The Political Herald, but declined the editorship for fear that membership in one party would limit his freedom of judgment. In 1789 he was well known and respected by printers and publishers in London. In 1791 he severed his connection with the

²Ibid., pp. 10-15.

³Ford K. Brown, The Life of William Godwin (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1926), pp. 14-16.

New Annual Register--a liberal periodical for which he wrote historical articles--in order to begin writing his great treatise on political justice, which he completed in 1793.

In 1797, the year in which Godwin married Mary Wollstonecraft and the year in which their daughter Mary was born, Godwin was indeed famous. He had not only completed his Political Justice and Caleb Williams, but he had rescued his friends of the London Corresponding Society--Thomas Hardy, Horne Tooke, and Thomas Holcroft--from a charge of treason by means of his article "Cursory Strictures on the Charge Delivered by Lord Justice Eyre to the Grand Jury," published in the Morning Chronicle, October 20th, 1793, immediately reprinted as a pamphlet and distributed throughout England. At first, Godwin's authorship of the article was kept secret; but when it became known, the radicals were grateful for his timely intervention. He was hailed by the conservatives as a sage and as a champion of reform by the radicals, who ignored, for a time, his admonitions against haste and anarchy.⁴ Between 1793 and 1797 Godwin had become "an oracle in an ever-widening circle of friends," prosperous, and exalted in spirit. "Society was for a moment intimidated by the boldness of his attack" and had not yet "recovered its breath and turned to rend him."⁵ The year 1797 marked the culmination of his career, but it was also the year in which he lost his beloved wife, Mary Wollstonecraft, shortly after the birth of their daughter Mary.

⁴For a detailed account of the event see Woodcock, pp. 102-111.

⁵H. N. Brailsford, Shelley, Godwin and Their Circle (London: Oxford University Press, 1913), p. 142.

Godwin, who for many years had been opposed to marriage on the grounds that it constituted a form of slavery and monopoly, was left desolate by his wife's death. According to his own statement, they had been as happy as it is possible for human beings to be. His ideas concerning marriage had changed, and he no longer felt that man's private affections should be disregarded and suppressed. In the months following her death he devoted himself to writing his Memoirs of the Author of the "Vindication of the Rights of Women." It was undoubtedly a consolation to him to write of her, but he also felt it was his duty to reveal her true merit to the public, a duty he explains in the introduction. "Every benefactor of mankind is more or less influenced by a liberal passion for fame; and survivors only pay a debt due to these benefactors, when they assert and establish on their part, the honour they loved."⁶ How shocking and ironical it must have seemed to Godwin when the public did not view the Memoirs in this manner but considered his revelation of his wife's naive affair with Gilbert Imlay a scandal and disgrace not to be borne by decent people. It was this publication that turned public opinion against Godwin and rendered him and his family objects of scorn and contempt. In the Memoirs Mary Wollstonecraft is revealed as being, as John Middleton Murry says, as "lovely in heart as in feature."⁷ One of the closing remarks of the work is representative of the restrained tenderness with which the entire piece is

⁶ William Godwin, Memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft, ed. John Middleton Murry (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1930), p. 5.

⁷ John Middleton Murry, ed., Memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft, by William Godwin (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1930), p. 1.

permeated: "This light was lent to me for a very short period, and is now extinguished forever!"⁸ It was this concept of his wife that Godwin cultivated in her two young daughters, Mary and Fanny Imlay,⁹ who was four years old at the time of her mother's death.

In addition to providing a beautiful and remarkably objective biography of Mary Wollstonecraft, this little volume furnishes insight into the more intimate facets of Godwin's character which are not so discernible in his other works--his great capacity for love and friendship. "To have been the inspiration of Coleridge and Wordsworth in one generation, and of Shelley in the next; to have won the unbroken friendship of Lamb and the life-long reverence of Hazlitt, is not the fate of the commonplace rationalist, or of the calculating sponger Godwin is so often represented to have been."¹⁰ All of the children in his home, including those of Mrs. Clairmont, his second wife, loved him with loyalty and devotion. Such strong family ties could never have developed had the children not sensed in him a deep affection and concern for themselves. A rationalist he certainly was, but not the cold, unfeeling rationalist he is sometimes mistakenly thought to have been. His one request of Mary Shelley and the second Mrs. Godwin concerning his death was that he be buried as close as possible to Mary Wollstonecraft.

Little is known of the life of Godwin and the two little girls

⁸ Godwin, Memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft, p. 126.

⁹ Godwin never legally adopted Fanny, but she was always known to friends and the public as Fanny Godwin.

¹⁰ Murry, ed., Memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft, p. 1.

who made up his family during the years from 1797 to 1801, but he was aware from the very first that everything that happened to the children was of great importance in their development. One of his favorite theories which is especially emphasized in The Enquirer (1797) was that "education cannot begin too early, and that in the very dawn of infancy the future character begins to develop."¹¹

When Mary was nearly three years old, Godwin visited Ireland at the invitation of his friend John P. Curran, who lived in Dublin. While there he corresponded with James Marshal, in whose care he had left the children. His long letters to Marshal described his experiences, the people he met, their ideas, and the countryside, but he always included a passage concerning the children or messages to them. The affectionate domestic tone of these letters clearly indicates how deeply he felt about the little girls and how seriously he took the responsibility of rearing them. On July 11, 1800, he wrote to Marshal:

I received your letter this morning, four days from its date. I forget now what I said in my last letter about the poor little girls, but in this letter I will begin with them. Their talking about me, as you say they do, makes me wish to be with them, and will probably shorten my visit. It is the first time I have been seriously separated from them since they lost their mother, and I feel it was very naughty in me to have come away so far, and to have put so much land, and a river sixty miles broad, between us, though, as you know, I had very strong reasons for coming. I hope you have got Fanny a proper spelling-book. Have you examined her at all, and discovered what improvement she has made in reading? You do not tell me whether they have paid and received any visits. If it does not take much room in your next letter, I should be very glad to hear of that. Tell

¹¹C. Kegan Paul, William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries, I (London: Henry S. King and Co., 1876), 289.

Mary I will not give her away, and she shall be nobody's little girl but papa's. Papa is gone away, but papa will very soon come back again, and see the Polygon across two fields from the trunks of the trees at Camden Town. Will Mary and Fanny come to meet me? I will write them word, if I can, in my next letter or the letter after that, when and how it shall be. Next Sunday it will be a fortnight since I left them, and I should like if possible to see them on the Sunday after Sunday 20th July. . . .¹²

He probably refers to Mary and Fanny as "the poor little girls" because he felt himself inadequate to rear them and had been trying in his direct and blunt way to marry someone who would be a good mother to them. In the letter of August 2, he assigned the care of the garden to Fanny and Mr. Collins, the gardener, instructing her that he wished "to find it spruce, cropped, weeded, and mowed at my return." He promised her six kisses if she would save him a few strawberries and beans. "But then Mary must have six kisses too, because Fanny has six." On the same day, August 2, he wrote another letter which concludes:

And now what shall I say for my poor little girls? I hope they have not forgot me. I think of them every day, and should be glad, if the wind was more favourable, to blow them a kiss a-piece from Dublin to the Polygon. I have seen Mr. Grattan's little girls and Lady Mountcashel's little girls, and they are very nice children, but I have seen none that I love half so well or think half so good as my own. I thank you a thousand times for your care of them. I hope next summer, if I should ever again be obliged to leave them for a week or two, that I shall write long letters to Fanny in a fine print hand, and that Fanny will be able to read them to herself from one end to the other. That will be the summer of 1801.¹³

As the visit drew to a close he explained that he was bringing each of the children a present from their two aunts. "I love Aunt Bishop as much as I hate (you must not read that word) Aunt Everina." He instructed Fanny twice to "Look at the map" in order to explain to

¹²Ibid., I, 364-365.

¹³Ibid., I, 367-371.

her about the "river" that was sixty miles wide and prevented him from coming home to her as soon as he wished.¹⁴

The primary accomplishment he obviously hoped for in his relationship with the children was to make them feel loved and secure, to teach them to be industrious and responsible, to educate them, to inspire them with a concern for others and a positive attitude toward others, and to develop in them an inquiring mind--"Look at the map." With such wisdom and affectionate concern guiding the rearing of the children, much of their suffering and tragedy might have been avoided had Godwin been wiser in his choice of a second wife, whom he married four years after the death of Mary Wollstonecraft.

Mrs. Mary Jane Clairmont, a widow with two children by a previous marriage, followed the pattern of the typical "Cinderella" stepmother. She was partial to her own children and unkind to both Fanny and Mary. Her bad temper was kept frequently on edge because of her jealousy of Godwin's friends and her anger at their lack of interest in her coquettish ways. Brailsford's summary of her effect upon the household may be an exaggeration, but there seems to be much truth in it.

No one can . . . read the documents which this strange household left behind, without feeling that the parent of the disaster in their lives was not their philosophic father, but this commonplace "womanly woman," who flattered, intrigued, and lied.¹⁵

But Godwin hoped at the outset that he had found a good mother for his children and a pleasant wife and companion for himself. His letters to her attest to the fact that he had a genuine affection for her and treated her with courtesy and consideration. Two years after their

¹⁴Ibid., I, 373.

¹⁵Brailsford, pp. 169-170.

marriage their son William was born and the family circle was complete.

As the children matured, Godwin supervised their reading closely. On one occasion when Mrs. Godwin, Charles (the eldest child), and Mary were at the seaside, Charles expressed a desire to read Thomas Paine's Age of Reason. Godwin sent a book on the subject, but he objected to Charles's reading Paine.

It [The Age of Reason] is written in a vein of banter and impudence, and though I do not wish the young man to be the slave of the religion of his country, there are few things I hate more than a young man, with his little bit of knowledge, setting up to turn up his nose, and elevate his eyebrows, and make his sorry joke at everything the wisest and best men in England ever produced have treated with veneration [sic]. Therefore I preferred a work by Anthony Collins, the friend of Locke, written with sobriety and learning, to the broad grins of Thomas Paine.

.
Observe, I totally object to Mary's reading in Charles's book. I think it much too early for him, but I have been driven . . . from the standing of my own judgment by the improper conduct of T. T[urner].¹⁶

What a change had come over the man who, with Thomas Holcroft, revised Paine's Rights of Man in order that it be accepted for publication twenty years earlier!

In the year following (1812) we have a glimpse of the Godwin household at its best when Mary was fifteen years of age. Aaron Burr visited London, dined with the Godwins, and made the following entry in his Journal for February 15, 1812:

Had only time to get to G[odwin]'s house where dined. In the evening, William, the only son of W[illiam] Godwin, a lad of about 9 years old, gave his weekly lecture; having heard how Coleridge and others lectured, he would also lecture; and one of his sisters (Mary, I think) writes a lecture, which he reads

¹⁶Paul, II, 185.

from a little pulpit which they have erected for him. He went through it with great gravity and decorum. The subject was, "The Influence of Governments on the Character of the People." After the lecture we had tea, and the girls sang and danced an hour, and at nine came home.¹⁷

These weekly lectures undoubtedly reminded Godwin of his weekly sermons in his mother's kitchen when he was a lad. In fact, he may have motivated the children to carry out this activity, which evidently made an impression on the distinguished American visitor.

When Mary was approaching her sixteenth birthday, she was sent to Scotland at the invitation of Godwin's friend Mr. Baxter, who invited her to live with his family in Dundee in exchange for occasional visits of his own daughters to London. In these years of her adolescence Mary could not get along with her step-mother, and this arrangement was deemed best for her and the family. On the day after her departure Godwin wrote to Baxter concerning her welfare but explained too that he did not consider himself a perfect judge of her character.

I believe she has nothing of what is commonly called vices, and that she has considerable talent. . . . I am anxious that she should be brought up (in this respect) like a philosopher, even like a cynic. It will add greatly to the strength of her character. I should also add that she has no love of dissipation, and will be perfectly satisfied with your woods and your mountains. I wish too, that she should be excited to industry. She has occasionally great perserverance, but occasionally, too, she shows great need to be roused.

Her stay at Dundee lasted almost two years, and while there she became accustomed to a quiet and contented home atmosphere such as she had not known before. "If the talk . . . lacked something of the lustre which she knew at Skinner Street, it was compensated for by the

¹⁷R. Glynn Grylls, Mary Shelley, a Biography (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 17.

happiness of the household in general. The influence of this is important, as it explains a good deal of her outlook afterwards and especially that 'conventionality' which her critics say she pursued in later years."¹⁸

During this period her interest in writing grew rapidly in the manner described in her Introduction to the 1831 edition of

Frankenstein.

I lived principally in the country as a girl, and passed a considerable time in Scotland. . . . I wrote then--but in a most common-place style. It was beneath the trees of the grounds belonging to our house, or on the bleak sides of the woodless mountains near, that my true compositions, the airy flights of my imagination, were born and fostered. I did not make myself the heroine of my tales. Life appeared to me too common-place an affair as regarded myself. I could not figure to myself that romantic woes or wonderful events would ever be my lot; but I was not confined to my own identity, and I could people the hours with creations far more interesting to me at that age, than my own sensations.¹⁹

When Mary returned to Skinner Street early in May, 1814, she was almost seventeen years of age and a beautiful young woman. Since the relationship between her and Mrs. Godwin continued to be strained, she soon began a daily walk to her mother's grave in St. Pancras' churchyard, where she pondered the subjects her father and his friends discussed, read, and built her castles in the air. It was at this time that she became acquainted with Shelley. In his visits to Skinner Street, Shelley soon found out about her retreat and met her there daily. When Shelley asked Godwin's permission for his union with Mary,

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 18-19.

¹⁹Mary W. Shelley, Frankenstein, ed. M. K. Joseph (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 5-6. Hereafter cited in the text.

Godwin made desperate efforts to reconcile Shelley and Harriet and forbade Shelley his house. But it was too late. On July 28th, the two eloped to France accompanied by Claire (Jane) Clairmont. After a leisurely tour which lasted until their funds were exhausted, they returned to London in mid-September, where the financial struggle to live began in earnest.

— Their reception by the Godwins was hostile. There was communication between them and Jane was permitted to come to Skinner Street, but the Shelleys were not welcome there. Many conjectures concerning Godwin's objection to this union have been made. One suggests that Godwin was a thinker who had won a disciple, Shelley, who was a doer, but the feelings of the father about his daughter may not have been in agreement with the speculations of the philosopher.²⁰ Another suggestion points to the fact that Godwin frequently maintained that public institutions should not be flaunted for private reasons, but only to promote the public good. It is also well to remember the storm of abuse that Godwin's candid presentation of the facts of Mary Wollstonecraft's affair with Captain Gilbert Imlay in his Memoir had brought down upon the entire family. But whatever his reasons, it seems relatively certain that he never fully forgave Shelley for this seduction of his young daughter. It is also equally certain that Shelley's admiration of Godwin was shattered because of Godwin's hostile reaction to his union with Mary, especially since it did

²⁰ Elton Edward Smith and Esther Greenwell Smith, William Godwin (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 73.

not long deter Godwin from attempting to extort money from him.²¹

Most of Shelley's efforts at this time were concentrated on negotiating for an income with his solicitor and to avoid being arrested for debt. The Shelleys' first child, a daughter, was born prematurely in February, 1815, but lived only a few days.

The year 1816 was filled with important developments in the Godwin and Shelley households, some of which were tragic. It began propitiously with the birth of the Shelleys' first son, William, who was a thriving, healthy child. The break between the Godwins and the Shelleys began to mend when Godwin walked over from Bracknell, where he was visiting, to see the Shelleys, who were at nearby Binfield. From this time on there was frequent communication between them. An examination of Godwin's Journal reveals that scarcely a month went by that did not contain several entries of letters written to "P. B. S."²² In May the Shelleys and Claire went to Switzerland and took a cottage near Lord Byron's villa, where they visited frequently. Here Mary conceived the idea for Frankenstein and began her greatest work. They returned to England in September and were at Bath when Fanny Imlay committed suicide. It was Shelley who rushed to Swansea, after Mary received a frightening letter from her, to discover that Fanny, at the age of twenty-two, had deliberately taken an overdose of laudanum. Two months later the body of Harriet Shelley was found in the Serpentine, apparently another suicide. The year came to a close

²¹ Ibid.

²² William Godwin's Journal, in the Shelley-Godwin Collection of Lord Abinger, the manuscript on microfilm in the Duke University Library.

with the marriage of Mary W. Godwin and Percy B. Shelley on December 29th (Godwin places it on the 30th) attended by Mr. and Mrs. Godwin, satisfied witnesses to the ceremony.

The tragic events of 1816 being past and the Shelleys now legally married, 1817 was a year of comparative calm, broken only by the disappointment of Shelley's failure to gain custody of his two children by Harriet. Mary's first published work appeared in 1817, with the title, History of the Six Weeks Tour through a Part of France, Switzerland, Germany and Holland: with Letters Descriptive of a Sail round the Lake of Geneva, and of the Glaciers of Chamouni, a thin volume compiled from her own and Shelley's journal of their travels. Despite the cumbersome title, the work had simplicity and charm and "made a pleasant little stir in the literary world."²³ During this year she continued to work on Frankenstein, while her father completed Mandeville. Mary completed Frankenstein not long after the birth of her daughter, Clara Everina, in September. Shortly after her completion of the novel, her father suggested that she begin another. While Shelley was in London attending to the publication of "The Revolt of Islam," Mary wrote to him:

By the bye, talking of authorship do get a sketch of Godwin's plan from him--I do not think that I ought to get out of the habit of writing and I think that the thing he talked of would just suit me. I told you that after what had passed he would be particularly gracious.²⁴

²³Elizabeth Nitchie, Mary Shelley, Author of Frankenstein (1953; rpt. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970), p. 143.

²⁴The Letters of Mary W. Shelley, ed. Frederick L. Jones, I (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1944), no. 34. Hereafter cited in the text by volume and number of the letter.

Since their house in Marlow, where they had moved in March, was damp and unhealthy, Mary and Shelley were contemplating a move to the seashore or to Italy. Mary urged Shelley to make up his mind soon and tell her father immediately "as these things are always better to be talked of some days before they take place." She concluded, "Give my love to Godwin--when Mrs. G[odwin] is not by or you must give it to her too and I do not love her " (I, no. 35). Financial matters were evidently very critical in Skinner Street, for one of Mary's primary concerns before they left for Italy was that "Godwin must not be left unprovided" (I, no. 41).

On March 11, 1818, they departed for Italy, from which Shelley and their two children were never to return. Frankenstein was published the same day. While in Italy they moved frequently, sometimes to be near friends or to find a better doctor or a more healthful climate for the children. The infant Clara, only one year old, died in September of that year; and little William, age three and a half, died in June of the following year (1819). Mathilda, an obviously autobiographical novelette written after the deaths of William and Clara, reveals the deep depression of spirits into which Mary fell. In this study Mary thinly veils the identity of her father by giving Mathilda's father an aristocratic background and indulgent parents. But the portrait was true to Godwin's nature: he was "extravagant, generous, vain, dogmatic, and rigid" in holding to his convictions of what was right and just. Through the influence of his wife, Diana, a fictionalized portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft, he came to understand the true purpose of life and

became a distinguished member of society.²⁵ In this account, Mary attributed the decline in his popularity and greatness to the death of Mary Wollstonecraft. On November 12, 1819, the Shelley's last child, Percy Florence, was born, but Mary continued to be melancholy and depressed. In this year Godwin's Journal records many more letters to Mary than usual, some of which indicate that he was attempting to reconcile her to the loss of her children and encourage her to write.

When Mary did begin to write again in 1820, she chose the subject her father had suggested immediately after she completed Frankenstein. This was the historical novel Valperga. During the latter part of 1821 she had spent a great deal of time correcting and copying it, and on January 25th, 1822, she recorded in her Journal that she had finished.²⁶ In a letter to Maria Gisborne, a friend of her father's who had turned down his proposal of marriage but remained on friendly terms with the family, Mary wrote on February 9, 1822:

I have sent my novel to Papa--I long to hear more news of it--as with an author's vanity I want to see it in print & hear the praises of my friends--I should like as I said when you went away--a Copy of Mathilda--it might come out with the desk (I, no. 132).

By April Godwin was reading the novel he called Castruccio, which Mary had asked him to have published; but he was to make whatever changes he thought necessary and keep the proceeds of the sale for himself. He was in the process of re-reading portions of the novel,

²⁵Nitchie, p. 91.

²⁶Mary Shelley's Journal, ed. Frederick L. Jones (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947). Hereafter cited in the text.

probably with an eye to revising it, when the news of Shelley's death arrived and he suspended work on it.²⁷

Mary was not only crushed by the death of Shelley, but she was also very apprehensive about her own financial security and that of her child. She consulted her father, Lord Byron, and other friends, all of whom tried to assist her. Peacock wrote on October 18, 1822:

Your father has communicated to you his opinion that a personal application from Lord Byron's solicitor to Whitton [Sir Timothy Shelley's solicitor] on the subject of a permanent provision for you and your child will be the most advisable course. . . . In this opinion I entirely concur (I, no. 154n).

Byron had written to his solicitor John Hanson on October 23, giving the above instructions as Godwin advised. Sir Timothy did not reply until February 6, 1823; he offered no help at all to Mary and only to the child if she would give him up and place him under Sir Timothy's protection (I, no. 168n).

Godwin took up Valperga again in October and worked on it until mid-January 1823. On February 14, he wrote to his daughter, who was still in Italy:

Your novel is now fully printed, and ready for publication. I shall send you a copy either by the cock's parcel or John Hunt's. I have taken great liberties with it, and I fear your amour propre will be proportionably shocked. I need not tell you that all the merit of the book is conclusively your own. The whole of what I have done is nearly confined to the taking away things that must have prevented its success. . . . I am promised a character of the work in the Morning Chronicle & the Herald, & was in hopes to have sent you the one or the other by this time. I also sent a copy of the book to the Examiner for the same purpose.²⁸

²⁷William Godwin's Journal, 1822.

²⁸William Godwin's Letters, in the Shelley-Godwin Collection of Lord Abinger, the manuscript on microfilm in the Duke University Library.

Mary arrived in London on August 25, 1823, and was met at the wharf by her father and William Jr. Some days later she wrote to

Leigh Hunt:

I had a very kind reception in the Strand [the new location of the Godwin home] and all was done that could be done to make me comfortable. . . .

.
 But lo and behold! I found myself famous!--Frankenstein had prodigious success as a drama and was about to be repeated for the 23rd night at the English Opera House.

.
 On the strength of the drama my father had published for my benefit a new edition of F[rankenstein] and this seemed all I had to look to, for he despaired utterly of my doing anything with S[ir] T. S[helley] (I, no. 194).

Mary wrote to Sir Timothy, however, telling him that she had arrived; and his solicitor, Whitton, invited her to call. When she and her father met with Whitton, he gave her one hundred pounds and told them that Sir Timothy would probably make an annual settlement of one hundred pounds each on both Mary and her son, Percy. With this added financial security, Mary left her father's house and took private rooms for herself and Percy (I, no. 94).

She renewed old acquaintances and was graciously welcomed back to her accustomed place in the circle she had known before leaving London, but she considered herself unhappy and an exile from Italy. From this point on throughout her life she stayed in close touch with her father, either by letters or through visits. When she wrote on June 13, 1824, to Marianne Hunt that her father's first volume of The History of the Commonwealth had come out and was selling well, it is apparent that his success had kindled her interest, for she hoped by next spring to publish herself (I, no. 209).

So close was the association between the two, particularly in

regard to their writings, that it is difficult to be precise about the extent of their influence on each other. Since there are few entries in her Journal after Shelley's death and since Godwin was not given to entering personal matters in his, it is not possible to trace the details of their relationship after her return to England in August, 1823. The letters are also sparse. But they were mutually dependent on each other for love and inspiration in their writing. In addition, Godwin became more dependent on Mary for money as he grew older, while she was dependent on him for moral stamina and fortitude.

The timing of the appearance of her novels is not unlike that of her father's. He had written his Memoir of Mary Wollstonecraft and brought out a new edition of her Letters from Norway immediately after her death. Mary was prevented from writing a biography of Shelley because her financial agreement with Sir Timothy demanded her silence, but she edited his unpublished manuscripts as Posthumous Poems (1824) shortly after her return to England. Godwin had eased his grief and made public his belief in marriage by writing St. Leon and creating the peerless wife of St. Leon, Marguerite de Damville, as a tribute to Mary Wollstonecraft. He doubtless encouraged Mary to find comfort in The Last Man by creating her most complete biographical sketch of Shelley in the character of Adrian. Whether or not their contemporaries recognized these portraits was not essential, but the healing power of the writing helped restore Mary to a more normal frame of mind that permitted her to function effectively again. Godwin finished his History of the Commonwealth in 1828 and then began work on an historical novel set in the early eighteenth century. This work, Cloudesley, he

finished in 1830. It is significant that during this same period when Godwin was at work on Cloudesley, Mary was at work on her second historical novel, Perkin Warbeck, also published in 1830. In 1832 when Mary had occasion to write to the publisher John Murray concerning information about Lord Byron that he hoped to obtain from her, she took the opportunity to make a plea for her father.

You apparently consider the closing of your "Family Library" as conclusive, on the subject of my father's writing to you. Is this necessary? You are but too well aware of the evil days on which literature has fallen, and how difficult it is for a man, however gifted, whose existence depends on his pen, to make one engagement succeed another with sufficient speed to answer the calls of his situation. Nearly all our literati have found but one resource in this--which is in the ample scope afforded by periodicals. A kind of literary pride has prevented my father from mingling in these; and, never having published anything anonymously, he feels disinclined to enter on a . . . new career.

I feel persuaded that he would render his proposed "Lives of the Necromancers" a deeply interesting and valuable work. There is a life and energy in his writings which always exalts them above those of his contemporaries. If this subject, which seems to me a fortunate one, does not please you, there are many others which would offer themselves, were he certain that you would accede to him and give him that encouragement which he has been accustomed hitherto to find. He had thought of the "Lives of the English Philosophers." I should certainly be glad that the publisher of Byron and Moore, and all the best writers, added the name of Godwin to the list; and if upon consideration you find that your views do not oppose an engagement with him, you will perhaps invite him to further communication on the subject.²⁹

At the time this letter was written (May 4th, 1832), Godwin was at work on his last novel, Deloraine, and Mary was at work on Lodore, both of which resemble each other in many ways. Godwin was evidently looking for another subject on which to begin, as was his custom, when he

²⁹ Samuel Smiles, A Publisher and His Friends, Memoirs and Correspondence of the Late John Murray, II (London: J. Murray, 1891), 328-329.

finished Deloraine. He had investigated the possibility of writing for periodicals, but the editors had required his anonymity which he rejected. Murray refused to publish the Lives of the Necromancers, which was not well received because of its irreligious character, a position Murray could not tolerate in spite of his kindly feeling toward Godwin. It was, however, published--his last work, written at the age of seventy-eight. The letter cited above as well as others in the correspondence of the father and daughter reveals their mutual concern for each other's literary efforts. If either had difficulty in finding a subject or having a work published, the other came forth immediately with aid and counsel. In 1835 Mary followed his example in writing biography with her Lives of the Most Eminent Literary and Scientific Men of Italy and in 1838 with Lives of the Most Eminent Literary and Scientific Men of France.

Their concern for each other was not, of course, limited to their literary works but included almost every facet of their lives. When Godwin's publishing business went into bankruptcy in 1825, Mary wrote to Leigh Hunt that she was employed in raising money for her maintenance "of which he must participate" (I, no. 225). From Mary's letters to Jane Williams Hogg and Trelawny we also learn that Godwin was with her when she was recuperating from smallpox in June, 1828 and that she was paying him a lengthy visit in April, 1829 (II, nos. 312 and 329). When his last novel came out, Mary wrote to Maria Gisborne on January 16, 1833:

Poor dear fellow! It is hard work for him--I am in all the tremor of fearing what I shall get for my novel [Lodore, published in 1835], which is nearly finished--His and my comfort depend on it--

I do not know whether you will like it--I cannot guess whether it will succeed--There is no writhing interest--nothing wonderful, nor tragic--Will it be dull? Chi lo sa! We shall see--I shall of course be glad if it succeeds (II, no. 424).

As the Godwins advanced in age, Mary became increasingly attentive to both her father and step-mother. She and Mrs. Godwin nursed Godwin during his final illness, one sleeping or resting while the other attended him. After a short illness (probably pneumonia) he died at the age of eighty on April 7, 1836.

At the time of Godwin's death Mary was at work on her novel Falkner, published in 1837, and it was her last. For a time after this she worked with Shelley's poetry to which she added biographical and critical notes. This work and his Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments were published in 1839 and 1840. Although she left several unfinished and unpublished works, her only publication after this was Rambles in Germany and Italy (1841), which recounts her experiences while traveling with her son, Percy, and his friends.

Certain events of Mary's life after the death of her father clearly indicate that he had been a stabilizing influence on her life. With the removal of this influence, her impulsiveness and lack of judgment involved her in an indiscreet friendship with a young Italian in Paris, an exiled member of the Carbonari to whom Claire introduced her. She became the patron of this penniless, ingratiating young man, Gatteschi, by finding pupils for him and by employing him to compile the political facts for her Rambles. She wrote him recklessly sentimental letters about her life and inmost thoughts until she discovered that Gatteschi had found a richer patron in Lady Sussex Lennox. After the death of Sir Timothy Shelley in 1844, when Percy

Florence inherited the Shelley title and estates, Gatteschi attempted to blackmail Mary by threatening to reveal or even publish her letters. Sir Percy's friend Alexander Knox reported Gatteschi's secret political activities to the French police and persuaded the prefect, by means of a considerable sum of money, to seize Gatteschi's papers for political reasons. Mary's letters were thus retrieved (II, no. 554n). Other unsuccessful attempts at blackmail harrassed her, but she would probably have been spared the ordeal of the Gatteschi affair had her father been alive to advise her. In 1848 Sir Percy married Jane St. John, a young widow who proved to be an excellent wife to him and the rare daughter-in-law who truly loves her husband's mother.³⁰ The closing years of Mary's life were happily and peacefully spent with the young couple. She died after a short illness on February 1, 1851, surviving her father by only fifteen years.

The ties which bound Godwin and Mary were very close, closer perhaps than those of the typical father and daughter, and there were many circumstances which drew them together more and more as the years went by. Their mutual love and reverence for Mary Wollstonecraft was a strong bond between them, especially since Mary and the second Mrs. Godwin were never amicable until after the death of Fanny Imlay. The portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft, which hung over the fireplace of Godwin's study as long as he lived, he bequeathed to Mary. Resembling her mother in both appearance and disposition, Mary was reared by Godwin to be like her; and after Shelley's

³⁰Muriel Spark, Child of Light, a Reassessment of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (Hadleigh, Essex: Tower Bridge Publications Ltd., 1951), p. 119.

death she provided him with the intellectual companionship and gentle affection of which Mrs. Godwin was not capable. Mary's life as a young widow was a model of propriety, and even though the American actor John Howard Payne became her devoted suitor, she preferred to remain the widow of Percy Bysshe Shelley than to become the wife of the attractive but improvident Payne. At the time of Shelley's death, Godwin was sixty-six years of age and Mary nearly twenty-six. They had lived through two suicides and three natural deaths together; they had also known the scorn and abuse of the world. At his first meeting with Shelley, Trelawny was shocked to find a beardless, gentle youth--not the monster at war with the world that Shelley was reputed to be. Mary and Godwin had had enough of infamy and both grew conservative. Within a few years after her return to England, Godwin was virtually unknown; but Mary became a well-known and highly respected member of society. She enjoyed the association with upper-class acquaintances to such an extent that some of her critics have called her a snob.

Mary had not the daring and freedom of her mother--traits which both Godwin and Shelley attempted to cultivate in her, and she was in no sense a feminist like her mother. She always maintained her own residence apart from the Godwins and enjoyed an active social life after her return to England. But the stabilizing force in her life and work was her father, who, with dogged determination, never laid down his pen except in death and never permitted Mary to lay hers down while he lived. The major ideas set forth in Godwin's Enquiry concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness are inculcated in his novels, and it is no accident that his ideas with which Mary concurred are also set forth in hers.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE NOVELS

The only hope for mankind, according to Godwin, lay in involving as many individuals as possible in a quest for their own perfectibility. The problem of injustice, as set forth in my introduction, does not originate in society and its institutions, but in man himself. Since the emphasis in Political Justice is placed on showing what is unjust in society and how this injustice affects the individual, this paper will approach its thesis by attempting to demonstrate that Godwin applied the theories of Political Justice in his novels by depicting characters under the influence of the injustices of his day. He does not limit the scope of either Political Justice or the novels to eighteenth and nineteenth-century England, but constantly reminds his readers that many injustices have existed for centuries. In Political Justice he shows the timelessness of injustice by citing examples from the histories of many different persons, countries, and centuries; in the novels he uses this same device and others as well.

The audience for whom Political Justice was intended was the intellectual élite, who were best suited, so Godwin thought, to lead the people in reform to a better society. This small group--Godwin calls them "men of study and reflection"--were the true agents of improvement. In spite of the high cost of the book, three guineas, it sold well; and a second edition was brought out for fourteen

shillings in 1796.¹ But Godwin was realistic in his assessment of the situation:

Books have by their very nature but a limited operation; though . . . they are entitled to the foremost place. The number of those that almost wholly abstain from reading, is exceedingly great.²

The novel had become one of the most popular forms of literature in England, and with this in mind Godwin began to project plans for a work of fiction as soon as he completed Political Justice. He had not written a novel since 1783, a period of ten years, and in returning to fiction he hoped not only to increase his income but to give living reality to his theoretical principles in a genre that would appeal to a larger number of readers. That his novels were novels of purpose is rarely questioned, and the consensus of opinion is that each of his novels, including the earliest ones before Political Justice, clearly shows Godwin deliberately fashioning characters and events to illustrate his convictions and theories about the dilemma of man in an unjust society.³ Upon completing Political Justice, he had a written statement of his theories which had been in the process of developing for many years, and he was careful in his attempts to adhere to them in all the works which

¹Burton R. Pollin, Education and Enlightenment in the Works of William Godwin (New York: Las Americas Publishing Co., 1962), p. 169.

²William Godwin, Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness, I (1798; rpt. 3 vols., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946, ed. F. E. L. Priestley), 294-295. Hereafter cited as PJ in the text.

³Harold Victor Weekes in "Godwin as Novelist" (Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1961) expresses an opinion not in agreement with this judgment.

followed. There are exceptions, of course, because his ideas about some matters changed, the most obvious being his denouncement of marriage and the personal sentiments of man. His very concept of perfectibility justifies the right of a man to change his mind, for this is the inevitable consequence of a sincere quest for perfection. Caleb Williams (1794), the novel written immediately after Political Justice, follows more closely perhaps than any of the others the principles of the treatise.

A brief restatement of the steps in Godwin's plan for the attainment of a state of perfectibility should be made before beginning a discussion of their application in the novels. They are: education, reason, benevolence, justice, and perfectibility. In effect, they constitute a circle; for when one has arrived at a more advanced stage of perfectibility he is able to advance in knowledge, reason, and the others, until he has completed the cycle again. To Godwin, reason was man's basic quality, and since it is susceptible of unlimited improvement, this quality is the key to man's perfectibility. But reason cannot be improved without knowledge, and because of this, education is an underlying theme in all of his works and one which he never fails to emphasize. In fact, education is the cornerstone of his theoretical structure, the key to justice and perfectibility. By the term education let us assume that Godwin does not mean formal education alone but rather anything that contributes to the knowledge of man. And he considered that this education began at birth. Nothing, in his opinion, was more important in determining the

character of man than the early years of his life.⁴ But education does not stop with youth.

Education, in one sense, is the affair of youth; but in a stricter and more accurate sense, the education of an intellectual being can terminate only with his life. Every incident that befalls us, is the parent of a sentiment, and either confirms or counteracts the preconceptions of the mind (PJ, II, 21).

In Caleb Williams, it becomes clear rather early in the story that the flaw in Mr. Falkland's character, which is responsible for all his crimes, is a result of only one mistake in his education. In all respects except this one, Falkland's background had caused him to be rational, benevolent and just. Falkland had acquired an excessive admiration for chivalry and knightly honor. His goal of perfect chivalry had made him the idol of nearly all who knew him. As Godwin might have said: he became a veritable engine of benevolence and justice throughout the community. The approval and admiration of the community were everything to him, and he was determined to preserve his honor at any cost. Caleb Williams, a poor young orphan employed as his secretary, attempted to leave his service because he frequently lost his self-control and vented his anger on Caleb when that young man aroused his guilty conscience with probing questions and over-zealous curiosity. Falkland's erratic behavior, in turn, made Caleb suspicious and eager to find out the reason behind it. Upon learning that Caleb desired to leave, Falkland raved menacingly:

"Do you not know, miserable wretch!" added he, suddenly altering his tone, and stamping upon the ground with fury, "that I have sworn to preserve my reputation whatever be the expense, that

⁴Paul, I, 289.

I love it more than the whole world and its inhabitants taken together? And do you think that you shall wound it? Begone, miscreant! reptile! and cease to contend with insurmountable power."⁵

In fact, an earlier attack upon Falkland's honor is responsible for the awesome secret that he is attempting to conceal from the world. Squire Tyrell, a conceited and egotistical bully, became madly jealous of the gentlemanly Falkland. When the Squire learned that his young cousin Emily Melville, an orphan under his protection, was in love with Falkland, he determined to subdue and humiliate her by marrying her to a rough farmhand named Grimes. When the marriage was about to be forced on her, she ran away. She was caught, however, and put in prison on false charges that Tyrell brought against her. Before her trial could take place, she died. The entire neighborhood was aroused against Tyrell and treated him with contempt. In an attempt to re-instate himself in the community, he attended the assembly. Since it had been agreed upon unanimously that Tyrell was to be refused admittance, an effort was made to prevent him from entering. But his demeanor was so fierce and commanding that no one had the courage to stop him. At this moment Falkland entered and ordered him to leave in a lengthy Godwinian speech which concluded: "Go, shrink into your miserable self! Begone, and let me never be blasted with your sight again." Tyrell left, but returned after a short time and knocked Falkland to the floor, kicked him, and attempted to drag him from the room. The other men present seized Tyrell and

⁵William Godwin, Caleb Williams, ed. David McCracken (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 154. Hereafter cited in the text.

and threw him out of the hall. When the meeting finally adjourned some time later, Tyrell was found murdered near the assembly hall. Falkland had committed the murder but was tried and acquitted. A few months later an innocent farmer and his son, whose lives Falkland could have saved, were found guilty and hanged.

This, then, was the secret for which Caleb was searching and for which Mr. Falkland was to pursue him throughout the rest of the book. Haunted and tortured by his conscience, Falkland did not wish to commit another murder but wished only to keep Caleb completely in his power so that the truth could not be discovered by the rest of the world.

In working out the pattern of cause and effect in the actions of the Squire and Falkland, Godwin's principle of necessity plays a major role. Falkland, without realizing it, was a threat to Tyrell's supremacy in the community; and under this pressure Tyrell's actions became more and more unreasonable and brutal. Both were very jealous of their honor, but Tyrell's character was far less perfect than that of Falkland. Tyrell's condition was a direct result of his early life and education. The only child of a widowed mother, he had been spoiled and indulged since early childhood. Everything and everybody must give way to his wishes; he was not even made to learn to read and write well. Because of his self-confidence, athletic figure, and large estate, he became the most popular young man at the weekly assemblies and was much admired by the ladies. But with the coming of Falkland, all this was changed; for in comparison the young squire appeared to be exactly what he was--boorish, uneducated,

spoiled. His popularity waned, while that of Falkland increased. Every new success of Falkland's was a challenge and insult to Tyrell, even though none was intended. Falkland was able to control himself and keep peace until Tyrell physically attacked him. The two men, so much alike in temperament but different in background and education, would inevitably clash for the highest place in the community. Violence and murder ensued--of necessity.

St. Leon, a Tale of the Sixteenth Century provides many examples of the destructive effects of a faulty education upon the lives of individuals. Here again, a false sense of honor, instilled in St. Leon since childhood, is the cause of great misery and suffering. St. Leon lost his entire fortune, as well as that of his wife, in gambling. Forced into a simple life of poverty and hard work, the family finds happiness and peace until an aged, dying man comes to their isolated cottage and offers St. Leon the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life. This stranger, Signor Zampieri, has suffered so much and so long that he wishes to die and leave his treasures with St. Leon. Seeing the miserable condition of Zampieri, St. Leon fears the gift, but he accepts it because he wishes to restore himself and his family to a place of honor in France. He reacquires the lost estates and provides lavishly for his family, but his neighbors and friends become suspicious of him. He even loses the respect and confidence of his wife and son. It becomes impossible for him and his family to remain long in one place because he is inevitably suspected of infamy. On one occasion he is thought to be an evil magician because of scientific experiments he was

conducting in a cave near his home. The ignorance and superstition of the masses is demonstrated when the townspeople march on his home, burn it to the ground, and murder his innocent black servant. He learns too late that the love of wealth and honor, which was bred into him as a part of his aristocratic heritage, has destroyed his family.

After the death of his wife, he is made a prisoner of the Spanish Inquisition. In order to escape being burned at the stake, he mixes and drinks the elixir of immortality, which transforms him from a middle-aged man to a youth of twenty. As he lives through one and a half life-times, almost all the concepts of honor and wealth that he had been taught are proved to be wrong.

The next novel, Fleetwood, or the New Man of Feeling (1805), is an attack upon the over-emphasis on sensibility in polite society. Children should be taught to be sensitive, but not unreasonably so, nor should they be shielded too long from the realities of society. Their sensibilities should not be unduly developed to appreciate those things that will be of no advantage in daily life and contacts with other people. Nature and solitude are splendid but they are no substitute for man. "The magnificance of nature, after a time, will produce much the same effect upon him, as if I were to sit down a hungry man to a sumptuous service of plate, where all that presented itself on every side was massy silver and burnished gold, but there was no food."⁶

⁶William Godwin, Fleetwood, Standard Novels, no. 22 (London: Richard Bentley, 1832), p. 199. Hereafter cited in the text.

The novel shows precisely and in detail how a misanthrope of sensibility is formed. Let him be the only son of a melancholy, grieving father, and live amidst wild and magnificent scenery in Wales. Make him a solitary wanderer, a climber of mountains. Give him a tutor he can respect but not love, and surround him with peasants whom he may save from drowning but with whom he can scarcely identify himself.⁷

Next let him go to Oxford where his strongest recollection will be of a certain Withers whose ridiculous epic poem on the fifth labor of Hercules made him the object of a cruel, practical joke devised by his fellow students. The pathetically naive and sensitive poet-author was so crushed by the experience that he drowned himself in the Isis.

Disgusted by the callous insensitivity of his classmates and the immorality and hypocrisy of the French court, where he next journeyed, he wandered over England and Europe seeking true friendship and a sense of usefulness. Finally at forty-five, a disillusioned misanthrope, he found a friend in Macneil, a Rousseauian lover of mankind, and married his youngest daughter, Mary. Because of his excessive sensibility, many trivial circumstances threatened the happiness of the marriage. In the midst of these trifling worries, a young fortune-seeking scoundrel implicates Mary in supposed infidelity with his own brother, and Mary is cast out by her husband. The truth is finally disclosed and Fleetwood and Mary are re-united. The evil brother is executed while the innocent one is given a four-hundred-pound annuity just before his wedding day. "After an extraordinary complexity of trials, Fleetwood, the misanthrope, finally rejoins the human race."⁸

⁷Smith and Smith, p. 97.

⁸Ibid., pp. 97-98.

Mandeville (1817), Godwin's fourth novel, makes use of the same theme of sensibility and misanthropy, but with greater power and artistry. It is a brilliant study of the effects of education and environment on the lives of men, but because of its morbidity and preoccupation with the psychological analysis of character, it was not as popular as Caleb Williams and St. Leon. The two principal characters are a nephew, Charles Mandeville, and his uncle Audley Mandeville. The story opens in Ireland with the rebellion of the Irish against their English oppressors in 1641, when the entire family of the three-year-old Charles were massacred. Charles was saved by his Irish nurse and then taken by a Presbyterian minister to England to live with his uncle, the head of the Mandeville family. The house of the uncle was located in a remote spot of western England by the sea. Part of it was in ruins, and the uncle was a complete recluse in the portion of it that was habitable. The minister who had brought Charles from Ireland was employed as the child's tutor. The elder Mandeville was in this neurotic state as a result of the cruelty and stupidity of his father, Commodore Mandeville, a daring seaman who had sailed twice with Sir Francis Drake around the world. He was proficient in his profession, "but in all other matters he was as ignorant as a Hottentot" and held every kind of knowledge and refinement with which he was unacquainted in contempt.⁹ Charles's uncle, Audley, born prematurely, was not strong and was deformed. He was despised and

⁹William Godwin, Mandeville: a Tale of the Seventeenth Century in England, I (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1817), 52. Hereafter cited in the text.

neglected by his father, but loved and tenderly reared by his mother. A cousin of the same age, Amelia Montfort, his mother's orphaned niece, was also reared by his mother. The two children grew up together and eventually fell very much in love. The mother died and the Commodore, in order to prevent a marriage, sent Audley to London and married Amelia to a disabled seaman. When Audley returned and learned of the marriage, he was so enraged that he became temporarily insane, lingering for months between life and death. When Amelia died in childbirth, he retired into his personal quarters and never came out again.

Godwin maintained that the health of an individual affected his character, and in the portrayal of Audley we are led to believe that had he been physically strong, the outcome of the story would have been entirely different. He was not well, he had been overly sheltered by his mother and abused by his father, his studies had consisted of theoretical and romantic works--all these produced an excessively sensitive young man completely incapable of coping with life. After young Charles came to the Mandeville home, the reader is not given any further insights into the thinking of Audley. He was a quiet, completely broken man whose interest in life was not stirred by the coming of his young nephew into his household, even though he is described as being rational.

Into this dark, unwholesome atmosphere the three-year-old child came. The novel is narrated in the first person by Charles Mandeville, who wrote it after the concluding episodes of the book. He recalls that as he began to grow up he fell into habits of reverie and loved a hazy rather than a sunshiny day. He loved "the pattering of the rain,

the roaring of the waves, and the pelting of the storm." The sight of a bare and gloomy heath fascinated and delighted him more than that of a green and fertile meadow. Godwin felt that concentration upon such Romantic elements as these was injurious to character. The narrator continues: "Perhaps all this proves me to be a monster, . . . and unworthy to live. I cannot help it. The purpose of these pages is, to be made the record of truth" (I, 113-114). Love of the Gothic and the strange had come very early into the life of the lad and was the beginning of a misanthropic attitude that was to dominate his adult years.

His early education, presided over by the stern, emaciated Bradford, he describes as distorted, like that of his teacher who had brought him to England. Bradford's character had been formed by colleges and books, monastic discipline, and theological debates; and it was therefore unnatural, strained, and artificial. The influence of this gloomy, anti-Catholic, martyr-like individual was cut short by the death of Bradford when Charles was eleven years of age. The boy was then sent to Winchester College, where he met young Lionel Clifford, who was attractive in every way as well as gay, witty, and benevolent. He came of a poor branch of a good family but laughed at poverty and declared that the rich man was a slave, one of Godwin's favorite themes (I, 239). For a time Charles delighted in the friendship of Clifford and learned a humane and benevolent philosophy from him. In a discussion concerning inherited wealth and nobility, Clifford, the mouthpiece of Godwin, declared:

There is but one true nobility, and that is bestowed by the Almighty ruler of the universe. It has its seat in the soul.

It is that inspiration, that makes the generous man, the inventor of arts, the legislator of the mind, the spirit formed to act greatly on the theatre of the world, and the poet who records the deeds of these spirits (I, 251).

But Charles, who held the same convictions as Clifford, "could not put [his] soul into [his] tongue" and began to grow envious of Clifford. The envy grew and, aggravated by other unfavorable circumstances at school, it finally developed into hatred, a hatred so morbid that Charles imagined that Clifford was his enemy.

A very evil young man, appropriately named Mallison, started a malicious rumor that Charles was a Whig spy and could not be trusted. When Charles heard of this lie, he became hysterical, wandered off into the woods, and lost consciousness. When he regained consciousness he was in "a receptacle for lunatics," and his sister Henrietta was by his side. The existence of this sister was not revealed until well into the book. Henrietta was as charming, sweet-spirited, and good as her masculine counterpart Clifford. She had been saved from the massacre of 1641 because she was with a friend of her mother's, a Mrs. Willis, the wife of a retired sailor, and they had reared Henrietta in their modest cottage.

In retrospect Charles sees the cottage and its inhabitants as fortunate and happy.

I could not be insensible to the quiet contentment, the cheerful tone, and the alacrity of kindness, of Beaulieu Cottage, so opposite to everything I could remember to have seen (I, 202). . . . Oh, had I spent my early years at Beaulieu, had I passed a part of every day with Mrs. Willis, a woman whose every word was a spark detached from the storehouse of wisdom, whose every look was benevolence, who had that grace forever attending her, that won your confidence,

and with an irresistible power drew forth your soul,--had I lived with my Henrietta, had I associated with the noble scions of the house of Montagu, and the respectable family that dwelt at the priory, [neighbors and friends of the Willises] I should have been a human creature, I should have been the member of a community, I should have lived with my fellow mortals on peaceful terms, I should have been as frank, as I now was invincibly reserved, suspicious, and forever disposed to regard my neighbor with thoughts of hostility (I, 209-210).

Under the kind, wholesome influence of Henrietta and her friends, Charles regained his sanity. Henrietta's conversation revealed a religion of love, but Hilkiah's [Bradford] revealed a religion of hatred. Unfortunately this association with Henrietta and the Willises soon came to an end. When Charles heard that the rumor that he was a spy had reached the king in France, he secluded himself in a farmhouse, where his hatred of Clifford returned. The news that Clifford and Henrietta were to be married inflamed it, and he attempted to kidnap Henrietta. However, he was prevented from accomplishing this by Clifford who, in defending Henrietta, slashed Charles's face with his sword. The left eye was gone and a gaping scar was left on the cheek. The scar was like a perpetual grin. "It ate into my soul. . . . Even as certain tyrannical planters in the West Indies have set a red-hot iron upon the negroes they have purchased, to denote that they are irremediably a property, so Clifford had set his mark upon me, as a token that I was his forever" (III, 366-367).

The troubles and distresses of the young Mandevilles obviously exceed the bounds of probability, but there is enough real truth in each situation to enable Godwin to make his point. These young men were destroyed, of necessity, because of their lack of knowledge

and because of the cruel and inhuman treatment they received in childhood and youth. Charles became a slave of passion, Audley a slave of apathy. One was inflamed by the injustice done him, the other crushed by it. The theme of the importance of education is a dominant one in this novel, for there is scarcely an individual in the story whose character is not revealed to be a direct result of his early life and education. The major lesson to be learned here is that adequate amounts of knowledge and benevolence at work in the lives of the young will eventually lead to a sweet and equitable reasonableness as they mature, the possibility of perfectibility. Because of this lack of benevolence in their environment and education, tragedy stalked them throughout their lives.

The contemporary reviewers of Mandeville would have agreed with John Wilson Croker's opinion that it was "a very dull novel and a very clever book. Mandeville is one of those unhappy beings whose minds are so irritable and liable to disorder, as never to be clearly and securely rational, nor, except in an occasional paroxysm, wholly and decidedly mad." Those of us who are of more sober sense cannot comprehend the operation of minds of this class "nor explain by what strange perversion of intellect they see in all mankind a conspiracy against them." Such a character, however, is only too common in England and Mr. Godwin's delineation is admirable--"faithful in its conception, forcible in its expression; and, in a word, the most lively and tangible image which we have ever seen of the waywardness of a selfish temper and the wanderings

of a depraved understanding."¹⁰

One of the chief arguments that Harold V. Weeks presents in "Godwin as Novelist" in defense of his position that Godwin's novels are not novels of purpose is that Godwin's theory concerning education is not observed in them. He maintains that the education of Falkland, of St. Leon, of Mandeville did not prepare them to cope with the experiences that were to come. We have seen that this is true, but it is true because there was at least one major flaw in the education and early environment of each of the three men. With Falkland and St. Leon the flaw was their concept of honor, with the Mandevilles the flaws were many but convincing. It hardly seems possible that Godwin could have shown the deleterious effects of an improper education more clearly in a negative way! For examples of education that is adequate to produce good results, we can turn to the minor figures: Mr. Clare in Caleb Williams, Marguerite in St. Leon, and Henrietta and Clifford in Mandeville--all of these illustrate the development of sound and beautiful character under the influence of good education and environment. To fail to see this is to miss the main point of the novels.

When Mary began work on Frankenstein during the summer of 1816, she had read Political Justice, Caleb Williams, and St. Leon. Even though she was greatly under the influence of Shelley at this time, her father was a successful novelist, which Shelley was not, and she re-read all three of these works as well as many others while

¹⁰ John Wilson Croker, rev. of Mandeville: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century in England, Quarterly Review, 18 (1817), 176-177.

she was writing her first novel. At the same time, her father was at work on Mandeville. The strength of Godwin's influence on the writing of Frankenstein is not immediately obvious, a situation which has led some critics to state that his influence on that novel was less than that which he had on the subsequent ones. But the ideas concerning education that appear in the work distinctly parallel those of Godwin.

At the beginning of Victor Frankenstein's narration of his life-story to Robert Walton, he describes himself as having a great deal of curiosity about the causes of things: "While my companion [Elizabeth Beaufort] contemplated with a serious and satisfied spirit the magnificent appearances of things, I delighted in the investigating their causes." He was "more deeply smitten with a thirst for knowledge," than his dear Elizabeth. The same thirst for knowledge is exhibited in both Frankenstein and Walton as that which exists in both Caleb and Mr. Falkland in Caleb Williams. Henry Clerval, another friend of Frankenstein's, has the same intellectual interests and motivation as Falkland and St. Leon.

He loved enterprise, hardship, and even danger, for its own sake. . . . He composed heroic songs, and began to write many a tale of enchantment and knightly adventure. He tried to make us act plays, and to enter into masquerades, in which the characters were drawn from the heroes of Roncesvalles, of the Round Table of King Arthur, and the chivalrous train who shed their blood to redeem the holy sepulchre from the hands of the infidels (p. 37).

All of this came as a result of his being "deeply read in books of chivalry and romance." The principal subject, however, which so attracted and fascinated both Frankenstein and Walton was science.

This interest is obviously more closely associated with Shelley, who had great interest in and considerable knowledge of science, than it is with Godwin. Although Godwin manifests an interest in science, he appears to know very little about it. St. Leon's favorite hobby was conducting scientific experiments, which were viewed with such suspicion by the neighbors that he conducted them in a secret place; and we are given an interesting description of St. Leon's mixing the elixir of life and transforming himself from a fifty-year-old man to one who is twenty years of age. During his early years of study, Victor Frankenstein searched for the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life, but soon abandoned them. There is an interweaving of Godwinian details of this kind throughout Frankenstein which Mary adapts to her purposes in various ways.

These, however, are insignificant when one examines the most dominant examples of Godwin's thoughts on education--the education of the monster. The intellectual development of this blighted being is projected in true Lockean fashion on a tabula rasa: first confused, then distinct sensations; next social affections; and finally, moral and intellectual judgments.¹¹ He begins his tale to Frankenstein by describing his physical adjustment to life immediately after his creation. His social development began with his first contacts with men, who shrieked and ran when they saw him. On one occasion a whole village was aroused by the sight of him: "some fled, some attacked me, until grievously bruised by stones and

¹¹M. A. Goldberg, "Moral and Myth in Mrs. Shelley's Frankenstein," Keats-Shelley Journal, VIII (1959), 27.

many other kinds of missile weapons, I escaped to the open country, and fearfully took refuge in a low hovel, quite bare, and making a wretched appearance after the palaces I had beheld in the village" (p. 106). Through a small chink in the wall between the hut and the cottage he was able to observe the daily lives of the inhabitants of the cottage. The DeLaceys--father, son, and daughter--were a good French family fallen on hard times because of their efforts to save a Turkish inhabitant of Paris from unjust execution. From these persons, he learned a simple, affectionate, courteous way of life. When he discovered that they were so poor that they did not have enough food, he ceased stealing from them, secretly provided them with wood for the fire, and helped with the daily chores. During the winter months, the young man frequently read to his father and sister, the monster listening at the chink. When the beautiful Turkish girl, Safie, arrived, the son instructed her in French and in Volney's Ruins of Empires (a favorite of both Shelley and Godwin), and the monster was able to learn French, history, politics, and government. "While I listened to the instructions which Felix bestowed upon the Arabian, the strange system of human society was explained to me. I heard of the division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty; of rank and descent, and noble blood" (p. 120). He later accidentally found copies of three of Godwin's favorite books: Paradise Lost, a volume of Plutarch's Lives, and The Sorrows of Werter, which he read with great attention. After a long, solitary residence in the hovel, he longed for human companionship and attempted to reveal himself to the DeLaceys. The

blind father accepted him kindly; but when the children returned and saw him, the daughter fainted, the Turkish girl ran shrieking out of the house, and the son attacked him. They moved away and he never saw them again. He had learned the most terrible lesson of all: society had rejected him, and his isolation from human love and companionship was permanent. His loneliness and frustration led him to try to capture a small boy to be his friend, but the terrified child resisted him. In an effort to silence the little boy, Frankenstein's brother William, the monster accidentally choked him to death. This incident marked the beginning of his violent and murderous career. Toward the conclusion of his tale, he begged Frankenstein to fashion a mate for him, explaining that the love and companionship of another being like himself would make him beneficent and good. "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" (p. 147). The monster's ugly deeds were a result of Godwinian necessity just as Tyrell's attack of Falkland was a necessity when Falkland attempted to drive the squire from the Assembly and alienate him from his fellowman. At his creation the monster's life was a plain page on which either good or evil could be written.¹² His education prepared him to be good but his environment, his reception by his fellowman, produced evil.

Mary's second novel, Valperga: or The Life and Adventures of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca, should be viewed as a partial collaboration with Godwin since he provided her with a plan for it in 1817

¹²Nitchie, p. 34.

and revised and edited it after its completion. This, her first historical novel, was set in Italy. The following translation of a biographical excerpt taken from an Italian source was included in the Preface.

Castruccio Castracani, one of the most celebrated captains of his time, lived in the fourteenth century. He was of the family of the Anteminelli of Lucca; and, having at a very early age borne arms in favour of the Ghibelines, he was exiled by the Guelphs. He served not long after in the armies of Philip king of France, who made war on the Flemings. . . . having joined Ugoccione Faggiuola, chief of the Ghibelines of Tuscany, he reduced Lucca, Pistoia, and several other towns. He became the ally of the emperor Louis of Bavaria . . . [who] gave him the investiture of Lucca under the denomination of Duke, together with the title of Senator of Rome. Nothing seemed able to oppose his courage and good fortune, when he was taken off by a premature death in 1330, in the forty-seventh year of his age.

The title Valperga was the name of the estate belonging to the beautiful Euthanasia, whom Castruccio loved and wished to marry.

Castruccio was eleven years of age when his family was driven by the victorious Guelphs from their home, Lucca, and forced to seek protection in the mother's native city. On the journey the child saw many of his dearest friends broken and heart-sick in their exile, and he "became inflamed with rage and desire for vengeance." The author points out the effect of these circumstances on its victims.

It was by scenes such as these, that party spirit was generated, and became so strong in Italy. Children, while they were yet too young to feel their own disgrace, saw the misery of their parents, and took early vows of implacable hatred against their persecutors: these were remembered in after times; the wounds were never seared, but the fresh blood ever streaming kept alive the feelings of passion and anger which had given rise to the first blow.¹³

¹³[Mary Shelley], Valperga, I (London: G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1823), 12. Hereafter cited in the text.

The dearest pleasure of Castruccio's father was the education of his son, who "was an apt and sprightly boy, bold in action, careless of consequences, and governed only by his affection for his parents" (I, 13). The father encouraged his adventurous spirit, but saw that he was trained and disciplined in all the arts and duties of a soldier. His favorite pastime was to stage a mock battle with an enthusiastic troop of lads, beseiging an imaginary castle. His earliest years had been spent in Lucca, where his closest companion was the daughter of the master of Valperga. They had been educated together from early childhood. "They had wandered hand in hand among the wild mountains and chestnut woods that surrounded her mother's castle. Their studies, their amusements, were in common; and it was a terrible blow to each when they were separated. . . ." (I, 26).

The families of the two children belonged to opposing political parties, but because of the peaceful, magnanimous spirit of Euthanasia's father there was friendship between them. After the departure of Castruccio and his family, the father, a studious, scholarly man, began to go blind; and even though much of Euthanasia's time was occupied with the priest who was engaged to tutor her, she spent many hours, sometimes whole days, in reading to her father.

The effect of this education on her mind was advantageous and memorable; she did not acquire that narrow idea of the present times, as if they and the world were the same, which characterizes the unlearned; she saw and marked the revolutions that had been, and the present seemed to her only a point of rest, from which time was to renew his flight, scattering change as he went; and, if her voice or act could mingle aught of good in these changes, this it was to which her imagination most ardently aspired. She was deeply penetrated by the acts and

thoughts of those men, who despised the spirit of party, and grasped the universe in their hopes of virtue and independence (I, 28-29).

Her father had allied himself with the Guelphs "because he thought he saw in the designs and principles of its leaders the germ of future independence for Italy" (I, 29). As he talked to his daughter, he often forgot her youthfulness and spoke as to an adult in "high strains of that ennobling spirit which he felt in his inmost heart. Euthanasia heard and understood. . . . Her young thoughts darted into futurity, to the hope of freedom for Italy, of revived learning and the reign of peace for all the world. . . ." (I, 30).

After a few years Castruccio and Euthanasia met again in Florence and eventually were betrothed to each other. But there was to be no marriage for these two. Even though they loved each other deeply, their loyalties and convictions were completely opposed. Since neither would compromise his political position, they grew farther and farther apart as the years went by. Castruccio became the tyrannical leader of his party, and Euthanasia one of the chief advisors of hers. Even though he was ambitious and warlike, his love for Euthanasia made him willing on several occasions to reach a compromise. He even tried to explain to her that if she were always by his side that he would be kinder and more generous in all his ways. But Euthanasia would not yield and she became so powerful in her party that when Castruccio's party gained control, his associates asked for her execution. He pleaded with Euthanasia to marry him and accept his party, for in this way

he could save her life and be united with her. When she refused, she was put in a small boat that was to sail to Sicily, where she would live in exile. But the boat was lost and Euthanasia drowned. Party loyalties, conceived in youth, deprived these two of any personal happiness.

The authors make it very clear throughout the third volume of the novel that neither party accomplished any good for the people and that the ultimate aim of both parties was practically the same, even though Euthanasia's party claimed falsely to be republican. There were traitors and dedicated men, devoted to the welfare of the people, in both groups. "At no time did either party clearly represent any particular political doctrine or social class."¹⁴ In fact, Euthanasia's party split and her influence then counted for little. Her inability to compromise caused her unnecessary anguish and led her to her death. She sacrificed herself for an ideal which could never in reality be accomplished. Her education had led her to expect the impossible, which the author describes as a "wild dream" (I, 30). Her life and influence, as well as that of Castruccio, would have counted for much more had she married Castruccio and joined forces with him.

Mary finished Valperga in January 1822 and Shelley was drowned the following July. She did not complete her next novel, The Last Man, until 1826. Three of the intervening four years between the two novels she had spent in London in close association

¹⁴"Guelphs and Ghibellines," Columbia Encyclopedia (1950), p. 830.

with her father. The importance of education is evident in The Last Man, the events of which were set in the twenty-first century, but there is less direct emphasis upon it than in any of the other novels. The narrator, for example, briefly states that his sister Perdita has cold and repulsive manners because she grew up in poverty, neglected and unloved, and she responded to this lack of kindness with distrust and silence.¹⁵ The fullest discussion of education occurs in the narrator's description of himself. He, Lionel Verney, was employed as a shepherd and learned to accept hardship and responsibility. He organized a friendless group of shepherd boys into a band and alone endured the punishment for many of their pranks. "In such a school my disposition became rugged, but firm" (p. 9). When the young crown prince, Adrian, came to visit his estate in the vicinity of Verney's home, Verney's jealousy of him was like that of Charles Mandeville for Lionel Clifford. But when Verney was caught poaching on the royal estate, Adrian was so humane and understanding that Verney's outlook on life completely changed. His poverty and lack of opportunity had made him more like a savage young animal than a man. From this state, the love and understanding of Adrian rescued him. He no longer hated the world or himself.

In this novel Mary again picks up a major theme of Valperga-- the harmful effects of political parties, and in so doing introduces Godwinian ideas on education. By the time Verney reached manhood,

¹⁵Mary Shelley, The Last Man, ed. Hugh J. Luke, Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 10. Hereafter cited in the text.

England had become a republic through the voluntary abdication of Adrian's father at the peaceable suggestion of his subjects. England was ruled by Parliament and a Lord Protector elected by Parliament. Although the two houses of Parliament had merged, there were three factions within it: royalists, aristocrats, and republicans, each of which was "violent, acrimonious, and unyielding." Many members were eager to restore the monarchy because they longed for the tinsel and false show of royalty they had learned to love in their youth. The leader of this group was Lord Raymond, "the sole remnant of a noble but impoverished family. From early youth he had considered his pedigree with complacency, and bitterly lamented his want of wealth. His first wish was aggrandisement; and the means that led towards this end were secondary considerations" (p. 27). If the monarchy were restored, he thought, he would become wealthy because the poorer nobles would be given preferments to increase their fortunes. The poverty and obscurity of his childhood had taught him to put wealth before everything else. In tracing motivations in this manner education becomes an underlying influence throughout the novel, but it is taken for granted and the emphasis placed upon other matters.

Mary wrote only two historical novels, and the second of these, The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck, was published in 1830. It is to be noted at the outset that the author explains in her Preface "that Perkin was, in reality, the lost Duke of York." She evidently was convinced that her hero was Edward the Fourth's younger son, Richard, Duke of York, who was imprisoned in the Tower with his brother, both

of whom were reported to have been murdered so that their uncle could ascend the throne as Richard the Third. Perkin is reared in Spain by a middle-class mother, a Fleming, whose Moorish husband DeFaro, is a seafaring man. The members of the family present in Spain are the mother, her beautiful daughter, and Richard's older cousin, Edmund Plantagenet, son of Richard the Third. Edmund, a model of goodness, unselfishness, courtesy, and kindness, had been reared far from court in an isolated priory by a priest who had formerly been a knight. This rustic, devout atmosphere and the companionship of the brave, dedicated priest had produced a young man who was a paragon of virtue and bravery. In the modest DeFaro home in Spain, young Richard had also been brought up to value the simple virtues and the simple, honest life. Plantagenet had taught him the art of war and the noblesse oblige of aristocracy and royalty. Neither of these two young men ever forgot that their ultimate duty was to reinstate Richard as the heir to the throne of England, a commitment which was to prove disastrous for both of them. Godwin held that "every king is, by unavoidable necessity, the enemy of the human race" (PJ, II, 23). He did not consider the life of a king to be an enviable or happy one, and the more power a monarch acquired, the more corrupt he became. Had Perkin been older and wiser, he would have lived out his life as a simple, private citizen. However, Mary Shelley does not emphasize this point, perhaps because it would make her novel unpopular or it would make Perkin less heroic, but she provides him with the lovely commoner Monina de Faro, whom he cannot marry and for whom he longs all the rest of his life. The crown,

needless to say, was not worth the sacrifice Richard made in his efforts to obtain it; but this is a Godwinian point that Mary fails to bring out in the work.

Godwin's last novel, Deloraine (1833), concerns the tragic life of a man of feeling who, because of his unwise marriage to a young girl whom he knows does not love him, commits a crime of violence. Although there is little here that is new, there is one emphasis, new in his fiction, to which he devoted one chapter in Political Justice: "promises and compacts are in no sense the foundation of morality. The foundation of morality is justice" (PJ, I, 194-195). The keeping of promises "tends to the welfare of intelligent beings," but it should not blindly be adhered to if it will be injurious to either party. The effect of this lack of knowledge upon individuals provides Godwin with an opportunity to introduce an intricate interweaving of a tremendous variety of promises between individuals which results in much trouble and suffering.

Two years later, Mary's fifth novel appeared, bearing throughout the marks of her father's influence. Lodore (the American title was The Beautiful Widow) deals with a man of feeling, is set in contemporary London, and is remarkably similar to Godwin's Fleetwood (1805). Young Lord Lodore, a high spirited man, had been indulged and spoiled in his youth and had little concern for anyone's wishes but his own. He learned from a school friend of calm and gentle disposition to disregard the opinion of the public, but it was an attitude that his nature was not suited to bear. After wandering

through Europe seeking a reason for living, he returned to his country estate at age thirty-two and married a beautiful, unsophisticated young girl, whom he thought was also mature and sincerely in love with him. "And here his error began; he had married one so young, that her education, even if its foundation had been good, required finishing, and who, as it was, had everything to learn."¹⁶ She was a shallow, thoughtless social butterfly, who was emotionally dependent on her mother and cared little for her husband or infant daughter. After a complicated series of distressing events caused by his wife's youth and his excessive sensibility, he left for America with his three-year-old daughter, where he lived for twelve years in solitude. Here he carried out a plan "to educate his daughter to all the perfection of which the feminine character is susceptible." Vanity and petty passion, he wished to prevent: sweetness, honor, and intelligent understanding he worked to cultivate. His chief ideas were drawn from Milton's Eve (p. 28). His success was remarkable indeed, but he did not live to accompany Ethel to England. His hot temper caused him to fight a duel in which he was killed. The lovely Ethel, however, returned to London and under the benign influence of her aunt was happily married and united with her mother, now a wiser and a better woman. Many more aspects of Godwin's ideas on education are explored here than are set forth in any of Mary's other novels. Individuals of all different ages--from three to sixty-three--are depicted in the process of acquiring knowledge that is beneficial to them. The change

¹⁶Mrs. Percy B. Shelley, The Beautiful Widow (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson and Brothers, n.d.), p. 48. Hereafter cited in the text as Lodore.

in Lady Lodore is worked out more carefully than that of the other characters, and her reunion with her daughter does not take place until the closing pages of the book. This novel resembles Mandeville in that every character is depicted as being as he is because of his education.

Falkner was begun before the death of Godwin, which occurred in 1836, but Mary did not finish it until 1837. It was the last of her novels. The setting is primarily rural eighteenth-century England. The later novels of both Mary and Godwin introduce little that is new but tend to be variations on old themes and old techniques. The idea of continuing education is emphasized in the regeneration of a man who has committed a crime and in the forgiveness of his vengeful pursuer. The author painstakingly reveals each character to be the result of either good or bad elements in his education and experience. Again she presents a large variety of characters of many different ages.

Mary's ideas concerning education differed very little at any period of her life from those of her father. Her emphasis upon the law of necessity is not so persistent as Godwin's, however, except in the development of her young characters who are growing into maturity. Mary seems to imply in her novels after Valperga that a mature individual should exercise some control over his actions in spite of the law of necessity. Her Verney, in The Last Man, sees his weaknesses in education and character and reforms under the influence of Adrian; but even though Godwin's Charles Mandeville in Mandeville sees his weaknesses, he does not resist the law of necessity and reform under

the good influences available to him, but submits to a permanently miserable and psychotic existence. In her character Lodore Mary demonstrates that some personalities are so badly damaged by their education that they never free themselves from its influence, but there are few major characters in her later novels who do not eventually manage to rise above their suffering to refute, to some extent, the law of necessity.

In working out their ideas concerning education, it becomes evident to the reader that Godwin and Mary drew from their personal experiences with each other. Euthanasia's education in Valperga and Ethel's in Lodore are analogues of Mary's education under Godwin. And Godwin's Fleetwood and Deloraine learn valuable lessons concerning love and human understanding from women young enough to be their daughters just as Godwin himself came to be influenced by Mary's ideas about necessity from Cloudesley, in whom the law did not operate, on to Deloraine. It is also evident that they worked and conferred closely together in their treatment of education after 1830, for they learned that their readers were not fully comprehending the message they were trying so hard to impart--that education was only the first step toward perfectibility, which was a life-long pursuit. For this reason, the last two novels of each author emphasize characters of a more mature age in the process of acquiring still more education in order to correct their errors and bring greater justice and happiness to themselves and to others.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROLES OF REASON, BENEVOLENCE, AND JUSTICE IN THE NOVELS

Of all the Godwinian concepts, reason is probably the most complex, and, as pointed out earlier, Godwin considered it the key to perfectibility. To Godwin, it meant the ability to see "things as they are." This definition, however, is an oversimplification that requires explanation. One definition of reason subscribed to, more or less, by many philosophers is that it is "the capacity to behave consciously in terms of the nature of what is not ourselves. . . . reason is the capacity to behave in terms of the nature of the object, that is to say, to behave objectively. Reason is thus our capacity for objectivity."¹ Reason's task is to test thinking by all the knowledge that can be brought to bear upon a given subject. A vivid example of the reasoning process is provided by Caleb Williams when Caleb, in an effort to educate himself, inquired of his honorable and highly educated master, Mr. Falkland, "how came Alexander of Macedon to be surnamed the Great?" Falkland replied: "How came it? Did you never read his history?"

[Caleb]: Yes, sir.

[Falkland]: Well, Williams, and could you find no reason there?

[Caleb]: Why, I do not know, sir. I could find reason why he should be so famous; but every man that is talked of is not admired. Judges differ about the merits of Alexander. Doctor Prideaux says in his Connections that he deserves only to be called the Great Cutthroat; and the author of Tom Jones has written a volume, to prove that he and all other conquerors ought to be classed with Jonathan Wild.

¹John MacMurray, Reason and Emotion (London: D. Appleton Century Co., 1938), p. 19.

[Falkland]: Accursed blasphemy! . . . Was ever mortal so completely the reverse of everything engrossing and selfish? He formed to himself a sublime image of excellence, and his only ambition was to realize it in his own story. Remember his giving away every thing when he set out upon his grand expedition, . . . reserving for himself nothing but hope. . . . Examine for yourself, and you will find Alexander a model of honour, generosity, and disinterestedness, a man who for the cultivated liberality of his mind and the unparalleled grandeur of his projects must stand alone the spectacle and admiration of all ages of the world.

[Caleb]: Ah, sir! . . . Was not he the common disturber of mankind? Did not he overrun nations that would never have heard of him, but for his devastations? How many hundreds of lives did he sacrifice in his career? What must I think of his cruelties; a whole tribe massacred for a crime committed by their ancestors one hundred and fifty years before; fifty thousand sold into slavery; two thousand crucified for their gallant defense of their country? Man is surely a strange sort of creature, who never praises any one more heartily than him who has spread destruction and ruin over the face of nations!

[Falkland]: The way of thinking you express, Williams, is natural enough, and I cannot blame you for it. But let me hope that you will become more liberal. The death of a hundred thousand men is at first sight very shocking; but what in reality are a hundred thousand such men more than a hundred thousand sheep? It is mind, Williams, the generation of knowledge and virtue that we ought to love. This was the project of Alexander; he set out in a great undertaking to civilise mankind . . . and, though he was cut off in the midst of his career, we may easily perceive the vast effects of his project. Grecian literature and cultivation . . . followed, in nations which before had been sunk to the condition of brutes. Alexander was the builder as notoriously as the destroyer of cities.

[Caleb]: And yet, sir, I am afraid that the pike and the battle axe are not the right instruments for making men wise (Caleb Williams, pp. 110-111).

As they discussed the character of Alexander, it becomes evident that Falkland's code of honor prejudiced his opinion and made him unable to view Alexander objectively. Falkland's desire to retain a belief to which he has a strong emotional attachment has blinded him and prevented him from seeing Alexander as he was.

Caleb's final judgment, that Alexander's purpose was good but his method of achieving it diabolic, illustrates another process

involved in reasoning--the ability to see the general in the particular. When Caleb cites Dr. Prideaux and Henry Fielding, he points to two generalizations that are not completely valid and which illustrate Godwin's theory that all generalizations are only partially true. Human nature and circumstance are so diverse that no two individuals can be accurately placed in the same general category. Certainly Alexander was a great cut-throat and deserved to be classed with Jonathan Wild, but these clever and amusing statements ignore the fact that Alexander had a worthy, if misguided, purpose.

There is yet another important connection between reason and Falkland's prejudice: his prejudice was a necessity because it has been instilled in him by his education. The entire chain of the thoughts of an individual and of the resulting chain of actions--whether good or bad, wise or unwise--are the product of necessity. "Trace back the chain as far as you please, every act at which you arrive is necessary" (PJ, I, 378).

In his last novel, Deloraine, Godwin makes a significant demonstration concerning this doctrine which he may have felt was indispensable to a more complete understanding of the law. Deloraine, a widower in his forties, had married a beautiful young girl whose parents had prevented her marriage to a young man in their neighborhood in order to restore the family honor and fortune. The daughter, Margaret, was so heart broken that the parents relented at the last moment and called off the marriage. They also wrote to William, Margaret's choice, to return to England from Canada, where he had gone to seek a new life and forget Margaret. He returned, but his

ship was wrecked as it approached the English coast. In fact, Margaret and her parents watched the sinking of the ship. Although William was rescued by another ship and survived, Margaret and her parents thought he had drowned. Some time later, Deloraine met Margaret and married her, even though he knew that she did not love him. William finally succeeded in getting back to England, located Margaret, and learned of her marriage. Before leaving her forever, he was attempting to get one last glimpse of her without her knowledge when they accidentally came face to face. Margaret dropped senseless to the ground and William knelt beside her to revive her. When Deloraine arrived on the scene, the two were sitting on the grass gazing happily at each other and talking. He leaped from his horse and shot William fatally. Margaret expired immediately, and Deloraine was haunted by this crime and chased by English authorities and William's vengeful friend until the end of the novel. He eventually found peace and security in Holland, where his young friend Thornton attempted to persuade him that his crime was no crime at all because it was

an irresistible necessity, and flowed from an uncontrollable impulse. There was no alloy of malice or forethought. It had in it no mixture of infirmity or weakness, but merely stamped me a man in the truest and most honourable sense.

Deloraine, however, was not deceived by this argument.

It is not that I was for a moment deceived by the generous sophistry of Thornton [his friend and son-in-law]. . . . I knew that the state of a moral being admits not of an excuse founded on the idea of his being hurried into an act pernicious and destructive, without the power of resistance. This doctrine I was well aware would open the door to endless and profligate abuse. An accountable creature must learn to be watchful over his steps, to be distrustful of himself, and to

be at all times upon his guard as against an enemy eager to lead him astray. . . . It is incredible how much may be effected by a habit of vigilance and distrust; and he who does not practice this habit, must expect to fall into deplorable and unpardonable errors. He who allows himself to talk or to dream of a resistless temptation, by so doing enters at once in the catalogue of living beings for a beast, rather than a man.²

As Deloraine ponders his conversation with Thornton, we are made aware that Thornton's kind and tolerant view of the crime has made it easier for Deloraine to live with its memory, but he maintains until the very end that no enlightened man of reason should of necessity commit a crime against his fellow man.

Benevolence, the next step in Godwin's scheme, is also governed by the law of necessity. Reason, in itself, can not be translated into action since it is merely a comparison and balancing of different feelings. However, by the force of the emotion aroused by the recognition of the true state of things, the reasoning individual is inherently compelled to understand and love his fellow beings. When this love and understanding move the individual to take benevolent action in behalf of his fellowman, he has arrived at the state of benevolence.³ Disinterested benevolence ("disinterested" meaning the lack of selfish motives) is thus the immediate result of reason. Once an individual is in possession of knowledge and has learned to view life without undue concern for himself, he is on the high road to perfectibility.

²William Godwin, Deloraine, a Tale, III (London: T. Thomas, 1833), 231-235. Hereafter cited in the text.

³John Middleton Murry, Heroes of Thought (N.Y.: Julian Messner, Inc., 1938), pp. 249-250.

An exceptionally clear example of this process occurs in Mary's Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck. Richard, the pretender, was in England, pursued by Henry IV's agents. He had just escaped the tower and was wandering on foot near London when he came upon the hut of Jane Shore. Three other friends who were plotting to free him from the Tower were in the hut when he arrived. The sound of the dawn patrol was heard approaching, and they all urged Richard to take the one available horse and escape to the sea where a ship was waiting to take him away from England. Richard took the horse, but instead of going toward the sea he went toward the sound of the horsemen. He attempted to reveal himself to the King's forces and be taken so that they would not continue searching and capture his friends in the hut. In spite of his efforts, the sound died away and he was not captured until later in the day. As a result of this benevolent action, he was not able to reach the ship and eventually lost his life.

The state of Godwinian benevolence is one of the most difficult states to attain because it involves man's ambivalent attitude toward his fellowman. "If self-interest and benevolence pull him in different directions, how is he to decide between them?"⁴ Godwin readily acknowledges that all men are interested in themselves and that this is natural and normal. But when self-interest is dominant and greatly exceeds a man's interest in the welfare of other men, it is damaging to the character and endangers the happiness of those

⁴D. H. Munro, Godwin's Moral Philosophy: an Interpretation of William Godwin (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 40.

with whom he comes in contact. Some men may even be benevolent in order to give themselves pleasure by obtaining the approval of society. They are also able to avoid the anguish of a guilty conscience. Mr. Falkland in Caleb Williams is a case in point here. He was thought by nearly all who knew him to be the most benevolent of men. His kindness of spirit originated from two motives: his sincere love for his fellowman and his intense love for his own honor. Since his self-love was the stronger of the two, he was thrown into a blind rage whenever his honor was threatened. Had Deloraine arrived at a state of disinterested benevolence, he would never have committed his crime and hastened the death of his wife. When he found William and Margaret together, he would have dismounted and inquired calmly into the matter. He would have learned the identity of William and would have remembered that these two young people had been separated by Margaret's proud and ambitious parents. Whatever the outcome of the tale from this point on, Deloraine would have taken a tolerant and benevolent attitude toward this compromising episode had he thought of Margaret's welfare before he thought of his own.

Again and again both Godwin and Mary show that passion and self-love are two of the major barriers to reason and benevolence. Every major male character in Godwin's novels, with the exception of St. Leon, commits a crime caused by his passionate self-love. Mary's Frankenstein was also deluded by passion, but his was a passion for knowledge. He wished to benefit the world, it is true, but his passionate devotion to learning the secret of life emanated

from his desire to bring glory and honor to himself. He tells his sad and horrifying tale to Robert Walton, who is searching for the Northwest Passage, in an effort to warn Walton against the over-zealous pursuit of knowledge. Frankenstein also exercised Godwinian benevolence when he destroyed the monster's mate. Perhaps the two unsightly creatures might have brought good, not ill, to mankind, as Frankenstein intended they would; but since he was not assured of this happy outcome, his benevolence consisted in the fact that he refused to risk the safety and happiness of the whole human race for the happiness of the unfortunate being he had created. Lest a race of malevolent titans be unleashed upon the world, he did not give life to the mate and sank her body in the ocean.

Once reason has been put into effect by an act of disinterested benevolence, justice immediately follows; and the individual who has progressed this far finds joy, peace, and self approval in knowing that he has done a kindness and made a step toward perfection. Although the destruction of the monster's mate enabled Frankenstein to deal justly with the world, he was never to know this joy because his injustice to the monster, the monster's victims, and himself was irrevocable. The moment of truth for Frankenstein came when he saw the creature come to life. He himself, the creator, was filled with horror and fled. From this time on he realized that the poor being would be hunted, reviled, and treated worse than an animal. When he first beheld its ugliness, he did not realize that the outside appearance did not indicate its real nature. Not until after the murder of little William and the fiend's account of his own life and

development did the scientist understand that his creation was indeed like man, longing for human companionship and earnestly desiring to be a good and useful member of society. The more Frankenstein learned of his creation, the more his agony increased; for he had thoughtlessly put into motion a living force he could not control. He alone was responsible for the welfare of this being, and he had not had the foresight or the power to provide for its future. "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" (p. 217). This terrible tragedy for the monster and all his victims had to be enacted before Frankenstein had sufficient knowledge to see the situation as it was. The truth gradually penetrated his thinking: his pride had led him to attempt more than was humanly possible, and in so doing he had brought suffering and death to all those he loved. Nevertheless he took a further step toward perfection in attempting to show his fatal mistake to another man very like himself, the explorer Robert Walton, who was about to sacrifice the lives of his crew by going on to the North Pole. The men objected to proceeding any further in the search, and had Walton continued, he would not only have violated their right of private judgment but all would probably have lost their lives. Frankenstein, in a thoroughly perfectible state just before his death, was successful in enabling Walton to make the decision to deal justly with his crew by turning the ship toward England and home.

Concerning justice, Godwin held that society's institutions

are the greatest enemy of justice. Of these institutions the most damaging is government. In their novels both Godwin and Mary deal primarily with the evils of monarchy and aristocracy, but Godwin maintained that no form of government is good and only the most necessary laws should be enacted and enforced. We have seen that the major weakness of many of the characters in these novels is a highly developed sense of aristocratic honor. A sense of honor is desirable and necessary, but to be obsessed by it and defend it at any cost brings to his destruction one character after another in the novels. Monarchy and its accompanying aristocracy are responsible for this unreasonable striving after honor.

Duelling, which Godwin deplored, was one method that privileged men used to defend their honor. Falkland, in Caleb Williams, had cultivated his character to such a high state that he refused to fight a duel during his stay in Italy. Because of his refusal, tragedy was averted and happiness and friendship were the outcome for all concerned. But such was not the case with Lodore in Mary's Lodore, or The Beautiful Widow. The major reason for Lodore's flight to America with his daughter, Ethel, was his disgrace for having refused a challenge to duel. He would not fight because his challenger was his own unacknowledged son, Count Casimir. Lodore thus withdrew for twelve years into "the wilderness of the Illinois" before deciding to return to England. On the return trip, Lodore and Ethel stopped in New York, where a crude, blustering army officer recognized Lodore and shamed him publicly for refusing the challenge. After striking the officer, Lodore was killed in the duel

which followed. In this particular instance the principal victim was Lodore himself. His only years of happiness were those spent in his forest cottage with Ethel, his books, and three black servants. Because of his passionate nature and overwrought sensibility, another result of aristocratic tradition, he was not fitted for life in society. He was, in fact, incapable of dealing justly with himself.

Godwin's fifth novel, Cloudesley, is a study of the evil effects of the aristocratic system on the aristocrats themselves. The opening remarks in Political Justice to the chapter entitled "The Moral Effects of Aristocracy" are relevant here.

The features of aristocratical institution are principally two: privilege, and an aggravated monopoly of wealth (PJ, II, 93).

The major portion of Cloudesley concerns the life of Lord Danvers, a younger son who came into the family title and estates upon the death of his elder brother, Arthur. Like Prince Arthur of old, this Arthur was from childhood a paragon of virtue, wisdom, and manly traits. Richard, the younger brother, did not hate or envy him because of the mutual love and respect they shared. But Richard was made cruelly aware of the difference between them, which he explains to his secretary, Meadows.

My father and mother directed all their attention to the welfare and advantage of their eldest son. I was seldom judged worthy to be made the subject of a smile, a caress, the smallest encouragement. I seemed only to stand in the way, to be a being that had intruded himself into a world where he was not wanted.

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It seemed as if we [the two brothers] were born of different castes. He was to be the lord of the palaces; I was to be launched in life at the expense of two or three thousand pounds, or to languish out my existence on an annuity of a few

hundreds; and even that reluctantly torn from the vast heaps, which were carefully laid up for this exclusive favourite of my parents and of fortune.⁵

Both young men went with Lord Marborough to aid Prince Eugene of Austria defend his country from the Turkish invaders. Arthur married at the end of the campaign, but was killed in a duel before the birth of his son. The mother, Irene, also died. Richard now saw his opportunity to inherit the title and estates of his family. He persuaded Cloudesley, their manager and Irene's guard, to marry Irene's maid, Eudocia, and accept the responsibility for Julian, Arthur's infant son. Richard then returned to England and inherited the title and properties of his brother, but misfortune and guilt made him miserable to the end of his days. Primogeniture is the major object of Godwin's attack.

In the meantime, Cloudesley and Eudocia proved to be excellent parents to Julian. They lived the simple life of farmers, but when Julian grew older Cloudesley moved the family in order to place Julian in a more appropriate school environment and give him a better education. Julian is one of the few Godwinian characters to receive an education that fitted him for life. His tutor was a university student, but his friends came from all walks of life.

When Cloudesley first came on the scene, he was in prison for a debt not his own, and he had been released through Arthur's influence. Cloudesley's only backward step away from perfectibility occurred when he conspired with Richard to cheat the infant son of

⁵William Godwin, Cloudesley: A Tale, I (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 118, 121.

Arthur out of his birthright. As Julian approached manhood and showed signs of being a splendid and admirable young man, Cloudesley returned to England to try to persuade Richard to restore the title and property to Julian. Richard not only refused but endeavored to place the blame for the crime on Cloudesley. After Cloudesley's return to Italy, Richard relented and sent Meadows, his secretary, to inform Julian of his identity. In his efforts to find Julian, Cloudesley was killed; but he had brought justice to Julian, repentance to Richard, and new love and hope to Borromeo, a blunt, uncompromising, middle-class misanthrope, who declared:

Yes, the true system for governing the world, for fashioning the tender spirits of youth, for smoothing the pillow of age, is love. Nothing else could have made a Cloudesley; nothing else could have made a Julian. I and Lord Danvers have been the delinquents; he for base and selfish ends; I from an erroneous judgment (III, 342-343).

This novel provides one of the clearest examples of the operation of all the steps in Godwin's scheme of perfectibility. The suffering and hardships of these individuals was set in motion by the injustice done to Richard by his parents and by the law of primogeniture. But goodness is made to come out of evil through the development of Cloudesley's character. His quiet, consistent benevolence, practiced over a long period of years, brought happiness into the lives of all those who were close to him.

If monarchy and aristocracy were injurious to the aristocrats, how much more damaging were they to the common people! Because he was a commoner, Caleb Williams was seldom given an honest hearing when he was brought into court. The poor farmer Hawkins and his son were executed for Falkland's crimes on the flimsiest of

circumstantial evidence. The evils of an aristocratic society are an ever-recurring theme in Godwin's novels. But it was Mary who dealt with the idea of injustice on a broad and comprehensive scale. Her novel The Last Man, written primarily as a tribute to Shelley, presents the fullest portrait of Shelley in her novels in the character Adrian. The story begins in England at a time of great political unrest and at a time when rumors of plague come from various parts of the world. The first victim of the plague to die on English soil arrived on an American vessel shipwrecked just off the coast. "It was whispered that he had died of the plague" (p. 157). The nature of the plague is, at first, enigmatic; but as it moves from the far East, to the Mediterranean, to America, to Ireland, to France, and finally to England, the reader realizes that this plague is injustice, especially political injustice. The American who perished on the English coast represents England's oppression of America and war with her colonists.

This interpretation of the plague is not immediately obvious and requires explanation. The disease, we are told, was not communicable but was caused by infection in the air. When Lionel Verney, the narrator of The Last Man, was preparing to go to the aid of a man who was dying of the plague, the by-standers warned him against it because they thought it was contagious. Verney replied:

"Do you not know, my friends, . . . that the Earl himself, now Lord Protector, visits daily, not only those probably infected by this disease, but the hospitals and pest houses, going near, and even touching the sick? yet he was never in better health. You labour under an entire mistake as to the nature

of the plague; but do not fear, I do not ask any of you to accompany me, nor to believe me, until I return safe and sound from my patient" (p. 187).

In Valperga, the novel preceding The Last Man, the disillusioned prophetess makes the following speech to Euthanasia:

Listen to me, while I announce to you the eternal and victorious influence of evil, which circulates like air about us, clinging to our flesh like a poisonous garment, eating into us, and destroying us. Are you blind, that you see it not? . . . Look around. Is there not war, violation of treaties, and hard-hearted cruelty? Look at the societies of men; are not our fellow creatures tormented one by the other in an endless circle of pain? Some shut up in iron cages, starved and destroyed; cities float in blood, and the hopes of the husbandman are manured by his own mangled limbs. . . (III, 44).

Of the many incidents in the book that confirm this interpretation of the plague, the most striking one takes place in London, where Verney has gone to aid Adrian to comfort and help the stricken people. He had worked tirelessly until late at night. Upon returning home, he found a frightened crowd gathered before his door.

With swift alarm, afraid to ask a single question, I leapt from my horse; the spectators saw me, knew me, and in awful silence divided to make way for me. I snatched a light, and rushing up stairs, and hearing a groan, without reflection I threw open the door of the first room that presented itself. It was quite dark; but, as I stepped within, a pernicious scent assailed my senses, producing sickening qualms, which made their way to my very heart, while I felt my leg clasped, and a groan repeated by the person that held me. I lowered my lamp, and saw a negro half clad, writhing under the agony of disease, while he held me with a convulsive grasp. With mixed horror and impatience I strove to disengage myself, and fell on the sufferer; he wound his naked festering arms round me, his face was close to mine, and his breath, death-laden, entered my vitals. For a moment I was overcome, my head was bowed with aching nausea. . . (pp. 244-245).

British humanitarians had fought for many years to abolish slavery.

In 1807, the British slave trade was made illegal, but it was not

until 1833, seven years after the publication of The Last Man, that slavery was officially abolished in England and all its possessions. The above excerpt clearly demonstrates the loathing with which Mary viewed the enslavement of the black people. The pollution in the air which caused the plague was injustice--evil.

Throughout the novel, almost every form of injustice is exposed, among all classes. The inhumane conditions of the prisons and hospitals are described, and a comparison of injustice in the city is made with that in the country.

The plague was not in London alone, it was every where. . . . When once the disease was introduced into the rural districts, its effects appeared more horrible, more exigent, and more difficult to cure, than in towns. There was a companionship in suffering there, and, the neighbours keeping constant watch on each other, and inspired by the active benevolence of Adrian, succour was afforded, and the path of destruction smoothed. But in the country, among the scattered farm-houses, in lone cottages, in fields, and barns, tragedies were acted harrowing to the soul, unseen, unheard, unnoticed (p. 193).

The attitudes of the people toward injustice are briefly explained as falling into three categories. The first group was composed of those "who bowed their heads in resignation, or at least in obedience" to Providence. The next group treated it casually and sought to harden themselves to it by indulging in entertainment or licentiousness. The members of the last group--the good, the prudent, and the wise--labored benevolently to relive suffering and injustice (p. 197).

As the tale draws to a close, all the principal characters still alive and a few other survivors begin their journey to Italy, where they feel they will have a better chance to live. In France,

however, religious dissent causes a division between them, fighting, and further loss of life. "During the whole progress of the plague, the teachers of religion were in possession of great power; a power of good, if rightly directed, or of incalculable mischief, if fanaticism or intolerance guided their efforts" (p. 273). On the way to Switzerland and Italy, all the members of the little group perish, one by one, except Verney and Adrian, who are immune to the plague. Adrian, however, was drowned, and Verney alone was left to tell the tale.

The Last Man is by far the most comprehensive and impressive treatment of the subject of justice to be found in any of the novels of either author. Godwin, however, opened the way to this theme in Caleb Williams. His great concern to show the fallibility of all men and the need for justice at all levels of society is evident throughout the work, and especially in the fact that he wrote two conclusions for the novel. In one, Caleb was defeated in his confrontation in court with Falkland. In prison Caleb finally lost his memory and could not understand why so many people came to tell him that Falkland was dead. The conclusion that Godwin evidently preferred and used depicts Falkland's confession of his crime, his repentance, and death. But Caleb lives on, tortured by the realization that his curiosity and desire to distinguish himself have caused the death of a man who is more benevolent and just than himself. Caleb considered Falkland a great man, who swerved from the path of perfectibility only once. His guilty conscience alone was sufficient punishment, and Caleb's pursuit of him had destroyed

one of the finest agents of justice in the land.

Godwin lamented the deaths of all truly great men and felt that the graves of such persons should have some inexpensive but distinguishing mark to remind those who passed by to remember and imitate their goodness.

It is impossible to calculate how much of good perishes, when a great and excellent man dies. It is owing to this calamity of death, that the world for ever is, and in some degree for ever must be, in its infancy.⁶

It is impossible to estimate how much Mary learned from her father about life and human personality, but her debt to him was very great. Both were dedicated and committed to the purpose of trying to bring about justice in the land. Godwin felt that the key to the problem of justice was reason. He himself had the same relentless curiosity that motivated young Caleb Williams to attempt to uncover Falkland's secret. Godwin was possessed by passionate desire to know the motivations behind the actions of men, and he felt that once these motivations were understood, benevolence would be the inevitable result since individuals themselves are seldom responsible for their motivations because of the law of necessity.

Take, for example, Mary's Lodore, who was killed in a duel by an American army officer. This officer had been educated to treat all cowardly individuals with violence and disrespect, and he considered Lodore a coward. The officer did not know, however, that Lodore struck the young man who challenged him to a duel for flirting

⁶William Godwin, Essay on Sepulchres (London: W. Miller, 1809), p. 10.

with his wife. Furthermore, the officer did not know that the young man was Lodore's own son, a sufficient reason for Lodore's rejection of the challenge. Both Lodore and the officer were men who could not control their passions, so they fought and Lodore was killed. Godwin's pronouncement on this situation would have been that they fought because neither understood the other or his motivations. Had they understood or stopped to consider that there might be other reasons than those immediately obvious, they would not have fought.

On the other hand, Mary's response to her characters would have been different. She would have reasoned that it is seldom possible for people to understand each other well enough to act justly, especially upon short acquaintance. Because of this ever-present lack of knowledge, love must come before reason, not after it. In other words, man must learn to love his fellowman even when he cannot understand the reasons for his actions. If Lodore had possessed the spirit of brotherly love, he would have ignored the ridiculous insult of this petty, hot-headed officer and refused to fight him since the duel endangered the lives of both. Some critics might suggest that this aspect of Mary's philosophy was derived from Shelley's influence, but I do not think this is a fair estimate of her mind and spirit. Mary did not have the logical, rational mental set of her father; she would not require an explanation before she felt benevolence for her fellowman nor would she require it of her characters. To put love before reason was a thoroughly natural position for her to take and one which was also implicit in her mother's writings. In this regard only did Mary's philosophy concerning reason

and benevolence differ from her father's. She did not discount reason; she simply felt that it was not the key to perfectibility--the ultimate goal of both the father and daughter.

CHAPTER V

AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS OF GENRE, POINT OF VIEW, SETTING, AND PLOT

It has been demonstrated that both Godwin and Mary wrote their novels with a definite purpose in mind which Godwin expressed in his preface to Caleb Williams.

. . . it was proposed in . . . the following work, to comprehend, as far as the progressive nature of a single story would allow, a general review of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism by which man becomes the destroyer of man. If the author shall have taught a valuable lesson, without subtracting from the interest and passion by which performances for this sort ought to be characterized, he will have reason to congratulate himself upon the vehicle he has chosen.¹

As a widely read man, Godwin was well aware what the requirements for a novel, "a performance of this sort," ought to be. The idea was not new, for his friend Thomas Holcroft had illustrated his political ideas in a novel Anna St. Ives in 1792, and there were few novels written up to this time which were not to some degree novels of purpose. But Godwin and his daughter were unique in that their basic ideas had been stated first in a formal treatise and much later in the highly imaginative poetry of Shelley. Both father and daughter consciously aimed at a more democratic form in making a sincere, though not always successful, effort to appeal to "the common reader." Since Godwin's earliest novels, written ten years before Caleb Williams, had had little success, Political Justice

¹William Godwin, Caleb Williams (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831), pp. xix-xx.

was his first successful work other than articles and columns he had written for periodicals. His struggle for success as a writer had been long and hard. Both he and Mary had also been witnesses to Shelley's search for an audience² and were keenly aware of the difficulty of commanding a large reading public. Thus, from the beginning, they were highly conscious artists who realized that their techniques were as important as their themes in attracting readers. By the time Mary began to write Frankenstein in 1816, Godwin had three successful novels in print and was at work on a fourth. He had already developed his own aesthetic values regarding fiction and had attempted many techniques to accomplish his ends.

Godwin left no work especially designed to explain his techniques as a writer of fiction other than the prefaces to his novels, comments in letters, and other prose works. However, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, a younger contemporary who owes much to the novel techniques of Godwin, wrote in 1838 "On Art in Fiction," an essay dealing explicitly with the various parts of the novelist's craft, some of which he had obviously observed in the works of Godwin.

Art in fiction, as Lytton saw it, was for the sake of making the writer's intention clear to the reader. Such an attitude towards the art of fiction as is found in Percy Lubbock's Craft of Fiction would be incomprehensible to Lytton. In The Craft of Fiction, though the author tries to avoid it, the emphasis leads one to believe that Madame Bovary is a greater book than War and Peace because the French novel is superior in form to the great Russian one.³

² Ian Jack, "The Poet and his Public--III: Shelley's Search for Readers," The Listener, 58 (June 6, 1957), pp. 917-918.

³ Harold M. Watts, "Lytton's Theories of Prose Fiction," PMLA, 50 (1935), 274-275.

Godwin's judgment in this instance would have been the same as Lytton's. Since Godwin believed that virtue was virtue only so long as the motive prompting it was virtuous and moral, he excluded from the realm of art any imaginative efforts that did not serve the ideal--that did not have the right moral tendency.

But it is to Fleetwood that we must turn in order to see what a careful, conscious literary artist Godwin was. When Fleetwood was first published in 1805, it contained a preface in which the author classifies his three existing novels in three different categories. He states that his reason for writing these different types of novels was to avoid repeating himself.

Caleb Williams was a story of very surprising and uncommon events, but which were supposed to be entirely within the laws and established course of nature. . . . The story of St. Leon is of the miraculous class; and its design to "mix human feelings and passion with incredible situations, and thus render them impressive and interesting."⁴

During the five-year interval between St. Leon and Fleetwood, he had learned from some "fastidious readers"

. . . that both these tales are in a vicious style of writing; . . . that the story we cannot believe, we are . . . called upon to hate; and that even the adventures of the honest secretary, who was first heard of ten years ago, are so much out of the usual road, that not one reader in a million can ever fear they will happen to himself.

The third category, Fleetwood, "consists of such adventures, as for the most part have occurred to at least one half of the Englishmen now existing, who are of the same rank of life as my hero" (pp. xiv-xv).

⁴ Godwin's quotation marks probably indicate a quotation from a conversation with Coleridge, who was a frequent visitor in the Godwin home, or from a lecture he had heard Coleridge deliver.

The one category omitted from Godwin's classification scheme is that which he had not yet attempted and into which Mandeville and Cloudsley fit--the historical novel. His preface to Cloudesley (1830) contains a statement regarding history in which he maintains that men undoubtedly obtain some knowledge of nations from history but "of the character of individuals almost nothing." Furthermore, "individual history and biography are merely guesses in the dark." Historical fiction is more truthful and dependable than that which is "drawn from statements, documents and letters written by those who were actually engaged in the scene," especially when the fiction is written by a "masterly hand" (I, vi-vii).

Mary's novels fall into similar categories, although she combined Godwin's types at the outset of her career. Frankenstein not only belongs to the miraculous class of St. Leon, but it is also, like Caleb Williams, a surprising story of uncommon events operating according to the laws of nature. Once we have accepted the fact that Frankenstein has fashioned and given life to a monstrous human being, we are no longer called upon to exercise "a willing suspension of disbelief" because the forces affecting the characters are all too true to life. The Last Man follows a similar pattern: after we admit the setting of the twenty-first century and a plague that is to exterminate the human race, the natural and social laws of nineteenth-century England determine nearly all other aspects of the novel. Valperga and Perkin Warbeck, both historical novels, are more nearly what is today called fictionalized biography than Godwin's Mandeville and Cloudesley,

which represent their historical periods faithfully but do not include any historical figures among their major characters. Mary's last two novels, Lodore and Falkner, are of the same type as Godwin's Fleetwood and Deloraine, which deal with the contemporary social scene of England's upper classes developed by "common and ordinary adventures" that "multitudes of readers of his own day have experienced."

In classifying the works of Godwin and Mary in twentieth-century critical terms, Northrop Frye's discussion of prose fiction is especially relevant.⁵ The term novel, he says, has become a catch-all term designating a work having a plot and dialogue that is not "on" something. Three distinct types--confession, anatomy, romance--combine with each other and make possible six different novel forms. Pure examples of any one type do not exist; in fact, as Frye says and Godwin knew, "the popular demand in fiction is always for a mixed form. . . ." The confession, according to Frye, is voiced by stylized rather than naturalistic characters who are the mouth-pieces of the ideas they represent--a definition which can be applied to Godwin's novels, all of which are confessions of this sort. His novels also meet Frye's requirements for the anatomy since they dissect or analyze human society in terms of a given intellectual pattern--in Godwin's case, the principles of Political Justice. "The romancer," Frye tells us, "does not attempt to create 'real people' so much as stylized figures which expand into psychological archetypes. It is in the romance that we find Jung's

⁵Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 303-314.

libido, amina, and shadow reflected in the hero, heroine, and villain respectively." The characters in a romance are idealized; they are extreme examples of the archetypes they represent. Although Godwin calls Caleb Williams a novel without a hero, both Falkland and Caleb are highly idealized, exaggerated character types; and while Falkland is not a romantic hero, he is a tragic hero whose sense of honor is his hamartia. In this sense, therefore, Caleb Williams is a romance as are St. Leon, Fleetwood, and all the rest. We have now come full circle and must conclude that Godwin's novels fulfill all the distinctions of Frye's types, as Godwin probably intended they should so that his novels would be attractive to a variety of tastes. Mary's novels also fulfill the same requirements with the exception of her historical romances Perkin Warbeck and Valperga, which cannot be classed as confessions. In fact, the confessional element in all of Mary's works, excluding Frankenstein and The Last Man, receives much less emphasis than it does in Godwin's novels. In summary, then, we must use the catchall term novel as the only label for the prose fiction of Godwin and Mary Shelley.

On every hand Godwin sought help in the composition of his novels. When a new edition of Fleetwood was to be published in The Standard Novels Series (1832), the editor and publisher, Richard Bentley, requested Godwin to write an account of the composition of Caleb Williams, which explains his method in considerable detail. Before beginning the novel, he discussed his purpose and plans with friends whose opinions he valued. Once he had determined on the main purpose of his story, he gathered about himself productions

of former authors that were relevant to his subject. He never feared the accusation of plagiarism because he felt that his vein of thinking was unique and would preserve him from "servile copying." In preparation for the writing of Caleb Williams, "no works of fiction came amiss to [him], provided they were written with energy" (pp. xi-xii).

The novel, as a literary genre, was still in a period of experiment when Godwin began to write toward the end of the eighteenth century. The press was flooded with novels of many types from which Godwin borrowed techniques, modifying and adapting them to his own use. His borrowing was so widespread and diverse that it can be treated only in summary form. But this diversity of sources led him to write novels that are composites of many types. Following his example, Mary borrowed from many sources, among which Godwin figures most prominently. Both Caleb Williams and Frankenstein, for example, can be labeled as sociological, psychological, and sentimental. There are also strong gothic elements in both. In addition, Caleb Williams has been called the first detective story, and Frankenstein marks the beginning of science fiction.

To the generation of great writers of fiction immediately preceding his own--Swift, Defoe, Richardson, Smollett, and Fielding--Godwin owed many of the best traits of his literary art. Other treasured sources of inspiration were English folk ballads and Charles Perrault's tales of Ma Mere L'Oie (Mother Goose); Shakespeare, whose tragedies Godwin read and re-read; and the classic writers of "the Greek and Roman Republics." Nor did he neglect

the literature of his own day. His Journal entries indicate that he was frequently reading two or more works simultaneously--one contemporary, the other a famous work from the past. On February 17, 1793 he was reading Horace's Odes and Mackenzie's The Man of Feeling (1771). He was familiar with the works of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, and Hazlitt, who were his personal friends; he had read the gothic novels of Anne Radcliffe, Matthew Gregory Lewis, and Charles Brockden Brown; and he knew well the sociological novels and dramas of Thomas Holcroft and the satiric romances of Robert Bage. It was, in fact, to Man as He Is and Man as He is Not, or Hermsprong that Godwin was indebted for the subtitle of The Adventures of Caleb Williams, or Things as They Are. A sincere admirer of both the man and his works, Godwin made a special trip to the village where Bage lived in order to visit him. In a letter to his first wife, Godwin describes Bage as "A very remarkable instance, in my opinion, of great intellectual refinement, attained in the bosom of rusticity."⁶ In summary "Godwin gathered in all the techniques of novel writing that had been developed to his time, . . . he is above all representative of his age, . . . the contributions that he made to the novelist's profession were of genuine value and importance. . . . his success as a novelist was the product less of temperament than of intellectual endeavour."⁷

When the actual writing of a novel began, Godwin recognized very quickly the importance of point of view. In his short fiction

⁶Paul, I, 261-263.

⁷Weekes, p. 73.

(1783) he had experimented with the third person in Imogene and the epistolary technique in Italian Letters. He began Caleb Williams in the third person but very soon changed to the first when he had difficulty in achieving his purpose with the third. In all subsequent works of fiction, he used a first person narrator. With the exception of Cloudesley, each narrator examined his own life and actions to assess and atone for his mistakes, a sort of Rousseauistic confession of a guilt ridden "hero" who has come to see the error of his ways. This point of view permits a loose structure that is, at the same time, unified because nothing is included that does not in some way relate to the protagonist and his problems. These gloomy spirits, wrote John Wilson Croker in reviewing Mandeville, are "not only unamusing but painful. . . . 'Falkland,' 'St. Leon,' and 'Mandeville' are members of the same family, and their portraits are painted with the same melancholy force and disgusting accuracy. . . ." ⁸ Mary also used the first person in Frankenstein, but Frankenstein is not himself the narrator. The author created a frame for the narration, which is done in the first person through Robert Walton's letters to his sister. The epistolary technique is not consistently maintained throughout the novel, but it enabled the narrator to survive both of the major characters, to describe the confession and death of Frankenstein, and the impending end of the monster. In this manner, Mary brought her story to a closed ending so far as the major characters are concerned and Frankenstein's

⁸Croker, 18, 176-177.

tragic tale puts him in the same family with Falkland, St. Leon, and Mandeville.

Godwin's one departure from his favorite point of view is in Cloudesley. Here, as in Caleb Williams, the narrator is a young man who becomes the secretary of Lord Danvers, usurper of the title and fortune of his nephew, Julian. But the adventures of the young secretary, Meadows, fill nearly half a volume before he meets Lord Danvers, and the major plot, in which Meadows plays a minor role, begins. The narration of Cloudesley appears to be an adaptation of Mary's point of view in Frankenstein since the plot necessitates that someone survive Lord Danvers and Cloudesley and conduct young Julian to England, to his inheritance, and to further perfectibility.

After The Last Man (1826) Mary never again used the first-person narrator. The novel, frankly autobiographical, is told by Lionel Verney, one of the characters representing Mary herself. He is not guilt ridden over some mistake or crime, as are Godwin's characters, but he has their gloomy sense of isolation. After his dear friend (Shelley) is drowned, he is alone in the world writing his memoirs and hoping that somewhere on earth another human being survives who will eventually come to relieve his loneliness. Since none of Godwin's mature works were written in the third person, Mary had to look elsewhere for examples. In her historical fiction and last two novels, she used a third person narrator with omniscience enough to penetrate the thoughts and motives of the characters.

One further point concerning the narrators of the Godwin and Shelley novels is that neither author hesitated to stop to permit his

narrator to explain a moral or to argue either for or against an issue facing the characters. Their didacticism is omnipresent, though it is shorter and more restrained in Mary's fiction than in her father's.

Neither Godwin nor Mary was as skillful in handling point of view as they were in choosing the setting for their tales. But whatever period of time they chose and whatever location, they were almost always writing of nineteenth-century Englishmen. They wrote of contemporary England set in London, in the West Country, in various small towns and rural locations, or they selected a particular century in the past. They covered a large portion of western Europe and the British Isles. Godwin also included Russia during the time of Peter the Great, and Mary explored the regions of the North Pole. Her Italian and Swiss settings are particularly well done since they are descriptions of actual places where she had lived, such as Florence and Lucca, the locations for Valperga. Godwin had visited Ireland, which he describes in the opening chapters of Mandeville. But in all this variety of place and time, they appeared to have two objectives in mind: first, to give accurate descriptions; and second, to make the reader conscious that human beings and their institutions are relatively the same in any place and at any given period in history. Godwin's St. Leon lives in seven different countries during the sixteenth century, while Mary's Perkin Warbeck lives in five during the fifteenth century; yet both these protagonists encounter war, all the evils of aristocratic systems of government, and the cunning and murderous tactics of ambitious princes and monarchs.

It is very probable that Godwin chose his time periods for

political reasons as well as for maneuverability of plot. For example, Mandeville was set in the seventeenth century when the relationship between England and Ireland was not unlike that of the two countries in the early nineteenth century. Mandeville opens with one of the uprising of 1641, when the Irish catholics sought to recover their property and social position which had been taken from them by the English. Charles Mandeville's father, an English officer stationed in Ireland, and his family were massacred. Only two small children of the family escaped. In Godwin's day, late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was little fighting between the English and Irish, but there was much unrest, especially among the catholics, who were demanding complete emancipation which Pitt had virtually promised them in 1800 but had failed to put into effect. It was another means, as pointed out earlier, of giving universal meaning to a work by showing that no age is exempt from the destructive and corrupting influence of outmoded or unjust situations of society. A similar situation prevails in Mary's Valperga, when the Italians are torn by the fourteenth-century struggle between the Guelphs, who advocated constitutional monarchy, and the Ghibelines, who were led by the tyrant Castruccio and stood for absolute monarchy. While the outcome in the novel is the reverse of that in English history, the Regency Period in England saw a contest between the king and parliament which resulted in more power for parliament and less for the king. It is the reader's task to make the analogy.

But the choice of the twenty-first century for The Last Man is of unique and symbolic importance. The plague that destroyed all inhabitants

of the world except the narrator was injustice, and one of the major purposes of this novel was to refute a proposal of Malthus's theory of population. In Political Justice Godwin commented on Robert Wallace's views concerning population. Wallace had recommended in Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence (1761) the holding of common property to remedy social evils, but he was forced to abandon this recommendation when he calculated that the population of his ideal society would increase so rapidly that eventually there would not be enough food for all. Godwin proposed two arguments against Wallace's opinion: First, the period when the earth might become too populous for the support of its inhabitants was too distant to cause serious concern since only three-fourths of the habitable globe was under cultivation and many parts under cultivation were capable of more intensive cultivation. Second, since the problem lay so far in the future, remedies might be devised "of which we may yet at this time have not the smallest idea" (PJ, II, 518-519). The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature (1797) contained an essay entitled "Of Avarice and Profusion" in which Godwin stated: "Mechanical and daily labour is the deadliest foe to all that is great and admirable in the human mind."⁹ Therefore, he recommended a system that maintained an equitable balance in the distribution of both money and labour to all members of the state. This system—"a state of cultivated equality"—"strikes at the root of a deception that has long been continued, and long proved a

⁹William Godwin, The Enquirer (1797; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1965), p. 171.

curse to all the civilized nations of the earth."¹⁰ It was this essay that prompted Thomas Robert Malthus to write his Essay on Population, published the following year (1798).¹¹

Malthus's thesis was that since population tended to increase in a geometric ratio and the food supply increased in an arithmetic ratio, war, crime, poverty, and disease were necessary to keep the population down to the level of human subsistence. He further maintained that the society Godwin proposed would be reduced to vice and misery by overpopulation. Six of the nineteen chapters in Malthus's Essay attacked Godwin's theory of perfectibility, on which Godwin's remedy for the problem rested: that men in an advanced stage of perfectibility would exercise moral restraint as a reasonable check to population. Malthus later endorsed this remedy as being one means of solving the problem, but by 1819 he also advocated the withdrawal of poor relief and a repeal of the Poor Laws as a more effective check. Both Godwin and Shelley were adamant in their opposition to this most recent proposal.¹² Godwin's long delayed second reply to Malthus, Of Population, appeared in 1820 and the controversy that had continued for over twenty years immediately became heated as more and more men contributed to the debate. In

¹⁰Ibid., p. 184.

¹¹In An Essay on the Principle of Population, ed. James Bonar (1798; rpt. London: Macmillan and Co., 1926), p. 1, Malthus states: "The following Essay owes its origin to a conversation with a friend, on the subject of Mr. Godwin's Essay on avarice and profusion, in his Enquirer."

¹²W. P. Albrecht and C. E. Pulos, "Godwin and Malthus," PMLA, 70 (1955), 554.

1822 Francis Place openly advocated birth control in his reply to Godwin. Godwin's attack upon Malthus's proposal was politically effective, being praised in Parliament and quoted favorably by various publications.¹³ "In a time unfavorable to liberal reform, both Shelley and Godwin felt that merely keeping the Poor Laws would be a victory."¹⁴

In the light of the population controversy, The Last Man can be read as another reply to Malthus. Injustice not only checked the population, it eliminated the population altogether. The twenty-first century setting was necessary to provide time for the increase in population and make the tale seem credible. Thoughtful, informed readers of the day would have understood the symbol of the plague immediately as being injustice. Mary knew of Shelley's deep interest in this question, and it was a theme that would do honor to his memory. In the character of Adrian, modeled on Shelley, she shows a perfect human being, dedicated to the service of his fellowman. The moral restraint, which both Godwin and Shelley advocated, is illustrated in the fact that Adrian, having been refused by his first and only love, did not marry. Mary's use of the population theme also reveals her support of her father's convictions and his earlier works on the same subject. Yet Malthus carried the day in spite of the brief popularity of Godwin's reply to him and the publication of Mary's novel in 1826. "This [the population controversy], probably more than

¹³Kenneth Smith, The Malthusian Controversy (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), pp. 152-153.

¹⁴Albrecht and Pulos, p. 555.

any other single cause, brought about the eclipse of Godwin."¹⁵

It has been said that "literature in every age presents itself under one of two forms:" as a clear reflection of everyday life or as a journey into the unusual, away from the circumstances which surround the reader;¹⁶ and we have seen that Godwin and Mary alternated between these two in order to create an appropriate world for their characters and carry their point. Another way in which they created their worlds was through the stock techniques of setting and description such as those used in the gothic novel, a very popular literary trend of the day. The dominant atmosphere of their novels is gothic, yet they made use of this atmosphere in an unusual manner that is noticeable in the works of Anne Radcliffe, a prominent predecessor in this style. The atmosphere is first introduced by the state of mind of a major character such as Caleb Williams or Frankenstein, who has been subjected over a period of years to the pursuit of some relentless fiend or his own conscience. The atmosphere is then further developed by the setting. Caleb was virtually a prisoner in the gloomy home of his master which contained the mysterious iron chest. When he escaped and fled from place to place, he was shut up in damp, hideous prisons with rats and condemned prisoners, in the bizarre residence of the friendly outlaws in the ruined castle; he travels through dark forests, and hides in tiny apartments in run-down sections of London. The state of his mind is reflected symbolically in the setting.

¹⁵Kenneth Smith, p. 279.

¹⁶Montague Summers, The Gothic Quest (London: The Fortune Press, 1938), pp. 17-18.

It is not until he has resided for some time as a decent and respectable citizen in a remote section of England that he decides to turn and face Falkland instead of fleeing.

Mary, too, appropriated much of the popular tale of terror in Frankenstein. The travels of Robert Walton take him farther and farther away from civilization; he is alone, in spirit, on the icy northern seas because he has no friend. The vastness of the ocean, the gloom, the ice are but physical reflections of the situation of plot and character. From the beginning the predicament of Frankenstein and his monster are hopeless; what better way to emphasize this hopelessness than through the setting! The two solitary years Frankenstein spent in graveyards, charnel houses, and his laboratory also contribute to horror but not so powerfully as the appearance of the monster. The Mandeville estate in Godwin's Mandeville is symbolic of the mental state of the family. The house, situated near a barren stretch of seashore, was surrounded by mists, fog, and the turbulent sea. One wing of the house was in ruins, and the other inhabited by solemn unfriendly servants who imitated the gloom of their master, a misanthropic recluse. In contrast with this aristocratic ruin, the pleasant cottage where Mandeville's sister was reared is modest and neat, with well-trimmed vines and hedges and flowers blooming everywhere. Beaulieu Cottage is yet another symbol for the cheerful, well-ordered state of mind of its inhabitants. The same can be said for Mary's Valperga. Euthanasia's castle, Valperga, was an ancient and magnificent fortress built upon a rock. It was completely invulnerable, except from one approach that

Castruccio and Euthanasia had discovered in their childhood as they played together. Many years later when Castruccio's knowledge of this hidden access enabled him to storm and take the castle, we see that the setting and description are no accident. The castle is a symbol of Euthanasia herself--the peerlessly beautiful and perfect woman, vulnerable only to love and memory. Examples of this kind are many: each of their novels reveals that both Godwin and Mary were expert in handling setting and using it in many different ways.

Godwin's plan for the plot of Caleb Williams, as set forth in the second preface to Fleetwood, has been of great interest to critics (pp. iii-xiv). He planned the volumes in reverse order--three, two, one--and spent two or three weeks thinking and jotting down notes for his story, but at the end of that period he "then sat down to write [his] story from the beginning." Before his planning period took place, he tells us that he read over

"The Adventures of Mademoiselle de St. Phale," a French Protestant in the times of the fiercest persecution of the Huguenots, who fled through France in the utmost terror, in the midst of eternal alarms and hair-breadth escapes, having her quarters perpetually beaten up, and by scarcely any chance finding a moment's interval of security. I turned over the pages of a tremendous compilation entitled "God's Revenge against Murder," where the beam of the eye of Omniscience was represented as perpetually pursuing the guilty, and laying open his most hidden retreats to the light of day. I was extremely conversant with the "Newgate Calendar" and "The Lives of the Pirates."

This method of plotting indicates the great care with which he worked and his intense concern for the major moral theme of his novel. There is scarcely any single portion of a novel that is of such critical importance to its total significance and aesthetic impact as its ending, and it has only recently been brought to the attention of

the public that Godwin wrote two endings to Caleb Williams.¹⁷ The author of this discovery suggests numerous reasons why Godwin may have returned to his completed manuscript after a few days to write another ending, the one which he ultimately used. The ending which he preferred reveals more optimism and substantiates his belief in the principles set forth in Political Justice. Had he used the first ending, justice would not have been done and neither Caleb or Falkland, after all their years of suffering, would have taken another step toward perfectibility. Although the rejected ending may be more realistic, Godwin's biographers stress the fact that he was always an optimistic man who believed until the end of his days in his doctrine of perfectibility. Following this line of thought it seems likely that he either thought his way through a new ending that had not previously occurred to him, or his faith in his philosophy would not permit him to use any other. At any rate, both endings show perspicacious workmanship, and the change indicates his determination to validate his philosophy.

By his fortunate choice of the flight-pursuit theme and the momentum, interest, and suspense with which it is written, Caleb Williams became an exciting adventure of which Hazlitt declared: "We conceive no one ever began Caleb Williams that did not read it through. . . ."¹⁸ The feeling of guilt, the "eye of Omniscience,"

¹⁷D. Gilbert Dumas, "Things as They Were: The Original Ending of Caleb Williams," Studies in English Literature, 6 (1966), 575-597.

¹⁸The Complete Works of William Hazlitt, ed. P. P. Howe, 11 (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1930), p. 24.

pursues Falkland almost as relentlessly as he pursues Caleb. Toward the end of the novel Caleb finally determines to stand his ground. He refuses to flee and goes to the courts demanding that Falkland's case be re-opened and a new trial conducted. When this new hearing takes place, Falkland confesses, repents, and dies three days later. Caleb is next astounded and horrified when he recognizes what he has done: he has brought about, through his morbid curiosity, the destruction of a man much better than himself. He, like Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, must tell his tale to atone for his error.

In fashioning his plot, Godwin combined with the flight-pursuit pattern and the omniscient eye much that he had learned from Aristotle and the writers of Greek tragedy and comedy. (Early in 1792 he was reading *Oedipus* and *Antigone*.) All of his novels except *Cloudesley* have, barring their digressions, what we call organic unity. This unity *Caleb Williams* possesses in an extreme degree as does *Deloraine*, which follows a similar structural pattern. As a writer and student of drama (Godwin wrote two unsuccessful tragedies and attended the theatre frequently), he was familiar with the reversal and recognition of Aristotle's *Poetics*, both of which he carried out in the thoughts and actions of Caleb and Falkland in the closing chapters of the novel. Caleb fled from Falkland throughout the novel until he finally came, after a period of ten years, to recognize that he would never have peace or happiness unless he brought Falkland to justice. In passion and anger, he reverses his position, returns to his home town, exposes Falkland to the local magistrate, and is exonerated of guilt. The recognition and reversal, however, prove false when he discovers that

he has brought death to Falkland, a man superior to himself, and a far greater sorrow to himself than he has previously known. Falkland also experienced recognition in the final scene before the magistrate:

"I see too late the greatness and elevation of your mind. I confess that it is to my fault and not yours, . . . that I owe my ruin.

. . . My name will be consecrated to infamy, while your heroism, your patience and your virtues will be forever admired" (p. 324).

The real change in fortune was not, however, greatness for Caleb and ruin for Falkland--it was death for both. Caleb's was a living death while Falkland's was a final release in physical death.

Mary adopted nearly all these techniques in her novels. The flight-pursuit theme is obvious in Frankenstein: the monster pursues the steps of his creator until the creator turns and pursues the monster to the arctic wasteland. In his anger over the monster's murder of his bride, Frankenstein was temporarily blinded to his own part in the monster's guilt; but as he grows weaker and calmer, recognition comes. He had attempted to do more than man was able to do--to create a human being. When he sees his error, or crime, he is successful in revealing it to Walton and preventing him from making a similar mistake. Walton and the monster undergo recognition and the course of the plot is reversed when Walton turns the ship south and the monster goes north to construct his own funeral pyre. For both Falkland and Frankenstein there is no real reversal of plot, but both have gained knowledge of themselves before death, and their deaths have affected the plot so far as the other characters are concerned. The plot structure of Frankenstein is indeed close to that of Caleb Williams.

Another way in which Mary's plots resemble her father's is in her constant use of improbable incidents and unlikely coincidences, one of the weaknesses most frequently cited by their critics. It passes the bounds of believability that poor, young Caleb should meet so many misfortunes, so many disastrous, accidental encounters with enemies. Godwin anticipated Thomas Hardy by three quarters of a century. In St. Leon Godwin was not attempting to be realistic and the improbable is multiplied. St. Leon cannot walk the streets of any city of western Europe without being recognized or suspected of some crime. But Godwin attempted to supply a motivating force behind each incident and fit it naturally into his tale, whereas Mary was not always so successful in this regard. In Frankenstein, for example, the sudden flight of the DeLacey family from the cottage adjoining the monster's peep-hole is inconsistent with their character, especially since the creature had explained his situation to the blind father. They were intelligent, benevolent people who could surely remember that some kind, unknown being had helped them cultivate their crops, supply their wood, and shovel their paths through the snow. The monster's education through the chink in his hut is another impossibility as well as the presence of "the fair Syrian" (the title of one of Bage's novels) in the DeLacey cottage. The DeLacey episode is one of the most interesting in the novel, but it is also one of the most improbable.

Mary's Perkin Warbeck provides the most flagrant example of the improbable contrived to fit the controlling purpose of the novel. The youthful pretender Richard sent word to Henry IV on the eve of

battle that he has no desire to become King of England. His only motive in returning to England was to establish his identity and his honor. If Henry will acknowledge that he (Perkin Warbeck) is the Duke of York, he will return to Spain for the duration of his life. This incident occurs in Volume Three, and up to this point the reader has been led to believe that Richard's object in returning to England was to claim his throne. The message to Henry does, however, mark Richard as a more perfect man whose weakness is his honor.

The numerous digressions in the novels of both father and daughter were characteristic of many novels of the day, but they are exceedingly numerous and lengthy in the Godwin and Mary Shelley novels. Godwin's Cloudesley opens with a digression, nearly one hundred pages in length, which accomplishes only two ends: the characterization of Meadows and the analysis of an absolute monarchy. This latter accomplishment was later touched on in the description of the Turkish government and its officials and might have been elaborated to take the place of Meadows' experiences in Russia. Every new character who makes his appearance must have the story of his life told in great detail. Since the minor characters are numerous and frequently unnecessary, these digressions mar the effect and make the works tedious. In The Last Man, by Mary, the return of Verney and his wife Idris, to the neighborhood of Windsor, just when they were on the point of embarking for France, is unnecessary and distracting. However, Mary may have devised this incident for personal reasons in that Idris appears to resemble Fanny Imlay, Mary's

half sister who committed suicide. Since Godwin did not dare claim her body and give it a proper burial, the interment of Idris in the magnificent family vault at Windsor may have provided the sister and step-father with some strange sort of comfort.

Even though both Godwin and Mary were prone to belabor portions of their novels with too much explanation or too many examples, it is interesting that Godwin removed sections of Valperga as being unnecessary before having it published. When the novel came out, Godwin wrote to Mary:

I need not tell you that all the merit of the book is conclusively your own. The whole of what I have done is nearly confined to the taking away things that must have prevented its success. I scarcely ever saw anything more unfortunately out of taste, than the long detail of battles and campaigning, after the death of Beatrice, & when the reader is impatient for the conclusion.¹⁹

In these novels there are doubtless many other similarities in plot that could be considered, but one final characteristic deserves to be mentioned--the use of unusual or highly dramatic materials, roughly corresponding to Aristotle's requirement of spectacle in the tragedy. Godwin's St. Leon, based on a bizarre concept, is unusual in another way, for Godwin searched the histories of the countries in which St. Leon travelled for authentic historical events with dramatic intensity. St. Leon was imprisoned by the Spanish Inquisition, which was not officially abolished until 1820. In honor of the return of Philip the Second from England and the Netherlands, an Auto de Fé was to be held on August 29, 1559 in which St. Leon

¹⁹William Godwin, Letters, February 14, 1823.

and twenty-nine other prisoners were to be publicly burned unless they renounced their religion and accepted Catholicism. St. Leon was able to forego this ordeal by using the elixir of life. This form of execution was frequently held in Spain, but it was virtually unknown in other countries during the sixteenth century.²⁰ Deloraine, the hero of Godwin's last novel, used a small telescope to identify the men who were following him and his daughter up the Danube River. In Mary's Valperga, Castruccio was present when the Ponte alla Carraia collapsed in Florence on May 1st, 1304. A great May-day celebration depicting Dante's hell was held on the Arno River, and the crowd which gathered on the bridge to see it was so great that it broke in several places.²¹ Many people were killed, and the screams and confusion frightened the fourteen-year-old Castruccio so that he ran into a nearby cathedral for sanctuary. And in The Last Man the narrator, Verney, flew in a balloon to the north of England, not an impossible feat since the first sea voyage in a balloon was made across the English channel in 1785. This use of uncommon but authentic material is now a stock characteristic of the novel, but it was something of an innovation in Godwin's day.

Whether Mary adopted Godwin's method of planning her novels by beginning with the last volume and going in reverse order to the first is now known. We do know, however, that she had Shelley obtain

²⁰Henry Kamen, The Spanish Inquisition (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), pp. 177-196.

²¹Edmund G. Gardener, The Story of Florence, rev. ed. (London: J. M. Dent, Ltd., 1910), pp. 342-345.

Godwin's plan for Valperga from him before she began work on it. Each of her novels also carries out a dominant moral theme, which she undoubtedly had in mind from the beginning and developed her plot and all other parts of the novel to carry out this theme. Her command of plot is not as great as Godwin's because she lacked his energy and ability to carry the action forward. On the other hand, the plot of almost every novel of Mary's resembles a previous one or ones of Godwin's. The similarity between Frankenstein and Caleb Williams is no greater than that between Mary's Falkner and Godwin's Deloraine, both of which are composed of an interminable series of globe-trotting incidents. Mary does not insist on her theme as persistently as Godwin does in repeating it over and over, yet in all the aspects of the novel discussed here, she was heavily indebted to her father's works and advice.

CHAPTER VI

AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS OF CHARACTER, STYLE, AND TONE

In beginning a study of the characters created by Godwin and Mary, it is important to make a few generalizations before proceeding to a closer examination. Although there are relatively few major characters in any of the novels, the fictions of both authors are literally swarming with minor characters, far more than are necessary to accomplish their purposes. The one exception to this overpopulation in the novels is Frankenstein. Among the major figures, there is no true hero in Godwin's works, for he never attempted to create one and maintained that his idol Shakespeare "could not make a hero." It is also well to remember that Godwin's aesthetic theory was, like his political ones, a compromise between the extremes of romanticism and realism. The same might be said of Mary were it not for two qualifications: one, she did attempt to create heroes in Adrian of The Last Man and in Perkin Warbeck; and second, she had a much stronger tendency to write in a romantic strain than her father. The major characters in all of Godwin's novels and most of those in Mary's are not heroic but are developing personalities undergoing change. The minor characters, on the other hand, are frequently non-developing and possessed of heroic qualities in the manner of Clifford and Henrietta in Godwin's Mandeville, the male and female counterparts of perfection from the beginning to the end of the novel. In Frankenstein

few of the minor figures such as Clerval, Elizabeth, and Frankenstein's parents appear to have any faults or weaknesses. The theory on which such characterization rests is that to be human is to be imperfect, and a close study of character will inevitably reveal these imperfections. All of Godwin's major characters are, in the Aristotelian sense, a combination of the tragic and the comic. Falkland, of Caleb Williams, more nearly approaches the stature of a tragic hero than any of Godwin's other characters. Mary follows the same pattern, but with less thoroughness and intensity than her father. Perkin Warbeck, the young Pretender, is her most successful attempt to mold a hero. In depicting character Godwin's insights into human personality are far deeper and are executed with more thoroughness and precision than Mary's. At no time does she ever approach the excellence of Godwin's psychological study of Audley and Charles Mandeville. But she does follow in the path of Godwin in attempting to convey an impression of the mental state of her characters, with varying degrees of success. The state of mind of her Falkner greatly resembles the state of mind of Godwin's Falkland.

In developing their characters, both Godwin and Mary made extensive use of literary foils. The complexity of these contrasts in Caleb Williams is impressive. Falkland and Tyrell are proud and fearless country squires whose primary motivation for action is the approval of their fellowmen, but here the resemblance ends. Falkland is educated, Tyrell uneducated; Falkland is a refined man of sensibility, Tyrell boorish and insensitive to any of the finer aspects of

life; Falkland is reasonable and self-controlled, Tyrell is neither. Mr. Forester, Falkland's elder half-brother, is also provided as a contrast with Falkland. "The character of Mr. Forester was in many respects the reverse of that of my master," wrote Caleb of this blunt, kind man, who resembles Godwin himself. One foil for Caleb is Gines, who possesses the same curiosity and perseverance as Caleb but who lacks the virtuous motives and intellectual qualities of his opposite. The principal foils, however, are the protagonist and antagonist (Caleb and Falkland). They are similar in that they both have benevolent attitudes and wish to be honored and respected, but they are opposites in that Caleb, the commoner who has committed no crime, must flee from Falkland, the privileged aristocrat who fears his grandiose reputation will be destroyed by Caleb. Although Mary places no emphasis on contrasting characters in Frankenstein, Valperga owes much of its appeal and interest to the fact that Castruccio and Euthanasia are the alter-egos of each other in childhood, but the political persecution and banishment of Castruccio's family change his character until he becomes her opposite. Beatrice and Euthanasia are effective foils as are the parents of Castruccio and Euthanasia. In The Last Man Adrian provides an effective contrast with all the other male characters in that he is a selfless human being, completely untouched by motives of personal greed.

Wayne C. Booth, in his Rhetoric of Fiction, attaches considerable significance to the difference between "telling" and "showing" and

its effect on the novel.¹ He maintains that the skillful combination of the two will accomplish more than emphasis on "showing," which so many twentieth-century critics prefer. Even though Godwin and Mary "tell" much more than they "show," they would have agreed with Mr. Booth that the combination of these two methods is more effective than either one used singly. Godwin sometimes prefers to show rather than tell when he builds suspense and surprises the reader. The colorful, dynamic character Bethlem Gabor has been thoroughly analyzed by the narrator, St. Leon. When the final episode between them occurs, however, St. Leon does not explain that Bethlem is going insane. The reader becomes more and more apprehensive over Bethlem's mental state as his behavior becomes more and more erratic. It is not until after St. Leon has escaped from the castle and Bethlem is dead that the reader is informed of the Hungarian's madness. One of Mary's best moments as a builder of minor characters occurs in her description of the two professors Frankenstein meets at the university at Ingolstadt. M. Waldman listened attentively to Frankenstein's account of his studies up to that time, smiling tolerantly at the information which M. Krempe had insultingly mocked. The contrasting attitudes of the two professors toward their students and their subjects are vividly portrayed in this account of their actions and speech, and Mary does very little telling on this occasion.

Since most of the major characters of both authors were created to represent a particular idea and perform a didactic function, they

¹Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 3-20.

cannot be expected to be realistic in the shaping hands of novelists of modest talents. The ideas they represent are sometimes revealed by their names. Caleb, a biblical name meaning "dog," labels Caleb Williams as an inquisitive busybody who "dogs" the steps of his master until he finally becomes a dog in a lower sense by causing the death of a great and good man. Mandeville indicates the dual nature of Charles Mandeville, who is part man and part devil. Mary's Frankenstein might be translated literally, a frank or open man, and more freely, a confessor. A name which can be made to form a metaphor or symbol is a signal to the reader to notice that a special point is being made. The names of the two professors above suggest their basic qualities as professional men. Mr. Waldman is the genuinely prepared and dedicated teacher (a real forester or woodsman), while Mr. Krempe has only the surface requirements of his position (a man who touches only the edge or rim of the forest). The use of this traditional, stock device indicates that Godwin and Mary used every means at their disposal to interpret their characters, once they introduced them.

Contemporary critics of Godwin and Mary noted with regret the large number of sentimental, misanthropic characters who populate their novels. Of the major figures, those few who escape this category are Godwin's Cloudesley and Mary's Castruccio and Perkin Warbeck. The cultivation of extreme sensibility so fashionable during this period was a ridiculous hypocrisy to Godwin, who exposed it in most of his novels by making it the main source of misery for at least one well-developed character who is able to overcome many of his

difficulties when he recognizes their origin. Mary's *Lodore* and Falkner are very nearly as ridiculous in their extreme sensibility as Godwin's *Fleetwood*, who resembles Mr. Harley, Henry Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling*. Although one critic attributes Godwin's popularity to the sentimental quality of his novels,² they were intended as an attack on the cult of sensibility that flourished so long among the middle classes in England. In the development of youthful characters, both Godwin and Mary call attention to noble sentiments which exercise benign influences on Godwin's Julian in *Cloudesley* and Mary's Ethel in *Lodore*: sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others; to beauty in nature, art, and life; to the miscarriage of justice and the need for justice. "Sensibility was properly to be valued as long as it enabled its possessor to experience life more fully than could the common man, but it becomes dangerous when it develops into a sort of masochism or, on the other hand, a sickly voluptuousness."³

Godwin transformed the character who became a victim of sensibility into what was later called the Byronic hero. St. Leon (1799) was cast to some extent in this mold, but the Hungarian noble in the same novel meets the requirements more adequately. A military leader and a passionate, taciturn man by nature, Bethlem Gabor was more than six feet in stature, "and yet he was built as if it had been a colossus,

²Sprague Allen, "William Godwin as a Sentimentalist," *PMLA*, 33(1918), 1-29.

³Weekes, p. 58.

destined to sustain the weight of the heavens." After his wife and children had been murdered by a band of marauders, "He cursed their murderers, he cursed mankind, he rose up in fierce defiance of eternal providence; and your blood curdled within you as he spoke. . . . In the school of Bethlem Gabor, I became acquainted with the delights of melancholy . . . of a melancholy that looked down upon the world with indignation, and that relieved its secret load with curses and execration. We frequently continued whole nights in the participation of these bitter joys. . . ." Gabor even came to hate his friend St. Leon because he turned the other cheek and would not fight and hate. When Gabor's end came, he refused to be taken prisoner and died fighting. "His self-balanced and mighty soul could not submit to the condition of a prisoner; he was nothing, if he were not free as air, and wild as winds" (IV, 115-131). Frankenstein's monster also develops Byronic traits when he rebels against his creator and his crimes increase his sense of alienation and guilt. His final speech finds him in such a Faustian agony that he cries:

. . . I shall die, and what I now feel be no longer felt. Soon these burning miseries will be extinct. I shall ascend my funeral pile triumphantly, and exult in the agony of the torturing flames. The light of that conflagration will fade away; my ashes will be swept into the sea by the winds (p. 223).

After St. Leon, a misanthropic, Byronic character makes his appearance in all Godwin's novels; and after 1816 both Godwin and Mary frequently used Lord Byron himself as a model for men of this type. Godwin's Charles Mandeville and Mary's Lodore are particularly representative of this group, and Mary's Beatrice in St. Leon may very well be one of the first Byronic heroines in prose fiction.

It is not easy to trace the influence of Godwin's portrayal of women in Mary's works except in Frankenstein, where each portrait is highly idealized and unrealistic, clearly resembling the ladies in St. Leon and Fleetwood. For in writing Valperga and later novels, Mary introduced elements of realism in her characterization, and her women no longer "become insensible" at the slightest sign of stress. From Godwin she inherited the woman who is a paragon of virtue and beauty. Both of the major female characters in Frankenstein, for example, are modeled after Godwin's Marguerite de Damville in St. Leon, that "most excellent of women" and a highly idealized portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft. But Mary went beyond him in this aspect of her art. Lady Brampton in Perkin Warbeck is a woman of good character, but clever, daring, and interested in politics. Beatrice in Valperga offers herself to Castruccio, becomes his mistress, and suffers the tragic consequences of her youthful indiscretion. But the most realistic portrayal is that of Cornelia Santerre, the beautiful sixteen-year-old girl whom Lodore married. She changes from a frivolous social butterfly, dependent on her mother and inattentive to her husband and infant daughter, into a charming, mature woman who is finally re-united with her daughter after a separation of twelve years. No such women as these inhabit the pages of Godwin's fiction. Mary excelled him in her portrayal of women just as he excelled her in the portrayal of men.

Fictional characters are derived from three sources: history, works of other authors, and observations of real life. In writing his biographies and histories, Godwin had learned the importance of

accuracy and the necessity for careful research. Professor F. E. L. Priestley, editor of the only complete edition of Political Justice, pointed out that: "He [Godwin] was the first biographer of Chaucer to dig out original documents, and added more documents than any other before or since, especially the Scrope-Grosvenor documents."⁴ While Godwin was at work on his History of the Commonwealth, Crabb Robinson recorded in his journal on July 8, 1824: "Godwin called to inquire where he could obtain information about the appointment of the Judges during the Commonwealth."⁵ These research techniques Godwin passed down to Mary, who used them especially when working on her historical novels. In a letter to Peacock in November 1820, Shelley wrote:

Mary is writing a novel [Valperga], illustrative of the manners of the Middle Ages in Italy, which she has raked out of fifty old books. I promise myself success from it; and certainly, if what is wholly original will succeed, I shall not be disappointed.⁶

In re-creating the lives of the tyrant Castruccio and the Pretender, Perkin Warbeck, she did not find enough historical information to develop their characters, so she drew from the characters of other literary works and from her own observations of life. These varied sources she filtered through the alembic of her imagination to produce each character as she conceived him to be. Because of the variety of

⁴Ibid., p. 29.

⁵Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson, ed. Thomas Sadler, I (London: Macmillan and Co., 1869), 311.

⁶Complete Works of Percy B. Shelley, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, The Julian Edition, 10 (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1926), 223.

sources that she and all novelists use, it is unreliable and speculative to maintain that Byron was the exclusive model for Castruccio or Shelley the only model for Perkin Warbeck. Each is a synthesis of many models. The monster in Frankenstein has the same power and savage anger of Godwin's Bethlem Gabor, but the unfortunate creature has other characteristics that Gabor does not possess.

Despite the fact that Mary never developed any character solely from the original, her critics attempt to associate her characters with persons that she knew. It has only recently been shown that Godwin's novels might be approached from the same viewpoint. In 1955 P. N. Furbank wrote:

To put it briefly, the novel [Caleb Williams] is a highly dramatized symbolical picture of Godwin himself in the act of writing Political Justice. I think it is important to point this out at once, for some of the brilliance and originality of the conception is missed if we fail to realize it.⁷

In 1963 James T. Boulton proposed that Godwin's novels are intimately connected with Edmund Burke and his Reflections on the French Revolution (1790), a work which called forth such responses as Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Men (1791) and Thomas Paine's Rights of Man (1791). Professor Boulton also cites D. H. Monro's interpretation that the character Falkland symbolizes the idea of honor: "He is the spirit of Monarchy made visible."⁸ While both Monro and Furbank made excellent judgments, Boulton pushes the argument further by suggesting

⁷P. N. Furbank, "Godwin's Novels," Essays in Criticism, 5 (1955), 215.

⁸James T. Boulton, The Language of Politics in the Age of Wilkes and Burke (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 226-232.

that the original inspiration for *Falkland* was Edmund Burke, who, in his Reflections betrayed the rights of the common man. The tone of both Caleb Williams and Political Justice, he argues, is the same: "profound admiration for certain qualities and regret for their misuse." Godwin directed the following passage in Political Justice to Burke: "We know . . . that truth will be triumphant, even though you refuse to be her ally. We do not fear your enmity. But our hearts bleed to see such gallantry, talents and virtue employed in perpetuating the calamities of mankind." While the 1796 edition of Political Justice was in the press, Godwin received news of Burke's death and added a note to this passage indicating that Burke was the man to whom these words were addressed.

In all that is most exalted in talents, I regard him as the inferior of no man that ever adorned the face of earth; His excellencies however were somewhat tinctured with a vein of dark and saturnine temper; so that the same man strangely united a degree of the rude character of his native island, with an urbanity and susceptibility of the kinder affections, that have rarely been paralleled. But his principal defect consisted in this; that the false estimate as to the things entitled to our deference and admiration, which could alone render the aristocracy with whom he lived, unjust to his worth, in some degree infected his own mind. (PJ, II, 545-546).

Several admirable attempts have been made to interpret Mary Shelley's minor classic Frankenstein, to explain the roles of Frankenstein and his monster. All throw some light on the novel but fail to find in the rich undercurrent of its famous antecedents--the biblical story of creation, Paradise Lost, Faust, and the Promethean myth--little more than a highly significant archetypal situation of modern man caught in the eternal battle between good and evil. It is my purpose here to suggest another source and interpretation for

Frankenstein that resembles those worked out for Caleb Williams by Professors Boulton and Furbank.

The introduction Mary prepared for the 1831 edition of Frankenstein explains that her main inspiration came from a dream. "Everything . . . must be linked to something that went before. The Hindoos give the world an Elephant to support it, but they make the elephant stand upon a tortoise" (p. 8). This statement causes the reader to recall that the tortoise on which Caleb Williams stood was the story of Blue Beard, whose wife's curiosity nearly brought her to her death.⁹ Godwin explained that he amused himself with thinking of Caleb as the curious wife who could not refrain from opening the forbidden door in the absence of her husband. Godwin's genius enabled him to see the strong element of suspense and universal appeal of violence which the fairy tale "Blue Beard" satisfies symbolically. He took the tale and made the raw and primitive actions of Blue Beard compatible with the social and moral standards of his own culture by pitting Falkland's authority and eminence against Caleb's curiosity. When Blue Beard was absent from home for a few weeks, the wife

was so much pressed by her curiosity, . . . she went down a back pair of stairs, and with such an excessive haste, that she had like to have broken her neck two or three times.

Upon opening the door, she could not see clearly:

after some moments she began to observe that the floor was all covered over with clotted blood, on which lay the bodies of

⁹"When I wrote Caleb Williams, I considered it as in some measure a paraphrase on the story of Bluebeard by Charles Perrault." Godwin, Cloudesley, I, iv.

several dead women ranged against the walls. (These were all wives that the Blue Beard had married and murder'd one after another.) She thought that she should have died for fear, and the key she pulled out of the lock fell out of her hand:¹⁰

Godwin has changed the incident narrated above into Caleb's discovery of the chest and his assumption that it contained evidence of Falkland's guilt. In the fairy tale, Blue Beard's wife sent word to her brothers of her dilemma, and when her husband returned she fled to the roof of the house until the brothers arrived, slew Blue Beard, and saved her. Here, then, is the fairy tale plot of Caleb Williams, with the brothers filling the role of the law and courts of England.

The discussion of these combined elements of plot and character in Caleb Williams have been withheld up to this point because of their relevance to character. Mary was influenced by a character in a German ghost story in much the same way that Godwin was influenced by "Blue Beard."

There was the tale of the sinful founder of his race, whose miserable doom it was to bestow the kiss of death on all the younger sons of his fated house, just when they reached the age of promise. His gigantic, shadowy form, clothed like the ghost in Hamlet . . . was seen at midnight, by the moon's fitful beams, to advance slowly along the gloomy avenue. The shape was lost beneath the shadow of the castle walls; but soon . . . he advanced to the couch of the blooming youths, cradled in healthy sleep. Eternal sorrow sat upon his face as he bent down and kissed the forehead of the boys, who from that hour withered like flowers snapt upon the stalk. I have not seen these stories since then; but their incidents are as fresh in my mind as if I had read them yesterday (p. 7).

¹⁰ [Charles] Perrault, Histories or Tales of Past Times, 1729; rpt. in Jacques Barchilon and Henry Petit, eds., The Authentic Mother Goose Fairy Tales and Nursery Rhymes (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1960), pp. 22-23.

The tale of "the sinful founder of his race" is the one to which Mary directs most attention and which requires ours. Although her summaries of the stories are said to be inaccurate,¹¹ the impression they left upon her is the formative substance of her tale, and the accuracy or inaccuracy of the summaries is not important. Frankenstein, the creator of the monster, is the founder of his race. He is sinful because he has given physical life to a being to whom he cannot also give social and spiritual life. In order to prepare the creature for the spontaneous generation of life which Shelley and Byron had discussed on the night of Mary's dream, Frankenstein had given up all other activities and withdrawn into his laboratory. Erasmus Darwin, of whom they spoke, believed in "the spontaneous generation of life when conditions were suitable and nutrients available."¹² Two years were required for Frankenstein to produce these suitable conditions and bring life to his creature. The position toward which this line of inquiry leads is the identification of Frankenstein laboring for two years in his laboratory as Godwin writing Political Justice for two years in his study. The beginning of life in the monster is the publication of Political Justice and its effects on the lives of Godwin and those closest to him. Probably closer to the truth than any other interpretation we might make, the monster is Shelley. The major influence on Shelley's life and thought after 1810 was Godwin

¹¹Shelley, Frankenstein, "Explanatory Notes, p. 7," p. 235.

¹²Desmond King-Hele, ed., The Essential Writings of Erasmus Darwin (London: MacGibbon and Kee, Ltc., 1968), p. 92n.

and his Political Justice. On January 10, 1812 Shelley wrote of Godwin:

It is now . . . two years since first I saw your inestimable book on "Political Justice"; it opened to my mind fresh and more extensive views; it materially influenced my character, and I rose from its persual a wiser and a better man. I was no longer the votary of romance; till then I had existed in an ideal world--now I found that in this universe of ours was enough to excite the interest of the heart, enough to employ the discussions of reason; I beheld, in short, that I had duties to perform.¹³

Two years later (1814) Shelley maintained that in eloping with Mary, he was putting Godwin's ideas concerning love into practice. The elopement brought down upon Godwin, Shelley, and all concerned another storm of abuse. An ugly rumor that Godwin had sold Mary and Claire to Shelley circulated in London. Ladies who recognized Mary even drew their long skirts aside as they passed her on the street. The kiss of death that Godwin gave to Shelley was his philosophy which Shelley attempted to put into practice. In several letters Mary mentioned that Godwin did not love Shelley's memory because he felt Shelley had injured him and Fanny Imlay; and we recall that Frankenstein abhorred his creature, became terrified of it, and fled his responsibilities. The crimes of which the monster was guilty cannot, of course, be duplicated in the lives of the originals, yet a sense of guilt and financial harrassment pursued both Mary and Shelley. Evidence of this sense is contained in another ghost story that stood out in Mary's memory: "the History of the Inconstant Lover, who, when he thought to clasp the bride to whom he had pledged his vows, found

¹³ Complete Works of Percy B. Shelley, VIII, 240.

himself in the arms of the pale ghost of her whom he had deserted" (p. 7). Although Harriet Shelley was alive at this time, the story had made its impact.

"The monster is at once more intellectual and more emotional than his maker, indeed he excels Frankenstein as much (and in the same ways) as Milton's Adam excels Milton's God in Paradise Lost." The creature is, in addition, more imaginative. "The greatest paradox and most astonishing achievement of Mary Shelley's novel is that the monster is more human than his creator."¹⁴ Each of these contrasts could very aptly apply to Godwin and Shelley. Frankenstein's reliance upon science and Godwin's upon reason is the error both make when they assume that knowledge is a higher good than love and that it can be independent of the feeling of brotherhood afforded by a compassionate society. Reason and the scientific approach was the credo of Frankenstein-Godwin, but love was the plea of the monster-Shelley, a contrast which establishes one of the primary differences between the early Godwin and the late Shelley. In Godwin's work it is not until 1830 at the conclusion of Cloudesley that we hear love extolled to the exclusion of everything else as the answer to the world's problems.

Other critics, such as Miss Muriel Spark, might wish to see the monster as Mary suffering in her isolation from polite, conventional society; and this view can also be read into the novel. But Frankenstein

¹⁴Harold Bloom, "Frankenstein, or the New Prometheus," Partisan Review, 32 (1965), 613.

denies the monster his mate, fearing their offspring might terrorize the world. If we assume that Godwin is Frankenstein, his destruction of the mate is his objection to the union of Shelley and Mary and his attempt to prevent it. Few of Godwin's letters to Shelley survive, but enough evidence remains to indicate that his resentment against Shelley was deep and lasting.

Another and certainly feasible view is that the monster is Godwin himself. The account of public reaction against Godwin is tragic. He, like the monster, was filled with a benevolent desire to know and love his fellowman, but society misunderstood and misinterpreted his motives. His too-revealing Memoir of Mary Wollstonecraft began a hostile reaction in 1798 which continued with increasing momentum. In 1800 Godwin declared in his reply to Dr. Parr's Spital sermon:

I have now continued for some years a silent, not an inattentive, spectator of the flood of ribaldry, invective and intolerance which has been poured out against me and my writings. The work which has principally afforded a topic for the exercise of this malignity, has been the Enquiry Concerning Political Justice. . . . its reception with the public was favourable much beyond my conception of its merits; it was the specific and avowed occasion of procuring me the favour and countenance of many persons of the highest note in society and literature

 Yet it is now that these persons come forth to sound the alarm; now they tread upon the neck of the monster whom they regard as expiring; now they hold it necessary to show themselves intemperate¹⁵ and incessant in their hostilities against the spirit of innovation.

To be sure, some of the theories of Political Justice which were questionable then are still questionable today, but the irony of

¹⁵William Godwin, Uncollected Writings (1785-1822), ed. Jack W. Marken and Burton R. Pollin (Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1968), pp. 283, 293-294.

the situation is that the work was created to do good, and in Godwin's lifetime it served to produce the radical thinking and tragically erratic behavior of Shelley, the lack of financial success of the novels and the sorrows of Godwin and Mary, and it may even have contributed to the suicide of Fanny Imlay.

"The myth expresses the Romantic awareness of duality in man as it was to be echoed again in Dorian Gray and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, not to mention the theories of psychoanalysts."¹⁶ Professor Bloom sees Frankenstein and his monster as "the solipsistic and generous halves of the one self."¹⁷ In fitting this concept into my theory I view the scientist as the rationalist thinker and his monster as the natural man who agonizes over his rejection by the world. If this analogy is extended, Frankenstein and his monster might be said to represent two different philosophies--the rationalist and the romantic, both of which are implicit in Godwin's moral philosophy. In the closing paragraph of her preface to Frankenstein, Mary begins "And now, once again I bid my hideous progeny go forth and prosper." She refers, of course, to the 1831 edition of the work in which she presented Political Justice as the hideous progeny of Godwin. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Mary fashioned Frankenstein as Godwin and the monster as a combination of Shelley, Godwin, and herself. "The monster has no name."¹⁸

¹⁶D. J. Palmer and R. E. Dowse, "Frankenstein: A Moral Fable," The Listener, 68 (August, 1962), 284.

¹⁷Bloom, p. 613.

¹⁸Palmer and Dowse, p. 284.

Numerous novels, such as the anonymous travesty St. Godwin, published at the turn of the century were written to condemn or ridicule Godwin. Others represent a conscientious man of good intentions who comes to see the error of his ways. But more often he is a cold-blooded philosopher and a Machiavellian villain: proud of his intellectual powers, contemptuous of his victims, and doing evil systematically.¹⁹ The following excerpt from Charles Lloyd's "Lines Suggested by the Fast" (1799) are re-echoed in the final confessions of Frankenstein to Walton:

a spirit evil and foul,
Who under fair pretense of modern lights,
And vain philosophy, parcels the dole
Of human happiness . . .
With lavish distribution! who, with speech
Drest up in metaphysic eloquence,
And eked out plausibly with abstract phrase,
Would snatch from God himself the agency
Of good and ill!²⁰

Godwin, the "father" of his race, had made monsters of them all.

If this interpretation of the characters of the novel has validity, how remarkable it is that Mary Shelley should have written in the same vein as her father and over such a long period of years. Two possibilities suggest a solution. First, the novel should not be read as a complete denial of her faith in the theories of Godwin and Shelley, as Muriel Spark suggests, but simply as a fictional representation of what took place in the lives of Godwin and those

¹⁹B. Sprague Allen, "The Reaction against William Godwin," Modern Philology, 16 (1918), 64.

²⁰Ford K. Brown, The Life of William Godwin (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1926), p. 160.

close to him as a result of Political Justice. Second, Mary, writing perhaps from the depths of her unconscious, was not fully aware of what she had written, and, as the years passed, Godwin's growing conservatism made it possible for them to work in harmony with each other.

From the foregoing discussion, it becomes apparent that both Godwin and Mary looked for the universal in projecting character types, that they were strongly attracted by Jungian archetypes which, as expressions of the collective unconscious, were better suited to reflect the cultural forces of the age. In this connection it is interesting to point briefly to another example in Godwin's work. Professor Boulton notes that Godwin's second novel, St. Leon, "bears some marks of a symbolic purpose" similar to that of Caleb Williams.²¹ He refers here to the fact that St. Leon is a symbol of aristocratic honor to which he sacrifices, one by one, every human tie that is dear to him. Professor Boulton also implies that Burke may have been the inspiration for the character St. Leon. However, since Godwin stated in his preface to Fleetwood (1805) that he wished to avoid repeating himself, it seems unlikely that he would use the same original in an obvious way. St. Leon possesses many of the same characteristics as King George the Third, a type of character best fitted to carry the themes of honor and wealth which dominate this novel. Many facts in St. Leon's life also match those in the life of George the Third, whose reign (1760-1820) was one of the longest

²¹Boulton, pp. 230-231.

in English history and, in a sense, comparable to the extreme length of St. Leon's life extended by his use of the elixier vitae. St. Leon lost his estates and his fortunes in gambling. This loss, followed by his humiliation and the destitution of himself and his family, brought on an episode of insanity from which he did not recover for many months. Through the political chances the King took, he gambled and lost the American Colonies, and in 1765 the first illness associated with his insanity occurred, followed in 1788-1789 by a more serious attack in which he became mentally deranged. St. Leon was published in 1799 before the King's illnesses of 1801, 1804, and final illness which lasted from 1810-1820. The King's madness, in the light of present day medical knowledge, is now recognized as a type of insanity brought on by a rare physiological disorder not understood in Godwin's day.²² St. Leon was a very active, humane man and an enthusiastic patron of science and the arts--as was George the Third, and both were devoted to agriculture. At the time George the Third lost his reason (1788) and suffered permanent damage from which he never completely recovered, he was fifty years of age--the age at which St. Leon turned himself into a young man. The King continued to reign, however, with the assistance of his son until 1810, when his son became regent. St. Leon, now in his early twenties, met his son Charles in Hungary and was confined in prison at the close of the novel, while Charles was promoted to high military command. Another link is the name "St. Leon." The House of

²²Ida Macalpine and Richard Hunter, George III and the Mad-Business (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969), pp. xi-xv.

Hanover to which George the Third belonged, was descended from the Guelphs, a republican branch of which controlled the medieval city of Florence and took for its symbol the lion. For many years the city maintained a prize collection of a hundred of these beasts. Since the lion and the unicorn are the two principal animal symbols of the Hanover crest, they link St. Leon with the Guelph dynasty which figures so prominently in Mary's Valperga.²³

There is also another tie between the novels of these two authors and George the Third. In The Last Man the father of Adrian, who abdicated in favor of parliamentary control, reveals the Regency Period of England when great constitutional battles led to the ascendancy of parliamentary over monarchical power. Mary does a bit of juggling of historical facts here and has Adrian's insanity brought on by the Turkish girl Evadne's refusal to marry him, when in fact George the Third's first illness in 1765 was attributed by his contemporaries to the fact that he was not permitted to marry an English girl whom he loved, but was advised to wed the Austrian Princess Charlotte Sophia. But in The Last Man (1826) Adrian is the son, not the husband of Queen Charlotte, a fictional expediency necessary to Mary's plot. Her inclusion of Queen Charlotte (died 1818) in the cast of characters was meant to increase the awareness of the readers of the efforts of Metternich and the Emperor Francis the First to crush the spread of revolutionary principles with the help of the

²³ John Brown, Memoirs of George the Third, Late King of Great Britain (Liverpool: The Caxton Press, 1820), pp. 39-64.

Roman Catholic Church, which formed an extensive police system, or Spy International, necessary to maintain the absolutism of the Hapsburg Empire. Part of the intellectual quarantine imposed on the Austrian people was literary censorship which excluded thirty-two English novels published between 1820 and 1847, even though few Austrians could read English. Included in this number were nine of Sir Walter Scott's novels, Ann Radcliffe's Gaston de Blondeville, and Mary Shelley's The Last Man. Any work containing accounts of rebellion against established authority in any of its forms was suspect and banned by Metternich and his censors.²⁴ Even though both Godwin and Mary did use the Royal Family of their day, they wrote nothing to contradict each other or to point to a clear identification of the family. It is not at all unlikely that many of the characters in both these novels and others could be identified.²⁵ Lionel Verney in The Last Man is clearly cast as the son, whom Mary invented, of the distinguished Irish peer and politician Ralph Verney, who was financially ruined and died in poverty without heirs in 1791.²⁶

²⁴ Sibyl White Wyatt, The English Romantic Novel and Austrian Reaction (New York: Exposition Press, 1967), pp. 7-8, 134-138. For a list of the banned novels see pp. 175-176.

²⁵ For a comprehensive survey of the names Godwin uses see: Burton R. Pollin, "The Significance of Names in the Fiction of William Godwin," Revue Des Langues Vivantes, 37 (1971), 388-399. Since I had already noticed and verified my remarks concerning the names in Godwin's novels before Mr. Pollin's article was brought to my attention, I am not indebted to him for these observations. However, I am greatly indebted to him for corroboration of my speculation that many of the characters can be linked with actual persons.

²⁶ M[argaret] M[aria], [Lady] V[erney], "Verney, Ralph," DNB, 20 (1917), 265-266.

The father-and-daughter relationships in the novels of Godwin and Mary are my final evidence that these two exercised a great influence on each other in their portrayal of character. Caleb Williams and Frankenstein do not contain relationships between fathers and daughters, but St. Leon had three daughters, the youngest of whom was Julia, about the same age as Fanny Imlay when the book was written in 1799. Little Julia, the darling of the entire household and especially devoted to her father, was undoubtedly drawn from Godwin's observations of both Mary and Fanny, who were two and six years of age, respectively. Many years later when St. Leon visited his daughters, he found, ironically, that Julia was dead. The first significant father-daughter relationship in Mary's work appears in Valperga between Euthanasia and her father. (See Chapter II, pp. 56-57 for a discussion of Euthanasia's education.) Since the name Euthanasia means a gentle, painless death, there are several references to its use which suggest an interpretation. In 1742 Hume employed it: "Death is unavoidable to the political as well as to the animal body. Absolute monarchy . . . is the easiest death, the true Euthanasia of the British constitution." And in 1797, Sir Francis Burdett was quoted in the Annual Register as saying: ". . . without a reform of Parliament corruption would become the euthanasia of the constitution."²⁷ Euthanasia's death in Valperga is the symbolic death of the people's hope for a constitutional monarchy. The relationship between Euthanasia and her father was surely inspired to a great degree by

²⁷"Euthanasia," NED, III (1897), 325.

Mary's life with her father: they talked together, they read together, they spent whole days in each other's company. But she is perhaps the most ambivalent of all Mary's characters, and the reader wonders if Mary's unconscious was operating again to draw her both away from and toward her father's teachings. Euthanasia revered her father's memory and his quest for perfection, but when she carried out his teachings in her own life, they brought her only misery and death. The autobiographical element is highly enigmatic here, and the motivations of Euthanasia are not convincing. Godwin's Cloudesley does not contain a well-developed father and daughter, but Mary's Perkin Warbeck, published the same year (1830) does. The Spanish moor Hernan de Faro, is the father of the beautiful Monina, but he only appears on the scene in moments of extreme emergency to rescue Monina or one of her friends. After the execution of Perkin Warbeck, Monina embarked with her father on a trip around the world but died before the year was out of a broken heart. There is a certain likeness here to the dual nature expressed by Frankenstein and the monster. Monina--young, immature, and very beautiful--lived only for Perkin Warbeck, whom she idolized. Perkin, recognized by James IV of Scotland as the Duke of York, married James's cousin the Lady Katherine Gordon, a calm, controlled, mature personality and the opposite of Monina. After the death of Perkin, Katherine went sorrowfully back to Scotland and her father, a composed and capable woman. This contrast in personalities implies the change that took place in Mary's character after Shelley's death: the death of the spirit of impulsive, youthful love and the beginning of a more adult period of her life. In Mary's

Lodore there are two father-daughter pairs, one pair involving the major characters and another involving the minor characters. Godwin's last novel Deloraine reveals an aging man coming at last to be dependent on his daughter and her husband. He has followed Mary's Lodore in creating two fathers and two daughters, and there are sketchy indications of autobiographical allegory here, but they are so carefully disguised that the clarification of them would be long and tedious. Mary's last novel, Falkner, completed after her father's death, contains still another father and daughter, with the father aged and dying. Their persistence in including in their cast of characters a father and daughter shows them employing a relationship they understood and on which they themselves relied in actual life. Catherine in Deloraine, the most mature of Godwin's fictional daughters, is largely responsible for her father's peace and happiness in the waning years of his life. It is a genuine tribute which Godwin makes to Mary in his seventy-seventh year.

Godwin's formal style of writing was much admired by many of his contemporaries for its clarity, precision, and power. Formal discourse was, of course, the order of the day. His was a deliberate, unhurried style which Mary also used in her writing. The kind of style that is right for a literary work depends upon the intention of the writer,²⁸ and since we have established that Godwin's aim was didactic and his major characters were foreordained to a predetermined end, his elevated, precise style is appropriate to that end. The

²⁸ Monroe C. Beardsley, Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1958), p. 227.

formal essay and the sermon were never far from his thoughts as he wrote his fiction, although by using the first person he created the impression of greater informality and personal authority than he would have had he written in the third person. His speakers are all long-winded and excessively repetitious. Mary's characters are also long-winded, but she avoided needless repetition better than her father. Sometimes the repetition is used deliberately with good psychological effect in speeches that are confessional and which show the disturbed state of mind of the speakers. Charles Mandeville moans over and over again how different he would have been if he had known love and kindness in childhood. Such speeches reveal his self-pity and his inability to break away from the misanthropic pattern of his life to enjoy the friends he has finally made and the love of his sister and her husband. Frankenstein's interminable lament to Walton is much in the same vein and serves an artistic purpose.

Clear as Godwin's style is, it has little emotional force because he disdains to use, except on rare occasions, words with strong connotative meaning.²⁹ It might also be added that Godwin's excessive concern for thoroughness and precision exhausts the reader's patience and often fails to produce the sympathy or catharsis he hoped to evoke. While Mary's style lacks the vigor and power of Godwin's at his best, it also lacks what Croker calls "the disgusting accuracy" of her father's.³⁰ In her novels written in the third person, there

²⁹Boulton, p. 212.

³⁰Croker, p. 177.

is much dialogue, which is handled especially well in Perkin Warbeck. She employs style to help her create a fifteenth-century atmosphere by using such archaic expressions as y'cleped, assoil, and sooth, and by dialogue filled with metaphor and sentence patterns typical of the writings of Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare. When Lady Brampton sees Sir Robert Clifford enter the room, his face white with terror and surprise, she exclaimed: "Holy Virgin! . . . what had dressed your face, Sir Robert, in this pale livery? what tale of death have you heard?"³¹ Godwin makes frequent references to language not only in his essays but in his novels, a fact which indicates his great interest in language and its use. Since the style, as well as all other elements of the novels of Godwin and Mary, was determined a priori, there is little flexibility in the language of either. Although nearly all characters are presented in much the same manner, there are a few exceptions such as Mary's gipsies and Irishmen in Perkin Warbeck, whose language is different from that of the English courtiers. In Caleb Williams, the language of Falkland is in no way comparable with the "rude" and simple utterances of Tyrell and Grimes. But when Godwin tells us in St. Leon that he will not stoop to reproduce the native speech of the Negro Hector, we wonder if he refrains to ennoble the character or if he simply did not know how such a man would speak. Mary introduces three Negro servants in Lodore but does not develop their characters or have them converse.

³¹[Mary W. Shelley], The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck, 2 (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 49.

The dominant tone of the novels of both Godwin and Mary is didactic. It is heavily and persistently so in Godwin's and therefore an unattractive quality to a twentieth-century reader. Little is left to the imagination of the reader, who is seldom called upon to make inferences of his own. The novels of both, however, are enriched by the frequent use of irony scattered throughout all of them. The irony is sometimes unintentionally prophetic and tragic. The death of Julia in St. Leon anticipates the suicide of Fanny Imlay just as the death of Frankenstein's little brother William anticipates the death of the Shelleys' child William a few years after the publication of Frankenstein. But both authors were accomplished in the deliberate use of irony. Caleb Williams and Frankenstein have their basis in an ironic quest. Caleb was driven to expose Falkland to the world because he thought it just and benevolent. Not until after the exposure did Caleb realize his action was unjust and would haunt him the rest of his life. Frankenstein's obsession to create a new man and a superior race was, he thought, a benevolent act until it was accomplished. St. Leon is perhaps the most ironic of all: he writes of his sufferings--how terrible and how unending they are, never realizing that he brings them all upon himself. And what an iron-twist it is that the secret path into the stronghold Valperga, known only to Euthanasia and Castruccio, is the means by which Castruccio captures and destroys the castle. In The Last Man democratic leadership is indeed damned in the person of Ryland, who flees from London during the plague and dies in the midst of his hoarded food, while the representative of aristocracy dies fighting

for Greek independence and the representative of monarchy remains in London caring for the sick and needy.

Perhaps the primary influence Godwin had on the tone of Mary's novels was to produce their ambivalence. Hers was a romantic temperament and she obviously wished to make a romantic hero out of Perkin Warbeck. But in adhering to her father's ideas she could not make Perkin glorious in battle, a king's son come to claim his throne. His character and identity were ruined as she reluctantly fitted them into the Godwinian pattern. Mary loved her father but she did not wholeheartedly share his ideas.

An ever-present thread of optimism runs through all of Godwin's novels. This thread is also in Mary's works, but it comes and goes, subject always to the fluctuations of her personal feelings. This fluctuation is especially discernible in Falkner, completed after her father's death. The fact that she wrote no novels after this one speaks for itself as a strong indication that her motivation to write prose fiction died with her father.

Mary was not the inveterate scholar and reader that both Godwin and Shelley were. Consequently she did not have the vast storehouse of knowledge and awareness of literary techniques that they both possessed. For this reason she not only relied rather heavily upon Godwin's techniques in the novel but also upon many of the same antecedents that he imitated. Both, for example, depended upon Shakespeare and the contemporary theatre of their day, and there is a strong dramatic quality in their fiction. Since they were both aware of Aristotle's critical principles for the drama--especially

tragedy--and attempted to follow many of these principles, it is a pity they did not heed Aristotle's caution that pity and fear are produced more effectively through action rather than rhetoric. In most of their novels, the catharsis for the reader is blurred by the excessive comments or laments of one of the characters. Perhaps one reason why Frankenstein is superior to Mary's other novels is that she did not fall into the trap of verbosity so completely in Frankenstein as in her later works. Among her most moving and powerful scenes are those depicting the monster in his suffering with little or no comment from him. She produces genuine pathos as she describes the lonely monster watching and learning from the Delaceys, bringing them firewood and doing any little chore he can for them. As he weeps over his dead creator, the only human being he knew and loved, and plunges on to the North Pole, shrieking and howling in his agony, Mary approaches real tragedy. It is to be regretted that she did not break away from the rhetorical examples with which her father's works provided her.

Perhaps the strongest and most revealing evidence we have of the close relationship between the two authors and their novels is in the way their own lives are projected in disguise in the lives of their characters. There is not a single novel of either author that does not reflect, if not embody, some phase of their own lives or of persons whom they knew. It is ironic, however, that critics first saw this characteristic in Mary's novels and have only just begun to see that it originated in the novels of her father.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The foregoing chapters have shown that the writing career of Mary Shelley was developed primarily under the guiding hand of her father. She was an affectionate, intelligent woman, but her intellectual drive and power to create needed the stimulus of a more galvanic force than her own. This force she derived from a number of literary friends, but especially from Shelley and Godwin. With the death of Shelley, she looked chiefly to Godwin for her inspiration--and to the memory of Shelley and her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft.

In her "Criticism on the Novels of Godwin," written for the Standard Novels Edition of Caleb Williams (1831), Mary shows her awareness of the major characteristics of her father's philosophy as developed in his novels:

The principal object of his study and contemplation is man
the enemy of man. Do we not remember to have seen an edition
of "Caleb Williams" with these lines for a motto?

"Amid the woods the tiger knows his kind;
The panther preys not on the panther brood:
Man only is the common foe of man."¹

As we have seen, Godwin's principal object in his novels also became the object of Mary's. The major portion of her short essay deals with the aesthetic aspects of her father's art, all of the comment

¹Godwin, Caleb Williams (1831), pp. xiv-xv.

being favorable. She compliments her father on his ability to stir the emotions of the reader, a quality in the writing that they would both deem essential to accomplish their purpose. She especially calls attention to techniques which she followed in her own works and evidently admired in his:

One of the most remarkable ways in which the faculty of Mr. Godwin is evidenced, is the "magnitude and wealth" of his detail. No single action or event that could possibly, in such circumstances as he imagines, heighten the effect, is omitted. In this he resembles Hogarth; but he is always tragical,--producing his end altogether without ludicrous contrasts, or the intervention of anything bordering on the humorous. Mere mental imbecility is not to be found in the pictures of Mr. Godwin: his characters are people who analyse their own minds, and who never act from want of understanding, right or wrong. Indeed, they are too conscious; like that young rogue, Charles de St. Leon, for instance, who seems to do every thing with a truly French eye to effect.²

The characters in their novels lived in the minds of both and underwent the scrutiny of both father and daughter. We find no humor in the works of either author and only a very little satire in the earlier novels of Godwin.

Mary's second novel, Valperga, reveals an ambivalent attitude toward some of her characters, a strong indication that she did not always follow her own inclinations in her writing. When the time came for Shelley's one surviving son to attend school, his mother was advised to send him to one where he could learn to think for himself.

"To think for himself!" cried the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, the wife of Percy Shelley and the authoress of Frankenstein. "Oh my God, teach him to think like other people!"³

²Ibid., p. xvii.

³Murry, Heroes of Thought, p. 245.

And this is exactly what Mary Shelley did for her son. He became a model young man with such an even, undistinguished temperament that even his mother was at times discouraged by his apathy.

The ambivalence in Mary's novels resulting from her disagreement with her father's ideas began to diminish after her return to England, as the influence they exercised on each other became mutual and was no longer limited to Godwin's influence on Mary. She was instrumental in altering his convictions about both necessity and reason, with which she did not agree. Mary was not a skeptic and even attended church from time to time, and Godwin's references to a Divine Being and Creator of the Universe become more numerous as their association continued through the years. He even went so far in Cloudesley as to be influenced by her use of the third person narrator instead of the first person, which he had always used in previous works. Since he was not as successful as Mary with the third person point of view, he returned to the first person, while she continued to write in the third. All of these circumstances point to the fact that Mary had a mind of her own which she frequently exercised. Since Godwin believed in the right of private judgment, he surely extended this right to his own daughter!

Together Mary and Godwin weathered the lean years of their lives, supporting each other in every way they could as Godwin had suggested to her following Shelley's death:

Do not, I intreat you, be cast down about your worldly circumstances. You certainly contain within yourself the means of your subsistence. Your talents are truly extraordinary. Frankenstein is universally known; and though it can never be a book

for vulgar reading, is everywhere respected. It is the most wonderful work to have been written at twenty years of age that I ever heard of. You are now five & twenty. And most fortunately, you have pursued a course of reading, to cultivate your mind, in a manner the most admirably adapted to make you a great & successful author. If you cannot be independent, who should be? Your talents, as far as I can at present discuss, are turned for the writing of fictitious adventures.

If it shall ever happen to you to be placed in . . . urgent want of a small sum, I intreat you to let me know immediately. We must see what I can do. We must help one another.⁴

This mutual encouragement and aid continued throughout their lives.

Even though they did not agree in all things, they did hold many ideas in common about which Mary wrote with ardor and conviction. These ideas are evident in the themes which run through the novels, some of which have not been mentioned in the foregoing chapters. The privilege and property of aristocracy had a very personal meaning for them since Sir Timothy's longevity and his tight hold on the purse strings of the family fortune deprived Mary and her son of all but the most meager financial support. War, poverty, slavery, and all of man's inhumanities to man were equally deplored by both. Benevolence gained their mutual support, but with Godwin it was attained through reason. With Mary, who despaired of ever thoroughly understanding anyone, the way to benevolence was love. Godwin's first statement indicating that he had been swayed in his belief in reason by his association with Mary was made in Cloudesley when Borromeo confesses

. . . the true system for governing the world . . . is love. . . . I and Lord Danvers have been the delinquents; he for base and selfish ends; I from an erroneous judgment (III, 342-343).

⁴Godwin, Letters, February 8, 1823.

In this speech Borromeo is Godwin and Lord Danvers is Sir Timothy Shelley. Both have wronged young Julian, a composite figure of Shelley and his son Percy. Sir Timothy has deprived Julian of fatherly love, association with his family, and his inheritance. Borromeo has attempted to force the philosophy of reason and discipline upon Julian and has deprived him of his right of private judgment. In his father's absence, Julian ran away and joined a band of rebels in the mountains. When his father returned and went in search of Julian, the father, Cloudesley, was accidentally killed. Julian himself would have been killed had it not been for the intervention of Meadows and Lord Danvers. In this novel and also in Deloraine, Godwin appears to ask forgiveness for the suffering he has brought down on his family. In addition, he assigns a much less important role to reason than he did in his earlier works. With him, as with Shelley, in their last days, the spirit of love was the answer to the world's ills.

The theme of alienation and loneliness that runs through the works of both Mary and Godwin reveals how profound was their suffering over society's rejection of themselves. Although both had always a few loyal friends and a small family circle, they felt a deep sense of isolation from the world. Both too were oppressed by a sense of guilt for the tragedies to which they had unintentionally contributed. They understood each other and supported each other as few fathers and daughters ever have, and each attempted to bring some joy and pleasure out of pain for the other. How gratifying it must have been to both of them when Godwin's answer to Malthus was praised in Parliament and Mary's The Last Man was quoted from the floor in an ardent antislavery speech only a few years before the abolition of slavery in the British Empire.

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