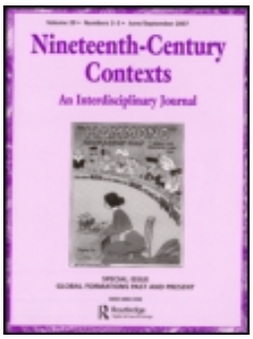

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"Misery Made Me a Fiend": Social Reproduction in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Robert Owen's Early Writings

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PATERNALISM, POLITICAL ECONOMY, AND THE CRISIS OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Since the Publication of Ellen Moers's "The Female Gothic" in 1976, one of the most common themes of *Frankenstein* criticism is the novel's relation to the family and biological reproduction. Critics, however, are divided over whether the novel is a celebration or a critique of the bourgeois family: Kate Ellis stresses the "subversiveness of Shelley's critique of the family" lodged in the creature's "protest" to "expose the 'wrongs' done to women and children… in the name of domestic affections" (126); and U.C. Knoepflmacher sees the novel as an unconscious critique of William Godwin, Shelley's father. On the other hand, Paul Youngquist disputes what he sees as the critical acceptance of the novel as a critique of patriarchy (353); Peter Dale Scott sees the novel as a "eulogy" on "family tranquility" (178); James Rieger argues that it reflects a "nostalgia for…domestic stability" (xiii); and Mary Poovey says that the novel's conservative agenda suggests that "imagination…must be regulated…by…domestic relationships" (123). Anne Mellor argues that Shelley's lack of a stable family in her youth combined with her brief period of happiness with the Potter's led her to idealize "the democratically structured bourgeois family," while expressing her "contradictory consciousness" of the problems for women (and children) produced because of the bourgeois family's reliance on domination and possession (xii).

Many other critics have drawn upon readings, such as Moers's and Gilbert and Gubar's, which see the novel as exploring the horrors of birth. Of these readings, Mary Jacobus has written that "to insist, for instance, that *Frankenstein* reflects Mary Shelley's experience of the trauma of parturition and postpartum depression may tell us about women's lives, but it reduces the text itself to a monstrous symptom…. Feminist readings such as those have no option but to posit the woman author as origin and her life as the primary locus of meaning" (108). What is more, readings

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of the novel as an allegory of birth only touch upon part of *Frankenstein*'s preoccupation with reproduction. For all the critical attention to biological reproduction in the novel, very little has been paid to the question of social reproduction. These readings neglect the family's role in the reproduction of subjects: Frankenstein's desire to "creat[e] a being like myself" is not merely an attempt to reproduce himself, it is also an attempt to create a "new species" who "would bless [him] as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to [him]" (49). Mellor comes closest to discussing the role of the family in the production of the nation-state when she recognizes that Victor is acting as a "legalized petty tyrant" (232). Armstrong and Tennenhouse identify the "desire for self-replication, and the use of sexual reproduction to express this desire and the idea of building a kingdom from inside out or from the bottom up" as central to *Robinson Crusoe* and its mythologizing of the creation of a new nation-state" (178). In this sense, *Frankenstein* can be read as an anti-*Robinson Crusoe*—an account of an attempt to create a new nation-state gone haywire. Although Frankenstein's reproductive project is almost certainly deliberately asexual, his language describing his researches ("pursued nature to her hiding places") and his "fervent longing to penetrate the secrets of nature" suggest that this project carried sexual affect for him (49, 238). Further, it is not merely beings Frankenstein would create, but subjects, as his references to their character and relation to him suggest. The nation-state, Armstrong and Tennenhouse argue, begins with the "self" (179). Central to any debate about social reproduction, then, is the matter of the formation of subjectivity. As Althusser argues, this is the primary challenge facing any "social formation": the necessity of reproducing the conditions and relations of production through the production of willing subjects (127, 170–83).

While social reproduction is a submerged concern in *Frankenstein*, it is the centerpiece of Robert Owen's thought. He also dreams of creating a new race—and in language which recalls Frankenstein's more famous project. In his *A New View of Society,* he argues that his "plan for the reformation of society in general, and the education of youth in particular will ensure that:

> characters, even in youth, may be formed, that in true knowledge, and in every good and valuable quality, will not only surpass the wise and learned of the present and preceding times, but will appear, as they really will be, a race of rational or superior beings. ("Third Essay" 48)

Although there is no evidence that the two actually met, there is little doubt that they knew of each other. Not only was Owen a frequent visitor and devotee of William Godwin, but as her letters attest, Shelley was a close friend of Owen's son, Robert Dale Owen.[1] Their (Shelley's and the elder Owen's) shared admiration for Godwin explains many of the similarities in their writings. Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Owen's writings—his *A New View of Society*, various speeches, plans, and essays—share the fundamental Godwinian conviction that character is a product of environment. They differ radically, however, in their confidence about the prospects for success in manipulating the environment to control the formation of character. My attempt to bring to the foreground Shelley's and Owen's shared Godwinian contention that character is a product of environment and their larger interest in social reproduction is not intended to negate the vast body of *Frankenstein* criticism which focuses on issues of biological reproduction within the family. In fact, this conjunction helps us to see more clearly the novel's complex position on the place of the bourgeois family in British society. More significantly, their differences, especially those concerning the institution of the family and the rigid separation of the public and private spheres can

help historicize the novel's reinforcement of that separation by showing alternative positions available in the culture.

This is to say that reading *Frankenstein* in the light of Owen's writings will help to foreground its intervention in contemporary debates about the status and future of British society; similarly reading Owen's work in *Frankenstein*'s shadow will highlight the ways in which his plans inherit (to use a metaphor Owen invokes repeatedly) from his culture certain patterns of imagining laborers and his relation to them. Juxtaposing them also emphasizes their difference: Owen's optimism about social engineering, Shelley's willingness to embrace the artificial division between the public and private sphere, to name just two important differences. To be more precise, without attempting to impose a one-to-one correspondence between their works, I will argue that both writers respond to a deep cultural anxiety about the stability of England and its ability to reproduce itself through the production of subjects. They both assume that, as an environment for the production of the subject, political economy's distaste for restraint or regulation of any kind on the development of capitalism leads to disastrous consequences. What is more, both writers critique the moral assumptions of political economy—in particular, about the autonomous nature of the individual—as the root of much social evil. However, while Owen is confident of his ability to intervene to check those evils, *Frankenstein* is deeply pessimistic about the possibilities for such success.

While both *Frankenstein* and Owen's writings give evidence of a deep sympathy to the cause of the laboring classes, both register a fear of their violent, even monstrous, tendencies, and a paternalistic attitude toward them. It is in regard to this mater of paternalism, however, that their differences emerge most clearly. For his part, as I will argue, Owen never gets beyond a paternalistic insistence that he knows what is best for laborers in particular and society as a whole; *Frankenstein*, however, is much more likely to critique the dangerous arrogance of paternalism.

Paternalism, at once an attitude and a historical philosophy of government, is, however, a complicated issue. As a philosophy of government, it imagined the gentry as the benevolent "father" of the state. While, as E. P. Thompson has argued, paternalism was no golden age of benevolence toward the poor, it did allow for some reciprocal relations between the poor and the gentry ("Patricians" 22). Its crumbling during the decades surrounding the turn of the nineteenth century fueled a debate about both the future production of subjects and the place of the father. Political economy, which came to replace paternalism as the dominant model of the state, was, as J. G. A. Pocock has argued, "much more than the emerging science of the 'wealth of nations' or the policy of administering the public revenue." It was also a "more complex, more ideological, enterprise aimed at establishing the moral, political and economic conditions of life in advancing commercial societies" (194–95). In its attempt to secure social reproduction, it took up paternalism's concern for the father, but in a much more limited, and literal fashion.[2] It relied, as Thomas Robert Malthus reiterated, solely on biological fathers to control the activities of their children. This was consistent with its insistence on abstracting individuals from determinate social contexts beyond the family. The father, then, plays a crucial role in securing social reproduction.[3] Without the father's ruling presence, the argument goes—in the writings of Malthus, Hanah More and Peter Gaskell—children are likely to disrupt the foundations of society, or to use the creature's words, to "glut the maw of death" (Shelley, *Frankenstein* 94).

Hannah More's contribution to the debate brings together all the elements of this debate that I have outlined above: an anxiety about social reproduction

(the "national character") and the unruly lower orders, a privileging of domestic life, and a critique of the gentry as abandoning fathers.[4] In a bid to legitimate her own claims to cultural authority, her *Moral Sketches of Prevailing Manners and Opinions* criticizes the gentry whose "mania for whatever is foreign" drives them to France, thus abandoning their responsibilities at home (13). More's fear that the "sober scenes of domestic life. . .will appear more and more insipid" in comparison with France attests to her anxiety about the status of the family; it becomes equally clear that she sees this as a problem of social reproduction: those who return "are more than ever assimilated with French manners. It is to be feared that with French habits, French principles may be imported. . .. We are losing our national character." Soon, she argues, "the strong discriminating features of the English heart and mind will be obliterated. . .in the undistinguished mass" (10).

More's anxiety about the influence of the French on Britain's "national character" bears out Gerald Newman's contention that "anti-French rhetoric and propaganda" served largely as "a powerful icon in domestic political, moral and social debate" in the hands of the emerging middle class (386). For More, it masked her particular anxiety about the "dangerous classes." Not only was the "national character" at risk, but the violence and criminality of the lower orders threatened to subvert the natural order. The gentry, like a good father, "the sun of a little system," should "attempt to mitigate the distresses, and to restrain the crimes of the lower orders, by living in the midst of them, each at his natural station, and thus neutralize a spirit of disaffection" (5). More's anxiety about the "national character," then, can be seen as a nodal point connecting several intimately related fears: about the gentry, the father, the family, and violence of the lower orders—to all of which both Owen and Shelley respond in their writings.

Malthus explicitly calls attention to a crisis of social reproduction—for him, a population careening out of control—which he argues is the result of irresponsible fathers supported by the poor laws. Indeed, for him, poverty itself was a problem of irresponsibility, not the inevitable product of a capitalist system, as Owen argued. Malthus argued that when someone finds himself in poverty, he "accuses" his wages, his parish, the avarice of the rich, or even "Providence," but "he never adverts to the quarter from which all his misfortunes originate. . .himself, on whom, in fact, the whole blame lies" (227). Since the problems (excessive population and poverty) are the result of individual "human ignorance and indolence," they can be solved by "human knowledge and virtue": if "each individual strictly fulfilled his duty" they "would be almost totally removed" (101). His solution to the problem is quite simple, aimed directly at fathers: "moral restraint, till we are in a condition to support a family, is the strict line of duty" (225).

Malthus's attempt to define poverty as an exclusively individual phenomenon is part of a cultural movement which sought to extract individuals from collective arrangements to supply the needs of an expanding industrial economy. Andrew Ure's 1835 *Philosophy of Manufactures* represents a later instance of this movement. He argues that the collective activities of laborers threaten industrial capitalism, which he identifies as the "best philanthropic dispensation ever made to man" (278). Ure's rhetoric in the volume devoted to the "Moral Economy of the Factory System" casts collective organizations in a satanic light. The "vast population" condensed in a factory "afford every opportunity of secret cabal and co-operative union among the workpeople; they communicate intelligence and energy to the vulgar mind" (497). They set up "dark tribunals, by the mandates of which they could paralyze every mill owner whose master did not comply with their wishes." This produces an

"extraordinary state of things, when the inventive head and the sustaining heart of trade were held in check by the unruly lower members, a destructive spirit began to display among some parts of the union. Acts of singular atrocity were committed. . . with weapons fit only for demons to wield" against the "most meritorious individuals" (282–83). Peter Gaskell's solution to this "problem" of unruly factory workers once again casts the problem in terms of social reproduction. "Let them cultivate home," he argues in *Artisans and Workers*, "let them become good husbands and good wives and they will in a single generation, produce offspring who will, in their turn, inherit their good qualities; let them discountenance agitation, combination, and political quacks" (qtd. in Bauman 72).

A COLLECTIVE PARRICIDAL MONSTER

It is not far from Ure's account of the "extraordinary state" in which the "unruly lower members" "display" a "destructive spirit" with "weapons fit only for demons" against the "most meritorious individuals" to the creature's acts of violence against his "inventive head" in *Frankenstein*. Indeed, Ure's account could be a description of the novel except for the fact that the novel suggests that the problem for the creature is that he is cut off from any "co-operative union" which might "communicate intelligence and energy" between related minds. My argument about Frankenstein and the creature assumes that their relationship is symbolic of the relations between laborers and the governing classes. I am not, however, claiming that Shelley intended her novel as an allegory of the relations of production. Although there is substantial textual and biographical evidence to support a claim that the novel dramatizes the relations of production, it is not necessary that Shelley saw the novel in this light. Rather, my argument is that Shelley's narrative draws upon cultural patterns of imagining the subject and subjected classes. These ideological patterns determine, and derive from, perceptions of class relationships and identities. Not only does the creature see Frankenstein as his "natural lord and king" (95), but, as Franco Moretti has observed, there are several parallels between the creature and the working class.

> Like the proletariat, the monster is denied a name and an individuality. He is the Frankenstein monster; he belongs wholly to his creator (just as one can speak of a "Ford worker"). Like the proletariat, he is a *collective* and *artificial* creature. He is not found in nature, but built. . .Reunited and brought back to life in the monster are the limbs of those—the poor—whom the breakdown in feudal relations has forced into brigandage, poverty, and death. (85)

Noting the creature's mention of his "invisible hand," in performing labor for the De Laceys (Shelley, *Frankenstein* 108, 110), Daniel Cottom argues that, like Elizabeth and Caroline, they were:

> marked for rescue from poverty. . .. In effect the power that rescues them is the same power that conceals the labor of the monster and then rejects it when it becomes visible. When labor becomes subjectivity—as the monster tries to introduce himself to the De Laceys—it must be rejected and one must flee from it, just as labor must remain essentially foreign to Elizabeth and Mrs. Frankenstein and yet intrinsic to someone like their servant Justine. (66–67)

Elsie B. Michie also reads the novel in the context of a Marxist account of the relations of production, arguing that the novel "reflects or represents the same economic moment Marx describes" (93–95), but she sees the Frankenstein as symbolic of the alienated laborer.

In a more biographical context, the term "monster" also has, for Shelley, associations with the working classes. Emily Sunstein has noted that in Shelley's journal account of her return from Germany, she comments on her "disgusting" plebeian fellow passengers; "Twere easier for god to make entirely new men than attempt to purify such monsters as these" (87). This passage brings together several strands of my argument about the novel. It identifies the laboring classes as "monsters," but in such a way as to problematize any reading which would suggest that the novel is an unambivalently sympathetic account of the conditions of the working classes. What is more, it lends support to my claim that the novel explores the question of social reproduction. Of course, the novel casts doubt on the potential success of any attempt (such as Owen's) to "make entirely new men." This criticism of the monstrous working class identifies Shelley, at least tentatively, with the emerging middle class intelligentsia.

The word "monster" also appeared frequently in reference to philosophers and radicals, in contexts closely associated with Shelley. Newman explains that much of the anti-French propaganda of this period relies on the "gallic stereotype" of destructiveness, which was associated with "Philosophy," of which Godwin was the representative figure in England. The image of the "grinning atheist," "satanic destroyer" (391), or "spectral grin" (397) were also linked with Enlightenment philosophy and especially Ingolstadt—where Frankenstein performed his researches (Shelley, *Frankenstein* 37)—by the Abbé Baruel's *Mémoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobitism*, which, as Lee Sterrenburg and Peter Dale Scott have argued, the Shelleys were reading the summer *Frankenstein* was conceived (Sterrenburg 155–56; Scott 179). Frankenstein's account of the creature's "fiendish laugh"—sounding as if "all surrounded me with mockery and laughter" (200)—and "grin" (53), certainly invoke this constellation of imagery associated with the working class and philosophical radicalism. Sterrenburg records that "in the 1790s, writers like Edmund Burke had warned of a "collective parricidal monster—the revolutionary regime in France," and that Horace Walpole referred to Godwin as "one of the greatest monsters exhibited by history." In his biography of the Godwins and the Shelleys, William St. Clair gives the title "The Jacobin Monster" to the chapter which traces the reaction to Godwin's writings.

For the middle class, the image of the working classes as monsters often stemmed from the indiscriminate collective mixtures of the "mob." The demonization—"monsterization"—of the working class and radical social critics was a means of solidifying the identity of the middle class. As Newman argues, the "advancing forces of British liberalism. . .were united less by religion than by social antagonism against the aristocracy, political fear of the masses, [and] moral pride in themselves" (408). This combination of "political fear" and "moral pride" converges in the image of "the mob." As Mark Harrison notes, in 1832, the Bristol *Jobnott* recorded that "the mob is an animal with many hands, but no brains. It displays collectively the worst of any of those qualities of which few, even of the most depraved individuals are wholly destitute" (191). In the "Second Essay" of *A New View of Society*, Owen uses this fear of a mobilized, collective working class to frighten his readers into accepting his radical plans: without supervision, the workers in the factory village were destitute and dangerous, "vice and immorality prevailed to a monstrous extent" (24).[5] There is a strange echo here of Burke, who saw the intelligentsia, unchecked by "patronage," provoking the people so that "along with its natural protectors, and guardians, learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude" (314). The absence of the father-patron produces a monstrous mob. In many ways, Owen offers himself as

this "patron," indeed, his followers called him the "Social Father" (Claeys, "Introduction" xx).

PATERNALISM, PARRICIDE, AND THE FAILURE OF RECIPROCITY

The anxiety about the safety of the "father," both biological and social, was a charged cultural issue during this period. Thus, in Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley*, when the young Waverley, swept away from his regiment and now "enlisted" in the Highlanders revolt against the crown, sees one of his "compatriots" about to shoot his former commander, he feels "as if he were about to see a parricide committed in his presence" (221). This cultural anxiety about the parricidal tendencies of a disaffected laboring class emerges in *Frankenstein* as well. Indeed, deprived of the (at least marginally) reciprocal position paternalism provided them in British society, the laboring classes were highly disaffected and prone to lash out in bread riots, loom breaking, and Luddite uprisings.[6] The novel repeatedly describes the creature's relationship to Frankenstein as both father-son and ruler-ruled (193–95). The creature's acts of violence, which Frankenstein imagines as a threat of parricide, follow upon the heels of failed attempts to establish reciprocal relations with him. When the creature confronts Frankenstein in the Alps, he reminds him of the reciprocal ties that bind them in a logic which echoes, as I will discuss momentarily, Owen's arguments to manufacturers about the laboring classes:

> Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us. You purpose to kill me. How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind. If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends. (94)

He proceeds to explain that this reciprocal relationship involves the playing of roles, the assignment of which is one of the primary functions of ideology: "I will not be tempted to set myself in opposition to thee. I am thy creature, and I will be even mild and docile to my natural lord and king, if thou wilt also perform thy part, the which thou owest me" (95). The roles of this ideological drama are cast along the lines of class relationships. The creature imagines their reciprocal relation in terms of a paternalist model of the state, in which the two would be unified by his subordination.

For a moment, the creature persuades Frankenstein to act his part. With a shock of recognition, Frankenstein recalls that he felt the part was his own: "I was partly urged by curiosity, and compassion confirmed my resolution. . .. For the first time, also, I felt what the duties of a creator towards his creature were, and that I ought to render him happy before I complained of his wickedness" (97). But even compassion, as Malthus notes, can be a dangerous emotion. While its "apparent end. . .is to draw the human race together, but more particularly that part of it which is of our own nation and kindred, in the bonds of brotherly love," if it is indiscriminately exercised, it will, "in the most marked manner, subtract from the sum of human happiness." It is this indiscriminate bonding together that the moral economy of capitalism guards against. Hence, "a youth of eighteen would be as completely justified in indulging the sexual passion with every object capable of exciting it, as in following indiscriminately every impulse of his benevolence" (281). Fortunately, for Frankenstein, this compassion wears off, and he repudiates his relation to the creature, claiming the priority of class loyalty in language that echoes Malthus's logic:

> During these last days I have been occupied in examining my past conduct; nor do I find it blameable. In a fit of enthusiastic madness I created a rational creature, and was bound towards him, to assure, as far as was in my power, his happiness and well-being. This was my duty; but there was another still paramount to that. My duties towards my fellow-creatures had greater claims to my attention, because they included a greater portion of happiness or misery. (215)

The utilitarian calculus in this decision, perhaps echoing Godwin's infamous declaration that in a burning house, one would be obliged to save the philosopher-philanthropist over a family member because it would involve greater utility for the greatest number (1: 128; 2: 287), provides evidence for those, such as Knoepflmacher, who see the novel as an exploration of Shelley's own family. But it also has relevance to the analysis I am suggesting here. His decision draws upon the method and values of utilitarian political economy: it requires that he abstract himself from social or personal entanglements, restricting his "impulse of benevolence" to the circle of his "own nation and kindred." Part of the novel's critique of political economy emerges in the fact that the calculus brought about not the "greater proportion of happiness" but of "misery."

Although Frankenstein identifies his "madness" as the act of creation, it would also extend to include the madness of his "compassion" associating him—or more precisely, creating a relationship of "fellow-feeling"—with the creature. He proposes to kill the creature to stave off this madness and to secure his unrelated existence. What I have been arguing in an economic context, Bette London has identified in a context of the novel's treatment of gender: she argues that "*Frankenstein*, as a novel, perpetuates" the myth of masculinity as undefined by any relation "by giving images of fathering without mothering: of fathering as undefined by any relation, whether to mother, wife, or children" (256). The fact of association threatens Frankenstein with madness. He justifies abandoning his "duty" towards his creature by claiming the priority of his attachment to his "fellow-creatures." The unacknowledged linguistic rhyme in rejecting his duty towards his creature" for that towards his "fellow creatures" calls attention to the hierarchy of differences here. The difference, that is, between Frankenstein's subordinate—"his creature"—and his "fellows." This is to say that in order to affirm his loyalty to his class, and indeed to affirm their status as a class, and secure, in Malthus's words, his "own nation and kindred," Frankenstein must repudiate his association with his creature. And in doing so, he represents the creature as other, rather than a "being like [him]self." Since he can only see the creature within the dichotomy of same/other, he denies, as Cottom suggests, his "kinship (or twinship) with the monster because to do so would be to lose his identity in the chaos imaged in the monster's appearance" (63). In other words, Frankenstein repudiates the creature to avoid indiscriminate bonding.

MANUFACTURING THE SUBJECT

Much of the rhetorical energy of Owen's proposals is directed at the attempt to imagine the laboring classes as "other" and thereby deny any association with them. He argues, in his "Address to the Inhabitants of New Lanark," that the "bad, the worthless, and the wicked," are problems caused by "those who apply these terms to their fellow men." They are the "cause of more misery in the world than those whom they call the outcasts of society" (114–115). This passage sounds more like Blake's "Prisons are built with stones of Law/Brothels with bricks of religion" (36) than the moral theory of a cotton manufacturer. To counteract this cause of "misery," it is

Owen's purpose to "effect a complete change in all our sentiments and conduct towards those poor miserable creatures whom the errors of past times have denominated the bad, the worthless, and the wicked" (114). It is important to see Owen's role here in a contest for control of the means of social reproduction. Whereas elsewhere he assigns causality to production—factory work makes workers vicious (173)—here it is those who define and articulate the conditions of subjectivity who play the formative role. It is my argument that these two views must be kept in tandem.

Owen argues that the violent behavior of the working class which compels moral reformers to label them as "wicked" is not the result of their moral deficiency, but rather, the product of social relations. In "Observations on the Effects of the Manufacturing System," he argues that "the employer sees the employed as mere instruments of gain, while these acquire a ferocity of character, which if legislative measures shall not be judiciously devised to prevent its increase, and ameliorate the conditions of this class, will sooner or later plunge the country into a formidable and perhaps inextricable state of danger" (232). In other—the creature's—words, Owen is warning that if those who have made laborers monsters do not "do their duty towards" them, they will "glut the maw of death." Rather than seeing violence as an individual failure, or the result of a "poverty of values" evidenced in a refusal of responsibility, Owen argues, in the "Third Essay" of *A New View of Society*, that the reverse is true: "Were all men trained to be rational, the art of war would be rendered useless. While, however, any part of mankind shall be taught that they form their own characters, and shall continue to be trained from infancy to think and act irrationally" (57), war will persist. In Owen's view, it is the very doctrine of personal responsibility, not its abdication, which brings about violence.

When he refers to the creature's moral dispositions, Frankenstein makes the same assumptions as the moral reformers whom Owen criticizes: that individuals—not social circumstances—are wholly responsible for their own character. His repeated imprecations of the creature as "Devil," "Abhorred monster," or "Wretched devil" all suggest that he sees the creature's actions as an expression of his moral state (94), just as Malthus saw the misery of the poor as the result of their inherently evil moral nature. This evil nature dictates "social policy" and determines the creature's disenfranchisement: "Begone, there can be no community between you and me" (95). It is also this same assumption that character exists independently of social environment which determines his ultimate refusal to create a companion.

> Three years before I was engaged in the same manner, and had created a fiend whose unparalleled barbarity had desolated my heart, and filled it with the bitterest remorse. I was now about to form another being of whose dispositions I was alike ignorant; she might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate, and delight, for its own sake, in murder and wretchedness. (163)

When he refers to his having "created a fiend," Frankenstein does not mean to suggest that this fiendishness resulted from his abandoning the creature (although this meaning may operate for a reader) but rather that it was an existential trait.

The difference between Owen's theory of character and those suggested by Frankenstein and political economy are significant. The centerpiece of Owen's thought, as he states it in the "Third Essay" is *that the character of man is, without a single exception, formed for him; that it may be, and is chiefly created by his predecessors; that they give him, or may give him, his ideas and habits, which are the powers that govern and direct his conduct. Man, therefore, never did, nor is it possible, ever can form his own character*" (43; emphasis in original). While Owen offers here a kind of "genetic" analysis of

character formation, elsewhere, in his "Observations" he offers a more socio-economic, if not protomarxian, analysis: the "inhabitants of every country are trained and formed by its leading existing circumstances, and the character of the lower orders in Britain is now formed chiefly by trade, manufactures, and commerce. . .the governing principle" of which is "immediate pecuniary gain, to which, on the great scale, every other is made to give way" (96). This governing principle. . .of immediate pecuniary gain" structures social relations to separate "individuals." For Owen, then, the new mode of production produces a new "character," or subject. Since capitalist individualism is founded on a "principle quite unfavourable to individual or general happiness," it must be checked by "legislative interference and direction" (94).

In the "Fourth Essay" of *A New View*, he explains the consequences for the laboring classes of the capitalist system. Competition for wealth, he asserts, produces "real oppression." "In consequence, [the laboring poor] are at present in a situation more degraded and miserable than they were before the introduction of these manufactories; upon the success of which their bare subsistence now depends" (95). Owen here outlines the double bind in which the "self-interest" of the poor exists: in order to secure their "bare subsistence," they must promote their "real oppression." In "A Further Development of a Plan for the relief of the Manufacturing and Labouring Poor," Owen contends that this factory system pits workers against each other, resulting in violence and animosity among themselves, which is "every where evinced in the state of the workhouses and houses of industry." When the "causes will be removed," the poor will live in greater harmony (143). To counteract the present state of division among the laboring poor, Owen plans to initiate a system of "united labour and expenditure" in his communities (141–42), which would, in turn restructure the subject. Owen aims to socialize the subject, to demonstrate the interpenetration of the social and the subject.

Frankenstein's scientific project to create a "new species" is, as I have suggested, also an attempt to generate a "new character." The novel figures that project as emblematic of both the relations of production and governance. For his dreams of creating life are thoroughly charged with the thoughts of his stature in relation to both his creatures and his fellow citizens. Of his early researches, he tells Walton that:

> My dreams were. . .undisturbed by reality; and entered with the greatest diligence into the search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life. But the latter obtained my most undivided attention: wealth was an inferior object; but what glory would attend the discovery, if I could banish disease from the human frame, and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death! (35)

His project of banishing disease is an obvious echo of Godwin, who, in an infamous passage in *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness,* prophesied that, through the inevitable progress of science, disease, and even death, would be eliminated (2: 527–28)—although Frankenstein sees himself as the agent of what Godwin construes as the result of inevitable progress. But the echoes of Godwin—who imagined a new race from the perpetual improvements of humans (2: 528)—extend even further, when Frankenstein contemplates creating a "new species." As I stated in the opening paragraphs, he imagines his creatures as "subjects," indebted to him for life. He recoils when he recognizes his debt to them. His account of his researches and eventual production of the creature make it clear that it is not merely a being or a "species" he would create, but a subject inserted into a set of familial and political relations.

> Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs.

His notion of a "species" who would "owe their being" to him beyond even the claims of fatherhood, demonstrates how thoroughly political is Frankenstein's vision of social and biological (re)production. The influence of *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* might also be detected here in Frankenstein's desire for gratitude. Godwin astutely recognized "gratitude" as fundamentally a relation of power, in which the debt of gratitude is a bond of subjection (1: 129). It is significant that Frankenstein invokes the same ideal of being a benefactor to "his" species that he invoked to justify abandoning his responsibility to the creature. Without the critical consciousness he brought to the subject of gratitude, Godwin articulated this ideal when he wrote that merely the desire to be a "benefactor of [one's] species" would ensure that the means to do so would materialize (1: 320).

But Frankenstein's efforts to create subjects are not limited to his scientific researches. When he tries to persuade Walton's crew from turning back, he does so by attempting to define masculinity, and thereby shape their character. And his speech here is as much an attempt to reproduce himself as were his researches into the principles of life.

> Are you then so easily turned from your design? Did you not call this a glorious expedition? and wherefore was it glorious? not because the way was smooth and placid as a southern sea, but because it was full of dangers and terror. . .because danger and death surrounded, and these dangers you were to brave and overcome. You were hereafter to be hailed as the benefactors of your species; your name[s] adored, as belonging to brave men who encountered death for honour and the benefit of mankind. . .. Oh! be men, be more than men. (212)

Frankenstein's echo of Godwin's phrase "benefactor of his species" suggests that Shelley uses this passage as a commentary on the implicit hegemonic agenda in grand schemes of benevolence. In spite of his own rhetorical attempt here to hail Walton's sailors as "men. . .more than men," Frankenstein later cautions Walton not to succumb to the creature's "powers of eloquence and persuasion" (218).

Owen's project is also to create, through language and social institutions, social relations and the subjects which support them. Like Frankenstein, Owen denies self-interest in his performance of the role of the father. And like Frankenstein's, Owen's failure—indeed his status as paternalist—comes from his inability to engage in a reciprocal relation with the workers whose lives he wanted, passionately, to improve. The relations his language assumes are always hierarchical and nonreciprocal. In his "Address to the Inhabitants of New Lanark," he informs his audience that:

> It is a delightful thought, an animating reflection, a stimulus to the steady prosecution of my purpose, beyond—nay far beyond—all that riches and honour, and praise can bestow to be conscious of the possibility of being instrumental in introducing a practical system into society, the complete establishment of which shall *give happiness to every human being through all succeeding generations.*(107)

Not only does Owen deny, as Frankenstein and Walton did, any concern for financial reward (indeed, Owen spent his considerable fortune in funding the socialist communities he designed), but, as the good disciple of Godwin that he was, he claims not to be interested in gratitude. In a curious fashion, his denial of gratitude, far from erasing the differences separating him from the "inhabitants" denies the reciprocity of their relationship—they are not, after all, *fellow* inhabitants. It is perhaps not gratitude itself which creates dependency, but rather

the absence of a mutuality of gratitude, when, in Stephanie Coontz's words, "reciprocity *with* others [is]. . .transformed into permanent obligations from others" (47). Owen makes clear this ambivalence about his relationship to his "creatures" when, at the end of the address, he explains, "I wish you to think that I am ardently engaged in endeavouring to benefit you and your children, and through you and them, to render mankind at large great and permanent advantages" (133). Both the complex and distancing syntax here ("ardently engaged in endeavouring to benefit") and the suggestion that he is using them to perform his benevolence reveal this ambivalence.[7] His attempts to deny the relative disparity of their positions in a social hierarchy might also attest to this discomfort: "My desire is only to be considered as one of yourselves—as a cotton spinner going about his daily and necessary avocations" (134).

To call Owen a "paternalist" or "father" in relation to his "creatures" is not merely an attempt to fit him into a reading of *Frankenstein*. Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, Owen's followers called him the "Social Father" (Claeys, "Introduction" xx). Gregory Claeys, whose recent work has begun a much needed attempt to examine the figure he calls "the most neglected of the early British socialist critics of political economy," has attempted to give balance to the popular conception of Owen as paternalist. Although Owen "employed a language of paternal care for the poor which could have been taken from eighteenth-century Toryism," his movement was "far more egalitarian than any other important reform movement of its time" (Claeys, *Machinery* 34; *Citizens* 25). In his introduction to *A New View of Society*, Claeys points out that Owen retained virtually complete control over everyday operations until late 1844. But the Rational Society was also broadly democratic, with delegates elected from the branches meeting in annual congresses to help decide policy" (xx). While Claeys is right to stress the egalitarian nature of Owen's writings, it would be a mistake to dismiss the fundamentally paternalist nature of even his humanitarian concern for the plight of the poor under the sway of capitalism. Owen quickly makes it clear that this theory is in direct opposition to laissez faire political economy. "The character," he explains, of "the poor and working classes of Great Britain and Ireland," who comprise "three-fourths of the population," are "now permitted to be very generally formed without proper guidance or direction, and, in many cases, under circumstances which directly impel them to a course of extreme vice and misery; thus rendering them the worst and most dangerous subjects in the empire." His explicit critique of laissez faire should not distract us from the parallel to Burke's and More's anxiety about unsupervised working classes. The rest of the nation, he continues, "are educated on the most mistaken principles of human nature" which "cannot fail to produce a general conduct. . .totally unworthy of the character of rational beings" (10). For Owen, it is the absence of government intervention which precipitates disaster.

In the "Third Essay" of *A New View*, he identifies this "most mistaken principle" on which, from "the earliest ages it has been the practice of the world to act," as "the supposition that each individual man forms his own character, and that therefore he is accountable for all his sentiments and habits, and consequently merits reward for some and punishment for others." This, he says, "is the true and sole origin of evil" (43). In making this claim, Owen is implicitly criticizing the myth of the self-made man, so central to the ideology of political economy. Rather than an "absolute" self, Owen informs the inhabitants of New Lanark (one of his experimental communities) that human character is a historical product:

> the reason why you believe and act as you do. . .is solely and merely because you were born, and lived in this part of the world—in Europe—in the island of Great Britain—and more especially in the northern part of it. Without the shadow of a doubt, had every one of you been born in other times or in other places, you might have been the reverse of that which the present time and place have made you. ("Address" 132)

Further, human character is also a product of social position:

> had the present judges of these realms been born and educated among the poor and profligate of St Giles's, is it not certain, inasmuch as they possess native energies and abilities, that ere this they would have been at the head of their *then* profession, and in consequence of that superiority and proficiency, would have already suffered imprisonment, transportation, or death? ("A New View" 22)

If these "criminals" were raised in the judge's stations, they might "have passed the same awful sentences on the present highly esteemed dignitaries of the law" (22). Owen's theory of the production of character is far reaching: at various moments in his argument, he asserts that character is a function of inheritance, the system of production, discursive constructs of morality (the will responsibility, self-determination), and historical and cultural formations.

Within a few years, Owen approaches the development of a theory of ideology, if not subjectivity. In his "Sketch of Some of the Existing Evils Arising from the Past and Present State of Society" (1817), Owen argues that all humans are subject to "four dense" and distorting "mental atmospheres" through which they perceive. These "mental atmospheres"—"class," "sect," "party," and "country"—produce "divisions" among men, and make them "strangers" (161). Once again, the subject cannot be extracted from its social formation. The different combinations and strengths of these atmospheres, however, are "sufficient to create through life individuality and distinctness of person and character" (161).

Owen's argument about the absence of radical free will has more explicitly economic implications as well. As Catherine Gallagher suggests, Owen's line of argument here should be seen in the context of political economy's "doctrine of free labor" which contends that, since workers freely contract their labor to factories, there is no need for any legislative interference with such factory conditions as fifteen hour days for children (14). She cites Owen's response:

> If the operatives in our manufactures were really free, and had the option to work nine or fifteen hours a day, it might be less necessary to legislate on this subject. But what is their actual situation in this respect? Are they, in anything but appearance, free labourers?. . .. What alternative have they or what freedom is there in this case, but the liberty of starving? ("On the Employment" 235)

While this absence of freedom causes obvious problems here, elsewhere, he will put this to his own use, and, he would insist, to the advantage of the laborers.

Since, as Owen argues in the "Fourth Essay" of *A New View*, human nature is "without exception universally plastic" (72) and beyond the control of any individual, to assign criminal sentences would be ridiculous. Arguing against the Malthusian notion that it is the individual "himself, on whom, in fact, the whole blame lies" (227), Owen suggests that the blame more properly rests on the "learned," the intellectuals who define the subject for their party or state, and "who have ever looked for the cause of human sentiments and actions in the individual through whom those sentiments and actions became visible. . .. The individual has been praised, blamed, or punished, according to the whims and fancies of this class or men, and, in consequence, the earth has been full charged with their ever-varying absurdities of the measures which these. . .create" ("Address" 120–21). As Armstrong and Tennenhouse argue at length in *The Imaginary Puritan,* the manufacture of a subject for industrial capitalism

requires intellectual labor at the "hands" of such writers as Malthus and More (89–139).

In *Frankenstein*, the creature echoes Owen's claim that, had their social environments been reversed, so would the character and actions of the judge and criminal. In the Alps, he explains, "I was benevolent. . .misery made me a fiend" (95). He concludes his account by echoing this: "I am malicious because I am miserable" (141). The novel furnishes ample evidence of the creature's benevolence to support his claim: while watching the De Laceys from his hovel, with an "invisible hand," as often as it was necessary, [he] cleared their path from the snow, and performed those offices that [he] had seen done by Felix" (110). The creature introduces his narrative in terms which reveal the novel's interest in social reproduction: "I shall shortly relate events that impressed me with feelings which, from what I was, have made me what I am" (111). In the course of his narration, he calls attention to the formative texts he discovered, and explains that the "patriarchal lives of protectors caused these impressions [from the texts] to take a firm hold on my mind; perhaps, if my first introduction had been made by a young soldier, burning for glory and slaughter, I should have been imbued with different sensations," and, he implies, developed a different character. This notion that texts read in youth form character is a recurrent theme in the novel. Since these "feelings" come from books ad from watching others, the creature's "character" is as "collective and artificial" as his body is in Morretti's account. In this sense, he is a literalization of Owen's social self.[8]

In contrast, Frankenstein's reactions to the creature locate the source of his destructiveness in what he sees as the creature's inherent wickedness. A "[w]retched devil" or "fiend" (94) would "delight, for its own sake, in murder and wretchedness" (163) regardless of the "leading existing circumstances" (Owen, "Observations" 96). Frankenstein, like the "learned" whom Owen criticized for looking "for the cause of human sentiments and actions in the individual through whom those sentiments and actions became visible" ("Address" 120–21), rigorously segregates the creature's character from his "environment." In doing so, he acts on assumptions similar to those which directed the actions of the British government under the ideological sway of political economy. F. O. Darvall relates that the regency Period was one "of severe distress," in which the country was undergoing "the most widespread, persistent, dangerous disturbances, short of actual revolution and civil war, that England has known in modern times" (306). The "major cause," he explains, "of popular disorder" in this period "was undoubtedly distress. . .. It was natural that there should be disturbances in 1801, 1811–12, and 1816–17, since these were the years of unusual distress, of high prices, of stagnation of trade, of unemployment and low earnings" (198–99). In spite of this obvious connection, Darvall relates that, during the Luddite disturbances of the second decade, Parliament assiduously separated discussions of public distress from discussions of public disorder (222).

In place of the capitalist theory of the subject which abstracts the "self" from its context—or disorder from distress—Owen agues that the self is a social subject. To take advantage of this fact, he proposes the establishment of a "New Institution," a "playground" (analogous to what we would recognize as a day-care facility) that would counteract the "mistaken principles" by which most were educated. It would teach children that:

> the happiness of man chiefly, if not altogether, depends on his own sentiments and habits, as well as those of the individuals around him. . .. Each child, therefore, on his entrance into the playground, is to be told in language which he can understand, that "he is never to injure his playfellows; but that, on the contrary, he is to contribute all in his power to make them happy." (39)

Although this was written before the novel, it is deeply relevant. One common popular analysis of the novel is that the fault for the creature's actions rests on Frankenstein's abandonment of him, but Owen's proposal here for a collective responsibility for childrearing combined with the creature's attempts to become involved in the De Lacey family suggest that the circle of responsibility should be drawn much wider. Just as no individual can be responsible for his or her own character, no family can be wholly responsible for the formation of the character of their children.

Because of the widely cast circle of responsibility, Owen enthusiastically recommends social institutions as a means of social reproduction. Among other things, the "New Institution" would teach children to acquire useful "habits," which by their repetition, "will fix [this principle] firmly; it will become easy and familiar to them, or, as it is often termed, natural" (39). There are several interesting social features in his plan. Perhaps the most interesting is that, rather than relying on a strictly authoritarian hierarchical system of instruction which clearly distinguishes between teachers and students, Owen's plan calls for students to share the responsibilities for teaching. In doing so, he blurs the distinctions on which hierarchies are built. While Owen may position himself outside the circuit of reciprocal relations, his plans involve them at other levels.

But Owen's theories of the exclusively social nature of the will raises some difficult problems. How does he account for his own exemption from dominant social ideas? How will he find teachers who will not pass on their own "mistaken principles"? It is this curious self-exemption from the errors of his generation which prompted Marx and Engels to write in the third of the "Theses on Feurbach":

> The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are the products of other circumstances and upbringing, forgets that it is men who change circumstances and that the educator must himself be educated. Hence this doctrine is bound to divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society. (7)

In his introduction, C. J. Arthur notes that Engels's edition cites Owen as an example here (22). This superior position to society is precisely what Armstrong and Tennenhouse describe as the position of the "liberal intellectual": "outside the state. . .one foot in the sanctuary of reproduction, the other in an unspecified relation to it" (88). While Owen intends to subvert the divisions Marx and Engels say he perpetuates, they are right. Owen's claims for the benefits of his plans for government—they will "proceed with ease to the people and gratifications to those who govern" (83)—assume such a division. C. J. Arthur argues that Marx's solution to this contradiction was a "revolutionary practice":

> Marx wants to say that *all* men are both products of circumstances and potential changers of circumstances. Instead of trying to comprehend how this might be, the tendency he is criticizing splits the process into two. First someone "superior to society" sets up certain circumstances and education, and then the mass of the people are produced as new men by those circumstances. Marx, however, insisted on a more dialectical relation between circumstances and activity which must be grasped as "revolutionary practice." (22–23)

Owen would not have had to wait for Marx and Engels for this reminder. In his discussion of the inevitability that education would reproduce the doctrine of the state, Godwin reminds those who might deliberately oppose this doctrine, and attempt to use institutions to provide an alternative to the official doctrine: "Who is the preceptor by whom this task is to be effected? Is he born in the ordinary mode of generation, or does he descend among us from the skies?" (1: 49).

But Owen's programs are beset by larger problems than this tendency to exempt himself from his own theory of the social determination of character. His plans always open up the door for the kind of totalizing institutional control which Foucault has so thoroughly analyzed. For not only were students to share the responsibility of teaching, but community members were to take on the role of police (*New View* 28, passim). As Claeys suggests, in the absence of a social hierarchy, mutual policing "represented a milder form of coercion than the existing police, army and other civil authorities provided, certainly as far as working classes were concerned. In addition, it was believed that such control would operate almost subliminally, without the need for either eternal vigilance or any agency of police" (123). And in *A New View*, Owen describes his success: the factory workers "were taught to be rational, and they acted rationally." They "became industrious, temperate, healthy, faithful to their employers, and kind to each other; while the proprietors were deriving services from their attachment, almost without inspection" (31). Owen's success represents the dream of social reproduction: a machine that smoothly produces "faithful" subjects without contradictions. It is also remarkably similar to Frankenstein's dream of his faithful subjects, the species who would "owe their being to" him.

In spite of its concern to produce faithful subjects, it would be wrong to dismiss Owen's plans as totalitarian. For example, Claeys cites a May 1835 edition of Owen's *New Moral World* which proposes a progressive, age-based division of labor, which would "unite" in each individual "the producer, and the possessor of wealth, the communicator and the recipient of knowledge, the governor and the governed, to destroy the invidious distinctions that have split up the one great family of man into sections and classes" ("Introduction" xxviii). This "uniting" functions both to unify (the community) and divide (the "individual"), and provide a means for sympathy to displace self-interest. Owen draws on Hume's contention that sympathy operates according to perceived "parallel[s] among individuals" (318).

In his later (1839) lecture "On the Natural and Rational Classification of Society," Owen argues that this system will ensure that all "the population. . .should freely partake of the benefits to be derived from the concentrated knowledge and acquirements of the world, and that no part should remain in an ignorant or barbarous state" (356). Further the "enjoyment" of these "benefits" would be enhanced by the knowledge that they were not depriving a single human being of similar privileges and advantages," and that many would have shared these pleasures. It is this destabilization of the distinctions between ruler and ruled which distinguishes Owen's plan from totalitarianism. His concern here is not merely to resurrect the whole individual, but rather to create a system which would socialize the interests of individuals—to create a community, that is, in which reciprocal relations would be possible. It is in this respect that Owen's plan seems most to complement *Frankenstein*'s critique of the refusal of reciprocality among relations between ruler and ruled which ends in a kind of nonreciprocal alternating of the positions of ruler and ruled. What is more, any community, if it is not to be mere aggregate of atomized individuals each pursuing self-interest, must devise a means of establishing codes of behavior and relations. Our "natural" resistance to any form of discipline, authority or regulation is, at least in part, an expression of capitalist laissez-faire individualism, which in its own way integrates individuals into a totalizing system as parts in a complex machine.

REGULATION AND THE DOMESTIC SPHERE OF REPRODUCTION

The problem of regulation and individualism in Owen's work here allows us to approach the question of the relative conservatism of *Frankenstein* with respect to its reliance on models of the bourgeois family. Poovey has argued that the novel is "conservative. . .alongside contemporary works that display even some degree of confidence in imaginative power" because " it calls into question not the social conventions that inhibit creativity, but rather the egotism that Mary Shelley associates with the artist's monstrous self-assertion." It views, she continues "the imagination as an appetite that can and must be regulated specifically by the give-and-take of domestic relationships" (122–23). Mellor has rightly qualified Poovey's critique by resituating it onto the specific political structure of the family—as "founded on the legitimate possession and exploitation of property and on an ideology of domination. . .that renders it innately hierarchical" (xii). In spite of this conservative reliance on the bourgeois family and its legitimation of domination and possession, the novel also offers a radical critique that is bound up with this reliance, and that is its critique of masculinist and capitalist self-assertion which brooks no restraint or regulation—domestic or otherwise.

Both Owen and Shelley insist on the necessity of regulation to prevent the creation of monsters. The difference is in the nature of the regulation they imagine. When Alphonse Frankenstein decides to begin a family, he finds that the demands of family life require him to "relinquish many of his public employments" (29). What, in the 1818 edition was a response to the needs he recognized in supporting his family, becomes, in the 1831 edition, a strategy developed before their birth, of retreating from the public sphere, and finally "fix[ing] themselves in their native country. . .in considerable seclusion" (234–36). While Mellor's elaboration of Shelley's nuanced ideal of the bourgeois family requiring that men and women should sacrifice their interests to advance the family and both fill the role of the "proper mother," reminds us that here is a father who actually cares for his children, it also implies that one cannot pursue both public and private good at the same time.

In other words, it is the specific nature of the regulation that Shelley invokes to restrain the imagination—and not regulation in itself—that makes the novel conservative. Even if, as I am suggesting, that Victor Frankenstein's "monstrous self-assertion" is better linked to the monstrous self-assertion of capitalism than that of the artist, by calling exclusively upon the "give-and-take of domestic relationships" to regulate individualist imagination, the novel assumes the separation of public and private spheres which capitalism relies on. The novel's preoccupation with unregulated activities—Walton's, the creature's, and Frankenstein's reading, as well as the latter's researches and experiments—repeatedly emphasizes domestic regulation: it is the father who has failed to regulate the activities of the son. Political Economy assumes the same separation of domestic and private spheres. When Malthus called any form of regulation a "species of tyranny," he was not referring to regulation of individual (domestic) behaviors—he was infamously ready to regulate the reproductive activities of any laborer—he was speaking of economic regulation.

According to Mellor's reading of the novel, Alphonse Frankenstein, unlike his son, is playing the role of "the proper mother" (although she does not discuss him specifically). Although Mellor sees the novel as critiquing the doctrine of separate spheres, she overlooks some crucial details that point to the novel's ambiguities on the matter. For example, she cites Elizabeth's regret, on Victor's second departure,

that "she had not the same opportunities of enlarging her understanding and cultivating her understanding" but does not note here that the 1831 edition replaces this critical regret with a "disquiet at the idea of [Victor's] suffering, away from her, the inroads of misery and grief. It had been her care to provide me a companion in Clerval—and yet a man is blind to a thousand minute circumstances, which call forth a woman's sedulous attention" (253). Mellor also rightly cites the De Lacey family as an alternative model of an egalitarian family, but glosses over the sexual division of labor which has "the young man constantly employed out of doors, and the girl in various labourious occupations within" (103–05).

In this light, Owen's plans for the New Institution take on added significance. Although it is beset with political problems—he assumes that girls should be taught housework while boys be trained in the military arts of community self-defense ("Third Essay" 47, 57)—he challenges the gendered separation of the spheres in other ways. The fundamental aim of the Institution, as with all of Owen's plans, is to inculcate "the inseparable connection which exists between individual and general, between private and public good" (61). What is more, Owen's entire philosophy is based on the premise that the public and the private spheres are inextricable, not incompatible. The New Institution inserts the public into what has been considered the most sacred element of the private sphere: the raising of children. Emphasizing the interpenetration of the public and the private, he argues that the present system of marriage is situated within a system based on the "inequality of condition and education" of men and women, which prevents any degree of what he calls the "double affection" necessary for happy unions (327).

While Foucault has rightly taught us to see even the mild and gentle acts of management of the New Institution as exercises of power, to refuse any regulation as a "species of tyranny" is to align ourselves with the forces of capitalism. Godwin opposed institutions for the very reasons his student, Owen, proposed them—and for the reasons we resist them—because they violate the sanctity of private judgment (201–03, 253). Both Owen's writings and *Frankenstein* encourage us to recognize the dangers of deregulation.

When Frankenstein seeks to define the cause of his destruction—his father's failure to regulate his reading—his vision is limited by assumption about the separation of the spheres. He cites his father's "Ah, Cornelius Agrippa! My dear Victor, do not waste your time upon this, it is sad trash" as evidence of "the many opportunities instructors possess of directing the attention of their pupils to useful knowledge, which they utterly neglect." A neglectful father leads to the monstrous behavior of his son. He goes on to identify this moment as the turning point in his life:

> If, instead of this remark, my father had taken the pains to explain to me, that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded, and that a modern system of science had been introduced which possessed much greater powers than the ancient, because the powers of the latter were chimerical, while those of the former were real and practical; I should probably have applied myself to the more rational theory of chemistry which has resulted from modern discoveries. It is even possible, that the train of my ideas would never have received the fatal impulse that led to my ruin. (32–33)

In the 1831 edition, after describing his readings in "Cornelius Agrippa, Albertus Magnus, and Paraclesus," Frankenstein concludes that "Thus strangely are our souls constructed, and by such slight ligaments are we bound to prosperity or ruin" (239). Like the gears in a complex organic machine, once the initial movement is triggered, the rest follows in its "train." Rather than the largely individualistic and asocial notions of a "fatal impulse" and an absent father, both

the novel and the writings of Owen suggest that Frankenstein should have cast his eyes much more widely, to the "leading existing circumstances," to the system which separated him from his fellow-beings—both creatures and products, laborers and manufacturers, and the domestic and public spheres—to discover "the train…that led to [his] ruin."

NOTES

1. Although Shelley's surviving letters to and about Owen's son, Robert Dale Owen, Jr., are from a later period, they suggest a previous relationship (2: 3–5, 2: 16–19).

2. In a much longer version of this essay, I suggest that this fundamental shift from paternalism to political economy determined the middle class anxiety about the "national character" and the dangers of the "unruly" lower classes. For the lower classes, it produced much more immediate anxieties about surviving soaring food costs and displacement by mechanical production. This anxiety led to an increase in the number of bread riots, Luddite loombreaking, and more peaceful mass demonstrations (which the middle class saw as evidence of their monstrous, demonic moral depravity). For an extended discussion of this radical change in British society, see the works cited by Thompson (especially "Patricians and Plebs," "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd," "The Moral Economy Reviewed," and *The Making of the English Working Class*); Pocock; Bohstedt; Baugh; and Himmelfarb.

3. This is equally true of the debates about social reproduction in the late twentieth century. Dan Quayle's infamous "family values" speech blasted the sitcom *Murphy Brown* for mocking the importance of fathers. But Quayle's primary thrust in the speech was to blame the 1992 Los Angeles riots on the collapse of the black family—in particular the absence of the father in the inner city.

4. See Tobin's excellent discussion of More (74–128).

5. Bauman would argue that Owen has the causal relationship backwards: since the "lower orders" were inclined to rebel and riot…the severe conditions" of the factory were considered to be "exactly what was needed for their own interests and for the safety of the society at large" (54–55).

6. See Bohstedt; and Thompson ("The Moral Economy" and *Making* [472–575]) for discussions of working class violence and action in the face of the failure of reciprocity between laborers and the gentry.

7. Lakoff and Johnson, under the heading of "Closeness is Strength of Effect," argue that a syntactically attenuated sentence suggests an attenuation of meaning (127–32).

8. There is perhaps also an echo of Hume here, who argues that the "mind is a heap or collection of different perceptions" (207). Hume further argues that sympathy socializes the self by introducing others' perceptions into the mind (316–22).

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