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MONSTROUS MISEDUCATION: *FRANKENSTEIN* AS EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT ON THE MODERN PROBLEM OF TERROR

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MONSTROUS MISEDUCATION: *FRANKENSTEIN* AS EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT ON THE MODERN PROBLEM OF TERROR

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the children among whom I have had the privilege of learning, including my two children, Keely Pate Holzer and Liam Reed Holzer. My fondest hopes lie in their future and the possibility that this scholarship might contribute in some small way toward the "cultural wealth" they will inherit.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv

ABSTRACT vi

INTRODUCTION 1

The Educational Landscape of Terror

CHAPTER I 37

A Biographical Sketch of Mary Shelley's Educational Metamorphoses

CHAPTER II 76

Mary Shelley's Lived Experience as Monstrous Miseducation

CHAPTER III 118

Exposition of *Frankenstein* as Educational Thought

CHAPTER IV 162

Influence of *Frankenstein* as Educational Thought

CHAPTER V 190

Contemporary Relevance of *Frankenstein* as Educational Thought

CONCLUSION 235

BIBLIOGRAPHY 238

ABSTRACT

Seeking to understand terror as an under-theorized educational problem with critical implications for contemporary schools and societies, this dissertation is an inquiry into the life, work, and influence of Mary Shelley (1797-1851) (Seymour 2000, Marshall 2000, Sunstein 1989, Mellor 1988). It takes up Susan Laird's proposition that as a "philosophical fiction of education," *Frankenstein* "merits serious study" (Laird 2008, 158). The educational thought of her anarchist father William Godwin (1756-1836) (McLaughlin 2007, St. Clair 1989) and feminist mother Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) (Laird 2008, Martin 1985) are formative for her as is her husband Percy Bysshe Shelley's (1792-1822) literary milieu, English Romanticism.

As its grounding premise, this study theorizes literature as a genre of educational thought in the vein of the cave myth and the Pygmalion myth (Martin 2011, 2006). It formulates *monstrous miseducation*, a species of "cultural miseducation" (Martin 2000) and its *terror curriculum* (the *bildung* and genius ideals) from Mary Shelley's lived experience and her Frankenstein myth. It identifies the core features of monstrous miseducation as: Miltonic identity politics, Godwinian perfectibility, and abandonment to "multiple educational agency" (Martin 2002). This dissertation claims that the core features of monstrous miseducation are matched by critical absences of maternal teaching and teachings (Laird 2013, 1994, 1988) and cyborg affinity politics (Haraway 1991). Through the case studies of Columbine (Cullen 2009) and the Freedom Writers (Freedom Writers and Gruwell 1999) the study tests monstrous miseducation's pragmatic utility toward understanding contemporary terror and terrorism.

INTRODUCTION

The Educational Landscape of Terror

Amid suicide bombings, rampage shootings, and ecological disasters, few would dispute the characterization of this historical moment as a "time of terror." But a convincing characterization of terror as an educational problem requires a great deal of theoretical work that has not yet been done. This theoretical work is worthwhile; indeed it is imperative, because when terror is theorized as an educational problem, one of human design, educational solutions become possible.

Terror as an Educational Problem

I define "terror" in the ordinary language sense as violence and/or intimidation in word and/or deed that involves a special way of *being* afraid and of *causing* fear, rational and irrational. It would seem that the special way of *being* afraid that might be called terror is "special" and distinct from some other kind of fear because it involves feeling afraid nearly constantly and at the same time feeling that there is little or nothing we can do to avoid calamity. Also, it seems we feel this special kind of generalized fear and dread in spite and because of empirically guaranteed threats like climate change and irrationally imagined threats like witchcraft in Salem, 1692. As an emotional response, terror surely involves a calculus of intentional and unintentional causes and consequences linked to the aesthetic branch of philosophical and educational thought.

The violence and intimidation of terror also seems to be a special way of *causing* fear in order to bring about a certain outcome, often, but not always, political. Violence and intimidation that fall under the rubric of terror are special and distinct from other kinds of violence and intimidation because they are purposeful. Arguably,

the purposeful quality of terror suggests that this special way of causing fear aims to "educate" in the sense of raising awareness and compelling change. For example, the violence and intimidation around which a dispossessed people united in the 1789 French Revolution against an unjust monarchical system intended to teach both monarch and subject a bloody lesson toward the end of justice. To say that terror "teaches" implies an intentionality that neither teaching nor learning possess, but it would seem that a modern change in hearts and minds was brought about by "the Terror" that "devoured its own children."[1] The generational transmission of the terror's violence and intimidation terror instituted a qualitative change of an educational variety. Terror, then, has had enduring "learning outcomes."

Nonetheless, acts and actors of terror also terrorize by presenting and representing themselves as unknown and unknowable threats. In these cases, the means and ends of terror often obscure rather than elucidate problems or solutions. Hence, their educational value – for better and for worse – is questionable. Violence like the 2012 mass shooting of movie-goers at a theater in Aurora, Colorado, or that perpetrated on the school children and personnel at Sandy Hook Elementary School in New Town, Connecticut defies comprehension. Other than possibly learning to feel the special kind of free-floating fear that might be called terror, what educational wisdom can we glean from acts of terror without a clear agenda?

Most often, though, the targets of terror – violent words and/or deeds – are not "indiscriminate" (although there may be many unintended victims) nor are the acts of violence "senseless" (although an "objective" bystander might label them as such). It

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[1] Deborah Kennedy, *Helen Maria Williams and the Revolution* (Cranbury, NJ: Rosemont Publishing, 2002), 113.

would seem that in many cases, the actors somehow mean terror that deploys violence and intimidation as a method of transmission, to activate change by example. For instance, displaying an "enemy's" decapitated head on a stake at the gates of a walled city might encourage would-be invaders to keep out or suffer the same fate. In addition to changing the hearts and minds of threatening outsiders by example, such a terrific display might also help the neutral stranger at the gates to understand the kind of culture that lies within and a host of other learning outcomes. The neutral stranger might return to her own people having added terror and its attendant violence and intimidation to her repertoire of horrendously effective practice. Thus, the violence and intimidation of terror, in some sense, is meant to show, to demonstrate. Suggesting its link to monstrousness, among other things, terror's intention is to warn. The etymological history of monster and monstrous suggests an important relationship. According to Mary Gregory, "*Monstre* is derived from the mid-twelfth century French, *mostre*, meaning prodigy, marvel, which, in turn, comes from the classical Latin monstrum, meaning potent, prodigy, monstrous creature, wicked person, monstrous act, atrocity, from the base *monere*, to warn."[2] The internal logic of terror, it would seem, is itself a rather terrifying cultural construct. And if terror is indeed a cultural construct rather than a biological one, what would be the implications for educational thought?

Terror as Hidden Curriculum

First, we would have to think of education itself as a cultural construct. Apparently, this does not go without saying because Jane Roland Martin has made such arguments her life's work. In *Education Reconfigured: Culture, Encounter, and*

[2] Mary Gregory, *Diderot and the Metamorphosis of Species* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 136.

Change, Martin's theory of education as "a series of encounters in which cultural stock is yoked to individual capacities" claims, when seen through a cultural lens, "education is a maker and shaper of both individuals and cultures."[3] Cultural stock consists of both "assets *and* liabilities," according to Martin.[4] Through case studies that demonstrate "the items of cultural stock that become yoked to an individual's capacities represent the content of that individual's learning" in the same way that "the stock that an educational agent yokes to individual capacities represents the content of the cultural transmission," Martin is able to support the propositions that "culture – or, more precisely, cultural stock – *is* curriculum," and lived encounters with cultural landscapes *are* learning.[5] Multiple educational agency extends far beyond schools, churches, and homes to include media outlets, military installations, political platforms, and the like, Martin argues. Without recognizing the intentional and unintentional curriculum enmeshed in these entities, we cannot begin to take stock of or theorize the educative and, more important for this project, the miseducative consequences of encounters with them. If, with Martin, we concede: "that education takes place not just in schools but in every nook and cranny of society, that it brings about change in both individuals and cultures, and that the change education brings about can be for the better and the worse," it follows that "education makes and shapes individuals and their cultures."[6]

If cultural stock is indeed curriculum – proper and hidden – the theoretical and practical implications for thinking about terror as an educational problem are staggering. Martin's "cultural miseducation" signifies the generational causes and

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[3] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 76.
[4] Jane Roland Martin, *Cultural Miseducation* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 17.
[5] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 95-114.
[6] Ibid, 94.

consequences of the transmission of "devastating" values and practices (cultural liabilities) and/or the disappearance of values and practices (cultural wealth) such that "societies – and also the groups and institutions within them…become sadly miseducative."[7] The *Stanford Philosophical Dictionary* traces the origin of the term "miseducation" to James Mill's (1773-1836) superimposition of his educational philosophy over the phenomena of criminality, incarceration, and prisoner reform saying, "just as one's character can be well moulded by a good education, so too may one's character be badly moulded through miseducation."[8] Convinced that behaviors and mindsets classed as criminal were the direct result of "bad education," he theorized that "reform" through punishment mimics the same miseducation that malformed the criminal character in the first place.[9] What is the practical and theoretical importance, then, of thinking about terror as an educational problem, a cultural liability or a hidden curriculum transmitted by multiple educational agency and perpetuated by cultural miseducation? What constitutes the educational and aesthetic values and practices of terror? How and in what ways do encounters with terror make and unmake, shape and misshape individuals and cultures? How and in what ways do encounters with terror form, reform, and deform individuals and cultures? What are the potentially educative and miseducative causes and consequences of encounters with terror? Is there a peculiar species of cultural miseducation that is characterized by terror?

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[7] Jane Roland Martin, *Cultural Miseducation* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 89.
[8] Terence Ball, "James Mill," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/james-mill/>.
[9] Ibid.

Terror as a Hidden Curriculum of Modernity

Roughly taking the French Revolution of 1789 as my point of departure because I could trace the conceptual language of terror in its political guise to that historical event, I have begun to suspect that the cultural liability of terror was itself a least one hidden curricular tenet of modernity, albeit with much older roots in Western thought. If that is the case, then we might name it the "terror curriculum." Terror curriculum, it would seem, is implicated in a modern project comprised of educational and aesthetic values and practices whose curriculum proper includes universal progress, rationality, and emancipation. Few would deny, though, that the same modern project that gave rise to the cultural wealth of early modern democracy and mass literacy also saw troubling cultural liabilities that surely included terror on an unprecedented scale and of an unprecedented kind. If the cultural liability of terror is cast as a modern hidden curriculum, surely it has causes that might be traced to antiquity and consequences that persist to this "post-modern" moment.

But characterizing the late-twentieth/early-twenty-first century a "post-modern moment" implies that the terror curriculum of an earlier revolutionary moment has been transcended or rehabilitated by a "sadder, wiser" sort of skepticism toward modernity's curriculum proper: universal progress, rationality, and emancipation. The day-to-day realities of this time of terror, however, suggest that the modifier "post" was born of the same hubristic modern project it seeks to dismantle. This curious condition points to the kind of looping complexity imbedded in Martin's concept of cultural stock as curriculum and cultural miseducation as a cause of, a vehicle for, and a consequence of cultural liabilities – especially if cultural liabilities are mostly hidden curricula. It also

calls into question modernity and post-modernity's self-conscious treatises on education. My inquiry into the hidden curriculum of terror, then, calls for scrutiny of what is missing from canonical texts of educational thought as well as of educational thought outside of the canon.

Therefore, my inquiry into the terror curriculum and its miseducative causes and consequences takes imaginative literature seriously as a source of educational thought. In the same way Plato reformulates Socrates' cave myth and Martin reformulates Ovid's Pygmalion myth to develop a conceptual language and framework for thinking and talking about education and miseducation, I reformulate the Frankenstein myth to think about terror curriculum as a distinctly modern, gendered educational problem.

Frankenstein *as Educational Thought*

Although literary critic Fred Botting famously said Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley's *Frankenstein: or the Modern Prometheus* "is a product of criticism, not a work of literature," many philosophers of education might dispute its legitimacy as source material for educational thought despite the fact that many disciplines have thought problems through the Frankenstein myth.[10] Indeed *Frankenstein* has been summoned in the discourse of scientific progress (genetically modified foods and industrial agriculture; stem cell and cloning research; and biological, nuclear, and chemical warfare), and literary criticism and cultural theory (feminist and queer theory; post-colonial criticism; psychoanalytical approaches; and disabilities studies). And just as the meme of the Frankenstein myth has saturated popular culture; it has educated the popular scientific imagination – for better and for worse. "Frankensteinian" has

[10] Fred Botting, ed., *Frankenstein/Mary Shelley* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995), I.

become idiomatic, at least in the Western world, of hubristic kind of techno-scientific projects that unleash unintended negative consequences on a naïve human species, a species preoccupied with the business of "progress." Yet, despite the grand epistemological questions raised by the myth and meme, *Frankenstein* has not featured in the canon of educational studies.

Clearly *Frankenstein* (and arguably its author) is haunted by the canon of educational thought (Plato, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Mary Wollstonecraft, etc.) and other texts that might well be identified as educational thought. This is so if the definition of what counts as educational thought were broadened to include literary studies as a foundational discipline of educational studies and if what counts as education were broadened to account for intended and unintended cultural encounters and exchanges, as Martin would have it. Canonization is a controversial process, but it exists as a curricular reality to be confronted and addressed. Although I protest the exclusion of *Frankenstein* from the canon of educational thought, I am neither advocating for blithely opening the existing canon nor endorsing the notion of eliminating the canon altogether. *Continuum Library of Educational Thought* represents the most recent, international, and exhaustive formulation of a canon for the history of educational thought. That canon includes only two women – one of whom is Mary Wollstonecraft, the mother of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley, the author or *Frankenstein*. Indeed, the Wollstonecraft volume proposed *Frankenstein* as a source of educational thought worthy of further study.[11]

[11] Susan Laird, *Mary Wollstonecraft* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), 155.

Hence, an important part of the work of this dissertation will be to show how literature has and does serve as a founding discipline of educational thought by drawing conceptual language from Mary Shelley's educational biography, lived experience, and her thought experiment, *Frankenstein*, to show miseducation as a maker and shaper of individuals and of cultures. Through a distinctly educational inquiry into the life, work, and influence of Mary Shelley focusing in the main on a critical and imaginative study of *Frankenstein* as educational thought, I take terror seriously as an under-theorized educational problem with critical implications for contemporary schools and societies. How might *Frankenstein* serve as a vehicle for theorizing the terror curriculum as a modern, gendered educational problem? Could the Frankenstein myth, like Plato's cave myth and Ovid's Pygmalion myth, stand as a founding educational myth of a species of cultural miseducation we might name "monstrous miseducation"?

Monstrous Miseducation as a Closed Circuit

Monstrous miseducation denotes the gendered aesthetic and practical causes and consequences of unmediated encounters with the terror curriculum. I deploy the concept to signify a cultural landscape that normalizes, naturalizes, and "super-naturalizes" terror, thereby tacitly condoning the terror curriculum. Monstrous miseducation transmits the terror curriculum vis-à-vis language and frameworks that, I suspect, operate under the level of consciousness. Despite our avowed desire to eliminate terror when its hidden curriculum surfaces, the monstrous miseducation that informs and is informed by the way we learn to be afraid and to cause fear compromises our efforts. Sometimes we do nothing to counter the terror curriculum because, like the terrorist, we are monstrously miseducated by an ideology that trades in nihilistic and

apocalyptic motifs. The terror curriculum seduces us by promising the thrill of sublime fear even at the cost of crippling despair. Finally, monstrous miseducation achieves a balance of terror between mutually insecure, impotent, resentful parties engaged in an endlessly looping terror campaign characterized by violent words and/or deeds aimed at symbolic targets.

Monstrously miseducated people respond to the consequences of monstrous miseducation, terror, by preparing for an untimely end and/or sentimentalizing the victims' plight rather than, in Slavoj Zizek's words, "…by means of patient, critical analysis" we might "'learn, learn, and learn' what causes this violence."[12] But until terror is seen as a gendered educational problem with educational solutions, monstrously miseducative causes and consequences may well be inevitable.

Monstrous miseducation is a closed circuit that is dangerously self-sustaining. Consider the recent attack on Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida. Much of the media coverage has demanded that we need a "counter-narrative" to prevent such carnage and to "fight terrorism," but without the language of monstrous miseducation, a monstrously miseducated public cannot write such a narrative. Without a definition of terror as an educational problem, we become mired in false distinctions between a "hate crime" (which Orlando surely was) and "terrorism." When seen as an educational problem, terrorism *is* a hate crime because hate crimes are meant to change the hearts and minds of an individual or a given group by an individual or a given group whose logic may only be apparent to that terrorist actor or group. We cannot begin to write a

[12] Slavoj Zizek, *Violence* (New York: Picador, 2008), 7-8.

counter-narrative if the closed circuit of monstrous miseducation leads us (terrorists included) to ask the wrong questions.

Unlike the tenets of what might be readily identified as a curriculum proper, it would seem that the tenets of terror's hidden curriculum cannot be construed as morally neutral because the causes and consequences of monstrous miseducation's closed circuit are inclusive – victims, perpetrators, and bystanders are alike "innocent" and "guilty." The terror curriculum is miseducative on many counts, but its monstrous causes and consequences are by definition miseducative because they transmit the message – intentionally and unintentionally – that there is nothing we can do to avoid disaster.

Martin says that cultural miseducation emerges out of a cultural stock portfolio that passes on cultural liabilities like racism, sexism, homophobia, and the like collectively and individually via hidden curricula transmitted by multiple educational agency that does not know or does not acknowledge its own miseducative power.[13] In light of recent events, then, it seems especially important, that we test monstrous miseducation, a species of cultural miseducation, to see if it rightly names the educational character of the modern, gendered cultural liability of terror.

Without names for the educational characteristics of terror, multiple educational agency will continue to naturalize violence as a biological imperative or "super-naturalize" it as an unknowable force. Thereby, monstrous miseducation sanctions violence as an inevitable "fact of modern life" or sensationalizes violence as an incomprehensible phenomena and feeling. In the same way that violence is under-

[13] Jane Roland Martin, *Cultural Miseducation* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 42.

theorized "in the text of education," the terror curriculum and monstrous miseducation have thus far escaped the critical eye of educational studies.[14]

Terror Curriculum as Deep Structure of Educational Thought

I suspect that the hidden curriculum of terror driving and driven by the closed circuit of monstrous miseducation is buried within the ideological subsoil Martin uncovers in her "cultural anthropology" of the "deep structure of educational thought."[15] This deep structure, according to Martin, frames Western claims and conclusions about "what education is and is not, what it can and cannot do, and the way it can and cannot proceed."[16] I take Martin's critique of the deep structure of education as a jumping off place for thinking about the terror curriculum as a modern, gendered educational problem and monstrous miseducation as its cause and consequence:

> In building intentionality into the very nature of education, this element of education's deep structure casts the hidden curriculum of school and society outside the educational realm. In requiring voluntariness on the part of learners, it rules out the first great metamorphosis, for newborns are not in a position to choose to be inducted into human culture. In confining education to the achievement of knowledge and understanding, it excludes the acquisition of feelings and emotions, passions and actions. In limiting the intended outcomes of education to ones that are worthwhile, it places vices and other undesirable qualities beyond the pale. And, of course, in viewing education solely from the standpoint of the individual, it loses sight of education writ large.[17]

Fictive media like Plato's retelling of Socratic dialogues, Ovid's literary retelling of transformational myths, Rousseau's "philosophical-educational novel, *Emile*,"[18] Gilman's thought experiment, *Herland* provide a firm theoretical plane of the platform on which educational thought is built, despite educational studies rare

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[14] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 39.
[15] Ibid, 26.
[16] Ibid, 26.
[17] Ibid, 44-5.
[18] Susan Laird, *Mary Wollstonecraft* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), 18.

acknowledgement of its debt to literary sources of educational thought. Martin points out the fallacies on which Plato's "production model" of education and Ovid's creation model of education rest.[19] Martin asserts, "Plato bequeathed to us a model of education that envisions human beings as the raw materials of production" whose innate aptitudes could be exploited by the right kind of education aimed at producing the right kind of "finished product."[20] The problem, according to Martin, is that Plato's model relies on a faulty Identity Postulate that fails to account for "individual differences" in learning and performing "societal task[s] and role[s]."[21] Ovid's model, Martin explains, is a "myth of creation" in which education itself stands as a Pygmalion figure, the "creator of something new" working with deliberation and purpose toward a preordained goal.[22] This model assumes that the "creative and transformational" project of education is an entirely "intentional activity or enterprise" and fails to account for unintentional learning and/or hidden curricula.[23]

While these functional and mythical "historical models" of education focus on making and shaping individuals, they also have aesthetic and practical implications for the making and shaping of the larger cultural surround.[24] The rubric of this deep structure of educational thought features profound dichotomies, assumptions, valuations, definitions, and equations that Martin considers to be false.[25] Excluded from the rubric of this deep structure is "education 'writ large' which accounts for "individual learning" *and* "cultural transmission," education for membership in "a home

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[19] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 78.
[20] Ibid, 76-7.
[21] Ibid, 77.
[22] Ibid, 78.
[23] Ibid, 78-9.
[24] Ibid, 76-9.
[25] Ibid, 28-37.

and family," and violence as "an educational issue."[26] Educational thought from the Frankenstein myth fills in these gaps in the deep structure of educational thought.

In Martin's economy, these models, alongside the organic "growth conception of education" attributed to Rousseau, the utopian separatist "Herland dream" she attributes to Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and a host of other narratives of development, make up case studies Martin uses to show the educational reciprocity between the individual and her culture.[27] Surely, then, this very educational and philosophical imaginary has also had a sculptor's hand in un-making and misshaping individuals who have in turn learned to map the contours of and locate themselves within Frankensteinian monstrous miseducation. Although Martin looks to literary sources of educational thought and uses the aesthetic language of "making and shaping," she does not flesh out the gendered, aesthetic implications of encounters with terror curriculum.

Monstrous Miseducation and Deep Gender

The closed circuit of monstrous miseducation is "deeply gendered."[28] Deep gender, in the sense Carolyn Korsmeyer theorizes, is "deep" because it hides beneath and props up an apparently neutral, asexual discourse.[29] She argues that deep gender operates in an aesthetic, "conceptual mode" that influences the way we frame ideas and the meanings we attach to those ideas rather than what I might call "shallow sexism" – one sex's overt denial of material, intellectual, and emotional resources to the other. Subsumed in taken-for-granted aesthetic forms, concepts, and hierarchies, deep gender subtly informs the foundations of "entire conceptual framework[s]" why only certain

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[26] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 38-9.
[27] Ibid, 79-85.
[28] Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 3.
[29] Ibid, 3.

discursive species "count as a 'philosophical subject'."[30] For that reason, deep gender persists in cultures that would condemn crass sexism.

Though she does not name it, Korsmeyer nods to terror curriculum in exploration of the "perverse" pleasure of the sublime. She notes:

> the sublime itself appears to be grounded in the profound emotional pain of terror…[and] an experience of paradoxical mastery: the vastness of its objects threaten to master the self, and yet the self recovers it's integrity in the realization of its own freedom.[31]

Perhaps the "sub" of the sublime suggests that rather than glimpsing some external, transcendent noumenon, the experience of sublimity involves gaining momentary insight about (often terrifying) systems, signs, structures running underneath – and inextricably linked to – the experience of the everyday material and phenomenological universe. Perhaps modernity means a sort of ordinary, everyday miseducative terror. The deeply gendered concept of sublime that traces its origins to Mary Shelley's modernity is especially important to my work around the terror curriculum, but Korsmeyer's aesthetics overlook the implications of these values for education.

It is important to note here that Korsmeyer's deep gender, like Martin's deep structure of educational thought is virtually invisible because it is, by design, a patriarchal framework that just looks like "the way the world is." In uncovering the hidden curriculum of terror and the causes and consequences of monstrous miseducation, I aim to account for those gendered concepts, frameworks, and approaches that escape or are buried beneath "the standard purview of philosophy" and

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[30] Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 3, 84.
[31] Ibid, 134, 136.

educational studies.[32] With John Dewey's aesthetics to link deep gender with the deep structure of education, I am able to name the conditions under which terror curriculum hides and on which the closed circuit of monstrous miseducation depends.

Monstrous Miseducation and An-aesthetic Experience

John Dewey's aesthetics, while they traffic in some of Korsmeyer's deeply gendered concepts and hierarchies and depend upon some of Martin's deep structures of educational thought, directly address the link between aesthetics and education. Drawing an important distinction between art and aesthetics, Dewey provisionally defines art as a process involving the dynamic exchange of "doing" (making) and "undergoing" (suffering) toward the end of creating a physical object.[33] Dewey admonishes what he takes to be an artificial separation between the productions of art and those of daily life.[34] Blurring the boundary between spectator and spectacle, representation and that which is being represented, Dewey's notion of the making and suffering will either result in an aesthetic experience or it will not depending on the degree to which meaning, action, and feeling converge as a "qualitative unity."[35] For Dewey, there is nothing in the spectacle itself that elicits the aesthetic experience, so the whole concept of the sublime would constitute a categorical error. The making and suffering must fulfill a perceptual whole such that the aesthetic experience maintains the continuity between the everyday art of living and the "refined" judgment of art.[36] The activities of the perceiver therefore must mimic those of the creator in order for an

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[32] Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 84-5.
[33] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 1938), 48.
[34] Ibid, 5.
[35] Ibid, 44.
[36] Ibid, 11.

aesthetic experience to emerge as such. While making and suffering may constitute *an* experience, everyday or "refined," without Dewey's qualitative unity, such an experience cannot properly be called an *aesthetic* experience.[37] The aesthetic of terror is simply not a sustainable aesthetic for our species.

Dewey identifies those beings who fully engage aesthetic experience as "live creatures" who not only live in an environment, but who interact with that environment through "defense" and "conquest," making the adjustments necessary toward the fulfillment of needs and desires.[38] Through meeting, overcoming, and restoring a rhythmic equilibrium with the environment, the live creature's experience is enriched by the struggle itself. Maintaining an affective balance with the environment and negotiating the constantly shifting energies within her mind and body, it sometimes happens that the live creature senses a cosmic convergence that Dewey describes as a "dynamic unity."[39] The play of energies, the creative "tension" marking the aesthetic experience, according to Dewey, cannot be sustained in either a finished environment or in one of unremitting flux.[40] It is incumbent upon the live creature, then to adjust her whole being to the environment; perceiving the past as a resource, losing and regaining balance in the present, and anticipating the possibilities of the future.

Building on Dewey's concepts of the aesthetic experience and the live creature, education itself becomes an aesthetic experience undergone by the live creature among other live creatures in an environment that is neither wholly finished nor wholly unstable. It follows that the live creature's environment is her curriculum and her

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[37] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 1938), 47.
[38] Ibid, 104.
[39] Ibid, 167.
[40] Ibid, 15-16.

experience is her education. Cultural miseducation, then, constitutes an an-aesthetic experience undergone by a live creature alone or among other live creatures in a completely finished environment of material abundance or in an entirely unstable environment of perceived scarcity. And cultural miseducation, like education, changes the live creature through the process of "educational metamorphoses," the always complicated, often-problematic "instances of whole person transformations brought about by education."[41] Ultimately, educational metamorphoses are about identity.

Often, educational metamorphoses involve "culture crossings," or "great changes [that] constitute crossings from one culture or cultural group to another" and "tend to be fraught with alienation, inner conflict, accusations of betrayal, and anxieties about going home again."[42] Alienation, conflict, betrayal, and anxieties are all symptoms of an an-aesthetic experience within an an-aesthetic environment – cultural miseducation – made and suffered by a Deweyan live creature. An-aesthetic experiences and environments sometimes bring about educational metamorphoses that change live creatures into senseless creatures. Over time, senseless creatures may become emotionally numb and existentially void. Sometimes senseless, invisible creatures commit senseless violence (directed at the self and at others) in order to feel *something* and in order to be *somebody*.

Except for Martin's acknowledgement that "[t]he silence surrounding the topic of violence" represents a "gap in the text of education," her efforts to point out that this "refusal to treat violence as an educational issue" amounts to furthering the "false illusion" that "learning guarantees improvement of the individual," and her suggestion

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[41] Jane Roland Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 2-3.
[42] Ibid, 8-9.

that a given culture's multiple educational agency is responsible for transmitting "vices as well as virtues," no study of violence as an educational issue exists.[43] Nevertheless, Martin, Korsmeyer, and Dewey's language gestures toward the educational and aesthetic theory of the causes and conditions of a deeply gendered type of modern cultural miseducation characterized by violence toward the end of terror: monstrous miseducation.

Terror Curriculum as Technoscience

Amid the educational agency of Mutually Assured Destruction and the student uprisings of the late 1960s, Hannah Arendt writes, "The technical development of the implements of violence has now reached the point where no political goal could conceivably correspond to their destructive potential or justify their actual use in armed conflict."[44] She claims that "the rebellion of the young…has been directed against the academic glorification of scholarship and science," and "[p]rogress…can no longer serve as the standard by which to evaluate the disastrously rapid change-processes we have let loose."[45] Four decades later, Arendt's warnings and her claims regarding unchecked multiple educational agency wrought by techno-scientific productivity still hold sway. And while Arendt could not have known about the exponentially destructive potential of twenty-first-century "cyber-warfare," an adolescent Mary Shelley prophesied this self-replicating code, this viral kind of techno-scientific menace in 1816.[46]

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[43] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 39-41.
[44] Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1970), 3.
[45] Ibid, 30.
[46] James Bamford and Chris Schmidt, "CyberWar Threat," on *Nova* (Boston: WGBH Educational Foundation, 2015).

Coined by Bruno Latour, the term "technoscience" denotes science that requires technological devices as a precondition to knowledge.[47] When the technology takes priority over a science that denies technology's roots in aesthetics and dismisses local folk wisdom, it runs the risk of being miseducative. Ideally, science and technology stand in reciprocal and aesthetic relation to one another. As Dewey said in 1920:

> Science, "reason" is not therefore something laid from above upon experience. Suggested and tested in experience, it is also employed through inventions in a thousand ways to expand and enrich experience. Although…this self-creation and self-regulation of experience is still largely technological rather than truly artistic or human, yet what has been achieved contains the guaranty of the possibility of intelligent administering of experience. The limits are moral and intellectual, due to defects in our good will and knowledge.[48]

Our techno-scientific "self-creation" and "self-regulation," Dewey claims, is problematic if we do not understand that "reason" is "tested in experience" rather than the reverse. However, the deep structures of educational thought and many educational agents insist that techno-scientific productivity is the means and end of education. "[A]rtistic and human…administering of experience," suggests a different paradigm from these time-honored, Western deep structures of educational thought as well as critical evaluation of educational agency. In the age of revolution, Mary Shelley knew from her lived experience that techno-scientific productivity void of what Susan Laird names "maternal teach and teachings" is monstrous.[49]

Laird defines maternal teaching "as an educating task and achievement which occurs in a variety of social contexts outside the context of schooling," and argues that it "must figure in any treatment of *in loco parentis* governance that does not simply

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[47] Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 174.
[48] John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920, Kindle Edition), location 958-964.
[49] Susan Schober Laird, *Maternal Teaching and Maternal Teachings* (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1988), 137-9.

reproduce the injustices" of an oppressive, normative sense of the maternal ideal that saddles mothers with a majority of mystified and devalued childrearing tasks coupled with a "universalist," "value-free," Socratic teaching ideal that reduces what "counts" as teaching to "value laden" academic contexts.[50] According to Laird, maternal teaching occurs in a safe environment where "sharing experiences" involves trusting others to help through both "criticism" and "praise," while maternal teachings are "daily" lived experiences of "difficulties and triumphs" in "a playful and imaginative spirit."[51] Maternal teaching and teachings are a practical expression of Dewey's aesthetic experience. Without maternal teaching and teachings, the live creature cannot learn to live wisely and well among other live creatures in a complex world. The live creature learns to live instead by the tenets of terror curriculum: fearfully and violently. This is the lesson I derive from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Terror Curriculum as Bildung *and Genius*

Emerging out of Prussian state-sponsored scholarship in the eighteenth-century, the concept of *bildung* articulated the very idea of "enlightenment" and was deployed in fields ranging from theology to natural philosophy and from political philosophy to pedagogical theory. As Minister of Education in the Prussian State, Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), defined the humanist *bildung* ideal "as the edification and cultivation of the whole individual" that he (masculine pronoun intentional) might realize his capacities for individual and collective self-determination in solidarity with other autonomous individuals to whom edification and self-determination have been

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[50] Susan Schober Laird, *Maternal Teaching and Maternal Teachings* (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1988), 137-9.
[51] Susan Laird, "Teaching in a Different Sense: Alcott's Marmee," in *Philosophy of Education*, edited by A. Thompson (Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society, 1994) 164-172.

denied.[52] At birth, the aesthetic and educational philosophy goes, each individual possesses an embryonic form of universal humanity; the *bildung* that Humboldt insists our species develops in community over a well-lived lifetime. Taking up Humboldt's *bildung* ideal, Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) "sought to displace academic philosophy with philosophical anthropology" and claimed *bildung* was the proper understanding of philosophy itself: "a theory of how the individual develops into the sort of organic unity that will constantly work toward the full development of its talents and abilities and that will drive social progress."[53] For Humboldt, Herder, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805), and others, the lived experience of *bildung* embodies Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) "Answer to the Question, What Is Enlightenment?" The answer, for these neo-humanists, was to educate the individual reason and character in harmony with the individual mind and body such that the individual heart, mind, and body become contributing members of the body politic.

It is important to this project, a project that takes literature to be an important source of educational thought for educational studies, to note that *bildung* in its literary guise became *bildungsroman*. These bourgeois, fictionalized narratives featured a naturalized aesthetic of education, apprenticeship, coming-of-age, and self-discovery. Historically, the German *bildungsroman* defined itself in opposition to the "decadence" of English and French "social novels," but that should not suggest that the German

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[52] Eva Giloi, *Monarchy, Myth, and Material Culture in Germany: 1750-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 61.
[53] Jim Good, "The German Bildung Tradition" (paper presented at the annual conference of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, Columbia, South Carolina, March 8-10, 2007).

bildungsroman was apolitical.[54] *Bildung* has its roots in German Idealism and Romanticism, but the pedagogical platform of the *bildungsroman* was built upon concrete, "naturalized" notions of social responsibility, not transcendent, "super-naturalized" ideals (like narratives of genius). In conversation with Herder's pedagogical sense of *bildung*, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprentice Years* and *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* have become paradigmatic *bildungsromane* in the German tradition. Both trace a hero's journey from the "self-cultivation" of talents to a unique vocation through which he might contribute to the general welfare of Goethe's Weimar.

But the same historical moment that produced the naturalized growth model of *bildung* also produced the super-naturalized radical originality of genius. How does the organic aesthetic driving the *bildung* account for the simultaneous turn of the nineteenth-century sublime ideal of "pure" genius of the individual "artist" whose inherent talent flouts social convention, transcends reason, and commands nature?[55] It would seem that the radical originality of genius is inherently incompatible with the organic growth model of *bildung*. Indeed, genius must have created, vacated, and broken the "natural" mold of *bildung* by which the ordinary intellect grows. Genius, the theory goes, cannot be learned or taught, it just *is*. And it *rarely* is.

According to German Idealism and Romanticism, genius is also gender neutral. But the "artistic creativity" of genius "is not just a feature of a superior reason, it is a feature of a superior mind," and the model for that mind, Korsmeyer claims, is "a male mind: one that is strong and capable of independence from tradition and social norms,

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[54] Maike Oergel, *Culture and Identity* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2006), 222.
[55] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 147.

and that rises above the quotidian concerns that shape ordinary activities."[56] The genius mind is the male mind that first threw off the bonds of ignorance, first emerged from the darkness of Plato's cave, first saw the sun of the "really real," and first returned to free his fellow bondsmen. According to the *bildung* ideal, the bondsmen may follow his naturalized *bildung* trajectory or not, but few possess the super-naturalized genius from which the original liberation ethos of *bildung* emerged. Paradoxically, those who deviate from (refusing the ascent from "darkness" or questioning the "truth" of sunlight) the "natural" path of *bildung* are excluded from the realm of genius because genius is self-born, self-directed, and radically free. "Some," says the rhetoric of genius, "are born great, some achieve greatness" while others "have greatness thrust upon 'em."[57]

Beyond exploiting the super-naturalized creative power of genius, the theory goes, education cannot make genius. Culture (as curriculum) cannot make genius. Genius is just not an educational concept, although it is problematically classed as one. *Bildung* is equally problematic as an educational ideal. By encouraging the organic growth of *bildung*, it could be said broadly that education makes and shapes the individual, but because *bildung* is firmly planted on the nature side of the nature/culture divide, that individual's development and the place that individual will occupy in society is essentially (pre)determined.[58] The culture (curriculum) from which the false educational ideals of genius and *bildung* derive is miseducative because it does not acknowledge its own role as a maker and shaper of individuals and only narrowly sees

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[56] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 29.
[57] This is the famous tongue-in-cheek quote from Shakespeare's duped pendant, Malvolio, who is tricked into believing he has had "greatness thrust upon him."
[58] Taken to a logical extreme, though, almost anything can be argued to be deterministic.

the individual as its maker and shaper. The hidden curriculum, yet unnamed, that operates according to these false educational ideals is powerfully miseducative.

Thinking of the aesthetic representation of time and naturalized development in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin's modern "historically productive horizontal" and medieval "extra-temporal, otherworldly" vertical trajectories, offers an expanded insight into the terror curriculum as *bildung* and genius. Bakhtin's idea that modernity saw history and time on a horizontal axis (*bildung*) while the medieval world saw history and time on a vertical one (genius) graphically depicts these competing trajectories of development/change and origins/destinations and their corresponding ideologies.[59] The way in which the individual and cultural imagination is miseducated by *bildung*'s expectation of evolutionary development (the plant/garden/gardener metaphor) and genius's expectation of revolutionary exceptionality (the sculpture/studio/sculptor metaphor) has practical implications.

Both the concept of genius and *bildung* take for granted that individuals make and shape culture, but neither acknowledges the role culture plays as a maker and shaper of individuals. Martin's "unified" theory of education as encounter sees "the processes of cultural transmission and individual learning" as "two sides of a single coin" and "represents education as an interaction between an individual and a culture in which both parties change."[60] Monstrous miseducation rests on the *bildung*/genius educational fallacy of terror curriculum and is comprised of complex, unmediated

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[59] Mikhail Bakhtin, "The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel)" in *Speech Genres and Other Essays*, Eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986) and *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).
[60] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 2-3.

(creative and destructive) encounters and exchanges with terror curriculum engendered by genius and *bildung* ideals. The *Frankenstein* myth shows that these encounters and exchanges transform motherless, alienated individuals and cultures into monstrous creators and monstrous creatures.

Terror Curriculum as Bildung*-Terror and Genius-Terror*

Recalling Dewey's live creature and aesthetic experience, how might terror curriculum produce and be produced by individuals unable to imagine having creative control over their "energies" within a given environment?[61] At what point does cultural miseducation become qualitatively monstrous? Could the inability to imagine a future in which the exertion of creative (or destructive) force that empowers individuals and cultures (economically, politically, and socially) be the consequence of other kinds of miseducation, or is this pervasive impotence unique to monstrous miseducation and related to the *bildung* and genius ideals? What about miseducation that, while failing to educate the political imaginary, does indeed transmit, through violence and intimidation, an apocalyptic or nihilistic imaginary that re-presents the violence and intimidation that inspired it in the first place?

If the nature of violence has not changed, surely the methods of violence, "distinguished by its instrumental character," have changed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.[62] Arendt draws sharp conceptual distinctions between "power," "strength," "force," and "authority" and the violence with which those abstractions are associated, saying, "Phenomenologically, it [violence] is close to strength, since

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[61] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 1938), 13. Here, I am using "energies" in the Deweyan aesthetic sense to mean biological rhythms working in opposition and harmony with each other and with the material conditions of everyday life.
[62] Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1970), 46.

implements of violence, like all other tools, are designed and used for the purpose of multiplying natural strength until, in the last stage of their development, they can substitute for it."[63] For Arendt, violence itself evolves along a "natural" sort of *bildung* growth trajectory. To some extent, I agree with Arendt but suspect she missed a crucial kind of violence characteristic of terror curriculum of late-modern culture: violence as an end in itself. Drawing important distinctions between different kinds of terror, Arendt says that totalitarian terror is a state of "one against all" reinforced by violent means. While Arendt's taxonomy is helpful, the larger scale of terror curriculum both fosters and depends upon the original sense of Hobbesian "all against all" violence that is not "normal," "natural," or "super-natural." We use those descriptors because we are monstrous miseducated by terror curriculum to imagine the future in binary extremes: techno-utopian progress or techno-dystopian regress. Education, according to this value scheme must either be a social engineering project or a brainwashing enterprise.

Individuals or groups whose project might be characterized as *bildung*-terror want something – politically, economically, and socially – and use terror publically as a means to get what they want. Conversely, an individual (not a group) who takes up the private project of genius-terror either does not want anything or never makes her/his desires public. Perhaps, the individual engaged in genius-terror wants something that is so obscure as to be practically meaningless or wants something that is beyond the realm of ordinary, everyday human experience. With genius-terror, inspiring and appreciating terror is perhaps an end unto itself: the product *is* the process.

The preconditions to *bildung*-terror are perceptions of powerlessness and

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[63] Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1970), 46.

invisibility within a society that normalizes and naturalizes violence, while the preconditions to genius-terror are unclear unless the "super-naturalization" of monstrous miseducation itself is taken as the precondition. In the twenty-first century, *bildung*-terror has become an increasingly private act of seeming desperation (as opposed to the ideology-driven revolutionary terror or totalitarian terror of the last two and half centuries) as in the case of "domestic terrorist" Timothy McVeigh's bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City and less sensational cases of day-to-day gun violence in the streets and the "family terrorism" of private homes.[64]

Rhonda Hammer recognizes "family terrorism" as distinct from "domestic violence" or "family violence" because she argues that those labels are often used too narrowly to describe violence perpetrated by men on women. For Hammer, they do not adequately describe the "widespread, global nature of emotional, physical, and sexual violence that is perpetuated against children and the elderly by both men and women every day."[65] In other words, "domestic violence" and "family violence" do not account for cultural miseducation. She believes that only "by delineating and making apparent the dominant-subordinate pathological relations that take place in unequal family power relations" can we begin to address the deeply gendered roots of such violence.[66] Her analysis is extremely important to the concepts of monstrous miseducation and the terror curriculum because she is talking about the buried cultural liabilities that inform family terrorism. Citing recent studies of media coverage of "domestic terrorism," Hammer concludes that "[t]he condoning, promotion, and

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[64] Rhonda Hammer, *Antifeminism and Family Terrorism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 145.
[65] Ibid, 117.
[66] Ibid, 117.

provocation of male violence against women within the mass media…takes place within a larger frame that addresses family terrorism and sexual abuse in a psychologized and individuated, decontextualized manner."[67] This individualizing of pathologies and decontextualizing of violence obfuscates the causes and consequences of terror and takes it out of the educational realm. In other words, the terror may follow the naturalized *bildung* trajectory (the abuser was abused and thus became abusive), but the sensationalized coverage of the terror may project upon it the super-naturalized power of genius-terror (the abuse and the abuser are incomprehensible). Both terror scenarios concentrate on the individual actor – the monster – rather than look at the broader cultural landscape. It is difficult *not* to "psychologize" the terrorist as a genius, "self-radicalized," "lone wolf" when our homes, like our media, are one of myriad educational agents indifferent to or ignorant of the miseducative consequences of transmitting the terror curriculum.[68]

This century has also seen its share of *bildung*-terror committed by well-organized, well-funded, and well-armed groups laying claim to myriad causes. Despite engaging in projects that the culture might identify as *bildung*-terror, groups and individuals who ally themselves with groups would not necessarily self-identify as terrorists. They might call themselves activists pushed to violence by injustice or some wrong by another name. Regardless, they would not deny having committed the violence. For the *bildung*-terrorist, the violence has an intentional, educational aim, albeit with unintentional, miseducative consequences. By causing fear and suffering,

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[67] Rhonda Hammer, *Antifeminism and Family Terrorism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 145.

[68] This exclusive, genius-terror language of a "lone wolf" and "self-radicalized" arose to describe Omar Mateen in the aftermath of the 2016 Orlando terrorist attack.

the *bildung*-terrorist hopes to bring about changes that are potentially advantageous to her and the interests she imagines she represents. The event itself and the reenactment via multiple educational agency transmit naturalized narratives that may advance a political, economic, or social agenda that may be educative or miseducative. For example, lynchings in the South maintained the apartheid system through *bildung*-terror. An eco-terrorist might burn down a housing development to protest ecologically irresponsible suburban sprawl. There is a difference in kind between these two examples of *bildung*-terror that might justify calling the latter violence, "activism." Lynching is murder while arson is the destruction of property that may or may not result in death. Both, however, intend to educate on a grand scale and to bring about change.

Genius-terror, by contrast, cannot have a specific educational mission because its purpose is so ambiguous it cannot hope to "teach" its victims or those who bear witness to the atrocity anything but fear itself. Because the super-naturalized violence of genius-terror could happen to anyone, anywhere, for no clear reason, individuals and societies may learn to live in fear, but they cannot possibly learn any specific lessons that would benefit them in any affective or cognitive way. The perpetrator of the violence stands to gain nothing materially, but may experience the fleeting thrill of horror and fascination at the spectacle she has created. In the moment, the spectator or victim of genius-terror experiences all-consuming fear rather than any twinge of empathy. Assuming the actor does not take her/his life in the act of genius-terror, she would be utterly detached from the product of the violence and the name "terrorist" or the idea of "terrorism" would carry no signification. That is not to say genius-terror does not possess it own internal logic. It is to say that such logic lies so far outside of

ordinary experience as to be extraordinary and so far beyond "human nature" as to be super-natural. Genius-terror like the 2012 mass shooting of movie-goers at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado or that perpetrated on the children and school personnel at Sandy Hook Elementary School in New Town, Connecticut defies comprehension and stands out to spectators and survivors as singularly senseless, indiscriminate, and monstrous. By definition such genius-terror is miseducative, but is it also miseducative to cast these "all-to-human" acts and affects as extra-ordinary or super-natural?

Bildung-terror corresponds to the deep educational structure of *bildung*, and genius-terror corresponds to that of genius. The organic growth determinism of *bildung*, as Martin implies in her treatment of the "growth model of education," should not imply "growth pure and simple" for the individual.[69] Rather, "educators" intentionally guide much of the individual's development at home and at school, but encounters with cultural wealth and liabilities outside of home and school may well be unmediated. Both encounters will have intended and unintended consequences for the individual, some of them miseducative.

Similarly, *bildung*-terror does not emerge "naturally" in a given culture. The pre-conditions of perceived powerlessness and ontological insignificance must be present and the individual actor must feel the need to assert herself within the culture through violent means. If violence and/or threats of violence were not deployed to force the larger culture or another individual to bend to the actor's will and to acknowledge the actor's existence, the actor cannot be said to have engaged *bildung*-

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[69] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 81.

terror. Learning to consider violence as a means to an end, perhaps as a means that is "natural" to the species, bridges the ethos of *bildung* and the instrument of terror.

Genius, while it may be "nurtured," is presumed to be present in the individual at birth. It is a disembodied creation myth, not a growth model, although it is somehow cast as a discursive species of educational thought. The rhetoric of genius calls it rare, absolute, pure, transcendent, divinely deterministic, and detached from the everyday experiences of the material world. Genius, in a Kantian word, is "disinterested." According to Korsmeyer's understanding of Kant's aesthetic experience of pure judgment free from interest, "[d]isinterested does not mean that we care nothing for [the object]; it means that our pleasure is not rooted in personal advancement or gratification – in the satisfaction of one of our desires."[70] As an end unto itself, genius-terror operates according to the same "objective" paradigm of "purity." Singular acts of genius-terror are statistical anomalies, but they inspire fear as few events can. But these events also take the focus off of empirically guaranteed threats to the survival of the species in the form of myriad ecological disasters, epidemic diseases, gun violence, and the day-to-day peril of children and the elderly facing family terrorism. It would seem that the hidden terror curriculum of monstrous miseducation cultivates in us a taste for the monumental, "one-off" violence of genius-terror over which we have little present-tense control.[71]

Does the deeply gendered conceptual apparatus at the foundation of monstrous miseducation make and shape cultures and individuals that are fit only for one another?

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[70] Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 45.
[71] *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 144-167.

In other words, does the symbiotic relationship between a monstrously miseducative culture and a monstrously miseducated individual amount to a balance of terror that arrests the "development" of either? Given the terror curriculum, is "development" even a desirable narrative for education? What kinds of narratives might sustainably re-make and re-shape individuals and cultures?

What would happen if a lone, male "genius" created and abandoned a physically mature creature to be educated by "nature"? What kinds multiple educational agency could intervene to educate the creator and his creature? How would these encounters shape them? How might these encounters miseducate and misshape them? What kind of culture emerges at the interstices of nature and nurture when a miseducated creator and a misshapen creature collide? What sort of educational wisdom about terror as a modern, gendered, educational problem emerges from such inquiry? What might be the value of having a conceptual language by which to conduct further pragmatic "cultural bookkeeping" projects using literary texts as sources of hidden educational wisdom and as case studies?[72]

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is a gloss on Mary Shelley's biography as a series of educational metamorphoses. Just as her most renowned book *Frankenstein* is itself both a critique and a symptom of genius and *bildung*, the educational biography of its creator falls prey and bears witness to a peculiar material and intellectual history. Therefore, to begin contextualizing and theorizing monstrous miseducation, chapter two looks at *bildung* and genius made manifest in Shelley's educational biography. This daughter of "genius," William

[72] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 111.

Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, read widely: the books in her father's library and children's book store; the educational thought of her mother; and the work of her revolutionary Romantic coterie. All of these encounters shaped the lived experience of Mary Shelley from which I begin to formulate the concept of monstrous miseducation. Indeed, Mary Shelley's lived experience against the backdrop of a revolutionary era stands as a case study of the core features of monstrous miseducation: Miltonic identity politics and their attendant essentialism and exceptionalism; Godwinian perfectibility[73] and its attendant paternalism and uneven development;[74] abandonment to multiple educational agency[75] and its attendant "techno-scientific" productivity[76]; and gothic sublimity[77] and its attendant fatalism and will to irrationality. As important as the core features that are present in monstrous miseducation are those that are absent: Laird's maternal teaching and teachings[78] with a focus on love and survival; Haraway's cyborg affinity politics with a focus on alliances and amalgams;[79] and Martin's "circulation of gifts"[80] with a focus on "cultural bookkeeping"[81] and Wollstonecraftian "rational hopes of futurity."[82]

Chapter three is an exposition of *Frankenstein* as educational thought through which I further develop the core features of monstrous miseducation. Expanding the

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[73] Siobhan Ni, "'Why may not man one day be immortal?' Population, Perfectibility, and the Immortality Question in Godwin's *Political Justice*," *History of European Ideas* 33 (2007): 25-39.
[74] Joshua Esty, "The Colonial Bildungsroman," *Victorian Studies*, 49.3 (2007).
[75] Jane Roland Martin, *Cultural Miseducation* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 32.
[76] Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 174.
[77] Vijay Mishra, *The Gothic Sublime* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).
[78] Susan Schober Laird, *Maternal Teaching and Maternal Teachings* (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1988).
[79] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women (*New York: Routledge, 1991), 152.
[80] Jane Roland Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 136-43.
[81] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 111.
[82] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 87.

contextual boundaries, deploying the conceptual language, and following the conceptual framework developed in chapters one and two, this chapter concentrates on the matter, means, and method of instruction – intentional and unintentional – of monstrous miseducation. The exposition will necessarily focus on the monstrous miseducation of Victor Frankenstein and his creature, but the educational thought of the text extends far beyond the these two archetypical "gods" and "monsters" to look at the false educational ideals and problematic aesthetic that undergird monstrous miseducation – namely, *bildung* and genius.

Chapter four explores the possible influence of *Frankenstein* as educational thought. Clearly *Frankenstein* is haunted by the canon of educational thought and other texts that might well be identified as educational thought if thought were broadened to include literary studies as a foundational discipline of educational studies and if what counts as education were broadened to account for intended and unintended cultural exchanges. Equally apparent is the fact that the myth and meme of *Frankenstein* has become idiomatic, at least in the Western world, of hubristic kind of techno-scientific projects that unleash unintended negative consequences on our naïve species while it is preoccupied with the business of progress. Just as *Frankenstein* has become a meme of popular culture, it has also educated the popular scientific imagination – for better and for worse. Surely, allusions to *Frankenstein* inspire suspicion of unchecked scientific genius, but not on the educational ideal of genius itself. Even facing the fear of "making monsters," the educational components of such coming of age stories as that of the creature or his creator disappear in favor of essentially deterministic narratives that neatly ignore social, economic, and political contexts and problems. The cultural

influence of *Frankenstein* is undeniable, but this chapter is interested in what parts and versions of the story that Western culture retells and reproduces and how that selectivity relates to monstrous miseducation and the terror curriculum. Using the questions raised by *Frankenstein*, I will put prevailing narratives of education to a sort of "Turing Test" to show the ways in which these humanist myths might be classed as the untenable tenets of terror curriculum. Such inquiry might well suggest that we need revised myths of education in the age of terror.

The test of monstrous miseducation's relevance and value to educational thought is its pragmatic utility in helping us to draw educational wisdom from contemporary cases of terrorism. Deploying the deep educational structures of *bildung* and genius to explore the aesthetic – making and shaping – power of terror curriculum and monstrous miseducation, chapter five deploys the conceptual apparatus I formulated in the first three chapters alongside the influence of the Frankenstein myth detailed in chapter four to analyze the paradigm case of Columbine and the borderline case of The Freedom Writers. Schooling is only one of myriad educational agents that act as custodians and transmitters of cultural stock, and school violence is but one consequence of monstrous miseducation. However these cases most clearly show the contemporary relevance of the educational thought buried in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

CHAPTER I

A Biographical Sketch of Mary Shelley's Educational Metamorphoses

Until "the animal" arrived in Somers Town, London on 30 August 1797,[1] its playfully expectant parents, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) and William Godwin (1756-1836), imagined their child would be a boy and called it by its father's name, William.[2] And although Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley was born a girl named after both her mother and her father, she would die Mary Shelley on the first of February 1851. After the drowning death of her spouse, Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1822, she fatalistically refused to take any another name saying, "I like the name Mary Shelley too much. I've always found it very pretty and I mean to have it engraved on my tombstone."[3] It would seem, then, that she chose the name she took with her to the grave and perhaps shed the name she was given in the cradle. Surely she never took her *in utero* name, William, but for a time, she eschewed her father's name and signed all of her work Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (MWS). Indeed, the names chosen for and by this woman – from "William," to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, to Mary Godwin, back to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, to Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, to Mary Shelley – signal important transitions in her educational biography. From birth to age four, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin shed her birth name and became Mary Godwin, a legitimate, motherless, father's daughter. During early adolescence, she reclaimed her mother's name and again came to know herself as Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. After

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[1] Janet Todd, *The Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 436.
[2] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 20.
[3] Helen Buss, et. al., *Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1998), 276.

displeasing her father, Mary Godwin became Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, an illegitimate, fatherless, failed mother and wife. Finally, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley became Mary Shelley, an eternal wife to the deceased Percy Shelley and mother to their sole surviving child.

Along with revealing Mary Shelley's tenuous grasp on her own legitimacy against the backdrop of early nineteenth-century mores, each name change marks an instance of what Jane Roland Martin names "educational metamorphosis." Educational metamorphoses involve complicated, often-problematic "instances of whole person transformations brought about by education…for the better or the worse."[4] The changes brought about by Martin's educational metamorphoses necessarily involve loss and confusion. Heralded by "culture crossings that "tend to be fraught with alienation, inner conflict, accusations of betrayal, and anxieties about going home again," Mary Shelley's educational metamorphoses are haunted by personal losses, but they are also marked by the losses associated with the grand upheavals of the larger cultural matrix.[5]

"William" to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (1796-1797): Legitimacy

Nothing in the extant primary source material suggests that Wollstonecraft and Godwin preferred that their child be born a boy, only that they referred to the pregnancy as "William." There is reason to suspect, though, that the couple believed "William's" illegitimacy would be problematic, especially in light of Wollstonecraft's questionable past; she already had an illegitimate daughter in her custody, Fanny Imlay. Despite the couple's well-known stance against marriage, "the most odious of all monopolies,"

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[4] Jane Roland Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 2-3.
[5] Ibid, 8-9.

Wollstonecraft and Godwin married on 29 March 1797.[6] In silent attendance at the secret ceremony in St. Pancras' church, second trimester "William" received the surname Godwin on that day. On 10 September 1797, eleven days after giving birth to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, her mother died of puerperal fever.

Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin to Mary Godwin (1797-1801): Abandonment

A devastating sense of loss, then, heralded Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin's first great metamorphosis from "creature of nature" to the little girl who would come to know herself as Mary Godwin, a "member of human culture."[7] Anne Mellor points to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin's "anxiety" about being abandoned by her father during her four-year educational metamorphosis into Mary Godwin.[8] In letters home to Mary, the often-absent Godwin repeatedly reassured her that he would "not give her away."[9] Perhaps these very reassurances were unsettling. Surely the little girl who had lost her mother formed an intense attachment to her father during her "formative years," the years she spent in the house her father had once shared with her mother, the Polygon. Under the watchful, but somehow domesticated John Opie portrait of her mother – a portrait painted in 1797 when Wollstonecraft was pregnant with "William" – baby Mary found herself profoundly abandoned to the care of a grieving, preoccupied Godwin.

During Mary's first year of life, Louisa, a friend of Godwin's sister, was charged with her day-to-day care while Godwin poured his grief into immortalizing her mother in his *Memoirs of the Author of "The Rights of Woman."* In response to a letter from a

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[6] William St. Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 171.
[7] Jane Roland Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 39.
[8] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 6.
[9] William Godwin as quoted in Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 6.

female friend inquiring after Fanny and Mary's welfare, he confessed to being "totally unfitted to educate" and "direct the infant mind" unlike Wollstonecraft, the "best qualified in the world" to teach children.[10] Here and elsewhere, duty-bound Godwin revealed his tacit belief in Wollstonecraft's "fitness" for the task of educating and directing young minds even while contradicting her theories and thus exposing his own narrow definition of education as a process of training the mind of an individual subject – an intellectual enterprise isolated from the emotional, physical, and cultural surround.

But Godwin did not seem bothered by myriad incongruities as he ushered Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin from a creature of nature to a member of culture. Godwin's educational philosophy flew in the face of popular phrenology, yet he had the screaming three-week-old Mary examined by a phrenologist who confirmed what Godwin knew must be the case: "she had 'quick sensibility' and 'considerable memory and intelligence'."[11] And Mary soon proved to be a "singularly bold, somewhat imperious, and active of mind[ed]" daughter.[12] While these qualities attracted Godwin to Wollstonecraft, in her namesake, they complicated things.

And as a very young girl, most of what Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin knew of her mother came filtered through the sentiments of "a love amounting to veneration by her father" and from "the warm-eyed lady who smiled from the wall in her father's study, whose grave she was taken to visit when she was still too small to understand quite what death meant."[13] According to Charlotte Gordon's recent *Romantic Outlaws:*

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[10] Charles Kegan Paul, *William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries, Volume 1* (London: Henry S, King and Company, 1876), 281.
[11] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 112.
[12] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 58.
[13] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 33.

The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecraft and Her Daughter Mary Shelley, Godwin "did not think it odd to teach" little Mary to read and write by tracing the letters of her own name on her mother's gravestone "[a]nd Mary was eager to learn anything her father had to teach. In her eyes, he became 'greater, and wiser, and better…than any other being.' He was also all she had left."[14] Despite Godwin's paternalistic bent, his own pursuits, projects, and pressures increasingly competed for his time and he became ever more closed off to the little girl who had learned to think her father "was my God."[15] And atop the grave marked by the name she shared with her deceased mother, "Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin," this little girl began her first great educational metamorphosis from creature of nature to member of human culture, figuratively burying her former self in her mother's grave and transforming the self that "yet lived," her father's daughter, Mary Godwin.

Mary Godwin to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (1801-1814): "Perfectibility"

Although Mary's formal education was largely neglected, when Godwin was at home for any extended period of time, he directed her early schooling. He went to some trouble to research and procure age-appropriate reading material for her.[16] Godwin tried to implement Wollstonecraft's posthumously published *Lessons* (written for the "unfortunate" Fanny and published by Godwin in 1798) in his initial attempts to bring the girls up "to good."[17] But as Mary's precocious intellect grew, he abdicated direct responsibility in the educational realm and simply granted her unrestricted access

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[14] Charlotte Gordon, *Romantic Outlaws* (New York: Random House, 2015, Kindle Ed.), location 180.
[15] Mary Shelley as quoted in Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 179.
[16] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 9. His search for educational materials may have had some hand in cultivating the interest in juvenile literature that would contribute to his eventually establishing a children's bookstore.
[17] Ibid, 9. Interestingly, the four-year-old girl to whom the narrative of the lessons certainly refers is Fanny. The baby in the lessons is called William.

to his library comprised primarily of "Old English authors," classical Western literature, and contemporary volumes of radical thought including his work and that of her mother.[18] As to educating "the affections," Mary was left to her own devices.

Perhaps Godwin's inability or unwillingness to attend to Mary's affective development combined with his fear of losing custody to Wollstonecraft's sisters inspired his search for a second wife so soon after Wollstonecraft's death. Godwin's urgency to remarry may also have grown out of his concern for his own health and wellbeing. [19] Real tensions arose at the Polygon after Godwin married Mary-Jane Clairmont in 1801 and blended Mary and Fanny with Clairmont's two children, Jane "Claire" and Charles. In 1803, the "William" of expectant Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin would finally be born to Mary-Jane Clairmont and William Godwin. Godwin was grateful to the woman who promised to meet his "standing rights due from a wife to a husband" and to be his "mamma" when his own mother died.[20] Mary-Jane was grateful to have found "an eligible widower conveniently nearby" and won his affection by reading just enough of *Political Justice* to flatter the "immortal Godwin."[21]

Indeed, the new Mrs. Godwin was anxious that interested friends of Wollstonecraft, like the Lady Mountcashell who would become Mrs. Margaret Mason, know "Charles knows Latin Greek and French, mathematics and draws well. The girls

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[18] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 58N.
[19] William St. Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 191, 296. During this time, he began suffering from what he called "deliquium" and the medical community called "cataleptic fits" – a condition contemporary biographers suspect was narcolepsy. In light of Godwin's belief that one day the mind-over-matter progress of the human species would render the all-too-human need for sleep obsolete, it is ironic that Godwin should be afflicted by this particular disorder. According to Seymour, Godwin premised his pursuit of several women on the "'Promethean fire' sparked by affection and parental love," however his desire to remarry may have been sparked by fearful intimations of his own mortality (37).
[20] William St. Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 244.
[21] Charlotte Gordon, *Romantic Outlaws* (New York: Random House, 2015, Kindle Ed.), location 486-92.

have been taught by Mr Godwin Roman Greek and English history, French and Italian from masters. Frances and Mary draw very well."[22] Godwin's impressive library grew to include volumes of children's literature, some contributed by close friends of Godwin's, but most written, edited, and published by Godwin and Mrs. Godwin and collected together in the "Juvenile Library."[23] Although Mrs. Godwin fancied herself rather an expert in children's literacy (she was a skilled translator), it was Mary Godwin, not her stepmother nor her father, who taught little William Godwin to read.[24]

It was not just "the Clairmont family's invasion of her home" that began ten year-old Mary Godwin's educational metamorphosis into fatherless, mother's daughter, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin; it was the family's move from the Polygon in "semi-rural" Somers Town to the five-story shop and residence at 14 Skinner Street amid the urban squalor of Holborn Hill in 1807.[25] With Mrs. Godwin's encouragement, Godwin hoped that moving to this district of prisons, public hangings, "butchers and booksellers" would prove financially advantageous.[26]

Now, Mary Godwin knew she was home by a sensory assault of death and dying that replaced the "tranquil churchyard where her mother seemed only to lie asleep under the tall grass."[27] From her stifling attic "schoolroom," she heard the screams of animals being slaughtered at Smithfield and the tolling bell of St. Sepulchre's signaling convicts condemned to die at Tyburn gallows. Minding the bookshop on the ground floor, she

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[22] Mary Jane Godwin as quoted in Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 53.
[23] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 52. As Godwin's deliquium episodes became more frequent, Mrs. Godwin prodded him to open a children's bookstore to ease the financial insecurities she was convinced brought on his fits.
[24] Ibid, 50.
[25] Ibid, 55-57.
[26] Ibid, 57.
[27] Ibid, 56.

saw the thronging crowds of people rushing to public hangings at New Drop outside the Old Bailey and the orphaned children of mothers' confined to the overcrowded prison at Newgate. She might have known that debtors like her father rotted away in debtors' prisons like the one just blocks from their new home, but she surely knew that Skinner Street was not a safe place. Her childhood effectively ended at the age of ten.

Yet her keen mind found sanctuary in the Skinner Street library.[28] Alone with the books where she "discharged the business of the shop with the prudent steadiness of a man of forty," the self-educating "shop girl," Mary Godwin, must have begun to identify more keenly as a motherless child.[29] She read widely in the canon of English literature, including excerpts from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* featured in "*The Poetical Class-Book,* published in 1810 and probably assembled by Godwin himself."[30] Although she would not write *Frankenstein* for six years, well after her educational metamorphosis into Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, important seeds of that work and of her transformation were sewn in Mary Godwin's sullen encounters with Milton.[31]

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[28] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 56. Seymour notes: "A catalogue…of the Skinner Street library in 1817 offers instant contradiction to the notion that Mary, who would have been in and out of that library every day she was at home, was the untutored pupil of Shelley [her husband]. On the contrary, Godwin's books would have ensured that Mary was at least as well read as he when they met…. The books listed in Mary's journals from 1814 on are always treated as thought this was her first reading of them, but Godwin's library contained many of these volumes and Godwin was a man who believed all books should be read at least twice." Shelley's "reading list" may be found in *The Journals of Mary Shelley: 1814-1844*, ed. Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), or here: http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/MShelley/bydates.html.

[29] Ibid, 66.

[30] Ibid, 54.

[31] Here, Mary Shelley must have started asking some important questions. Just below her dedication of *Frankenstein* to Mary Godwin's father, the novel's epigraph famously asks the petulant question of adamantine genius from Book X of Milton's *Paradise Lost*: "Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay / To mould me Man, did I solicit thee / From darkness to promote me?"

The preoccupied, "perpetually cash-strapped" Godwin too became increasingly closed off to Mary Godwin despite his claims to the contrary.[32] Sounding very Rousseauian even while quoting John Dryden in a letter to his young disciple, Percy Bysshe Shelley, about his daughters' education, Godwin optimistically relates that he has sewn the "seeds of intellect and knowledge, seeds of moral judgment and conduct," seeds that have for years been "'ungrateful to the tiller's care,'" were finally responding to his assiduous attention.[33] And it is true that Godwin did take Mary Godwin (along with the other children) to theaters and lectures and to galleries and gardens during this time, but according to a young adult Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, while her father did sacrifice his time and talent to train her, he was "unfit for" early childhood "formation of character" because of his "undeviating" exactitude delivered in "pointed and humiliating" language that rendered him "too far divided from his pupil through want of sympathy."[34]

Suffering from what she would later call the "girlish troubles" of her "father's house," Mary Godwin was sent away to a boarding school in Ramsgate. [35] There is no evidence that she was sent to the "Ladies School" at Ramsgate for a formal education. In contrast to the education afforded Charles and the younger William Godwin, she received "only room, board, and kindness."[36] Her "condition" did not improve. In Seymour's account, Mary Godwin's girlish troubles amounted to "eczema in times of

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[32] Charlotte Gordon, *Romantic Outlaws* (New York: Random House, 2015, Kindle Ed.), location 2620.
[33] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 66. Martin would say that an interpretation of Rousseauian education that sees it as "growth pure and simple" is flawed, however Godwin's approach with Mary comes very near to this misinterpretation of Rousseau.
[34] Charles Kegan Paul, *William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries, Volume 1* (London: Henry S, King and Company, 1876), 38.
[35] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 61-64.
[36] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 11.

stress" brought on by her intense dislike of her stepmother and the "move into the city from a semi-rural home" at the urging of the stepmother she so resented.[37] It is also possible to infer from Mary Godwin's periodic banishments and from surviving correspondence that, during her early adolescence, she did not show a propensity for the "perfectibility" outlined in Godwin's educational philosophy.[38] In a letter to William Baxter, the patriarch of the Glassite family to which a chronically ill and disillusioned adolescent Mary Godwin was sent twice between 1810 and 1814, Godwin confided, "I am anxious that she should be brought up…like a philosopher, even like a cynic. It would add greatly to the strength and worth of her character."[39] Contrary to Godwin's cold directives, it was in the "affectionate, uncritical household" of the Baxter family that Mary Godwin transformed into her mother's daughter.[40]

Despite her abiding reverence for Godwin, she would never forget that it was ultimately he who had banished her to the Sir Walter Scott's romanticized Scottish Highlands. Here, she made her first close girlfriend, Isabella Baxter.[41] She and Isabella cultivated their gothic imaginations, "memorized reams of poetry and loved Dundee's legends and ghost stories."[42] When the girls left their initials in a windowsill at the Baxter's house, Mary Godwin carved her mother's initials with deliberation: MWG.[43] But in her reclamation of her mother's name, Mary Godwin seemed to identify more with the gravestone image of her mother than the living mother immortalized in the legacy of her work. She did not "fit" anywhere in the educational and cultural

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[37] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 61-64.
[38] Paul McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 117-18.
[39] William Godwin as quoted in Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 72.
[40] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 61.
[41] Charlotte Gordon, *Romantic Outlaws* (New York: Random House, 2015, Kindle Ed.), location 973.
[42] Ibid, location 979.
[43] Ibid, location 977.

landscape of early nineteenth-century Britain. Her father had indeed betrayed and abandoned her, as she always feared he might. But the Baxter's home was a chrysalis, and during her exile she underwent the next whole person transformation of her educational metamorphoses: from Mary Godwin to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin:[44]

> …the eyry of freedom, and the pleasant region where unheeded I could commune with the creatures of my fancy…beneath the trees of the grounds belonging to our house, or on the bleak sides of the woodless mountains near, [ ] 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.[45]

Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin to Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1814-1816): Sublimity

It was *this* Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin who returned from exile to her father's house in 1814 wearing an "illegal" tartan to find Percy Shelley.[46] She had first met Shelley at the age of fifteen when she returned home from Scotland for a brief visit in 1812. Having been the exciting subject of correspondence with her family, the dashing and dangerous "[s]on of a man of fortune in Sussex" represented financial security for Godwin's chronically impoverished family and a revitalization of Godwin's waning reputation as a radical thinker.[47] Mary shared her family's fascination with "PB Shelley: Democrat, Philanthropist, and Atheist."[48] Certainly, Godwin did not discourage Shelley's patronage or adoration, although he displaced his own desires on "Mrs. Godwin and three daughters" who he confessed were "interested in your letters

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[44] Jane Roland Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 2-3.
[45] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 21.
[46] Charlotte Gordon, *Romantic Outlaws* (New York: Random House, 2015, Kindle Ed.), location 939.
[47] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 18.
[48] Cian Duffy, *Shelley and the Revolutionary Sublime* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 90.

and your history."[49] During the early summer of 1814, the married Shelley began taking his meals regularly with the Godwin family on Skinner Street. By 26 June of that same year, Mary Godwin Wollstonecraft and Percy Shelley had declared their love for each other in the graveyard of St. Pancras in front of Mary Wollstonecraft's grave.[50] The couple "marked this day as the start of their sexual relationship."[51]

Less than a month later, on 18 July 1814, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin and her stepsister, Jane/Claire, ran away with Shelley to France.[52] Among his many causes, was Shelley's mission to liberate young women from their oppressive domestic circumstances. Only three years before liberating Mary and Jane/Claire, he had sprung the sixteen-year-old Harriet Westbrook from her domestic trap and eloped with her 28 August 1811. Now he had left the pregnant Harriet and his first child in London and embarked on a new "rescue" mission guided by his "harem psychology": saving Mary and their failed chaperone, Jane/Claire Godwin, from stifling Skinner Street.[53] The sixteen-year-old Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin was likely seduced by Shelley's

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[49] William Godwin as quoted in Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 18.
[50] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 20.
[51] Charlotte Gordon, *Romantic Outlaws* (New York: Random House, 2015, Kindle Ed.), location 1390.
[52] William St. Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 363. After Mary and Jane/Claire ran away on 18 July 1814, some would joke that Godwin "sold" his sixteen-year-old daughters to Shelley to remedy his dire financial situation.[52] Shelley had promised to give Godwin a substantial sum of money on the evening before his daughters fled to France with Shelley. Because the wayward trio needed funds for their journey, Shelley was only able to give Godwin a fraction of the promised amount: £1500. Writing a letter to Shelley, Godwin betrays his ambivalence toward the mixed blessing of his daughter's affair with the married poetic "genius." In uncharacteristic hyperbole, Godwin says, "I could not believe that you wd. enter my house under the name of benefactor, to leave behind an endless poison to corrode my soul. I would as soon have credited that the stars would fall from Heav'n for my destruction…" Godwin's private "principles" were not as fixed as his public prose suggested.
[53] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 73, 21. In Sir Timothy's view, his son's rescue fantasies were as untenable as this second elopement. The financial security that had made Shelley valuable to Godwin evaporated when Sir Timothy withheld his son's allowance. Monies Shelley remitted to Godwin came from high-interest post-obit loans on the Shelley estate. Shelley's schemes, like Godwin's principles, were compromised by material conditions.

hypocritical chivalry, but she was also frightened and fascinated by his suicidal ideations and attempts at the prospect of being separated from her.

Through a haze of "incarnate romance" during their pilgrimage to Rousseau, Shelley became Mary Godwin Wollstonecraft's father figure, her "everything," until she might regain Godwin's paternalistic love.[54] According to Mellor, "Percy, as the older published poet, quickly assumed the role of mentor-teacher to his young student-mistress, setting Mary to work on a rigorous program of reading and study that she followed dutifully for years to come."[55] But having studied her mother's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796), a work that was "calculated to make a man [Godwin] fall in love with its author [Wollstonecraft]," Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin was already well-schooled in the "romantic aesthetic" that she would develop experientially on this first, difficult "tour" of the "wartorn" continent.[56] Problematically, she could "find beauty in a natural scene only by removing people from it."[57] The letters and journals that she would eventually publish as *History of a 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* (1817) are particularly telling of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin's adolescent worldview during this complicated educational metamorphosis.

Mellor reads Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin's experience and treatment of a feminized nature as "a sacred life-force that sustains those human beings who treat her

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[54] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 24. She could not have known that she would be estranged from her father for three and a half years after running away with Shelley.
[55] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 23.
[56] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 24.
[57] Ibid, 25. This is an ecologically problematic feature of both Enlightenment and Romantic thought.

with respect" as an "ecological vision that she owed in part to what she read as Wordsworth's celebration of a maternally nurturant Nature "that never did betray / the heart that loved her," while for Shelley, Nature embodied a thrillingly sublime and terrifyingly unstable force.[58] In both visions, though, Nature is cordoned off and elevated from all-too-human culture. Mellor suggests that Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin idolized Nature because she craved stability in the wake of her severed relations with Godwin. Perhaps her worship of Nature as a maternal caregiver may also have been inspired by her feelings of motherlessness and by the decidedly unromantic poverty that heralded her educational metamorphosis into Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.

After six weeks, the half-starved, bedraggled, and penniless travelers returned to London to face the consequences of their scandalous conduct. The pregnant Mary had been terribly ill on the stormy sea passage home, leaving Shelley and Jane/Claire alone to cultivate their gothic romance on the ship's deck. When they reached London, Shelley found that he could not pay for their return voyage from France because his wife, Harriet Shelley, in the final trimester of her pregnancy, had withdrawn all the money from their account. Shelley begged for funds from his abandoned wife at the Westbrooks' "stolid, bourgeois" home when no one in London would help the trio.[59]

Their "gloomy little lodgings" on Church Terrace overlooked Wollstonecraft's grave where Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin "often went to sit and read," and perhaps to wonder if Shelley was more in love with her name than with her in all her complexity.[60] Surely, he loved her for her "exquisitely fashioned" mind, but troublingly he saw

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[58] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 26-7.
[59] Charlotte Gordon, *Romantic Outlaws* (New York: Random House, 2015, Kindle Ed.), location 2076.
[60] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 122.

himself as "possess[ing] this treasure."[61] Claire, as her stepsister Jane Clairmont had fashionably renamed herself, was becoming an unbearable burden and an intolerable presence in Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin's view. But Claire delighted Shelley with her levity and her susceptibility to his tales of terror. Shelley was finally living his radical thought experiment of free love and had no intention of releasing either captive.

Anxious that Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin should join him in practicing free love just as she had joined him in flouting the institution of marriage according to Godwin's principles, Shelley encouraged the pregnant adolescent to have a sexual relationship with his university friend, Thomas Jefferson Hogg.[62] While she became and remained close friends with Hogg, and scant evidence hints that she obeyed Shelley, her own words unfailingly suggest her discomfort with Shelley's plurality schemes.[63] While Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin could not understand how her father could fault her for practicing his principles, she could not well endure living Shelley's communal "experiments" either. Yet, perhaps it was this seventeen year-old girl's sense that she had lost her father that pushed her to promise Shelley to "be a good girl & never vex [him] and to "learn Greek" just as Godwin would have wanted.[64]

The trio fashioned themselves as socially conscious bohemians: refraining from consuming animals and sugar to protest the unethical treatment of non-human and human animals; moving from place to place in London to avoid creditors who had rented to them on Shelley's family name; reading revolutionary texts; attending

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[61] Percy Bysshe Shelley as quoted in Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 123.
[62] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 160.
[63] Shelley wanted Harriet and his two children to join Hogg, Claire, and Mary in a communal domestic arrangement.
[64] Florence A. Thomas Marshall, *The Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Complete* (Los Angeles: The Library of Alexandria, 2000), Kindle Edition, location 1075.

incendiary lectures and poetry readings; and keeping only the most radical company. But the reality was that they were undernourished (children, in the case of the girls), anxious, and dogged by scandal. Little wonder, then, that Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin's daughter, Clara, was born two months prematurely and scarcely survived for eleven days, the same period of time Wollstonecraft survived after giving birth to Clara's mother. Neither is it surprising that Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin blamed herself for the baby's death just as she blamed herself for her mother's death and dreamed the dream of a child-mother "that it had only been cold & that we rubbed it by the fire & it lived."[65]

In an attempt to ease Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin's devastation at having lost Clara, Shelley sent Claire off to Devon. Some scholars speculate that Claire was pregnant and Shelley sent her away to hide the pregnancy from the grieving Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin.[66] Whatever the actual case may be, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin came out of her dark depression during Claire's absence, reread Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* and her father's *Fleetwood*, wrote children's stories ("Maurice" and "The Fisher's Cot"), [67] and again dared to imagine Shelley as her "sweet elf" until he left her to check on Claire's welfare.[68]

During their residence at Bishopgate, a time Seymour says was characterized by "unconscious comedy and high earnestness," Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin became an active participant in the philosophical, scientific, moral, and political debates of her

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[65] Florence A. Thomas Marshall, *The Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Complete* (Los Angeles: The Library of Alexandria, 2000), Kindle Edition, location 1281.
[66] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 165-75.
[67] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 134-6.
[68] Susan Tyler Hitchcock, *Frankenstein: A Cultural History* (New York: Norton, 2007), 61.

time. When William Lawrence, the respected surgeon who had attended Clara's birth, espoused scientifically racist theories about Africans, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin educated herself on the slave trade and became even more vehemently against *it*, but not vocally against Lawrence.[69] While others mocked Lord Monboddo's theory of a "lost simian civilization," Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin found the underlying ideas fascinating.[70] She studied to keep up with the classicists in her midst even while she managed to grow a garden in the city to better nourish her second pregnancy.

The birth of William "Willmouse" Shelley in January of 1816 was not enough to warm Godwin's heart to again allow Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin under his Skinner Street roof as she had hoped it would. She was hurt by the injustice that Claire was permitted to see her mother in Godwin's house, but motherless Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin was cut off from her father and scandalized by her stepmother's relentless gossip. Fanny, all the while, occupied the awful status of an illegitimate, unmarried daughter of marriageable age whom, like a good Miltonic daughter, copied Godwin's cold, hurtful letters to Shelley demanding his promised financial support.[71] Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin's correspondence and journals during this time clearly show her resentment toward Fanny's uneasy father-daughter relationship with Godwin.

While the trio's decision to go to Geneva, the "refuge of the English enlightenment in exile," was most likely due to the rabid gossip that haunted them in England, Claire's infatuation with George Gordon, Lord Byron, also self-exiled to

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[69] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 138-9.
[70] Ibid, 140-1.
[71] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 145-53.

Geneva, may have also have influenced their decision to leave London.[72] The pregnant Claire had met and had a sexual relationship with him in London a few months prior and could not see that "[her] mistake was to have fallen in love with the devil's mask which hid a surprisingly old-fashioned Regency dandy."[73] Ignorant of the pregnancy and certainly of the possibility that Shelley had fathered Claire's child, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin dared to be hopeful and spent the "summer during which *Frankenstein* was conceived" learning Italian, marveling at powerful Alpine electrical storms, touring the sublime Alps, and mothering her beloved Willmouse.[74] With Byron, John William Polidori, Byron's personal physician and harassed houseguest, Shelley, and Claire, the "devout but nearly silent listener," Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, spent many evenings discussing ideas and telling stories while nature, in pathetic fallacy, raged in the mountains and skies that overlooked blackened Lake Geneva.[75] Inspired by readings of German ghost stories, Coleridge's "Christabel," interactions with sublime nature, discussions of galvanism, speculations on the origins of life, and experiences of guilt and exile, Byron challenged each of them to write a horror story. Only Byron and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin would fully develop the narratives sketched out during this time into full-length works: *Manfred* and *Frankenstein*.[76]

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[72] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 145.
[73] Ibid, 151.
[74] Ibid, 153-56.
[75] Ibid, 155-61. Just prior to joining Byron, Polidori had attended two lectures on creation without God by William Lawrence, the same celebrated surgeon who attended Clara's birth and espoused his racist medical views at the Bishopsgate gatherings, in his new position as Professor of Anatomy at the Royal College of Surgeons. Polidori would commit suicide in London, on 24 August 1821.
[76] Although originally attributed to Byron, Polidori authored the popular short story *The Vampyre* on Byron's challenge. It, too, enjoyed some fame as modernity's first vampire tale, influencing Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897).

Claire's pregnancy brought the trio back to England in September. They settled in Bath where Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin attended the theater, lectures of the Literary and Philosophical Society, and a salon of sorts at the home of Mary and Thomas Peacock.[77] Discussions at the Peacock's suppers focused on issues of social and economic justice, especially the corn failure and subsequent famine of 1816. While she learned of contemporary social, political, and economic ills, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin could not see that her personal woes were symptomatic of those same ills.

During this time, Fanny wrote Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin despairing letters to which she replied tersely. Perhaps caring for Claire during her pregnancy hardened her to the plight of her half-sister. When Fanny went missing in October after a "very alarming" letter, all assumed the "worst possible," but Shelley had a particularly violent reaction to the news and "jumped up thrust his hand in [his] hair" and joined the search.[78] Fanny's body was found alone in an inn at Swansea, an apparent suicide by laudanum.[79] A necklace of mysterious origin, a Swiss watch from Mary and Shelley, and her stocking stays, embroidered with her mother's initials (MGW) and passed down to Fanny, were the only clues to the identity of this young woman.[80] Godwin, in striking contrast to his reaction to Wollstonecraft's death, insisted that Fanny be buried

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[77] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 166-7.
[78] Quoted in Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 234.
[79] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 222-5, 234-40. Todd convincingly argues that Shelley provided Fanny with the laudanum on which she overdosed and that he had indeed seduced Fanny and made promises to "rescue" her from Godwin's house as he had rescued Harriet, Claire, and Shelley. Uncharacteristic silence, missing letters and journal entries, during this time do a great deal to confirm Todd's claims.
[80] Ibid, 232-3.

in an unmarked grave so that in death she could realize the "obscurity she so much desired" in life.[81] Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin's journals went suspiciously silent.

Real tragedies and sensational gossip continued to interrupt Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin's attempts to live a scholarly and private life, but during her transformation into Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley she sought solace in heavy artistic collaboration with Shelley. As she wrote *Frankenstein*, the couple read *Paradise Lost* and speculated on Godwin's thesis in *Caleb Williams* that members of our species are social animals and their exclusion from society leads to violent and criminal behaviors. But the horrors of reality again broke the spell of their study.

The pregnant body of Harriet Westbrook Shelley "Smith" was found in the Serpentine River in London about six weeks after her initial drowning.[82] It is unclear whether she took the name "Smith" because a man by that name had fathered her pregnancy or if she took it to protect her anonymity, but many biographers suggest that Shelley was the father of Harriet's unborn child at the time of her suicide.[83] Indisputable, however, was the fact that Shelley wanted custody of Iathe and Charles, his two acknowledged children with Harriet, and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin supported his suit.[84] A desire to appear stable for the custody courts may have motivated Shelley to marry Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin on 30 December 1816 just

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[81] William Godwin as quoted in Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 171.
[82] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 175-6. Again, because of silence on the part of those who would most likely know the real story and clamorous gossip on the part of those who would not, it is difficult to parse out the truth of Harriet's life and death. Shelley blamed the conventional Westbrooks, especially her sister who stood to benefit from Harriet's disinheritance. Some sources say that upon being driven from the Westbrook house, Harriet "fell" into prostitution and became pregnant much like the heroine in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman*.
[83] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 244-9.
[84] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 176.

seventeen days after Harriet's body was discovered.[85] Godwin was in attendance. She had been calling herself Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley for some time and "while indifferent enough to write the wrong date for the wedding in her diary, [she] took sedate pleasure in signing herself 'Mary W. Shelley.'"[86] She replaced Godwin's name.

Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin was now legally Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, but her educational metamorphosis was still in process. Pregnant again, she continued to balance motherhood (caring for the temperamental Shelley must be included in her mothering), her studies, writing, Mozart concerts, visits to Lord Elgin's "removals" at the British museum, and attending talks by Coleridge and others.[87] While she finished *Frankenstein* and ran a busy household, Shelley studied and wrote work that focused more overtly on social, political, and economic justice, seemingly blind to those issues at home. Shelley was virtually sainted by followers like Leigh and Marianne Hunt while Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, "a sedate faced young lady…with her great tablet of a forehead, and her white shoulders unconscious of a crimson gown" was the only one to take herself and the world very seriously.[88] The nineteen year-old finished *Frankenstein* on 13 May 1817 and showed the manuscript to Godwin before adding the petulant, adamantine question from Book X of Milton's *Paradise Lost* to the epigraph just under her dedication of the book to her father: "Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay / To mould me Man, did I solicit thee / From darkness to promote me?"[89]

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[85] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 177.
[86] Ibid, 177.
[87] Ibid, 180-84.
[88] Quoted in Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 188.
[89] Ibid, 186, 189.

None of Godwin's contacts would agree to publish the controversial manuscript, but Shelley's would. Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin wisely kept the copyrights and allowed her "hideous progeny" to be published anonymously by Lackingtons, a publishing house known for its "cheap books."[90] In this, Shelley literally replaced Godwin as far as pushing for publication. And much like Godwin, he missed the educational thought of *Frankenstein*. Perhaps because it would damn him as much as the Milton quote would damn Godwin, Shelley refused to see that his ideas about education were Godwinian: the environment created people, but people changed society and therefore could improve society and individual people. At the same time, though, Shelley, like Godwin subscribed to "the fatality of heredity, appearance and temperament – and they seemed particularly interested in this in relation to women."[91] Shelley would not have considered himself Godwinian or Frankensteinian at this stage, but Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's book certainly cast him as embodying contradiction. Her grateful references in the Preface to a "friend" who helped her novel come to life caused critics and readers to speculate that Shelley or Godwin actually wrote it. Finally, in naming herself as the author, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, she owned her rejection of Godwin and his name even while she allowed herself to be subsumed in Shelley's name. But she kept the part of herself that was her mother's daughter, Wollstonecraft.

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley to Mary Shelley (1816-1851): Posterity

Perhaps Wollstonecraft's scandals still clung to Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's new name despite having dropped Godwin and taken Shelley, making it difficult for her to remain in England. More likely, though, it was the birth of Alba, Claire's illegitimate

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[90] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 190.
[91] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 45.

child with Byron, which provided the impetus the trio needed to move their household to Italy where Byron now lived.[92] Too, after Shelley was denied custody of Ianthe and Charles in the midst of rumors he had fathered Alba, his health declined and Dr. Lawrence recommended the Italian climate.[93] Amid London gossip and plans to move to Italy, Mary gave birth to her third child and named her Clara, after the daughter who had died in her arms only two years before.

After christening Willmouse, Clara, and Alba (who Byron renamed Allegra), the trio set out for Milan in March of 1818 via Napoleon's road from France to Switzerland, where they "suffered only the minor irritation of a temporary confiscation of the works of Rousseau and Voltaire…at the French border."[94] Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley continued her program of study, reading Sir Walter Scott's *Rob Roy* and Byron's "Lara," "The Corsair," and "The Giaour" and attending the opera, plays, and mothering her children (including Shelley) and Allegra. Byron refused to visit them in Milan and sent a messenger to retrieve the child, but Allegra was too ill to travel. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley knew if Allegra stayed, her mother Claire would stay, and she wanted Claire out of their house. Against Shelley's desire that they all live together, she arranged to have Allegra sent to Byron in Venice with the nurse, Elise Duvillard.[95]

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[92] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 191. Byron was in Italy, and regardless of Alba's true paternity, all agreed that her father was Byron and that being in closer proximity to Byron's name (if not Byron) would eventually be better positioned to benefit from it. Of course, Byron was a man of extremes and either wanted Alba in his sole custody or not at all. At least with Mary and Shelley, Byron reasoned, Alba could have some pretense to normalcy in the relaxed legal climate of Italy.
[93] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 198.
[94] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 198-9. According to Seymour, Godwin and Mary Jane Godwin did not attend the christening service because they resented the Shelleys and Claire leaving England and the possibility of Shelley's support leaving with them.
[95] Ibid, 206.

With Allegra gone and Claire consoled by reports that Allegra, "dressed in little trousers trimmed with lace," was being raised in Byron's home "like a little princess," Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's social consciousness was raised in economically strained Pisa where she saw the anxiety of poverty and "chained gangs of prisoners."[96] In Italy, she was able to reacquaint herself with the strong, exiled women who had been her mother's friends and her earliest caregivers, Margaret Mason (formerly Lady Mountcashell and Margaret Kingsborough) and Maria Gisborne.[97]

Finally settling in Pisa near these friends and a university in Casa Bertini, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's intellectual life flourished as she read Latin texts, Ben Johnson, and drafts of Shelley's work.[98] Godwin suggested that she write "a collection of short histories of leaders of the Commonwealth established by Oliver Cromwell after the execution of Charles I," but Shelley discouraged her efforts as a biographer, preferring that she "write a tragic drama."[99] Godwin himself finally authored *A History of the Commonwealth of England* while Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley copied her husband's translation of Plato's *Symposium*.[100]

This male coopting of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's talent, time, and desires must have seemed a petty disappointment in the light of letters they received from Elise begging to be rescued with Allegra from Byron's house. Shelley and Claire went to Venice to retrieve Elise and Allegra, and left Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley alone with the "terror" she always experienced at the prospect of Shelley's leaving her, especially

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[96] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 206.
[97] Janet Todd, *Daughters of Ireland* (New York: Random House, 2003), 297-8. Maria Gisborne had been one of Godwin's marriage interests.
[98] Ibid, 209.
[99] Ibid, 208.
[100] She would eventually write *Perkin Warbeck: A Romance* (1830) as a historical fiction. After Shelley's death, she also published a great deal of serious scholarship including biographies and reviews.

to "rescue" young women, and most especially when he left with Claire.[101] This terror may well explain why she agreed to follow when Shelley summoned her to Venice to alleviate suspicion about his travelling alone with Claire, despite the fact that Clara was very ill with dysentery. On 24 September 1818, in Este, a village outside of Venice, Clara died and "was buried on the lonely beach of the Lido" without a grave marker.[102]

Later in autumn of the same year, the Shelleys and Claire became resident tourists in Rome. By November, they were in Naples making pilgrimage to Virgil. It was also in Naples where Shelley adopted and gave his name to his "Neapolitan 'charge'," a baby named Elena Adelaide Shelley.[103] While speculations abound, nothing in the extant source material is definitive as to this child's parentage. What is clear is that the day after registering the baby as the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and Percy Bysshe Shelley, the Shelley's and Claire returned to Rome with Elena on 28 February 1819 where she died during the summer of 1820.[104]

Amid rumors of Claire's aborted pregnancy, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's actual pregnancy, Shelley's melancholy poetry, and Willmouse's illness, social events in Rome like receiving royalty and being presented to the Pope must have rung rather hollow in the tense, ill Shelley home. Willmouse's illness was eventually identified as

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[101] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 211. Seymour speculates that Elise likely had an affair with Byron that went wrong.
[102] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 158.
[103] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 219-21. The parentage of this child remains a mystery, but scholars have speculated that Shelley fathered Elena with an unnamed Englishwoman, Claire, or Elise, their children's nurse. Others think Elena may have been the daughter of Elise and Byron, while still others believe as Mary seemed to believe, that Elena was a foundling Shelley adopted to ameliorate her grief. The parentage of this child remains a mystery, but scholars have speculated that Shelley fathered Elena with an unnamed Englishwoman, Claire, or Elise, their children's nurse. Others think Elena may have been the daughter of Elise and Byron, while still others believe as Mary seemed to believe, that Elena was a foundling Shelley adopted to ameliorate her grief.
[104] Ibid, 221.

malaria. It grew critical, and along with so many young children suffering in malarial southern Italy, the little boy died 7 June of 1819.[105]

During this time, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley completely withdrew from the household and finished her mother's *The Cave of Fancy* first as *The Fields of Fancy* and finally as the novella, *Mathilda*, the story of a father with incestuous desires for his daughter.[106] Godwin was horrified and confiscated the manuscript his daughter sent him.[107] While there is no evidence to suggest that Shelley read the manuscript, he surely appears in the novella as Woodville, a poet who unsuccessfully courts the suicidal Mathilda who holds herself responsible for the death of her father.

News of the more that 500 peaceful demonstrators killed in the Peterloo Massacre on 16 August 1819 inspired Shelley's "The Masque of Anarchy" (1819), but Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's revolutionary zeal was darkened by an endless train of loss and she would later claim that Shelley's revolutionary spirit had been long dead by 1819, too.[108] Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley could not emerge from her grief over Willmouse's death until Percy Florence Shelley was born on 12 November 1819.[109] After his birth, she began publically supporting revolutionaries in both Spain and Naples, but her domestic relations were chilly at best.[110] Shortly after a visit from Margaret Mason from Pisa, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley moved her study to Mason's villa. On Mason's advice, she had cordoned off a "room of her own" away from Shelley and Claire. Eventually, though, Mason would favor Claire over Mary.

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[105] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 169.
[106] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 235-6.
[107] Ibid, 236.
[108] Ibid, 237.
[109] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 180.
[110] Ibid, 197.

The Shelley's friendship with Edward and Jane Williams that began in 1821, however, promised to be longer-lived. Right from the beginning, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley overlooked Jane's duplicitousness and envied what she took to be her "simple" love for Edward. And Shelley, too, compared his cold marriage to the Williams's warm one and wrote rather cruel poems reproaching his frigid wife.[111] Shelley's spirits rose and his passion for sailing, all but left behind in the Geneva summer of 1816, was reignited by Edward's love of sailing. But the Byron-Claire-Allegra situation continued to complicate the Shelley's lives.

News that Byron had sent the four-year-old Allegra to live in the convent Bagnacavallo in Ravenna, brought Shelley and Claire to Allegra's rescue and left Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley alone in Pisa, anxiously caring for baby Percy. The result of their journey south was a new collaborative publishing venture for Shelley; a journal with Leigh Hunt and Byron called the *Liberal*.[112] For this, Shelley would secure much larger lodgings in Pisa to accommodate the Hunts and Byron and his mistress, Teresa

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[111] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 147. During her she wrote *Valperga* and researched folk tales of haunting. Claire had taken a position in Florence, leaving Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley in uneasy peace and Shelley in self-interested longing for Claire's "impetuousness" and "warmth" (Seymour 255). At their residence in Lung'Arno, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley cultivated a friendship with an exiled Greek Prince, Alexander Mavrocordatos, and with him, championed the cause of Greek independence from Turkey (259-65). Meanwhile, Shelley pursued another damsel in distress, Emilia Viviani, whose "noble and unfortunate" person, "imprisoned" by her father, the governor of Pisa, in a "convent," would virtually replace Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley as "the moon" in Shelley's poetry (266-9). Rather, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley would become the "winter moon" and Emilia a flaming comet until she threatened blackmail.

[112] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 227-9. Sunstein cites conservative criticism that calls the journal an "unholy alliance" (232).

Guiccioli.[113] Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was pleased with the prospect of the their company and the assurance that Claire would be forced to leave their house.[114]

Byron joined them at Pisa, but Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's moods continued to be dark. The promise of reliving Geneva, 1816 was a failed promise. She was no longer her father's daughter, Mary Godwin, nor was she the Mary Godwin Wollstonecraft of 1816. Her resentment-fueled marriage to Shelley made it difficult to claim his name, her only surviving child's name, yet she could not seem to shed it. She turned inward and read. Most notably, she sullenly read "the Hist. of Shipwrecks" while Shelley and Edward Williams engineered a boat. With the arrival of the "extraordinarily young…fun," ex-naval recruit, Edward Trelawny, Shelley and Byron planned to test their vessel the following summer.[115] Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was as taken with Trelawny and his stories as the others in her expatriate circle, and they built a friendship around their common interest in gothic literature. Only Byron was skeptical of Trelawny's "swashbuckling" tales of his seaworthy expertise.[116] The stories thrilled Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, but Shelley's sailing fantasies terrified her.

And she began to feel unwelcome in Pisa. She wanted to attend Protestant services in Pisa but the clergyman, Dr. John Nott, used Shelley's atheism as a platform for an attack on atheism itself.[117] Excluded from Nott's circle, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley turned back to social activities that orbited around Shelley. Largely because of Shelley's poetic presentation of himself as a "victim" of her coldness, however, even

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[113] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 277.
[114] Ibid, 279-81. When Claire was absent, Shelley was either figuratively withdrawn or literally absent with Claire. According to Seymour, "Liberal though Shelley may have been in his views, he was not so modern or so generous as to give Mary and equal say when her wishes conflicted with his own" (279).
[115] Ibid, 282.
[116] Ibid, 284.
[117] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 209.

their close friends rather maligned her.[118] The final cause, though, of their move to the Villa Magni on the bay of Lerici was the news on 23 April 1822, that Allegra had died of typhus in the convent at Ravenna.[119] The Shelleys agreed that the distraught Claire must be shuttled away from Byron for her own protection.

The sublime setting of Villa Magni did indeed inspire terror and "visions" for Mary, during the early months of her fourth pregnancy. From this isolated house, perched "above the surge of the sea" against the "rocky coast," Mary entertained ideations of impending disaster and feared something terrible might befall baby Percy.[120] Shelley, however, was smitten with the house and the bay, despite reporting hallucinations of a smiling, clapping little girl rising out of the sea, "nightmarish visions" of dead "sleepers" engaged in a "ghastly dance," and "dreams" of his doppelgänger.[121] In this sublimely gothic crucible, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley miscarried 16 June 1822.[122]

Shelley and Edward Williams built their "new toy," dubbed the *Don Juan*, extending its stem and stern and adding top-sails to give the illusion that it was longer and taller than Byron's boat.[123] Watching all of this construction and foolishness from the cold comfort of Villa Magni, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley became convinced that

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[118] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 287.
[119] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 215.
[120] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 294.
[121] Ibid, 295-6.
[122] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 144.
[123] Donald Prell, *Edward John Trelawny* (Palm Springs: Strand Publishing, 2008), 29. Until Prell, Trelawny's biographer and sometime apologist, dispelled what he calls the "unseaworthiness myth," biographers and literary scholars have enjoyed the kind of Freudian "mast competition" between Byron and Shelley. The popular wisdom said that had they consulted a Boatwright, or even a general engineer rather than relying on the dubious expertise of Trelawny and his friend, Captain Roberts, they would have learned that the extensions made the *Don Juan* dangerously unbalanced. According to Prell, it was Shelley and Williams who were unseaworthy, not the *Don Juan*. In 1831, Mary Shelley edited Trelawny's biography, *Adventures of a Younger Son*, therefore it is possible that she contributed to some of the enduring criticisms of Trelawny.

the place itself caused her to miscarry and begged Shelley to return to Pisa. During a visit with the Hunts to Pisa, Shelley wrote to Mary to tell her the family would stay on at Villa Magni and that he, Edward Williams, and a young sailor would soon set sail from Livorno to Lerici to join her. The three set sail on 8 July in spite of a storm.

When they did not appear by 11 July, Jane, Claire, and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley began to worry. Jane and Claire went to the Hunt's house in Pisa to see Byron and Teresa before travelling on to Livorno to speculate about the *Don Juan's* fate with Trelawny and Roberts, who held out impossible hope for its safe return.[124] Returning to Lerici later that same morning, Jane Williams and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley were still hopeful until the news that two bodies, later identified as Edward Williams and Charles Vivian, had washed ashore halfway between Livorno and Lerici, in Viareggio, on 18 July. When another body surfaced, only the book of Keats's poems in the pocket identified him to Trelawny as Percy Bysshe Shelley.[125]

After his death, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley took a suicidal kind of solace in her belief that Shelley was always with her, teaching her to be "worthy to join him."[126] She wanted him buried next to William in Rome, but Trelawny would have the final word on the ceremony. He chose to have Shelley's body covered in quicklime and burned on the Italian shore in a Pagan rite. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was not in attendance, but witnesses marveled at the supernatural flames that leapt from Shelley's

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[124] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 302-3. That early morning, Roberts said he had seen the Don Juan lowering her top-sails only about ten miles from shore. Even with a telescope, it would have been impossible to see at that distance through stormy skies. Seymour claims that Robert's optimism was inspired by his guilt over encouraging Shelley to add the top-sails.
[125] Samantha Mathews, *Poetical Remains* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 133.
[126] Florence A. Thomas Marshall, *The Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Complete* (Los Angeles: The Library of Alexandria, 2000), Kindle Edition, location 4953.

"transcendent, not quite human" funeral pyre.[127] None seemed to know that the chemical properties of quicklime cause it to glow with incandescence at high temperatures. Finally, the Shelleyan myth, rather than the reality, became the matter.

For Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, it was her guilt over her publically reknowned coldness that was to be the legacy of her life with Shelley thanks in large part to Shelley's poetry and correspondence as well as to Trelawny's flawed biography of Shelley. While she did fight Trelawny for Shelley's heart, snatched in gothic glory from the funeral pyre, she could not stem the tide of resentment against her, nor did she seem to want to thwart the proposed canonization of Shelley's sainthood by speaking her truth.[128] However, in a letter to her mother's dear friend, Maria Gisborne, dated 17 September 1822, her tone is resentful, blaming Shelley, her "own beloved, and exalted & divine Shelley," for having "left [her] alone in this miserable and hateful world."[129]

The poles of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's educational metamorphosis into Mary Shelley were, on the one hand, her desperate attempts to use her mother's name to regain acceptance from her radical circle despite Trelawny's smear campaign, and on the other, her desperate attempts to use her husband's name to attain some measure of respectability that would insure Sir Timothy Shelley's acknowledgement of his grandson, Percy Shelley. The embittered, guilt-driven twenty-four year-old widow set about devoting the remainder of her life to securing the legacies of both Percys. In "the last story I shall have to tell," Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley assures Gisborne that with "all that might have been bright in my life…now despoiled," she "shall live to improve

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[127] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 304.
[128] Ibid, 306.
[129] Florence A. Thomas Marshall, *The Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Complete* (Los Angeles: The Library of Alexandria, 2000), Kindle Edition, location 5082.

myself, to take care of my child, and render myself worthy to join him [Shelley]."[130] But Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's educational metamorphosis into Mary Shelley would take place over the remainder of her life.

Living under Byron's protection as his "fair copyist" during the period immediately following Shelley's death, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's journal entries suggest that she succumbed to Byron's uncanny "power…of exciting such deep & shifting emotions." [131] When confronted by Teresa's jealousy, however, she marveled at anyone who could be jealous of a "living corpse."[132] With Byron and Hogg's help, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and Jane Williams joined the Hunts in Genoa while Claire carried on a brief affair with Trelawny. [133] Amid copying Byron's endless "Cantos"; writing for *The Liberal*; unearthing and copying Shelley's unpublished writing; beginning work on Shelley's biography; and finishing her novel, *Valperga*,[134] Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley taught her son, Percy. Again in Godwin's good graces, ostensibly because of her attempts to support herself through her writing (although he suggested she pursue the more popular vein of travel writing), she asked him to send her a copy of her mother's *Lessons* from which she took Percy's curriculum.[135]

Regardless of her relative independence, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was impoverished. After Byron met with Sir Timothy on her behalf to convince him to help

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[130] Florence A. Thomas Marshall, *The Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Complete* (Los Angeles: The Library of Alexandria, 2000), Kindle Edition, location 4915.
[131] Ibid, location 5236.
[132] Ibid, location 4972.
[133] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 227.
[134] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 320. *Valperga* is a historical fiction about Castruccio Castracani, a tyrant who conquered Florence in the fourteenth-century and forces his lover Countess Euthanasia's to choose between the political liberty of her fictive Valperga and his love. She dies for political liberty and Valperga. The novel was published in 1823 to mediocre reviews and Mary's financial woes increased.
[135] Ibid, 319.

support his widowed daughter-in-law and his grandson Percy, Sir Timothy agreed to support Percy if Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley agreed to surrender him to the Shelley estate.[136] Despite Byron's urging her to relinquish Percy, she insisted on keeping him while redoubling her efforts to appease Sir Timothy. Between Byron's leaving Italy to fight for Greek independence and Jane's betrayal in gossiping about her troubled marriage, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley planned her return to England. [137]

During the summer of 1823, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley returned to England by way of France where she stayed a short time with the Smiths and the Kenneys, old revolutionary friends of her parents (and not admirers of the "new" Mrs. Godwin).[138] She was thrilled to report in a letter to the Hunts that "Mrs. K[enney] says that I am grown very like my Mother, especially in Manners – in my way of addressing people – this is the most flattering thing anyone cd say to me. I have tried to please them, & have hopes that I have succeeded."[139] Both the Smiths and the Kenneys, far more partial to Wollstonecraft than to Godwin, warned Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley that she would find England a very difficult place, but she dared to refuse her exile, took her first steamboat voyage, and arrived a "famous" prodigal in London, August of 1823. Her fame came not from the novel *Frankenstein*, but from the sensational stage

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[136] During this time women had no legal right to their children and both women and children were the property of their fathers and husbands.
[137] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 323-5. Byron left travel funds for her with Hunt, but Hunt kept the money. Deceived, she wrote Byron a resentful letter to which he replied that he would forgive her if she comforted Teresa in his absence. Instead, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley found a way to return to England. Trelawny told people that he, Trelawny, paid for her return to England with Percy, but in truth, he loaned her part of the money and Mrs. Mason paid the remainder.
[138] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 242-5.
[139] Mary Shelley as quoted in Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 328.

production, *Presumption, or the Fate of Frankenstein*.[140] She attended the amusingly warped version of her novel with her brother, William, Jane, and her father.

Over the five years Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley spent in Italy, London had clothed itself in the ultra-modern raiment of empire and transformed into "an urban Arcadia for the wealthy."[141] She felt like a stranger in this "city of the future."[142] Thus, she and little Percy settled with Jane in a Kentish Town that had gone from a sleepy village to a suburb, and she began writing her apocalyptic novel, *The Last Man*.[143]

The enduring animosity between Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and her stepmother Mrs. Godwin made it difficult to return to her father's London, but the sixty-seven year-old Godwin was very pleased to have the "curator of his reputation" in close range.[144] Beyond her value to Godwin's intellectual legacy, reconciliation between Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and Sir Timothy would mean the financial security Godwin desperately craved. She felt obliged to support her father, but held out little hope of securing an allowance from Sir Timothy during her lifetime or an inheritance for Percy. However, Sir Timothy did agree to give her an annual pittance of £200 if she agreed not to publish a Shelley biography or to use his name, her hard-won surname, in

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[140] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 333-4. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley made no money from this stage production that only vaguely resembled her novel, but the protests in front of the theater garnered her a good deal of negative publicity. Protestors carried signs that called the play a "monstrous Drama" based on the "improper work" *Frankenstein* dealt in a "subject pregnant with mischief." Until it began to impact her tenuous financial relationship to Sir Timothy, she did not seem to be bothered by the attention.
[141] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 330.
[142] Ibid, 329-30.
[143] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 258. Claire, writing to her "genius" (Claire's language) stepsister Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley while serving as a governess in Russia, claimed that *The Last Man* glorifies Byron (and later, *Lodore* also published as *The Beautiful Widow*, 1835) and vowed to "stick to Frankenstein" rather than join the literati's worship of Byron's "vile spirit" who, in the end, "was the merest compound of Vanity, folly, and every miserable weakness that ever met together in one human Being (as quoted on 354)."
[144] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 333.

any of her published works.[145] She agreed. This precarious agreement would haunt Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley until Sir Timothy's death in 1844.

Somehow, she kept her private sense of humor while publically performing the part of an "elegant, sickly, and young" widow, devoted to the memory of Shelley and the future prospects of Percy, even while she entertained various suitors.[146] In particular, organist Vincent Novello, educated Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley in the oratorio of Haydn's *The Creation*.[147] But when news came that Byron had died of malaria in April of 1824, Mary sank into another depression and resigned herself to follow the "immortals" into an early grave after immortalizing their lives and work.[148] Because of Sir Timothy's mandate, however, she could not openly publish her biographical and editorial work. Plenty of others were free to "research" and publish this material, however. Disturbing her quiet Kentish Town life of scholarship and caretaking in Kentish Town, "friends" like Trelawny and Thomas Medwin sought Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's intimate biographical knowledge of these immortals beyond what they only vaguely knew. She finally agreed to help Thomas Moore, a poet and scholar with whom she was romantically attached, but Medwin "scooped" Moore and published Byron's biography in the fall of 1824.[149] Shelley was relegated to a footnote in Byron's life and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was completely absent.

She stayed current on the state of social, political, and economic crises on a local and global scale, watching Parliamentary debates and corresponding with radical

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[145] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 336.
[146] Ibid, 339.
[147] Ibid, 345. This oratorio appears as "the language of the immortals" at the end of *The Last Man.*
[148] Ibid, 348.
[149] Ibid, 352.

friends, but she must have felt a victim of the very system she critiqued. Constantly plagued by financial anxieties, focused on future success for Percy and survival for Godwin, when *The Last Man* was published in 1825, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley desperately needed the novel to be successful. It was not. To make matters worse, Sir Timothy suspended her meager allowance until his grandson and heir, Harriet's son, Charles Shelley, died in September of 1826.[150] Percy was now the only surviving heir to the Shelley fortune, and while Sir Timothy did increase Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's yearly allowance by £50, he was chronically late in remittance.[151] Seymour claims that "Sir Timothy's punitive attitude had by this time given Mary a terror of seeing her name in print; every time the words 'Mrs Shelley' appeared, she could be sure that her allowance would be withheld until she begged forgiveness."[152] Financial insecurity and the betrayal of friends guided her final metamorphosis.

Jane Williams moved out of the home she shared with Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and moved in with Thomas Jefferson Hogg, becoming his common-law wife. This betrayal was particularly painful to Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley who considered herself "wedded to Jane" and found Hogg despicable.[153] Heartbroken, in 1827, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley moved to Sompting on the southern coast of England. Here, she turned her attentions to helping a young woman and her illegitimate daughter escape to France with her transgendered lover to live their unconventional domestic arrangement

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[150] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), xviii.
[151] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 277.
[152] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 363.
[153] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989),\, 268. Many biographers speculate that she and Jane had a lesbian partnership.

in peace.[154] All the while, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley edited Shelley's work, wrote for ladies annuals, and researched her historical novel *Perkin Warbeck* (1830).

Acknowledging the influence of her parents and her husband in an 1827 letter, Mary Shelley discloses the burden and blessing of her legacy and metamorphoses:

> The memory of my Mother has been always been the pride and delight of my life; & the admiration of others for her, has been the cause of most of the happiness [of my life] I have enjoyed. Her *greatness of soul* & my father *high talents* have perpetually reminded me that I ought to *degenerate* as little as I could from those from whom I *derived my being*. For several years with M' Shelley I was blessed with the companionship of one, who fostered this ambition & inspired that of being worthy of him. He who was *single among men* for Philanthropy – devoted generosity – talent & goodness. –yet you *must not fancy that I am what I wish I were*, and my chief merit must always be derived, first from the *glory these wonderful beings have shed* [? around] me, & then for the enthusiasm I have for excellence & the ardent admiration I feel for those who *sacrifice* themselves for the public good" (my emphasis).[155]

On the eve of Victoria's long reign, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was optimistic about a republican ethos in France led by a new progressive king, Louis Philippe, and hoped English children, too, would "live to see a new birth for the world!"[156] She did not seem to think that an English republic was possible in her lifetime, however, and her final two novels, *Lodore* (1835) and *Falkner* (1837), reveal this skepticism. Politically aligned with the Independents' domestic policy, she surreptitiously advocated for the removal of forces in Ireland, lower taxes on the poor, and a reformed system of national education. Regarding international policy, she supported the Independents' call to abolish slavery globally. She travelled extensively, returning to the now-Romanticized

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[154] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 378-86. Fanny Wright, a friend of Wollstonecraft, helped the family settle in France. Like Jane, the beautiful young woman Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley had supported, Isabel Robinson, also betrayed her by spreading rumors in Paris.
[155] *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, vol. 2, Ed. by Betty T. Bennett (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 214.
[156] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 410.

European destinations of memory.[157] But she grew disillusioned by the day-to-day reality of her own precarious domestic arrangements.

After her younger brother William Godwin died of cholera before his thirtieth birthday, Mary Shelley clung more intensely to her son, Percy, and began making arrangements beyond her means for his schooling. When advised by a radical friend that Percy ought to be taught to think independently, it was Mary Shelley, not Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, that cynically remarked, "Teach him to think for himself? Oh, my God, teach him rather to think like other people!"[158] She sent Percy to Harrow and then to Cambridge. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley had paid an exorbitant price for her education, and in the end, it seemed she wished to protect her son from the weight of her parent's legacy and have him inherit only the titled name of his father's legacy.

Throughout the remainder of her life, though, she did travel with the thoroughly modern and bourgeois Percy and "attempt[] to enrich his mind." Four years after Percy inherited the baronetcy upon Sir Timothy's death in 1844, he married Jane Gibson St. John, by all accounts a caring, "simple" woman who worshipped Mary Shelley.[159] Sir Percy Florence Shelley and Lady Shelley would tenaciously defend Mary Shelley's memory, likely destroying letters and journals that recorded the most unsavory details. They had learned well from Mary Shelley what it meant to preserve a legacy.

When Mary Shelley's father William Godwin died in 1836 at the age of 80, Mary Shelley turned again to the treacherous Trelawny to make arrangements to have

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[157] She specifically "haunted" the sites of her past with Shelley, seeking and not finding Clara's grave. From her experiences on these journey's she published a travelogue called *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843*.
[158] Mary Shelley as quoted in Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 421.
[159] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 378-81.

him buried next to Wollstonecraft.[160] She never forgave her stepmother and effectively wrested all spousal rights from Mary-Jane Clairmont Godwin after Godwin's death, remaining estranged from her and from Claire for the remainder of her life. Even as she edited and published a new, mythic edition of Shelley's works, she dutifully immortalized Godwin's life in *Monody on the Death of William Godwin*.[161] It remained to Sir Percy and Lady Jane Shelley to shape the version of Mary Shelley for posterity.

At the age of 53, Mary Shelley died from a brain tumor, on 1 February 1851 having produced a substantial oeuvre that could have sustained her financially, but it was Percy's welfare and future that preoccupied her all of his life. As Mellor says, after she felt sure "that her son was financially secure and emotionally happy, Mary Shelley lost the will to live" and followed the "immortals" of her memory into death.[162] Sir Percy and Lady Jane had the bodies of Wollstonecraft and Godwin exhumed and reburied in Bournemouth with Mary Shelley and Percy Bysshe Shelley's heart, "leaving the second Mrs. Godwin ignobly behind."[163]

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[160] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 440.
[161] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 353-355. Sunstein calls Mary Shelley a "student of Shelley's life" (399).
[162] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 182.
[163] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 384-5.

CHAPTER II

Mary Shelley's Lived Experience as Monstrous Miseducation

Copious biographical research and literature on Mary Shelley makes clear that the tale of her life is both critical and symptomatic of a problem theorized by philosopher of education Jane Roland Martin: "cultural miseducation." Cultural miseducation involves the generational transmission of "cultural stock" that includes items that might be valued as "cultural liabilities" and those that might be valued as "cultural wealth." By preserving cultural liabilities and/or losing items of cultural wealth, "societies…become sadly miseducative."[1] Arguably, all cultural miseducation is "deeply gendered," but Mary Shelley's cultural miseducation was surely of a deeply gendered variety that is suggestive of the subspecies of cultural miseducation I have theorized from her lived experience: monstrous miseducation.[2]

Troublingly, Mary Shelley's miseducation, like her thought experiment *Frankenstein*, is emblematic of what Donna Haraway calls the "masculinist reproductive dream" – a dream of creative authorship, in the sense of authority and autonomy.[3] Premised on "hierarchical dualisms of naturalized identities,"[4] this dream, Haraway argues, has enabled the very real "traditions of 'Western' science and politics – racist, male-dominant capitalism; the tradition of progress; the tradition of the appropriation of nature as resource for the productions of culture; [and] the tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other."[5] With Carolyn Korsmeyer,

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[1] Jane Roland Martin, *Cultural Miseducation* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 65, 5.
[2] Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 3.
[3] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women (*New York: Routledge, 1991), 152.
[4] Ibid, 175.
[5] Ibid, 150.

Haraway argues that the qualitatively gendered and quantitatively ranked concepts, frameworks, and approaches of art and science constitute "a border war" in which the stakes "have been the territories of production, reproduction, and imagination."[6] When those boundaries are crossed or blurred, "the transcendent authorization of interpretation is lost, and with it the ontology grounding Western epistemology."[7] Mary Shelley's lived experience tells the story of an unstable being within a world that sometimes does not play by its own patriarchal rules. Along with unprecedented access to some of the most radical thought of the Enlightenment Era, Mary Shelley inherited deeply gendered cultural liabilities much older and more deeply rooted than the modern project to which her biographers and critics so often bind her. This dubious inheritance informs the core features of monstrous miseducation.

In the previous chapter, I unpacked the biographers' ideologically freighted name of choice, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley, showing how it typographically represents changes undergone by this individual, changes Martin would attribute to her encounters with items of cultural stock that in turn became "yoked" to her "individual capacities."[8] The educational component that biographers miss and Martin catches goes further, though, to say that alongside the individual, the culture undergoes changes, changes brought about by education's "making and shaping" power. By the same token, miseducation is imbued with the power to affect change that unmakes and misshapes individuals and cultures. It would seem that Mary Shelley's lifeline, located in context, is most properly conceptualized as a series of looping encounters and

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[6] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women (*New York: Routledge, 1991), 150.
[7] Ibid, 153.
[8] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 76.

exchanges rather than as a progressive linear ascension. Her lived experience, then, is not a *bildung*, which may well have been seen as problematic at the turn of the nineteenth century, and arguably, at the turn of the twenty-first. Despite being a daughter of radical revolutionaries who surely believed in Enlightenment promises, Mary Shelley's lived experience amounts to a deeply gendered narrative of declension and loss, troubling modernity's myths of progress and gain. Her "coming of age" did not fit the naturalized, essentialist trajectory of *bildung*. Too, she never quite satisfied the super-naturalized, exceptionalist promise of genius.

In large part, Western culture, too, believed in the failed promises of revolution (genius) and modernity (*bildung*) and begets the disillusioned, disaffected children of monstrous miseducation. Thus, it is from Mary Shelley's lived experience against the backdrop of a revolutionary era that I begin my formulation of monstrous miseducation's core features: Miltonic identity politics and their essentialism and exceptionalism; Godwinian perfectibility[9] and its paternalism and uneven development;[10] and abandonment to multiple educational agency[11] and its "techno-scientific" productivity[12] and gothic sublimity.[13] As important as the core features that are *present* in monstrous miseducation are those that are *absent*: Susan Laird's maternal teaching as the "circulation of gifts"[14] and maternal teachings[15] with their focus on love

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[9] Siobhan Ni, "'Why may not man one day be immortal?' Population, Perfectibility, and the Immortality Question in Godwin's *Political Justice*," *History of European Ideas* 33 (2007): 25-39.
[10] Joshua Esty, "The Colonial Bildungsroman," *Victorian Studies*, 49.3 (2007).
[11] Jane Roland Martin, *Cultural Miseducation* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 32.
[12] Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 174.
[13] Vijay Mishra, *The Gothic Sublime* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).
[14] Jane Roland Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 136-43.
[15] Susan Schober Laird, *Maternal Teaching and Maternal Teachings* (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1988).

and survival such that we might imagine sustainable, "rational hopes of futurity"[16] and Haraway's cyborg affinity politics with their focus on alliances and hybridity.[17]

Miltonic Identity Politics as Monstrous Miseducation: Essentialism and Exceptionalism

Wollstonecraft was in the second trimester of her pregnancy with Mary Shelley when Godwin gave his daughter his surname at the secret marriage ceremony, on 29 March 1797, at St. Pancras' church, London. The same year he gave her his name, Godwin published a series of essays in a radical periodical, *The Enquirer*. These widely circulated essays dealt with a range of subject matter, but focused prominently on education, specifically on "awakening the mind" of the immature learner. Published four years before these essays, his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) had gained Godwin notoriety as a public intellectual and a rabidly loyal readership. Arguing that "government is antithetical to enlightenment" and that "'perfectibility' [that is, 'perpetual improvement' or continual progress toward intellectual and moral perfection] is one of the most unequivocal characteristics of the human species," *Political Justice* suggests Godwin's ideological leanings and indeed reinforces the truth that any political, social, and moral economy has profound educational implications.[18] But it was in *The Enquirer* essays written on the eve of Mary Shelley's birth that Godwin explicitly laid out his educational philosophy.

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[16] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 87.
[17] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women (*New York: Routledge, 1991), 152.
[18] Paul McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 117-18.

Godwin begins his first essay on education by defining education as a "moral process" whose "true" end "is the generation of happiness."[19] Looking forward to Mary Shelley's birth, he argues the masculinist dream of genius, saying a father's first responsibility to a child is "to awaken his mind" and "to breathe a soul into the, as yet, unformed mass."[20] The "higher" mind and soul come from the father's breath while the "lower" body is an "unformed mass" produced by the mother. Expectant father Godwin, who by his own admission "become[s] Milton" when he "read[s] Milton," surely adopts a Miltonic tone as he theorizes the origin and formation of genius:[21]

> …the first indications of genius ordinarily disclose themselves at least as early, as at the age of five years. As far therefore as genius is susceptible of being produced by education, the production of it requires a very early care…. [t]he infant comes into our hands a subject, capable of certain impressions and of being led on to a certain degree of improvement. His mind is like his body. What at first was cartilage, gradually becomes bone. Just so the mind acquires its solidity; and what might originally have been bent in a thousand directions, becomes stiff, unmanageable and unimpressible.[22]

The "production" of genius, for Miltonic Godwin, is an intentional process with predictable results in the hands of a skilled "preceptor." According to his "progressive" educational philosophy, the task of developing the infant's capacities for "improvement" before "the mind acquires its solidity" would land squarely in the intentional hands of the individual creative geniuses into which his genius baby would fall. Godwin's progressive mindset cannot fathom that the change brought about by education as "a maker and shaper of individuals and cultures" can come from unintentional encounters with culture as curriculum and have unintentional

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[19] William Godwin, *The Enquirer: Reflections On Education, Manners, and Literature* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1797), 1.
[20] Ibid, 2.
[21] Ibid, 27.
[22] Ibid, 12-13.

consequences that might be "for the worse."[23] Indeed, Godwin's contribution to educational thought is informed by and informs what Martin terms the "deep structure of educational thought," Western claims and conclusions about teaching as intentional, learning as voluntary, curricula as virtuous, and "education as the achievement of knowledge and understanding" without acknowledging the critical importance of "the acquisition of feelings and emotions, passions and actions."[24] In good Miltonic form, Godwin sees education, and certainly the "production" of genius, as a process undergone by an individual at the hands of another individual and does not acknowledge the reciprocal making and shaping (unmaking and misshaping) power of multiple educational agency. Unsurprisingly, Godwin never mentions the loss, confusion, and alienation that accompany the educational metamorphoses of a singular genius born of singular geniuses about which he waxes Miltonic.

Although she certainly lived the experience of loss endemic to educational metamorphoses, Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley's lost mother, never directly treated loss as part and parcel to educational metamorphoses either. But she must have objected to Godwin's educational philosophy on other grounds. Much better known in contemporary circles for her overt philosophical inquiry into education, Wollstonecraft must have wondered at the general absence of girls and women in Godwin's rhetoric. As the author of a treatise that stands as "the English-speaking world's first widely read argument for women's full independence and citizenship," *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Mary Shelley's mother must have found Godwin's lack of

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[23] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 94.
[24] Ibid, 44-45.

coeducational wisdom troubling.[25] Indeed, she might well have found those gaps culturally miseducative, despite the fact that, as Laird points out, the Early Modern idiom had no such descriptor. One of the "central educational concepts" Laird identifies in *Rights of Woman*, "the Divine Right of Kings and its corollary conception of women's 'sexual character'" stands as a clear case of cultural miseducation and surely points to the essentialism of Miltonic identity politics.[26] Mary Shelley's genius birthright was fixed to the essential and exceptional stars of her genius parentage, in Godwin's estimation. Indeed, his rhetoric of Miltonic essentialism and exceptionalism falls under the educational concept of, "monarchist miseducation."[27]

Wollstonecraft's view of education was looking beyond individual transformations to a larger cultural landscape marred by bourgeois, late eighteenth-century essentialist concepts of femininity and masculinity. But Wollstonecraft was chiefly concerned with the material injustices of her time: the cultural liability of overt sex discrimination. The workings of Korsmeyer's "deep gender" in the monstrous miseducation of men and women remained invisible in Wollstonecraft's polemics likely because she was preoccupied with confronting the everyday, material injustices women and girls suffered in the large and small scale "educational realm" of the late eighteenth-century.[28] When the curriculum proper was so openly sexist (surely informed by Miltonic identity politics and the cultural liabilities of essentialism and exceptionalism), the hidden terror curriculum of deeply gendered monstrous miseducation stayed hidden.

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[25] Susan Laird, *Mary Wollstonecraft* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), 12.
[26] Ibid, 63.
[27] Ibid, 77-108.
[28] Jane Roland Martin, *Changing the Educational Landscape* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 35-51.

For all of its "enlightened anarchism," Godwin's deeply gendered educational thought traffics in conceptual language that reproduces exceptionalist narratives of genius and essentialist narratives of *bildung* that are part and parcel to the terror curriculum. It is difficult to imagine that Wollstonecraft would not have objected in some substantive way to the monstrously miseducative underpinnings of Godwin's work, especially in its possible consequences for imminent Mary Shelley, but she would not live long enough to craft a proper rebuttal.

Wollstonecraft's death on 10 September 1797 of blood poisoning contracted quite literally at the hands of her surgeon and figuratively by deeply gendered cultural liabilities of monstrous miseducation. When the placenta did not immediately follow the baby into the world, Godwin brought in a "man-midwife" and physician whose unhygienic practice poisoned Wollstonecraft's blood.[29] A terrified Godwin simply could not resist the prevailing cultural liabilities of a Miltonic identity politics dictated by a medical science and its terror curriculum. Going against Wollstonecraft's own wisdom in these matters, in his panic, Godwin rejected an item of cultural wealth Wollstonecraft had circulated during her tenure as governess to Margaret King of the Anglo-Irish Kingsborough family.[30] As Lady Mary Mountcashell, the once-spoiled girl under Wollstonecraft's tutelage, would publish a treatise (1833) advising women against "the prejudice" that leads a birth attendant "to bring away either the child, or its appendages" in an "artificial" manner.[31] What is "natural" with regard to childbirth,

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[29] William St. Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 177.
[30] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 24.
[31] Lady Mountcashell as quoted in William St. Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 177. Mary Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788) came out of her experience as a governess to the Kingsborough girls.

according to Wollstonecraft and Mountcashell after her, varies from one woman to another and tampering with these natural rhythms and processes has devastating consequences.[32] In his terror at Wollstonecraft's bedside, Godwin listened to the Miltonic voice "reason" – the physician's orders. He authorized the surgical removal of "the placenta piece by piece," forced Wollstonecraft to drink red wine, and allowed a litter of puppies to nurse the "excess" milk from her breasts.[33] Godwin's connections to and his investment in the miracles of modern medicine amounted to a cultural liability, a terror curriculum that cast a long, monstrously miseducative shadow on mothers and their children. The lost cultural wealth in Wollstonecraft's portfolio and the imposed cultural liability in Godwin's portfolio proved deadly for Wollstonecraft. Under a "strange star" first identified by Caroline Herschel, incidentally the Kingsborough family's "Assistant Astronomer," Mary Shelley "from great parents sprung" and "dared to boast/Fortune my friend."[34] Herschel's "star" would prove less than auspicious to the twenty-five year-old widow who wrote those lines.

Very early on Mary Shelley's educational metamorphoses were characterized by the loss associated with deeply gendered culture crossings that alienated her from what

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[32] Janet Todd, *Daughters of Ireland* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003). Margaret King (later Lady Mountcashell) credited Wollstonecraft with countering the "monarchist miseducation" that she believed would have been her ruin (Laird, *Mary* 77-108). After separating from Lord Mountcashell, naming herself Mrs. Margaret Mason after the teacher in *Original Stories*, and attending medical lectures dressed as a man, she became a practicing physician. She claimed, though, that her medical know-how came predominantly from mothering healthy children. In addition to other works about the health and well being of women and children, she wrote the work haunted by Mary Wollstonecraft's tortured childbirth, "Advise to Young Mother on the Physical Education of Children, by a Grandmother." Throughout her life, she kept in contentious contact with Godwin. When in 1819, a very pregnant Mary Shelley visited her in Pisa, the sensible "Mrs. Margaret Mason" mothered the motherless mother-to-be, Mary Shelley.
[33] William St. Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 177-8.
[34] Mary Shelley as quoted in Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 27. These lines are from Mary Shelley's "And thou, strange Star," a poem written in 1822.

Laird names "maternal teaching."[35] Laird's maternal teaching is "an educating task and achievement which occurs in a variety of social contexts outside the context of schooling…that does not simply reproduce the injustices" of an oppressive, normative sense of the maternal ideal that saddles mothers with a majority of mystified and devalued childrearing tasks. Neither does maternal teaching comply with a "universalist," "value-free," Socratic teaching ideal that reduces what "counts" as teaching to "value laden" academic contexts.[36] Rather, maternal teaching demonstrates to children the "habits fundamental to the art of learning love and survival" so that they might learn to love and survive in an indifferent and often hostile modern world.[37] It accomplishes this through the transmission and circulation of cultural wealth while taking stock of cultural liabilities to minimize the likelihood of cultural miseducation:

> …sharing experiences with each other, thinking aloud about them in the retelling, risking and taking honest criticism, helping each other along with encouragement and praise, recognizing explicitly what each has learned through daily difficulties and triumphs, applying a playful and imaginative spirit to the hardest learning tasks of all: such as overcoming humiliation, disappointment, shyness, vanities, raging tempers, laziness, spitefulness, selfishness.[38]

The pragmatic test of maternal "teaching achievement," Laird argues, is a child's *"growing capacity and responsibility for learning to love and to survive despite their conflicts, pains, and troubles, most especially their mothers' absence"* (Laird's emphasis).[39] Despite the legacy of maternal teachings and cultural wealth left behind explicitly and implicitly in her mother's educational thought, Mary Shelley cannot be

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[35] Susan Schober Laird, *Maternal Teaching and Maternal Teachings* (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1988).
[36] Ibid, 137-9.
[37] Susan Laird, "Teaching in a Different Sense: Alcott's Marmee," in *Philosophy of Education*, edited by A. Thompson (Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society, 1994) 164-172.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.

said to have learned the habits of heart that could enable her to survive conflict, pain, and trouble in her mother's absence. If it is to be valued as an item of cultural wealth, love must mean more than desire, dependence, and/or patronage. Similarly, survival must mean something beyond that of "bare life" in the sense Giorgio Agamben insists is the "the very model of political power," of sovereign violence that sees survival as "[n]ot simple natural life, but life exposed to death."[40] For Mary Shelley, this void of maternal teaching and teachings often amounted to living Agamben's bare life.

Although she does not name them as such, Wollstonecraft theorizes maternal teaching and teachings in her educational thought. Despite his avowed purpose to educate Wollstonecraft's two daughters according to their mother's principles of maternal teaching and teachings, Godwin could not make them conform to his own philosophy and therefore could not practice them in earnest. Echoed in a letter from Lady Mountcashell to Godwin shortly after Wollstonecraft's death, the aim of Wollstonecraft's maternal teaching and teachings (like her own) was to educate children "as early as possible to think for themselves" toward the end of making them "happy and virtuous."[41] In other words, the principle aim of educating children to live in a world in which suffering and disappointment abound ought to be teaching them the habits of heart *and* mind to survive in and to love that world and those within it. In principle, perhaps Godwin agreed with maternal teaching and teachings. In reality, Godwin often left Wollstonecraft's daughters in the care of a succession of her loyal

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[40] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life,* trans. Daniel Heller Roazen, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 88.
[41] Ibid, 41.

friends.[42] In reality, Godwin often shut himself away in the room where the portrait of Wollstonecraft hung, the room that had been Wollstonecraft's study. In reality, the grieving Godwin was emotionally unavailable to Fanny Imlay and Mary Shelley. In reality, Godwin's monstrous miseducation could not suffer an alternative narrative.

But perhaps Godwin did not agree practically or philosophically with the maternal teaching and teachings within Wollstonecraft's principles for educating girls and women. Surely for this financially panicked father of two girls, providing them an expensive formal education may have struck Godwin as frivolous. After all, "['t]ill the softer sex has produced a Bacon, a Newton, a Hume or a Shakspeare [sic]," Godwin remained skeptical as to the value of educating girls and women beyond the needlework and smattering of French that bourgeois girls and women received.[43] Miltonic Godwin speaks of "sublimest genius" when praising "the poets" (male) and uses a language of transcendence and singularity that would seem to contradict his ideal of a naturally "unfolding" individual (male) character.[44] Further, he insists that it is the individual (male) who shapes the political economy, not the other way around. Godwin adored Mary Shelley's mother and her self-educated wit, but his own essentialist and exceptionalist educational thought would ironically exclude Wollstonecraft and her daughters from the realm of genius and from the province of makers and shapers.

In contrast to the maternal teaching and teachings of Wollstonecraft's educational thought, Godwin narrowly defined education as a process of training the mind of an individual subject – a strictly intellectual enterprise isolated from the

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[42] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 35-38.
[43] Ibid, 45.
[44] William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice (*New York: Evergreen Review, 2007, Kindle Edition), location 154.

emotional, the physical, and the cultural surround. It suggests that Godwin's practical methodology and philosophical predilections were both overtly sexist and deeply gendered, laboring under Martin's deep structures of educational thought.

Doubtless, Godwin admired Wollstonecraft, but whether he understood her educational thought is another question entirely. Perhaps Godwin's own thought on the subject eclipsed his understanding of her work. It could be, too, that he did not bother to understand Wollstonecraft's educational thought. After all, he inherited deeply gendered cultural liabilities along with cultural wealth. Invested as he was in the flawed deep structures of education, Godwin's own monstrous miseducation might well have caused him to misunderstand his encounters with maternal teaching and teachings in Wollstonecraft's work and the cultural stock that became yoked to his capacities may not have included learning how to love and survive in a complex and troubling world.[45]

As much as any one of so many fine minds of his generation, Godwin was a man of his time and place – himself, both a maker and shaper of individuals and cultures and made and shaped by individuals and culture. Surely he saw himself and his curriculum of enlightened anarchism as contributing to cultural wealth, but it is unlikely that he saw himself and his curriculum as made and shaped by encounters with items of cultural stock. He certainly saw himself as "fitted" for recognizing and developing genius. Fancying himself a genius, Godwin believed he knew the educational needs and desires of genius. But the educational sense of genius contains a built-in contradiction that Wollstonecraft exposed: the radical self-sufficiency of genius "will

[45] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 34.

educate itself."[46] Genius, a rather dubious educational concept of the terror curriculum, while it is used in educational contexts, is not an educational project. However, the rhetoric of genius may well amount to a miseducational project – a curriculum that amounts to a cultural liability. In Godwin's view:

> The capacity which it is in the power of education to bestow, must consist principally in information. Is it to be feared that a man should know too much for his happiness? Knowledge for the most part consists in added means of pleasure or enjoyment, and added discernment to select those means.[47]

Godwin was rationally discerning and selective indeed, but "when the wild cries of baby Mary fill the house, threatening to shatter the glass in the windows, [he] succumb[ed] to unreasoning panic."[48] And as baby Mary cried for a week following Wollstonecraft's funeral, he wrote *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in her Polygon study that he now occupied. Godwin published his memoirs of Wollstonecraft's life not even a full year after her death and told a tale that rather besmirched the intellectual and moral reputation she had enjoyed in diverse circles during her life.[49] The work he wrote as an unflinchingly honest and loving tribute was received as a licentious, celebrity tell-all.[50]

Godwin never acknowledged that one could indeed "know too much for his own happiness" and made public his knowledge of Wollstonecraft's private failure to conform to the manners, if not the morals, of the Georgian middle class lady.[51] Even those sympathetic to Wollstonecraft's lived experiment in "revolutionary self-

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[46] Harriet Devine Jump, *Mary Wollstonecraft: Writer* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 2003), 13.
[47] William Godwin, *The Enquirer: Reflections On Education, Manners, and Literature* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1797), 6.
[48] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 36.
[49] Janet Todd, *Mary Wollstonecraft* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2000), 449-58.
[50] Susan Laird, *Mary Wollstonecraft* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), 155.
[51] William St. Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 180-88.

education" found some of the details Godwin included to be shockingly contrary to the *zeitgeist* of classical liberalism: rational progress toward enlightened independence.[52] Generations to come might read Godwin's retrospective on Wollstonecraft's suicide attempts and love affairs as an accidental *pièce de résistance* to the deeply gendered and overtly misogynistic modern project, but Mary Shelley learned to read those memoirs as her own monstrous creation myth. Knowledge of her own "illegitimate" origins might well have made her cling to her father's name and shun the half-sister with whom she would have to share it.

Godwinian Perfectibility as Monstrous Miseducation: Paternalism and Uneven Development

After Wollstonecraft died giving birth to Mary, Godwin legally adopted Fanny. From his correspondence, it is clear he and Fanny were fond of each other, but he only moved to give Fanny his name after Wollstonecraft's sisters, Everina Wollstonecraft and Eliza Bishop, offered to raise the "orphaned" child with them in Ireland according to their mother's wishes.[53] Some of Godwin's most impassioned promises to deploy Wollstonecraft's ideas and methods in raising her daughters sprang from his desire to keep them from their relatively independent aunts. In denying their claim to Fanny, Godwin appealed to his own essentialist educational thought, reasoning that blood relation "is of no consequence" in determining what arrangements are in the best interests of a child "when it has once been ascertained that the child will receive greater

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[52] Susan Laird, *Mary Wollstonecraft* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), 9-58.
[53] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 35.

benefit by living under the superintendence of a stranger."[54] Perhaps Godwin genuinely believed that his keeping and raising Fanny would afford her the "greater benefit," but it is also clear that he found the task a daunting one that defied the reason upon which his world-view was built. For Godwin, the needs of little girls must have seemed vast and mysterious.

For like the cries of baby Mary, the "spirits and animation" of the four-year-old Fanny broke Godwin's concentration. Frequently, he had to "curb [his] temper" when she demanded his attention beyond the "stated hours."[55] While he speaks of "the genius of education" having been "disheartened and unnerved by the pretense that man is born all that it is possible for him to become,"[56] by all accounts Godwin did not believe Fanny possessed the essential intellectual promise or capacity of his biological daughter, Mary Shelley.[57] Genius, not the "genius of education," Godwin might be pressed to say, was his exceptional daughter's birthright.[58]

> Genius appears to signify little more in the first instance than a spirit of prying observation and incessant curiousity…. If nothing occur to excite the mind, it will become torpid; if it be frequently and strongly excited, unless in a manner that, while it excites, engenders aversion to effort, it will become active, mobile and turbulent. Hence it follows, that an adequate cause for the phenomenon of genius may be found, in the incidents that occur to us subsequent to birth. Genius, it should seem, may be produced after this method; have we any sufficient reason to doubt of its being always thus produced? ...Give me all the motives that have excited another man, and all the external advantages he has had to boast, and I shall arrive at an excellence no inferior to his.[59]

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[54] William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice (*New York: Evergreen Review, 2007, Kindle Edition), location 486.
[55] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 46.
[56] William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice (*New York: Evergreen Review, 2007, Kindle Edition), location 2525-26.
[57] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007).
[58] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 41.
[59] William Godwin, *The Enquirer: Reflections On Education, Manners, and Literature* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1797), 11-12.

Godwin, in his own paternalistic estimation, was better positioned than Wollstonecraft's sisters to offer the "advantages" of the "genius of education" to his girls, but according to Miranda Seymour's exhaustive biography of Mary Shelley, Godwin agreed that Wollstonecraft's principles were fine for Fanny, but "Godwin believed that his own daughter was destined for higher things."[60] Godwin would train Mary Shelley's mind. Ironically, Fanny would be trained according to the curriculum Rousseau laid out for Sophie in his educational-philosophical novel, *Emile*, the very curriculum that Mary Wollstonecraft criticized. Another prominent biographer of Mary Shelley, Anne Mellor, claims that Fanny would become Godwin's favorite.[61] From an educational biographical standpoint, it is true that jottings recording Fanny's cognitive and affective developments appear most often in Godwin's diary, especially after February 8, 1806 when he told Fanny the truth about her mother's affair with the American Gilbert Imlay and her illegitimate birth during the height of the terror in Paris, 1794.[62] To Fanny, Godwin felt he owed all that the protection of paternalism implied, including Joshua Esty's colonial studies concept of "uneven development."[63] Paternalistic Empire, Miltonic Godwin, and its biological progeny, cannot afford to allow the imperial subject, Fanny, to grow up and become capable of self-governance because Empire's exceptional identity is built upon the arrested development of the colonial holding. And even during the years right after her mother's death, Fanny was old enough to know – even if she was too young to understand – of the assault on her mother's reputation in the wake of Godwin's *Memoirs* and she would never openly

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[60] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 41.
[61] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 14.
[62] Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 35.
[63] Joshua Esty, "The Colonial Bildungsroman," in *Victorian Studies*, 49.3 (2007).

champion the *Rights of Woman*.[64] Both of Wollstonecraft's daughters were subject to the power of an insecure Empire and products of uneven development.

And Godwin's documented insecurities about educating Wollstonecraft's daughters ran deep. Especially after the reception of *Memoirs*, he worried that Wollstonecraft's sisters might actually be able to build a custody case and take away his "pets."[65] He was as afraid of losing Mary Shelley and, by all accounts, she was afraid of losing him. Perhaps Godwin's appeal to the overtly sexist "rights" of a patriarch and his turn toward a deeply gendered modern cultural stock portfolio that included paternalism and uneven development was driven by his fear of losing his daughters. It would seem that the motivations of both father and daughter informed and were informed by monstrous miseducation.

If the total impetus behind Godwin's educational metamorphosis into a more openly traditional patriarch is not exactly clear, the culture crossing he underwent alongside Mary Shelley came in the wake of an actual loss and seems connected to a fear of future losses. It is unequivocal that Mary Shelley's actual loss of her mother and her fear of losing her father amounted to a culture crossing that mapped her educational metamorphosis into a motherless daughter whose very self-definition depended on her father's attention and affection. Without the guidance of maternal teaching, the maternal teachings sketched in Wollstonecraft's work could not counter the powerful sense of loss that signaled this young girl's transformation into her father's daughter. Perhaps her mother's maternal teachings, housed as they were in a space that no longer

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[64] William St. Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 296.
[65] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 38.

belonged to her mother, a space that had become her father's library, represented the loss and alienation of becoming Mary Shelley. And imperial Godwin's attention toward his daughter and presence in her life was uncertain and intermittent, too.

Most of the time, Mary Shelley must have felt the absence of both her mother and her father. In the very early years, she did not learn the lessons of maternal teachings that must accompany the loss and alienation associated with educational metamorphoses: love and survival. Rather, she developed an "excessive & romantic attachment" to a father/empire who could not or would not return her jealous devotion.[66] Miltonic Godwin vacillated between "icy remoteness and passionate, demanding affection," offering Mary Shelley a model for all of her fictive fathers who refused to acknowledge the "emotional needs" of their daughters when those needs impeded upon "his customary habits."[67] Ordinary processes of generation and growth, including parenting children, had none of the grandiose qualities and cosmic implications of Godwin's real perfectibility project: the creation of a utopian society composed entirely of immortal, male, adult human beings.

Although Godwin relegates his utopian, social and biological engineering *bildung* ideology to an appendix titled, "Of Health, and the Prolongation of Human Life," in subsequent editions of *Political Justice*, in the first edition, he explicitly states immortality as the end of human progress. Siobhan Ni argues that the "spirit" of immortality in Godwin's political philosophy holds from the first edition to the fourth.[68] Answering widely publicized criticism of the first edition from Thomas Malthus and

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[66] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 8.
[67] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 37.
[68] Siobhan Ni, "'Why may not man one day be immortal?' Population, Perfectibility, and the Immortality Question in Godwin's *Political Justice*," *History of European Ideas* 33 (2007): 25-39.

others, Godwin chose to append these radical perfectibility "conjectures," but the revisions he published during Mary Shelley's early childhood maintained that because certain "powers" are currently beyond the species does not preclude the attainment of those powers (physical immortality) in the future:[69]

> …The whole will be a people of men, and not of children. Generation will not succeed generation, nor truth have…to recommence her career every thirty years….There will be no war, no crimes, no administration of justice, as it is called, and no government…there will be neither disease, anguish, melancholy, nor resentment…. Men will see the progressive advancement of virtue and good, and feel that, if things occasionally happen contrary to their hopes, the miscarriage itself was a necessary part of that progress.[70]

Godwin was not alone in his utopian belief in human perfection, but even his fellow "perfectibilists," among them David Hartley (1705-1757), Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), and the Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794), could not unreservedly endorse Godwin's *bildung* dream of physical immortality. Their vision of immortality relied on the ultimate triumph of the mind over the body.[71] In Godwin's utopian trajectory, the mind would ultimately master *all* matter.

Certainly Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a frequent visitor at the Polygon, could not have imagined a utopia without children as Godwin did. Indeed, he found "the cadaverous Silence of Godwin's Children…quite catacomb-ish: & thinking of Mary Wolstonecroft [sic] I was oppressed by it the day Davy & I dined there."[72] Coleridge and his son, David Hartley Coleridge, found that the coldly rational, day-to-day reality

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[69] William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice (*New York: Evergreen Review, 2007, Kindle Edition), location 11342-11365.
[70] Ibid, location 11353-11363.
[71] Siobhan Ni, "'Why may not man one day be immortal?' Population, Perfectibility, and the Immortality Question in Godwin's *Political Justice*," *History of European Ideas* 33 (2007): 25-39.
[72] Samuel Taylor Coleridge as quoted in Janet Todd, *Death and the Maidens* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2007), 46. Coleridge's son was named after the perfectibilist, David Hartley (1705-1757). He would go by Hartley later in life.

of the Godwin house not only lacked a progressive or liberating atmosphere, it was oppressive. Few would want the cadaverous immortality and catacomb-ish perfection of Godwin's house.

Visits from "red-lipped, large-eyed" Coleridge, "so brilliant in his unstoppable loquacity that even Godwin, who liked to guide conversation, sat and listened," temporarily broke up the deadening silence of the post-Wollstonecraftian Polygon and resuscitated the wasting, motherless Godwin girls.[73] But it was a strange kind of life that Coleridge breathed into the Polygon. Long before his famous recitation of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" to which Mary Shelley would listen, frozen by fear and fascination under a sofa, Coleridge began to embody a sort of opium-addicted "ancient mariner," dragging an albatross of heavy consciousness round his neck, compelled to tell the endlessly looping story of the perils and promises of coexistence in futurity.[74] Godwin cannot have understood what Coleridge seems to have discovered about educational encounters terror curriculum: like the mariner's story, monstrous miseducation is a sort viral code that downloads cultural liabilities alongside cultural wealth and taking stock without taking action amounts to a terrifying kind of consciousness.[75] Otherwise, Godwin would have recognized and been horrified at the sibylline implications of his immortality and "perfectibility" schemes.

As for Mary Shelley, perhaps the implications of immortality and perfectibility would not take on the appalling character of Coleridge's "life-in-death" nightmares until she underwent another educational metamorphosis. Her second painful culture

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[73] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 39-40.
[74] Morton, Timothy. *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.
[75] Morton, Timothy. "Ecology as Text, Text as Ecology." *The Oxford Literary Review* 32.1 (2010): 1-17.

crossing involved her desperate attempts to reclaim her mother's name and to understand what it meant to love and to survive without her mother. Love might well be a largely ineffable emotion, but from an aesthetic and pedagogical standpoint, love may mean a longing for wholeness and a sharing of that whole self so that another might feel complete. Survival, with all of its profound ontological implications, it would seem, is also profoundly connected to affective development.

Despite Godwin's grateful acknowledgment that Mary Shelley's intellectual acuity had "unfolded" itself in her early "scribbling," he was oblivious (perhaps willfully) to the profound sense of loss his daughter experienced at the very moment she gained a stepmother, Mary-Jane Clairmont in 1801. Seemingly, neither Godwin nor the new Mrs. Godwin gleaned the tenets of Wollstonecraft's "coeducational remedy": the cultural wealth of "mutuality" between men and women that might confound the cultural liability of the "sexual double standard" wrought by the cultural miseducation of "sexual essentialism and the sexual economy" and the monstrous miseducation of deeply gendered modernity.[76]

Abandonment to Multiple Educational Agency: Techno-scientific Productivity and Gothic Sublimity

Mary Shelley's essentialist understanding of her identity as an exceptional, Miltonic father's daughter faced a real crisis. She balked at having to share Godwin with a woman who is described almost universally as "clever" but "disagreeable" and prone to rages. In time, Mary Shelley would learn to mirror her stepmother's behaviors even as she would soon rename herself after her "real" mother, Wollstonecraft.

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[76] Susan Laird, "Food for Coeducational Thought," *Philosophy of Education* (2007): 1-13.

Certainly, the new Mrs. Godwin did not bring maternal teaching and maternal teachings into the Polygon. On the contrary, in response to an inquiry after the educational welfare of the girls, Godwin said that he and his new wife had no time for experimental methods that might create "little monsters of curiosity."[77] The methods of maternal teaching and the tenets of maternal teachings were absent for all the children of this blended family. Instead, he abandoned them to unmediated encounters with cultural stock from acknowledged and unacknowledged multiple educational agency.

After the family moved to Skinner Street above what would become the Godwins' bookshop, Mary Shelley must have sought solace from the crowded, noisy, violent neighborhood streets in the volumes of the "Juvenile Library." There, she encountered a volume Mary Lamb's "graceful retelling of Shakespeare's plays," the first publish work of which was *The Tempest.*[78] In some important way, this motherless, father's daughter must have seen herself as a Miranda dependent upon a paternalistic Prospero for her history, her education, and her very reality. Miranda, like Mary Shelley, has vague memories of being "tended" by "Four, or five, women once,"[79] but when Prospero asks Miranda what other memories she can retrieve "from the dark and abysm of time," she reports a blank.[80] Like Mary Shelley, Miranda has no memory of her own mother, but infers of Prospero's comments about his brother that "good wombs hath borne bad sons."[81] After a slew of strange hints about incest and illegitimacy surrounding Prospero, Caliban, and Caliban's also-absent hag-witch-

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[77] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 53.
[78] Ibid, 54.
[79] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* in *The Riverside Shakespeare, 2nd Edition*, Eds. G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 2.2.47-7.
[80] Ibid, 2.2.50.
[81] Ibid, 2.2.19-20.

mother, Prospero ostensibly relinquishes his creative authority (genius) and "magic" howling with grand finality, "this thing of darkness I/Acknowledge mine."[82] But Prospero's acknowledgment only casts a final spell that restores patriarchal order and reasserts Haraway's masculinist reproductive dream – cultural liabilities.[83] Motherless Caliban, like Mary Shelley, will inherit the monstrous legacy of a bastard, and motherless Miranda, like Mary Shelley will inherit the patriarchal legacy of Prospero's magic. Prospero's genius status, like Godwin's genius status, absolves him of his own darkness and casts both Miranda and Caliban as monsters. At this culture crossing in Mary Shelley's educational metamorphosis, she must have identified with both Miranda and Caliban – as a motherless monster dependent for all things on the genius father who merely acknowledged her and surely did not mediate her encounters with deeply gendered items of cultural stock – wealth and liabilities – that Haraway says amount to the "systems of myth and meanings structuring our imaginations."[84]

Chronically short of money and time, Godwin abandoned Mary Shelley to educational encounters beyond the books. He abandoned her to encounters with Martin's multiple educational agency, those entities responsible for transmitting cultural stock and extend far beyond schools, churches, and homes to include media outlets, military installations, political platforms, and the like. [85] As in our time, the "agency" of these unacknowledged and unaccountable entities and institutions in the early nineteenth-century was unchecked by the larger culture. Martin argues that a culture

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[82] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* in *The Riverside Shakespeare, 2nd Edition*, Eds. G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 5.2.275-6.
[83] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women (*New York: Routledge, 1991), 152.
[84] Ibid, 163. Percy Bysshe Shelley must also have imagined himself in relation to Prospero. He originally named the sailboat on which he met his death, *Ariel*.
[85] Jane Roland Martin, *Cultural Miseducation* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 32-61.

cannot begin to take stock of or theorize educative and miseducative consequences of encounters with the items of cultural stock transmitted by these various entities unless that culture recognizes the making and shaping power of these entities and institutions and takes deliberate stock of their value.[86] On Skinner Street and beyond, little Mary Shelley encountered a dazzling and devastating array of multiple educational agency with unstated educational aims and unintended consequences, the theoretical implications of which would surface in her work.

From the smoldering periphery of the revolutionary "Godwin School," Mary Shelley silently spied on fiery debates from which she was excluded. The Godwin School included a virtual pantheon of radical thinkers: Anthony Carlisle, Sir Humphrey Davy, Henri Fuseli, William Hazlitt, Charles and Mary Lamb, William Wordsworth, William Blake, Aaron Burr, Thomas Paine, and others.[87] Godwin may have unintentionally abandoned his daughter to encounters with multiple educational agency, but the new Mrs. Godwin actively tried to place limits on her access.

Mary Shelley never forgave nor forgot the evening her stepmother dragged her from under the parlor sofa where she had hidden to listen to Coleridge recite his "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."[88] She also never forgot the "rime." To little Mary Shelley, Coleridge must have seemed himself and a "glittering"-eyed ancient mariner doomed to tell the story of his transgression to an equally doomed listener. Mrs. Godwin sent Mary Shelley off to bed, "like one that hath been stunn'd,/And is of sense

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[86] Jane Roland Martin, *Cultural Miseducation* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 32-61.
[87] Paul McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2007).
[88] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 58.

forlorn:/A sadder and a wiser" girl.[89] She already would have known the mariner's sentimental didactic to "loveth" all creatures "great and small" the way God loves all creation because such messages were prevalent in the Godwin School and in the larger culture surround.[90] What must have been stunning to Mary Shelley was the coda to Coleridge's long poem: wisdom can come through depression. Stuck a sort of amber of depression from girlhood, this kind of rage at injustice turned inward, she began to see the awful beauty in "a thousand, thousand slimy things,"[91] and perhaps the viral nature of life itself.[92] Indeed, the encounter with Coleridge and his mariner's viral code was downloaded into Mary Shelley's consciousness; she, too, would be eternally doomed to pass it.[93]

Her encounter with John Milton's *Paradise Lost* during this time also had unintended consequences. Eve's claims about the flawed logic of genius as an educational ideal, *bildung* models that marginalize certain experience, and terror curriculum that lacks maternal teaching and teachings would emerge in the arguments of her Frankensteinian creature. And perhaps Eve's arguments resonated for this presumed genius daughter of genius who may have seen herself in Milton's Eve. Denied both infancy and maternal reciprocity in Paradise, Milton's Eve responds with pleasure to her own sympathetic gaze in the pool and is censured for it. Like Mary Shelley, Eve "mothers" herself at the pool and sees herself as the source of her own

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[89] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1800, Bartleby.com, 1999), http://www.bartleby.com/101/549.html, lines 624-26.
[90] Ibid, lines 615-18.
[91] Ibid, lines 239-40.
[92] Morton, Timothy. *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007, 158.
[93] Ibid, 158-60.

creation.[94] This vision of absolute self-possession is surely the problematic stuff of Godwinian genius and perfectibility. In the context of the division of labor, when Milton's Adam questions Eve's "wandering," she, like Mary Shelley, resists his "paternal solicitude"[95] (God's paternal solicitude), insisting that she must be free to resist temptation alone, otherwise "Eden were no Eden thus exposed" (IX.320).[96] The radical implication of Eve's logic, and possibly Mary Shelley's logic, is: if I am not free to wander and resist temptation alone, God is not a justifiable God. Mary Shelley may well have begun to wonder if Godwin was a justifiable god. Milton's Satan, "self-begot, self-raised/by his own quick'ning power," tempts Eve with precisely what has been denied her and, perhaps, what has been denied him in the arbitrary hierarchy of Heaven.[97] Using the simile of mothers' milk to describe the smell of the forbidden fruit, he claims that the fruit has awakened in him the power of reason and the freedom of speculation, precisely Godwin's educational aims.[98] Eve resists the Garden's arbitrary prohibitions and hierarchies, seemingly knowing the structural flaw of an ironic paradise that grows "luxurious by restraint" through "tending to wild" long before she ever tastes of the fruit.[99] Forbidden formal admission into the Godwin School, yet abandoned to its radical thought by "virtue" of neglect, young Mary Shelley

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[94] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Eds. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen Fallon (New York: The Modern Library, 2007), IX.538.
[95] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 93.
[96] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Eds. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen Fallon (New York: The Modern Library, 2007), IX.320.
[97] Ibid, V.855.
[98] Ibid, IX.602. When Frankenstein's creature opens his eyes for the first time, they are "speculative."
[99] Ibid, IX.223.

must have felt the squirm of ironic recognition in these Miltonic characters and tropes. How could Godwin be so indifferently permissive while so narrowly tyrannical?[100]

It was Wollstonecraft, who, arguing against Rousseau's caricature of Sophie, agreed with Milton's Eve, writing, "…it is a farce to call any being virtuous whose virtues do not result from the exercise of its own reason."[101] Unlike Fanny, Mary Shelley certainly was not overtly receiving Sophie's education, but she, who, like her Frankensteinian creature would read Milton's *Paradise Lost* and C.F. Volney's *The Ruins, or Meditation on the Revolutions of Empires and the Law of Nature*, at this stage, seems to lean toward a patriarchal tradition that fathered a feminized nature capable of casting a lone "Genius" into an inhospitable world and saying:

> Feeble work of my hands, I owe thee nothing, and I give thee life; the world wherein I placed thee was not made for thee, yet I give thee use of it; thou wilt find in it a mixture of good and evil; it is for thee to distinguish them; for thee to guide thy footsteps in a path containing thorns as well as roses. Be the arbiter of thine own fate; I put thy destiny into thine own hands![102]

Mary Shelley must have begun to wonder if the very structure of this world is insupportable to certain kinds of creatures. And what if that creature knows that she cannot be "the arbiter of [her/his] own fate" because a more powerful other has "put" her to that task? Would this very knowledge of her powerlessness become her undoing? These questions beg a distinct, insular, modern, deeply gendered kind of

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[100] Reporting on the 2016 terrorist attack on a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, the mainstream media called the terrorist Omar Mateen "self-radicalized" because he was not formally inducted into ISIS, yet he acquired a "radical" education from the online educational agency of ISIS, claimed an alliance with that group (and others), and "credited" ISIS with his terrorist hate-crime. Rather than taking responsibility for the production of terror and terrorists, a monstrously miseducated culture claimed that Mateen committed an act of genius-terror and, like Milton's Eve, Mary Shelley, and her creature, he was self-radicalized. This kind of thinking is dangerous because it takes terror out of the educational realm.

[101] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 14.

[102] C.F. Volney, *The Ruins, or Meditations on the Revolutions of Empires: and the Law of Nature* (1789, Project Gutenberg, 2006), http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1397/1397-h/1397-h.htm.

cultural miseducation: monstrous miseducation. Mary Shelley's father became a less and less justifiable god, and with knowledge – albeit knowledge filtered through a patriarchal lens – this self-educating creature, abandoned to encounters with multiple educational agency, became increasingly disillusioned with her hypocritical maker.

Arguably, monstrously miseducated Godwin did not possess the philosophical imagination of Wollstonecraft, and thus could not have that valued maternal teaching and teachings. Amid the failed promises and graphic spectacle of the French Revolution, Wollstonecraft critiqued the deeply gendered, deep structures of educational thought that confine education to an intentional, repeatable process of training the mind of the individual to the good of that individual and the larger society.[103] Wollstonecraft's critique of genius and *bildung* as educational ideals, in short, survived to haunt Godwin's limited and limiting vision of education. Godwin's solution was to send the troubled and troubling Mary Shelley away where she might learn to transcend her "girlish troubles" and fit herself to a smaller world.

And in her exile, Mary Shelley did not learn to conform to the "strictures" laid out by Hannah More, a contemporary of Wollstonecraft. Neither did she learn to live the principles of maternal teaching and teachings laid out in her mother's polemics, although she read and admired her mother's educational thought. In fact, through the patriarchal lens of her father's library and example, and the larger cultural surround, her readings and re-readings of her mother's educational thought may only have only served to make the adolescent Mary Shelley more acutely aware of the gulf between the liberatory promises of education and the stifling material reality of her experience.

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[103] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 26-46.

Thus, Percy Bysshe Shelley's promises to free her from Godwin's oppressive house must have sounded wonderful despite the fact that his infatuation with Mary Shelley was always already linked to his Romantic (genius and *bildung*) associations with her pedigree. In dedicating *The Revolt of Islam* (1818) to Mary, published in the same year the first edition of *Frankenstein*, Shelley describes her in terms of her genius lineage even while he criticizes her "Sire, of an immortal name" for his abandonment of his "aspiring" daughter and his liberal principles:

> They say that thou wert lovely from thy birth,
> Of glorious parents, thou aspiring Child.
> I wonder not for One then left this Earth
> Whose life was like a setting planet mild,
> Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled
> Of its departing glory; still her fame
> Shines on thee, through the tempests dark and wild
> Which shake these latter days; and thou canst claim
> The shelter, from thy Sire, of an immortal name.[104]

To the "mortal imagination" of Sir Timothy, Shelley's father, "[t]he sublime and rapturous moment" in which the sixteen-year-old Mary Shelley, "a spirit that sees into the truth of things," gave herself to his son was as shocking as his son's treatise in defense of atheism.[105] This Shelleyan "romance," with its fatalism and will to irrationality, was simply not "mortal" or sustainable, and Mary Shelley would spend the remainder of her life trying to repair the damage of her life with Shelley in an effort to secure an inheritance for her only surviving child, Percy. In effect, she spent her life, after Shelley, striving to meet the demands of rather opposite ends of the same patriarchal power: that of husbands and that of fathers.

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[104] Percy Bysshe Shelley as quoted in Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 20.
[105] Charlotte Gordon, *Romantic Outlaws* (New York: Random House, 2015, Kindle Edition), location 1385-7.

"Dazzled" as she was "by enlightenment," "tormented" as she was "by passions," Mary Shelley finally found herself "miserable as savage man…reasoning about a state different from his own."[106] She knew the *bildung* narrative of political, economic, and social justice even while she knew she had been and would be denied the "rights of man." She desired and was forbidden Miltonic Godwinian perfectibility even while she pursued and was barred from sublime Shelleyan transgression. No one would accuse Mary Shelley of possessing a less than stellar intellect, so her adoption of a fatalistic mindset and willing suspension of rationality must have come from this bitter knowledge of what she could not be. As much through the uneven development of her education as through the disappointed expectations of her genius, Mary Shelley herself was pieced together from fragments of monstrous miseducation's archetypical characters, mythic tropes, and stock symbols.

Despite careful restoration, these shards of terror curriculum's larger cultural texts of creation (the Promethean transgression and punishment of genius) and development (the formation and declension of *bildung*) suggest the fatalism and will to irrationality that comprise the misshapen contours of monstrous miseducation.[107] Mary Shelley, the illegitimate daughter of an insecure empire, abandoned by her Miltonic father, now eschewed the rationality he prized and willed herself to believe she was fated to suffer alongside Shelley's sublime genius. Now, with Shelley and his Romantic coterie, she delved deeply into the competing early-modern political, social,

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[106] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses (Discourse on the Sciences and Arts and Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men),* Trans. Roger and Judith Masters, Ed. Roger Masters (New York: St. Martins, 1964), 127.
[107] These questions are old ones in the history of philosophy: ontological, epistemological, and ethical.

and economic discourses of techno-scientific monstrosity she had encountered under Godwin's roof.[108]

Suggesting the fatalism and will to irrationality that characterized Mary Shelley's early adulthood, the two full-length texts that emerged from Lord Byron's "ghost story challenge," *Manfred* and *Frankenstein*, featured a guilt-ridden, outcast (by choice) Byronic Hero who uses a sort of scientific magic to create terror, which he then abandons to a society that may well be the real terror. Manfred's "sin" is never detailed. His suffering, it would seem, is Byron's point. But Victor Frankenstein's hubristic transgressions and his self-serving sufferings are detailed again and again. For Mary Shelley, the transgression and suffering seem to be but two of many points she wished to make in *Frankenstein*. Another was peculiar sort of aesthetic that emerged out of her lived experience of the larger cultural matrix: the gothic sublime.

In her legendary coldness and silence, Mary Shelley must have pondered the gothic sense of the sublime that draws on philosophical imagination rather than reason, and thus resides within the domain of the aesthetic. A brooding child born of revolution in late 18th, early 19th century Western Europe, the gothic tradition in art materialized as a ghoulish specter of madness threatening to cast a dark shadow over the well-lighted path of reason governed by early-modern democracy, peopled by a growing middle

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[108] Examples of these competing early-modern discourses of techno-scientific monstrosity include: the monstrous problem of violations against natural law in John Locke's rational *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (1690); the monstrous variances in physical anthropology in Georges Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon's comparative *The Varieties of the Human Species* (1749); the monstrous deviations from racial classifications in Carl Linnaeus's hierarchical *Systema Naturae* (1758); the monstrous violence condemned in Edmund Burke's conservative *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790); the monstrous system of hereditary wealth criticized in Wollstonecraft's radical *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792); the monstrous aristocracy censured in Thomas Paine's revolutionary *The Rights of Man* (1792); and the "monstrous edifice" of government dismantled in Godwin's anarchist *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1791).

class, and guided by capitalism's "invisible hand." The Enlightenment's positivistic promise to banish superstition, master monsters, and contain desire, ultimately could not subdue terror or deny uncertainty in the bloody wake of the French Revolution. Hence, scientific empiricism proved a woefully inadequate apparatus for appreciating the suddenness and strangeness of this violent brand of political and socio-economic upheaval. In Mary Shelley's view (a view she shared with her Romantic coterie), her parents' generation and the generation that preceded them (among them, Jean Jacques Rousseau, 1712-1878 and Denis Diderot, 1713-1784) were using the wrong tools and asking the wrong questions. And those failed attempts to establish clear causal connections across events made the nightmare of the revolution all the more nightmarish. Pandemonium made a mockery of staid methods of inquiry. Rationality hindered discernment, but Enlightenment progress could not allow for monsters.

While her mother actually lived the experience of The Terror in France during her pregnancy with Fanny, Mary Shelley theorized its aesthetic. Her growing ideological sympathies with Romanticism's aesthetic counter-culture, pushed her toward a gothic tradition that would revive a medieval ethos of terror moved to extremes by "natural" power and majesty. However, the Byronic Hero's individual freedom from mechanistic philosophies and embrace of mysterious "super-nature" became the gothic heroine's (and Mary Shelley's) sense of solitary vulnerability and awareness of fragile mortality. Destabilized by menacing forces beyond her control, the gothic heroine (like Mary Shelley) stumbles through darkness only vaguely appreciating her rather paltry place within a vast and puzzling universe. For the gothic heroine, "super-naturalized" terror is ultimately unknowable. Representative of the rapid

educational metamorphosis from gothic heroine into the ontologically unstable monster, Mary Shelley, the monster of the gothic sublime maims the guilty and the innocent alike and acts on rage informed by a complex logic of revenge. Indeed, while gothic artists often cast monsters as morally reprehensible, only rarely do they insult their audience by failing to offer the monster's horrific rationality. The monster understands its work and so does the transformed Mary Shelley. It is our species that lacks imagination in the moral universe of gothic sublimity, a moral universe that took its shape for Mary Shelley during her outcast summer of 1816, the summer of *Frankenstein*.

Having lived most of her young life as an exile, Mary Shelley was brokenhearted when her only documented girlhood friend, Isabella Baxter Booth, remained in the abusive hands of her once-egalitarian husband, David Booth, rather than escape with Mary Shelley to Italy. Mary Shelley must have felt mighty disillusioned when Isabella's liberal father and good friend of Godwin, William Baxter, supported his son-in-law, and forbade Isabella to join the unconventional Shelley household.[109] Like her mother and her husband, Mary Shelley fell in love with and attempted to rescue several women from marriage and Miltonic fathers over her lifetime.

But Mary Shelley also fell in love with a gothic aesthetic that accompanied the incredible losses she endured over her lifetime. She lost her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft; four children, Clara, William, Clara, and an unnamed miscarriage; a rival, Harriet Westbrook Shelley; a half-sister, Fanny Imlay; her mentor, George Gordon Lord Byron; and her god after Godwin, Percy Bysshe Shelley. She became

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[109] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 192.

suicidal and fatalistic, believing that her transgressions had cursed her and somehow warranted her suffering and loss. She blamed herself for killing her mother and linked the death of her own first child after eleven days to the death of Wollstonecraft after eleven days. After the deaths of each child, Godwin reminded Mary Shelley of her essential and exceptional identity, writing to her that she was "formed by nature to belong to the best" of two classes of people: "the dependent and the supporters," and that in "voluntarily enrolling [herself] among the worst," she might garner pity for herself in the short term, but ultimately those same people would "cease to love [her], and scarcely learn to endure [her]."[110] According to Godwin, it was Mary Shelley's duty, indeed the duty of genius and *bildung*, not to wallow in selfish emotion. Godwin was right even if it was for the wrong reasons.

After William's death, Shelley wrote a letter to the couple's friends, the Gisbornes, claiming that Mary Shelley "feels no more remorse in torturing me than in torturing her own mind," and his desire to reconceive their marriage as an "equal" friendship between two "distinct being[s]" in "perpetual communion" to the end of Mary "obtain[ing] empire over herself."[111] But Mary Shelley's uneven development made her the imperial subject of both Shelley and Godwin. After the letter, the Gisbornes withdrew their friendship and Mary Shelley again felt more than the usual sting of gossip's barbs toward her family. Even as an exile, with her fellow exiles, she felt personally shunned and alone.

After Shelley's death, it seems she resigned herself to the fate a deeply gendered terror curriculum had educated her to believe was her lot:

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[110] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 234.
[111] Ibid, 240.

> I was never the Eve of any Paradise, but a human creature blessed by an elemental spirit's company & love - an angel who imprisoned in flesh could not adapt himself to his clay shrine & so has flown and left it - & I feel as poets have described those loved by superhuman creatures & then deserted by them.[112]

Eschewing her father's name, but not his indelible influence, this widowed, motherless daughter had indeed transformed into the dutiful Mary Shelley into a woman who would keep her silence and her place. Characterizing herself as the negatives of a Shelleyan "elemental spirit," an "angel" trapped in a "clay shrine," or a "superhuman creature," Mary Shelley grounded herself as a "blessed" but "deserted…human creature." In describing herself as a "human creature" in relation to "superhuman creature," Shelley. Most biographers point to this language as evidence of her adulation of Shelley, but this language of genius also suggests that she has thrown off the chains such an essential and exceptional identity implies.

By 1823, her infamy in London took on new dimensions after the opening of a popular stage production of *Frankenstein, Presumption, or the Fate of Frankenstein*. She was both celebrated as a genius and condemned as a degenerating deviant for the ideas explored in this warped version of her novel. Protesters outside the theater insisted "the monstrous Drama, founded on the improper work called *Frankenstein*" dealt in matter "pregnant with mischief."[113] *Presumption* was just one of so many shockingly new commercial developments of "progressive" London, and Seymour speculates that the protests were a publicity stunt.[114] This production, on which Mary Shelley made no money, hijacked the thought experiment of her *Frankenstein* and ushered in the horror story that survives today. No "purists," including Mary Shelley

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[112] Harold Bloom, ed., *Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 11.
[113] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 334.
[114] Ibid, 334.

and Godwin, spoke up in defense of the "real" message of the novel. Rather, the opportunistic Godwin capitalized on the novel's popular appeal and republished it. Like its author and like her London, the novel flouted the genius and *bildung* ideals. Demarking a clear line between the monstrous and the human paradoxically tamed it.

The sixty-seven-year-old Godwin was pleased to have Mary Shelley, the "curator of his reputation," in close range again.[115] Having long-since abandoned the idea that his namesake, William, would take his place as a public intellectual, Miltonic Godwin pinned his legacy on his surviving daughter. Mary Shelley, however, enjoyed visits to Coleridge's lectures with her capricious half-brother William, and Coleridge was grateful for the young company after his own dear son, the David Hartley Coleridge of Mary's childhood, refused to visit him. Mary Shelley and William speculated that Hartley's descent into alcoholism was related to his failure to complete his own Prometheus story before Shelley completed his.[116] Mary always acknowledged her debt to Coleridge's *Rime* even if she did not see how her own work had influenced others, including Hartley. Coleridge was devastated by his estrangement from Hartley, but Godwin was a more practical man and found *his* son's failed *bildung* disappointing. When William Godwin the younger died of cholera in the fall of 1832, Claire, in a letter to Jane Williams Hogg, said she believed "William's chief misfortune had been to lack genius in a family who thought anything less a form of failure."[117] But Mary Shelley had finally become Miltonic Godwin's obedient, monstrously miseducated creation.

Beyond her value to Godwin's intellectual legacy, Mary Shelley's marriage

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[115] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 333.
[116] Nicole Healey, *Dorothy Wordsworth and Hartley Coleridge* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012), 37.
[117] Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 423.

promised Godwin financial security in the present tense. Like a dutiful colonial subject, she committed the remainder of her life to Godwin and to Percy. Even though the woman who would go to her grave as Mary Shelley saw her father' contribution to her education as a paternalistic sort of bequeathing of cultural stock (liabilities along with wealth) or Miltonic abandonment to multiple educational agency, she sometimes experienced her mother's teaching achievement through her mother's work as a circulation of gifts. Thus, Mary Shelley was, at least in part, self-aware that her lived experience was cultural miseducation. This very experience and inheritance may well have enabled her educational thought experiment, *Frankenstein*.

Finally, her lived experience shows that monstrous miseducation, a patriarchal aesthetic "at the very foundations of philosophy" rooted in "concepts that often do not directly refer to males and females at all, yet whose hierarchies are imbued with gendered significance" taught this motherless daughter of "artist-fathers" and "male creators" to see herself as both an excluded monster and an exclusive monster-maker.[118] Without maternal teaching and teachings and with Godwin's bequeathing of essentialist and exceptionalist ideologies, Mary Shelley could not begin to positively value the amalgam of her making and being or build mutually beneficial alliances by which one learns to share power and pain. In other words, even thought she was mired in Miltonic identity politics, she could imagine Haraway's cyborg affinity politics but could not live it in any meaningful way. It is, significant that Mary Shelley dedicated the first, anonymously published manuscript of *Frankenstein* to her father.

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[118] Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Feminist Aesthetics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/feminism-aesthetics/>.

She was "brought up to share their (Godwin and Wollstonecraft's) central belief in the duty of engagement in pubic debate on all pertinent moral, social, and political issues as a means of contributing to the general welfare."[119] Perhaps for that reason, she felt the sting of remorse at having disappointed her father more acutely during periods of estrangement from him. Indeed, she wrote *Frankenstein* during just such a period. Perhaps, too, having been an ardent but distant pupil of the Godwin School made her more acutely aware of her father's disregard for her individual welfare and hypocritical stance toward her unconventional domestic arrangement with Shelley during the writing of *Frankenstein*. This dedication evidences the mixed feelings of admiration and disappointment that would characterize the relationship between Mary Shelley and Miltonic Godwin. In the end, neither was very good at practicing egalitarian principles in the private sphere, and Mary Shelley later disavowed them in the public sphere.

But Mary Shelley's self-education, like that of the creature she imagines in *Frankenstein*, also allowed her to glimpse the monster myths undergirding aesthetic theory and educational thought – monster myths so ancient they seem like "nature." These myths generate and perpetuate the "gendered meanings within which ideas about art and aesthetics are framed" and the "systematic and occasionally insidious phenomenon that can impart to concepts considerable power to shape the ways we think and see the world."[120] Indeed, an important version of this myth's evolution was given new life in 19th century aesthetic theory that appropriated traits traditionally ascribed to "feminine" nature (emotion, intuition, etc.) and procreative metaphors of female

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[119] Pamela Clemit, "Frankenstein, Matilda, and the Legacies of Godwin and Wollstonecraft," in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 26-44.
[120] Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 4.

reproductive biology to describe the singular, transcendent, male "creator" mind of the "mad" genius.[121] In a move of unparalleled irony, the same emotional characteristics assigned to women and biological powers innate to women were considered weaknesses in actual women.[122] Because of her self-education and in spite of her monstrous miseducation, Mary Shelley has Victor Frankenstein go beyond metaphorical conquest of female power to colonize the only biological space belonging exclusively to women – the genius dream of creative authorship.[123] Despite some profoundly ambivalent moments, for Mary Shelley, the Romantic origins and essential goodness of human nature advanced by Rousseau and Condorcet collapse alongside the Enlightenment movement and powerful potentialities of human progress envisioned by the Royal Society of London. Evinced in terror curriculum, the consequences of these ways of "conceiving," "labouring," "birthing," "shaping," "forming," "creating," and "destroying," are ultimately calamitous, however sublime.

But the deeply gendered Western tradition of transcendent masculinized artistic creators and feminized divine aesthetic inspiration did not spring fully formed and absurdly armed from the brow of Romantic Era patriarchal consciousness. Indeed, the creation myth of singular male conquest of female procreative potential is a classical idea that Mary Shelley knew all too well. This same myth gave birth to Socrates' metaphor of teaching as midwifery, granted with an important disclaimer: Socrates' intentional practice attends the birth of abstract ideas from the "souls" of men, not real

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[121] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 22.
[122] Ibid, 26-7.
[123] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women (*New York: Routledge, 1991), 152.

babies from the "bodies" of women.[124] Socrates, in his manifest squeamishness about women's procreative potential, surely did not consider actual midwives as educators or actual women as *ex nihilo* creators. The everyday art of midwifery and the actual status of the midwife opens up the sort of ironic epistemological and ontological problems about the legitimacy of knowledge and expertise of professionals examined in Wollstonecraft's oeuvre. Wollstonecraft knew that the metaphor of female procreative potential has been historically hijacked to describe the Miltonic myth of singular male creative genius, and her daughter knew it as well and built a thought experiment that would expose its monstrousness: *Frankenstein*. They knew that these Zeus-like conceptual conquests eliminate the question of paternity.

Primogenitor – and its attendant essentialism and exceptionalism – positively depends upon the regulation of female reproductive potential, but that regulation has built-in limits. The ideal of *bildung* supplements (perhaps in the Derridian sense) the slippage of genius and the origin myth of the singular male creator. In 1818, after the publication of *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley re-read William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.[125] Amid real fears about Shelley's estrangement from his father and his father's fortune and her own troubled relationship with Godwin, during the following year, she wrote *Mathilda*, a novel about an incestuous relationship between a father and daughter. Anxieties about a monstrous inheritance from Miltonic Godwin came home to roost in this novel just as they did in *Frankenstein*.

To date, silence from the field of educational studies surrounds Mary Shelley's

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[124] Plato, *Theaetetus*, Translated by Benjamin Jowett (Middlesex, England: Echo Library, 2006), 8.
[125] *The Journals of Mary Shelley: 1814-1844*, ed. Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

"hideous progeny," her educational and aesthetic thought experiment *Frankenstein*. But it is that myth, taken in tandem with her lived experience, that has enabled me to draw my conceptual formulation of monstrous miseducation, a deeply gendered brand of cultural miseducation that informs and his informed by the modern terror curriculum.[126]

[126] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 55.

CHAPTER III

Exposition of *Frankenstein* as Educational Thought

Just as Mary Shelley's lived experience fell prey and bore witness to a peculiar material and intellectual history forged in monstrous miseducation, the Frankenstein myth is itself both a critique and a symptom of terror curriculum's genius terror and *bildung*. As with all myths, there are many retellings of the story. Therefore, I will begin this exposition with a summary of the novel.

Frankenstein is a frame narrative through which Victor Frankenstein tells his story and the story his creature relates to him to Robert Walton, an English explorer searching for the fabled Northwest Passage. In letters to his sister in England, Margaret Saville, Walton narrates Victor's story. Confiding his tale in Walton, Victor positions himself as an object lesson in the consequences of passion for scientific discovery and recognition unchecked by ethical inquiry.

According to Victor, at the age of seventeen, his idyllic childhood ends when his mother, Caroline, dies caring for his adopted sister and betrothed, Elizabeth, on the eve of his departure from Geneva, to attend university at Ingolstadt. Excelling in natural philosophy, Victor eventually pieces together dead animal and human body parts to build a human being that he animates with life. Victor, horrified at his handiwork when it comes to life, abandons the creature. The "newborn" creature wanders out into the world and experiences people's hatred, fear, and violence.

Wounded and terrorized, the creature hides in a hovel adjoining a cottage of French exiles, the De Lacey family. From his hiding place, he learns to read and write by secretly watching the adult children teach a visitor their language and history and the

rudiments of emotional intelligence by watching them care and for their blind father. After finding Victor's laboratory journal in the pocket of the cloak he instinctively wrapped around himself before leaving Victor's dormitory, the creature learns of his unique origins. Rejected by the De Lacey family, the creature uses information from Victor's laboratory journal to find his way to Geneva to petition his creator for companionship. When Victor returns to Geneva after learning that his six-year-old brother, William, has been murdered, he and his creature are reunited after two years.

The creature uses the story of his initially virtuous and ultimately violent existence as an argument to persuade Victor to create a female companion for him. Victor consents and travels to the remotest of the Orkney Islands to construct the female creature. As his male creature looks on, Victor destroys the female creature in a fit of conscience. The creature avenges this broken promise by murdering Elizabeth on the night of her wedding to Victor. Driven by a desire to avenge the murders of his loved ones, Victor tracks the creature to the northern-most regions of the globe where Walton finds him. Walton, after listening in horror and admiration, to Victor's cautionary tale agrees to destroy the creature after Victor's imminent death, but when he finds the creature weeping over Victor's corpse, he cannot kill him. The story ends with the creature disappearing into the ice rifts, vowing to commit suicide. Because we cannot know Victor's secret for animating dead matter, we never know if the creature is mortal.

This exposition will look at Mary Shelley's actual text, but my conceptual formulations of monstrous miseducation and terror curriculum ultimately come from the Frankenstein myth. Anne Mellor writes that *Frankenstein* "can claim the status of a myth" because it remains "so profoundly resonant in its implications for our

comprehension of our selves and our place in the world that it has become, at least in its barest outline, a trope of everyday life."[1] I would add that myth works through stories a culture tells itself about itself to educate its members about what to believe and what to fear. Through the educational myth of *Frankenstein* modern culture learns what to believe and what to fear. Mellor goes on to say that the *Frankenstein* myth is unique in that creature is "entirely man made" (without a female or "divine intervention") and the myth's creation was singular ("the waking dream of a specific eighteen-year-old girl on June 16, 1816") and not related to any "traditional religious systems" or folklore.[2] I agree with her criteria for myth status and believe *Frankenstein* meets them, but I would add that myth *necessarily* traffics in religious ritual and gods. Otherwise, the story would be some other kind of traditional tale, a legend perhaps, or a folk or fairytale. Contrary to Mellor's claim, I think *Frankenstein* is a myth that *depends* upon traditional religious systems and folklore alongside Jane Roland Martin's deep structures of education and Carolyn Korsmeyer's deep gender. For all of those ancient resonances, though, *Frankenstein* is, perhaps, the only thoroughly modern educational myth we possess, and the only myth modernity could have produced. I explore its possible influence in the next chapter.

This exposition of *Frankenstein* reformulates the myth as educational thought about "culture as curriculum" and learning as "encounter."[3] I take as given that regardless of intention, culture *is* curriculum, and lived encounters with cultural landscapes or curriculum *are* learning. Deploying the conceptual language of

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[1] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 38.
[2] Ibid, 38-9.
[3] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

monstrous miseducation and terror curriculum formulated from Mary Shelley's educational metamorphoses and lived experience, the exposition of *Frankenstein* refines the core features of monstrous miseducation: Miltonic identity politics (essentialism and exceptionalism); Godwinian perfectibility (paternalism and uneven development); abandonment to multiple educational agency (techno-scientific productivity and gothic sublimity). Further, this exposition uses Mary Shelley's thought experiment to imagine a counter-narrative to the monstrous miseducation of the Frankenstein myth, a narrative in which Susan Laird's maternal teaching (circulation of gifts) and teachings (love and survival) and Donna Harraway's cyborg affinity politics (alliances and amalgams) are present rather than absent.

Miltonic Identity Politics as Monstrous Miseducation: Essentialism and Exceptionalism

Victor, like his creator Mary Shelley, is no Rousseauian "child of nature" reared by a policy of intentional "non-intervention," what Martin names the "wild" variety of educational growth, "growth pure and simple."[4] With Rousseau, Mary Shelley would agree that "a man left to himself from birth would be more of a monster than the rest," and she might well agree with my formulation of a Rousseauian monster as a genius.[5] Victor is the product of *bildung* ideology, the "progressive" bourgeois "gardening" practices founded on the principle of allowing a child to "grow in accordance with nature" toward the identity he was meant to occupy in society.[6] His *bildung* fails, however, because of the larger culture's inability or unwillingness to recognize multiple

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[4] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 95-114, 80-2.
[5] Jean-Jacques Rousseau as quoted in Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 46.
[6] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 80-2.

educational agency and the cultural liabilities it transmits, including the ideal of *bildung* itself. In order to understand the failure of Victor's *bildung* it is important to note that cultural miseducation is not only the cause and consequence of the transmission of cultural liabilities; it is also the cause and consequence of a miseducated culture that has lost or disregarded items of cultural wealth like Susan Laird's maternal teaching and teaching, Donna Haraway's cyborg "affinity" politics,[7] and education as Martin's circulation of gifts[8] to the sustainable end of Wollstonecraftian "rational hopes of futurity."[9] This failure of the *bildung* gardening philosophy suggests that if the broader culture has been miseducated, it will be unable to recognize multiple educational agency as such, much less to take stock of its assets and liabilities. In particular, Victor's failed *bildung* points to the hidden curriculum of terror and its peculiarly modern cultural liability: the false educational ideal of genius. Along with her creations, Mary Shelley received this deeply gendered terror curriculum – evolutionary *bildung* and revolutionary genius – of monstrous miseducation. But Mary Shelley and her creature bore the burden of knowing the troubling implications of *bildung* and genius that Victor never fully understood because Victor's privilege made the essentialism and exceptionalism of Miltonic identity politics invisible.

Very early in life, Victor learned to see himself in terms of Miltonic identity politics, as his parents' "plaything and their idol," an "innocent and helpless creature bestowed on them by heaven, whom to bring up to good, and whose future lot it was in

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[7] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women (*New York: Routledge, 1991), 155.
[8] Jane Roland Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 136-43.
[9] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 153.

their hands to direct to happiness or misery, according as they fulfilled their duties towards me."[10] Victor claims to have "received a lesson of patience, of charity, and of self control" during "every hour of [his] infant life."[11] Had Victor spent "every hour" learning these lessons in a vacuum, perhaps he would have progressed according to the false ideal of *bildung*. But Victor is a member of human culture and, thus, exposed to multiple educational agency that intentionally and unintentionally transmits the culture's wealth and liabilities. Hence, the ideal was always already false.

Like Victor, the creature acquires a worldview based on essential and exceptional categories, a Miltonic identity politics from which his is "irrevocably excluded."[12] When he speaks to Victor for the first time after his abandonment, the creature petitions his "natural lord and king" to "perform thy part, the which thou owest me…I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel."[13] Victor's "faintness" and shrill epithets show him as a rather paltry, petty god in this epic showdown, yet the creature's Miltonic frame of reference positions him as a powerful creator. In one moment, the creature speaks as a towering, satanic, threat (genius) and in the next, as a cowering, supplicant, servant (*bildung*). This juxtaposition of creator and creature illustrates the mythic quality of a Miltonic identity politics that shrinks before gods, refuses to negotiate with monsters, and cannot imagine a world in which gods and monsters coexist.

During his exile in the woods outside of Ingolstadt, observing the domestic bliss of the cottagers, the creature worships the "perfect forms" of the De Lacey family: a

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[10] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 42.
[11] Ibid, 42.
[12] Ibid, 94.
[13] Ibid, 93.

blind, elderly father, a young adult son, Felix, and a daughter, Agatha.[14] Watching them interact, he is moved to tears by their physical beauty and the simple kindnesses they show one another. He therefore equates moral goodness with physical beauty and blood relations within a family until Safie, a "beautiful stranger" of Turkish descent, joins the De Lacey family.[15] The entire De Lacey family embraces this outsider and contributes to educating Safie to speak their language. Unknown and unseen, the creature "claims" the education meant for Safie and learns to read and write, but he also learns the Miltonic identity politics of terror curriculum.[16]

According to Miltonic identity politics, the cottagers are essentially bound to one another because of their biological relation. Safie qualifies as an exceptional being by virtue of her beauty and her romantic attachment to Felix. The creature, yet ignorant of his own strangeness, identifies with the stranger, Safie, and "dares" to hope for acceptance into the fold of "beloved" cottagers. It is not until he sees his own reflection in a clear pool that he knows of his physical deformity relative to the cottagers' perfect forms and Safie's beauty. It is not until he learns of human cruelty from Safie's lessons that he connects the cottagers to the species that abused him in the village. It is not until he reads Milton (and others) and Victor's laboratory journal that he understands himself as a different species from these beautiful people. But he still believes his kindness, conveyed in language, will compensate for his physical difference.

Part of the creature's *bildung*, then, includes learning to feel emotional as well as physical pain and pleasure as he becomes more acutely aware of himself as part of

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[14] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 104.
[15] Ibid, 106.
[16] Jane Roland Martin, *Reclaiming a Conversation* (New Haven: Yale University Press,1985), 7.

and apart from the human species whose "form is a filthy type of yours, more horrid even for the very resemblance."[17] The creature learns to regret knowing anything beyond physical needs. The hierarchized epistemology for our species' *bildung* proscribes this "growth," this educational metamorphosis, from physical to emotional, concrete to abstract, selfish to empathetic ways of knowing. When, for example, a child's exceptionalities do not allow her to "progress" according to this developmental model, to this *bildung* narrative of our species, she is considered "developmentally delayed." If that child comes to understand herself as "more horrid even for the very resemblance," such knowing is deeply problematic for the knower and grounded in the Miltonic identity politics of monstrous miseducation. The creature is this child.

In his voyeuristic isolation, the creature learns the "sanguinary laws of man" and the "difference of the sexes…of brother, sister, and all the various relationships which bind one human being to another in mutual bonds" through C.F. Volney's *Ruins of Empires: or Meditations on the Revolutions of Empires and the Law of Nature*, Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werter*. Mary Shelley could have put other texts, including her mother's educational thought, in the creature's hands but did not. This "absent" text could represent the cultural wealth of maternal teaching and teachings the creature was denied, cultural wealth that might have offset the terror curriculum's cultural liabilities, not only for the creature but also for Victor, for Mary Shelley, and for modernity writ large.

Instead, against the backdrop of these Miltonic narratives of creation, transgression, and fall, the creature learns of the "cursed origin of [his] being" by

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[17] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 117.

reading his own creation story in Victor's laboratory journal.[18] The more the creature learns about the human species to which he does not belong and of his creator from whom he is banished, the more acutely he understands the horror of his own being and the more he learns to see himself as a monster in an irrational universe that forbids him community, continuity, and compassion. The ontological implications of the creature's invisibility to the De Lacey family suggest the optimal conditions for the transmission of terror curriculum. By learning Victor's (and by extension, the human species') powers of reason and compassion and how to express them in language, yet still suffering horror and rejection, the creature complicates Wollstonecraft's claim that "the nature of reason must be the same in all…the tie that connects the creature with the Creator."[19] In the same way, Mary Shelley's lived experience of Miltonic identity politics in relation to Godwin and Shelley mocked this claim.

Like the creature, Mary Shelley read an account of her "filthy creation" in her father's *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and (like her creature) she understood the patriarchal literary tradition of Milton as "histories."[20] But she forbade her motherless creature access to her own mother's educational thought. Psychoanalytic speculations about unavailable fathers and absent mothers aside, monstrous miseducation suggests a lack of maternal teaching and teachings because it is in this gap that the creature, like his second-order creator Mary Shelley, comes to know what he is by learning what he is not. He, like Mary Shelley has dangerously

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[18] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 102.
[19] Mary Wollstonecraft (2001) *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. New York: The Modern Library, 47.
[20] William Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1798, Project Gutenberg, 2005) http://www.gutenberg.org/files/16199/16199-h/16199-h.htm, 115.

unmediated access to the texts of patriarchal culture, but is powerless to participate in that culture or change the injustices built into it. The creature seems to profoundly understand (as Victor does not), Wollstonecraft's proposition that, "Few…have had much affection for mankind, who did not first love their parents, their brothers, sisters, and even the domestic brutes."[21] The creature's complaint is indeed that a lack of maternal teaching and teachings has crippled and criminalized him, but also that unmediated encounters with Miltonic identity politics of modernity have consequences.

But would it even be possible for the creature's unique experience of self-education to follow the *bildung* ideal, moving "organically" from the physical, to the moral, to the intellectual ways of knowing? What might it mean to the educational myth of *Frankenstein* that the creature sees the human species and culture through the eyes of another species? The epistemological implications of the creature's standpoint and the way difference cannot be understood when the prevailing curricular paradigms are *bildung* and genius confirm the falsity of those ideals and suggest the dire consequences of monstrous miseducation. Despite suffering at the hands of the human species, the creature learns of its potential goodness and longs for companionship with members of our complex species. Perhaps he desires human contact because he possesses the all-too-human need for emotional attachment and for physical touch. And perhaps his education in and by human culture, peppered with examples of mindful human tenderness and altruism, merits his hope of building those relationships.

Like Milton's Eve, denied the first great metamorphosis and a mother, the creature sees his image reflected back to him in a clear pool and, after a moment of

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[21] Mary Wollstonecraft (2001) *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. New York: The Modern Library, 166.

Lacanian horror at his singularity, begins to place his faith in the "god-like science" of language.[22] His educational aim is to "become master of their language" so that he can explain his "deformity" in "conciliatory language" that will earn him "their love."[23] Unlike the creature, Milton's Eve's educational aim was absolute, solitary self-possession. The creature, who has spent the majority of his short life watching the domestic relations of a family, desires a link to another species with which he can share pain and pleasure. The creature desires a history. And for the creature, as for Mary Shelley, that history is profoundly connected to maternal teaching and teachings in love and survival. Provocatively, Mary Shelley denies a mother to the De Lacey family. The text is absolutely silent on this point.

The creature comes to regret knowing anything beyond physical needs, but before his metamorphosis, he aims to transcend the confines of his physical body by acquiring distinctly human ways of sensing, being, and knowing because he sees our species from the mythic and binary perspective of Miltonic identity politics, as "at once so powerful, so virtuous, and magnificent, yet so vicious and base…a mere scion of the evil principle, and…all that can be conceived of noble and godlike."[24] From the instruction "Felix bestowed upon" Safie, the creature comes to understand "the strange system of human society…the division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty; of rank, descent, and noble blood."[25] Yet despite his "disgust" at the "system"

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[22] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 102.
[23] Ibid, 104-5.
[24] Ibid, 109.
[25] Ibid, 109.

and its history, despite knowing he will be excluded because he possesses neither "high and unsullied descent" nor "riches," like Mary Shelley, he still wants to belong.[26]

Planning his approach and practicing his language throughout the winter months, the creature "allowed his thoughts, unchecked by reason, to ramble in the fields of Paradise, and dared to fancy amiable and lovely creatures sympathising with my feelings."[27] The creature waits for the spring day when "younger cottagers" leave old man De Lacey at home alone. He has reasoned that the blindness of the De Lacey family's patriarch should mean that the old man is not bound to an ocularcentric aesthetic, ontologic, or epistemic tradition. Also, the old man's status as an exile from revolutionary France should make him tolerant toward another outcast. Indeed, perhaps De Lacey's blindness *ought* to bind him to another creature who has suffered from prejudice born of a fear of difference. And for a moment, their common language and shared status *does* bind the impotent patriarch to the supplicant creature. But the younger, sighted cottagers return and misinterpret the scene before the creature can explain why he is clinging to their father's knees, begging for mercy, protection, and friendship. These beautiful, perfectible De Laceys read physical deformity as moral deformity just as sure as the creature reads physical beauty as moral beauty. Felix strikes the creature and chases him from the cottage. Calling upon the only frame of reference he has, Miltonic identity politics, in bitter anguish the creature laments that, "it was all a dream; no Eve soothed my sorrows, nor shared my thoughts; I was alone. I

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[26] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 109.
[27] Ibid, 118.

remembered Adam's supplication to his Creator. But where was mine? He had abandoned me; and, in the bitterness of my heart, I cursed him."[28]

Deeply wounded by his rejection and terribly aware of the horror he inspires, the enraged creature refrains from retaliation on the vain hope that the old man might yet educate his children that the creature's existence "has been hitherto harmless, and in some way beneficial."[29] The problem, however, is that even if the old man had "compassioned" the creature and insisted that his children give him a fair hearing, old man De Lacey (or any individual) could not wield the kind of power necessary to counter generations of monstrous miseducation wrought by terror curriculum.[30] Indeed, this blind, Miltonic patriarch alone cannot "undeceive" his children without maternal teaching and teachings.[31] The following day, the creature finds that the De Lacey family has fled. He burns down the cottage and dances around the flames in an ecstasy of revenge. After consulting Victor's journal, the creature sets out for Geneva to find his "father," Victor.

Violence motivated by revenge and as a warning of things to come is *bildung* terror. The burning of the De Lacey's cottage could certainly be classed as *bildung* terror, but the creature's pilgrimage to his creator is more complicated and profoundly tied to Miltonic identity politics. We can desire revenge without that desire manifesting itself in an act of terror. We can also get some sense of justice by means other than violence. But if the thing that we desire is existential meaning within a world that cannot or will not accept us (or even *see* us), *bildung* terror is an inadequate vehicle to

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[28] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 118.
[29] Ibid, 120.
[30] Ibid, 130.
[31] Ibid, 120.

meet that need. Indeed, terror curriculum itself is an inadequate vehicle to get at anything like truth, but when the seeker is made and marred by monstrous miseducation she lacks alternatives. Miseducated by terror curriculum, neither Victor nor his creature possesses the imagination to ask or answer such questions in any way but by means of terror because they cannot imagine a cyborg affinity politics that allows for chosen alliances of amalgamated, plural identities.

On the outskirts of Geneva, the creature encounters a beautiful little boy he does not yet know is Victor's six year-old brother. The creature is struck by the idea that one so young may not yet have been monstrously miseducated, and "[i]f, therefore, I could seize him, and educate him as my companion and friend, I should not be so desolate in this peopled earth."[32] The creature yet believes in the *bildung* ideal, if not for himself, for the promise embodied in this child. But the boy immediately calls the creature a "hideous monster," an "ugly wretch," and an "ogre," warning the creature that his father (Victor's father) M. Frankenstein, will punish the creature if he dares try to "keep him."[33] At the mention of a father and Frankenstein, the creature becomes enraged and silences the screaming child by strangling him. This, the creature's first crime, is the creature's impulsive reaction to the boy's shrill testament to the essentialism and exceptionalism of Miltonic identity politics and the *bildung* ideal that casts difference as monstrosity. This encounter marks the creature's metamorphosis into a monster because he has been named a monster by a monstrously miseducated child. The creature, too, is a monstrously miseducated, motherless child whose father is Frankenstein, but William can call out his powerful father's name as effortlessly he can call out his own. The

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[32] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 126.
[33] Ibid, 127.

"spurned" creature cannot call on his father for protection. Modernity, like the creature and Mary Shelley, has only a deeply gendered Miltonic identity politics by which to understand the world and the place of living and nonliving entities within it. Rather than an act of terror, the creature killing William is a crime of passion against Miltonic identity politics, a crime for which Victor has a frame of reference that he deliberately suppresses in order to deny his complicity – essentialism and exceptionalism.

I am not implying that Victor *should* have a "natural bond" with his decidedly artificial creation. That would be to commit the same Miltonic essentialist fallacy that claims women should have a natural maternal bond with their offspring. I say that had Victor not been monstrously miseducated, or had the cultural liabilities he encountered been tempered with maternal teaching and teachings, he might have had the imagination to engage Haraway's affinity. Affinity, as opposed to identity, denotes a feminist "coalition" united "not by blood but by choice" toward theorizing a counter to the rhetoric of the naturalized identity of a maternal bond or sentimentalized notions of nurturing capacities.[34] Haraway conceptualizes affinity as "the appeal of one chemical nuclear group for another," an advantageous "avidity" between creatures.[35] Affinity alliances are voluntary. Haraway sees possibility in "potent myths for resistance and recoupling" of the mind and body; the animal and human; the human and machine; and idealism and materialism in her thought experiment of the "cyborg society."[36] Rather than looking for some "new essential unity" that relies on a Miltonic identity politics, Haraway imagines a relational politics among amalgamated individuals and the living

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[34] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women (*New York: Routledge, 1991), 155.
[35] Ibid, 155.
[36] Ibid, 154.

and nonliving environment. She calls for "affinity, not identity."[37] In modernity, the cyborg "wary of holism," but "needy of connection" seeks affinity even while it "does not dream of community on the model of the organic family."[38]

The cyborg affinity politics I have theorized from Mary Shelley's lived experience and her Frankenstein myth do not demark a pristine, organic completeness that signals the end of the individual *bildung* or the beginning of genius. I am suggesting that Victor's monstrous miseducation, untempered by maternal teaching and teachings, did not equip him with the imagination required to choose affinity with his creation. The Miltonic identity politics of monstrous miseducation depend on Lockean empiricism (direct experience) or Kantian judgments (*a priori* knowing) to legitimate knowledge. Therefore, identification with a stranger, especially a very "strange stranger" like the creature, is either impossible or illegitimate.[39] Cyborg affinity politics do not rely on either direct experience or a priori knowing to legitimate its understanding of the stranger or to imagine Wollstonecraft's rational futurity as the circulation of gifts that are maternal teaching and teachings of love and survival rather than a patriarchal bequeathing "power-knowledge" systems.[40] Cyborg affinity politics might well imagine education as rational futurity and circulating gifts of love and survival, a counter to the apocalyptic and nihilistic ends of terror curriculum.

Unlike Victor, the creature initially does have the "rational" insight to imagine Wollstonecraft's futurity along with the consequences of the deeply gendered, modern

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[37] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women (*New York: Routledge, 1991), 155.
[38] Ibid, 151.
[39] Timothy Morton, "Thinking Ecologically: The Mesh, the Strange Stranger, and the Beautiful Soul," in *Collapse* 6 (2010), 265-293.
[40] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, Trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 27-8.

terror curriculum. Even though the creature's monstrous miseducation leads him to appeal to his petty god, Victor, he is able to see the possibility of a cyborg affinity politics by which he could become "linked" by choice "to the chain of existence and events" and live and die peacefully alongside another amalgamated companion without "curs[ing]" his "maker." [41] When the creature proposes his rationale for this possibility in order to convince Victor to create his companion, a small window opens in which Victor suppresses his revulsion, glimpses the logic of cyborg affinity politics, and "compassionated him." Realizing he holds the creature's "small portion of happiness" in his genius hands, Victor agrees to create the female creature. Despite the creature's vow to "make peace with the whole kind" if even one of Victor's species, our species, would include him and treat him with kindness, it is telling of Victor's commitment to Miltonic identity politics that he cannot imagine offering the creature *his* companionship. Victor cannot see this third and crucial option available to him because Victor no longer sees himself as a member of our species. Victor has come to know himself as a genius. Knowing the Miltonic "secrets of heaven and earth," amounts to monstrous miseducation that unfits us to live even within the "normative community" from which the very ideal of genius sprung.[42] Without maternal teaching and teachings of love and survival, the creature and creator are the only fit company left to one another, but monstrous miseducation voids even that undesirable connection.

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[41] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 130.
[42] John Covaleskie, *Membership and Moral Formation* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2013), 40-3.

Godwinian Perfectibility as Monstrous Miseducation: Paternalism and Uneven Development

With the benefit of hindsight, first-born Victor describes the early stages of his *bildung* in Geneva, Switzerland as "guided by a silken cord" within the bourgeois Frankenstein home and family that uncritically values monstrous miseducation's paternalistic means and ends in the domestic realm.[43] Led by "syndic" Alphonse Frankenstein, the family's sense of domestic responsibility and individual perfectibility, while well-intended, amounts to *noblesse oblige*. Victor's own mother, Caroline Beaufort Frankenstein, was a foundling "rescued" through marriage by the "protecting spirit" of Victor's much older father upon the death of her own father to whom she had sacrificed her girlhood.[44] In turn, his mother saves a highborn, "fair" girl, Elizabeth Lavenza, from the poverty of the peasants who were raising this orphaned daughter of a "Milanese nobleman" among their own "dark-eyed, hardy little vagrants."[45] Upon receiving this "gift" (the child, Elizabeth) from his mother, Victor, "with childish seriousness, interpreted her words literally" and imagined his "more than sister" as "a possession."[46] Frankensteinian women and peasants embody the uneven development of imperial subjects who learned that their very survival depended on the good will of the Empire when in reality, the Empire depended on the uneven development of imperial subjects. Arguably, Victor's appropriation of bodies began with the family values of Godwinian perfectibility impressed upon him at the age of six. Educated

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[43] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 42.
[44] Ibid, 41.
[45] Ibid, 43. Despite her radical leanings, Mary Shelley, like her mother, could not seem to shed her class prejudice.
[46] Ibid, 43.

according to the deeply gendered framework of modernity's terror curriculum, he learns to evaluate the world, himself, and other people in terms of patronage and desert.

For Frankensteinian women (and for bourgeois women more generally), patronage meant marriage to a man the age of her father or to a man with "promise" (or – ironically in light of the concept of "desert" for women – an inheritance), development meant virtuous matrimony and motherhood, and desert meant a delicate, blameless fall on misfortune that necessitated "raising" from destitution by a powerful, benevolent father-husband. Such "feminine" dependence on others would have been repellent to a "self-made" man like Victor, a man with genius prospects in the late eighteenth century. Indeed, the private home and larger cultural landscape in which he was raised taught him to see himself as a noble benefactor who giveth and taketh away, albeit on a rather petty scale. Of course, Victor was not self-made any more than any other bourgeois gentleman of Geneva. His patrimony determined the rights afforded to him and duties expected of him, but it also assured that his pursuits, projects, and paternalism could never quite be his own despite Godwinian perfectibility's *bildung* and genius rhetoric to the contrary. Like Percy Shelley, Victor's privileged inheritance, paradoxically, is the province of self-born, self-made, self-directed, and self-contained singularity. Denied maternal teaching and teachings about love and survival, Mary Shelley, is excluded from the Godwinian perfectibility she has read about even while she and most women are consigned to the uneven development of dependent imperial subjects. The creature, though, from his strange stranger standpoint has no frame of reference for Godwinian perfectibility and its attendant paternalism or uneven

development. His encounters initially educate him according to a circulation of gifts model that the terror curriculum quickly overshadows.

Hiding in the hovel connected to the De Lacey family cottage, the creature watches the family's everyday expression of familial affections and exercise of domestic duties. He learns that his habit of pilfering the family's meager food stores causes them distress. He stops stealing from them and instead starts contributing to their welfare as the "invisible hand" that supplies firewood and the "good spirit" who clears the path of snow.[47] The creature lovingly begins to call the De Lacey family his "friends" and "protectors" despite the fact that they are completely unaware of his presence. By stealth and voyeurism, the creature learns to give in a way that defies the model of rational self-interest an invisible hand might imply. His giving is not paternalistic, nor is it predicated on his own advancement. Rather than bequeathing, he gifts in a way that contributes to the general welfare because he sees real need and has the imagination to reason how he might help meet that need based on his unique strengths. This circulation of domestic affection and responsibility, the cultural wealth of maternal teaching and teachings, suggests the contrary case that informed the creature's ability to imagine cyborg affinity politics against all odds.

Is Mary Shelley deploying the value-laden descriptor "invisible hand" ironically? No extant evidence shows that she read Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1778). However, it is clear that she was familiar with contemporary economic doctrine and policy. From journals and letters, we know she read John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) in

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[47] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 104, 105.

1815, 1816, and again in 1820 and can speculate that she was also familiar with his defense of private property or at least the codification of its provisos into economic, political, and social policy (patrilineal bequeathing). By Mary Shelley's time, Locke's Natural Law – including the system of private property – would have been the given that enabled Smith to compare the invisible hand of the market with the invisible hand of God; conflate social well-being with economic growth; equate monetary value and human value; and to measure progress in economic abstractions. Human needs, not to mention stewardship of the living and nonliving planet, are rendered irrelevant or invisible by this admixture of proto-Darwinian evolutionary theory (*bildung*) and the invisible hand's magical alchemy (genius). Without understanding the monstrously miseducative underpinnings of the essentially deterministic growth model of *bildung* and the manifest destiny model of genius in Smith's justification of market competition, it is easy to overlook the genocidal rhetoric of his political economy echoed in Godwinian perfectibility:

> Many would not be able to find employment even upon these hard terms, but would either starve, or be driven to seek a subsistence, either by begging, or by the perpetration perhaps, of the greatest enormities. Want, famine, and mortality, would immediately prevail in that class, and from thence extend themselves to all the superior classes, till the number of inhabitants in the country was reduced to what could easily be maintained by the revenue and stock which remained in it, and which had escaped either the tyranny or calamity which had destroyed the rest.[48]

Indeed, within a capitalist system, philanthropy may not be evidence of a love of humanity at all. Ethics might not be something hardwired into the kind of beings we are as Smith's "Theory of Moral Sentiments" would suggest.[49] Ethical sensibilities

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[48] Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (West Sussex: Capstone Publishing Ltd., 2010), 85-6.
[49] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments (*New York: Penguin Classics), 2010.

might not be the trait that distinguishes the human from the nonhuman. It is not unreasonable to suggest that Mary Shelley is indirectly critiquing the mind-over-matter immortality and Malthusian logic of a Godwinian perfectibility that would lead to a society comprised completely of immortal adults. The creature is "born" in a mature body with an intellect that develops with "superhuman speed."[50] By the age of two, the creature's physical prowess exceeds that of Victor. Arguably his intellectual dexterity equals that of his creator. Surely, though, his emotional intelligence surpasses Victor's stunted emotional intelligence.

Perhaps an extremely cynical reading might yield a different interpretation of the creature's motivation for giving and would find that the self-interest that stirs the creature's "invisible hand" and wakens his "good spirit" is merely his desire to insinuate himself into the De Lacey household. His philanthropy might not be philanthropy at all. But that logic does not stand up to the educational thought Mary Shelley explores in the text. As one who experienced his accelerated first great metamorphosis in isolation, the creature craves the connection that the genius ideal deems unnecessary.

The solitary nature of the creature's first great metamorphosis much closer to that of Victor, the Wild Boy of Aveyron than that of "self-made" genius, Victor Frankenstein.[51] No contemporary documentary evidence exists to prove that Mary Shelley read about Victor of Aveyron. However, she was fascinated with and well read in the natural and "social" science of the day. She also includes the place name of

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[50] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 92.
[51] Jane Roland Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 42-5.

Aveyron in her travel narratives.[52] Hence, I suspect she did know about his widely publicized case. Captured in 1797, Victor quickly escaped the spectator sport of anthropological inquiry and almost as quickly reemerged in 1800 to spend the remainder of his life in the kind "captivity" of Dr. Jean Marc Gaspard Itard's (1774-1838) housekeeper, Mme. Guerin until his death in 1828. But because Victor of Aveyron never acquired the "god-like science" of human language as the creature did, we will never know if he had an understanding of his unique ontological standpoint, as the creature did. We do know that the creature appreciates that his physical strength and mental acuity is superior to that of our species, but we also know that the creature tries to throw off the alienating chains of genius and join the ranks of *bildung*. The problem, as Martin points out, is that the first great metamorphosis is "a relational affair involving not only hard work but also the circulation of love."[53] The genius creature makes cognitive leaps that Victor of Aveyron seems never to have made, but he has no reciprocal alliances, no affinities, therefore love is always already short-circuited in part because the creature's metamorphosis was of the quantum, revolutionary type rather than the slow, evolutionary variety characteristic of a more sustainable growth model.

While Godwinian perfectibility was inclusive for its time in the sense that it conceived of a wide variety of human intellect, believed in the educability of all classes of people, and attributed differences in levels of cognitive achievement to external (material) circumstances, it also placed sole responsibility for the individual pupil's education in the intentional hands of the educator. Hence, "the question whether the pupil shall be a man of perseverance and enterprise or a stupid and inanimate dolt,

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[52] Emily Sunstein, *Romance and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 123.
[53] Jane Roland Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 43.

depends upon the powers of those under whose direction he is placed and the skill with which those powers shall be applied."[54] "Perseverance" and "enterprise" are rather vague descriptors of what it means to be well educated. Such a powerful teacher might indeed create a focused, entrepreneurial warmonger. Conversely, by this logic, a poor teacher does not have the power to make anything of his student – stupid dolt or otherwise. In one breath, Godwin generously claims that all members of our species are capable of learning irrespective of physical and material differences. But in another, he openly excludes those "cases that are palpably and unequivocally excluded by the structure of their frame" from the realm of perfectibility – the capacity for perpetual improvement.[55] Perhaps the "deformation" in this educational paradigm is the paradigm itself: the "frame" of the sculpture made with skill and intention, in a vacuum, by a powerful Godwinian sculptor.

Astoundingly, rejection by the De Lacey family does not completely devastate the creature's hopes for sympathetic relations with our species. While he does express his suffering and rage by burning the empty cottage to the ground, the creature does not terrorize the family or kill them. His restraint is remarkable. Instead, he refuses "despair," and decides to "bend [his] steps" toward the "father" and "creator" who he knew had *seen* him during his creation and birth, but could not possibly *know* him as the creature he had become.[56] On the one hand, the "the spirit of revenge" motivates the creature to find Victor. On the other, the creature's desire for visibility and a connection to his maker motivates his search. With the help of his Miltonic theology

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[54] William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (New York: Evergreen Review, 2007, Kindle Edition), location 492-494.
[55] Ibid, location 1053-1058.
[56] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 124.

from *Paradise Lost* and observing the De Lacey family, the creature elevates Victor to the status of a superhuman genius to which he must "apply" for "that justice which I vainly attempted to gain from any other being that wore the human form."[57] In effect, the creature, like Mary Shelley, feels that creator-Victor, like God-Godwin, *owes* him a meaningful acknowledgement of his existence. Again, the language of desert and patronage characterizes the Godwinian perfectibility's paternalism. The creature's journey to meet his maker in Geneva is another in a series of "whole person or identity transformations brought about by" monstrous miseducation – culture crossings "fraught with alienation, inner conflict, accusations of betrayal, and anxieties about going home again."[58] The creature looks to his imperial master for validation and cannot imagine that the imperial master looks back at his subject for the very same.

By the time his two year-old creature tracks Victor down and demands that he create a female companion for him, Victor is no longer enchanted by the idea of being a god to a new species. Instead, he grudgingly accepts the responsibility of a misunderstood genius, victimized by his own genius. And in some important educational sense, this victimization is precisely what has happened to Victor – he has fallen prey to the fallacious reasoning of genius and Godwinian perfectibility. Hence, he cannot relinquish his faith in the project of genius altogether. If he had recognized the ideal of genius as a cultural liability, regardless of how "persuasive" the reasoning creature has become, Victor would not have used his "power" to create *or* to destroy the female companion.[59] For, in the final hour of her "birth," as the creature looks on

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[57] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 124.
[58] Jane Roland Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 8-9.
[59] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 178.

howling in agony, Victor dismantles the female creature's body with his bare surgeon's hands. He destroys his female creation because he fears her procreative potential and because he has been formally educated according to a *bildung* ideal that values self-replicating technology, he believes he knows the two creatures would usurp his perceived reproductive authority and relish mastery.

Victor's monstrous miseducation enables him only to imagine technological solutions to the problems wrought by technology. Therein lies the dangerous continuity of monstrous miseducation and Godwinian perfectibility. Judith Halberstam argues that the creation of the female, or the surgical construction of the uterus "out of bits and pieces of life and death, of criminals and animals, animate and inanimate objects," is the more horrific creation for Victor – a creation that must be aborted. [60] Halberstam overlooks Victor's horror at the surviving male creature, however. As the Godwinian sculptor, Victor must maintain creative control over the reproductive capacity of the arbitrarily constructed genders of his creations. Hence, he must control both the male and female parts in the reproduction of human life. If he had not aborted the female creature, he would effectively give up that authority.

Victor is not, as he claims, concerned about being responsible for propagating a "race of devils," or he would not have made the female creature reproductively viable.[61] Instead, he worries that he will lose control over the sexual reproduction of this new species – replication that would occur outside of his genius control. Just like the arbitrary surgical control he exacts over the genders he constructs, Victor arbitrates over

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[60] Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters,* Second ed. (Durham: Duke UP, 1995), 36-7.
[61] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 144.

the reproductive power of his creations and his genius cannot suffer their procreative potential. Although the creature is clearly both created as a male and desires to occupy a "masculine" role, it is neither masculine nor feminine. For Halberstam such in-between-ness is coded as early-modern monstrousness, but for Haraway, this very same in-between-ness belongs to the post-modern cyborg who does not share

> …the hopes of Frankenstein's monster…does not expect its father to save it through a restoration of the garden…through the fabrication of a heterosexual mate, through its completion in a finished whole, a city and cosmos. The cyborg does not dream of community on the model of the organic family, this time without the oedipal project. The cyborg would not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust.[62]

Unlike Haraway's cyborg, the creature is enmeshed in the *bildung* ideal derived from the terror curriculum that formed him, but ultimately he dares not hope for kinship with our species. He uses a separatist argument to convince Victor that he and his mate will live in Edenic plenty far from the "neighborhood of man."[63] Oddly, the creature's very existence, though, calls into profound question any singular notion of the "origin of species" for every living thing on earth that is not the creature or his mate. It is not even possible to point to a particular moment when species A mutated into species B, hence the "growth and development" of any species (let alone the individual members of a species) is not as predictable and paradoxically stable as *bildung* narratives claim. The creature's genius and genesis, then, condemns him to a "forced solitude" he "abhors"[64] a "vagabond and a slave" to "thought and feeling."[65]

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[62] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women (*New York: Routledge, 1991), 151.
[63] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 95, 130, 144.
[64] Ibid, 130.
[65] Ibid, 109.

Wollstonecraft asks the question that dismantles Godwinian perfectibility: "What, indeed, can tend to deprave the character more than outward submission and inward contempt?"[66] She understood the dilemma of Mary Shelley and her creature:

> Slaves and mobs have always indulged themselves in the same excesses, when once they broke loose from authority. The bent bow recoils with violence, when the hand is suddenly relaxed that forcibly held it…the plaything of outward circumstances, must be subjected to authority, or moderated by reason.[67]

And she warned that "every violation of justice and reason, in the treatment of children, weakens their reason," but monstrous miseducation depends upon injustice and unreason of Godwinian perfectibility.[68] Paternalism and uneven development must have "illegitimate offspring" in order to validate the Empire's very existence.[69]

Abandonment to Multiple Educational Agency as Monstrous Miseducation: Techno-scientific Productivity and Gothic Sublimity

The *bildung* ideal relies upon the meme of environmental determinism that divests the individual's development of her social, economic, and political context. The genius ideal relies upon a genetic meme, similar in consequence to that of *bildung*, that the individual can be understood and can understand herself apart from her biosocial environment. Avoiding debates over developmental and aesthetic models rooted in psychoanalysis, but noting that Mary Shelley and her fictive creations are products of abandonment (physically and emotionally) seems rather unavoidable. Alongside parthenogenic male birth of Miltonic mythos and Godwinian immortality, parental abandonment to multiple educational agency represents another core feature of

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[66] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 172.
[67] Ibid, 79.
[68] Ibid, 197.
[69] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 151.

monstrous miseducation. The trauma of such abandonment itself miseducates children that the world is not a safe place and that violence is one successful way to adapt to a hostile environment. And indeed, the modern world is *not* a safe place and violence *is* one successful mode of adaptation – a lesson learned all too well by parents who abandon and abuse children physically and emotionally under conditions of stress, especially economic stress. Abandonment is more often not of the literal variety undergone by the creature. More often, it is like that experienced by Mary Shelley and Victor: parents and guardians preoccupied with intellectual and business pursuits allow their children unmediated access to cultural stock that they are too busy and harried to inventory for liabilities that need to be discarded and assets that require preservation.

At age 17, Victor was abandoned to the University of Ingolstadt shortly after suffering the death of his mother. The first professor he encounters humiliates him by mocking his reverence for medieval and Renaissance alchemists in "this enlightened and scientific age."[70] But Victor's capacious intellect soon makes room for Newtonian natural philosophy, and he swiftly mutates into what the encounters with the multiple educational agency of the larger cultural surround have miseducated him to be: an isolated, arrogant, tragically misshapen being stripped of the ability to imagine himself in equal relation to others.[71] Victor's encounters with the *bildung* ideal of the university inspire him to deify certain kinds of self-replicating technologies – with known and unknown consequences – and their correspondent visions of progress. This branch of the techno-scientific terror curriculum teaches him to value development as "naturally"

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[70] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 52.
[71] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 162.

progressive and to see monstrous consequences as inevitable and ultimately solvable by more "advanced" technologies, all the while ignoring the power of that which historically gave rise to the technology in the first place. The aspect of Victor's monstrous miseducation that resulted from his abandonment to multiple educational agency, then, actually mimics the unchecked miseducative potential of multiple educational agency yoking the miseducative experiences of individuals to the miseducative ideologies of the terror curriculum. The contemporary political rhetoric of "fighting fire with fire" and "the war on terror" exemplifies this manifestation of collective monstrous miseducation. In fact, during Wollstonecraft's time, monarchical England, like the twenty-first-century United States of America, was "fighting a war on terror" with the first two revolutionary democracies: the newly independent United States of America and France.

Wollstonecraft would not have registered surprise at the consequences of Victor's expensive, single-sex miseducation. "Public" schools like Ingolstadt, Wollstonecraft insisted, are "hotbeds of vice and folly" where a curriculum of "habitual cruelty" teaches young men to exploit those at their mercy (animals, women, children), and instead of gaining "knowledge of human nature," they learn "merely cunning selfishness." After surpassing the professors who bequeathed to him their knowledge and isolating in his private quarters to conduct his independent research, Victor begins to self-identify as a genius artist-creator. The very evolving nature of his identification with genius suggests the culture crossing that induced his educational metamorphosis from self-interested bourgeois gentleman to narcissistic creative genius. Indeed, Victor's culture crossing from the private world of the Frankenstein estate to the public

world of the university amounts to abandonment to multiple educational agency wrought by techno-scientific productivity that is devoid of maternal teaching and teachings.[72] Ostensibly, only the creature, a magistrate of Geneva, Walton, and Walton's sister would ever know of his project. Like his creature, he works alone.

Equipped with the surgical skill to piece together a human body and the self-will to chase "nature to her hiding places," Victor learns to appreciate the nude uniformity of the "human frame" from the disinterested, artist-creator perspective of genius. It is this disinterestedness that enables him to "torture the living animal to animate the lifeless clay,"[73] and transforms him from a selfish entitled child into a dangerously gifted engineer who, as Wollstonecraft warned, becomes the kind of being who "can see pain, unmoved" and "learn[s] to inflict it."[74] Culture crossings that amount to abandoning individuals to an-aesthetic experiences and environments devoid of maternal teaching and teachings, charged Wollstonecraft, "destroy the constitution before it is formed; hardening the heart as it weakens the understanding" by narrowly valuing education of the intellect "instead of cultivating domestic affections."[75] If we take Wollstonecraft seriously, it would seem that the intentional, progressive, enlightened curriculum of Ingolstadt labors under a long shadow of unintentional learning: habits of cruelty and prejudice.[76] For all its progressive promises, without the circulation of gifts that is maternal teaching and the cyborg affinity politics of love and survival that are maternal

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[72] To be clear, though, the private sphere of servile Frankensteinian women did not amount to maternal teaching or teachings.
[73] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 58.
[74] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 177.
[75] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 162.
[76] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 87.

teachings, Victor's formal education isolates him and misshapes him in a way that forbids him to imagine sustainable, rational hopes for futurity.[77] His apocalyptic an-aesthetic cannot countenance a future of shared wisdom among amalgamated identities that have rationally chosen and formed affinity cells to build a sustainable environment.

Hence, despite the paternalism propped up by the uneven development of those with limited social capital that characterized Victor's upbringing (or because of its peculiar variety, Godwinian perfectibility), he *never* imagines himself parenting the being he endeavors to create. Instead, he hubristically envisions himself a god to a Miltonic legion of such creations, marveling that "a new species would bless me…and owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs."[78] Here, the educational myth of Frankenstein aligns with Korsmeyer's deep gender analysis of the masculine "value placed on dangerously fanciful imaginative activity."[79] Victor has clearly undergone an educational metamorphosis and taken up the mantel of genius in which techno-scientific productivity is confused as art in a way that Mary Shelley never could but Percy Shelley surely did.

Victor reports having experienced "rapture" when, as a child he sees through to the "causes" of natural phenomena. Seeing "the world" as "a secret" he "desired to divine," he eschews responsibility for his thoughts, feelings, and actions and instead fatalistically claims that "[n]atural philosophy is the genius that has regulated [his]

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[77] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 153.
[78] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 40.
[79] Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 30.

fate."[80] Explaining his "predilection for" natural philosophy, he goes on to detail two encounters that ushered in his an-aesthetic culture crossing to techno-scientific productivity. At age thirteen, he found and read Cornelius Agrippa's (1486-1535) work. In response to Victor's enthusiasm for the occult "principles of Agrippa," his father scoffs at his son's gullibility, calling Agrippa's thought "sad trash."[81] Victor blames his father for abandoning him to multiple educational agency and attributes his having "received the fatal impulse that led to [his] ruin" as a consequence of his father's failing to explain "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."[82]

According to Victor, his father's "cursory glance" and curt dismissal only peaked his adolescent interest in the alchemists and led him to read, "with the greatest avidity," the works of Paracelsus (1493-1541) and Albertus Magnus (1193-1280).[83] While his interest in these "occult" medieval and Renaissance texts, the content of which historians of science today cite as early chemistry, might "appear strange" to Walton "in the eighteenth century," Victor confesses to being "self-taught" in his "favourite studies," compelled to supplement "the routine of education in the schools of Geneva."[84] In Victor's retrospective of his *bildung*, his father went from one of "the agents and creators of all the many delights" to the ineffectual and "not scientific" patriarch who "left [Victor] to struggle with a child's blindness, added to a student's

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[80] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 45-6. This mixture of religious, fatalistic language with scientific, positivistic language suggests the absurdity of genius as an educational ideal.
[81] Ibid, 46.
[82] Ibid, 46.
[83] Ibid, 46-7.
[84] Ibid, 47.

thirst for knowledge…[u]nder the guidance of [his] new preceptors."[85] Like a good Godwinian perfectibilist, he became convinced in his "ardent imagination and childish reasoning" that he could "render man invulnerable to any but a violent death" and secure the genius end of immortality for the human species.[86]

While Victor has the luxury of "shunning his fellow creatures" and abandoning his creation, the newborn, full-grown creature is banned from the human species upon "receiving life."[87] Yet ignorant of his origins, the natural world, and society, the abandoned, sutured creature first comes to know sensations of light and darkness, heat and cold, hunger and thirst. He learns through his experience of the natural world, noting through the "operations of the fire" that the same cause can have different effects: physical pain and pleasure.[88] But as Mellor argues, this "Promethean gift" of fire and "civilization" has both creative and destructive potential.[89] It would seem a Promethean gift amounts to patriarchal bequeathing of power-knowledge systems enmeshed in the techno-scientific productivity realm of terror curriculum.

Indeed, the "original era of [the creature's] being" reads like the *bildung* narrative of Lockean empiricism, while in his telling of growth and development he self-identifies with Rousseauian Romanticism.[90] It is tempting to cast the creature as a Rousseauian child of nature, but when *Frankenstein* is reformulated as a myth of monstrous miseducation, it is difficult to sustain the argument that the creature is any more a "natural man" than Victor or than Mary Shelley herself. From his super-natural

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[85] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 45, 47.
[86] Ibid, 47, 48.
[87] Ibid, 103.
[88] Ibid, 97.
[89] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 78-9.
[90] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 95.

inception, the creature is excluded from the province of "nature" and the "natural."[91] He is unambiguously an artificially created thing, cast fully-formed – yet painstakingly sutured together by his maker – into the world in all its natural and cultural complexity. For all of the Lockean sensation and experience the creature gains in the forest outside Ingolstadt, his earliest educational encounters are not properly analogous to that of "primitive" peoples or cultures. In spite and because of his unprecedented isolation, he is deeply mired in the cultural morass of his place and time, the terror curriculum.[92]

If the sculptor's abandonment of the sculpture can be considered a non-interventionist policy of education, the creature's precocious physical independence and mental aptitude suggest the educational ideal of genius. Claiming the patriarchal education meant for someone else, the creature is self-taught in the Western intellectual tradition (like Wollstonecraft). Surely, he is radically independent from birth, but he is not "self-begot" like Milton's Satan. Can it be said, then, that his genius is self-made, self-directed, and self-contained? The implications of abandoning a physically (and quickly, intellectually) mature but emotionally immature creature to encounters with a world to which he is so singularly unfitted or which seems so singularly unfitted to him suggests the radical outsider status of genius. But Victor abandons the creature to multiple educational agency that enthusiastically supports monstrously accelerated development in so many ways, yet rejects this ontologically unstable being as

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[91] Without entering into the debate over what constitutes "nature" and "natural," I do think it is important to see those terms as ideologically freighted, socially constructed ideas.

[92] Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). If the theory of cell memory has any validity, the creature is certainly no *tabula rasa*. Also, while surely outside of my domain, Julia Kristeva's answer to the patriarchal unconscious of Jacques Lacan and Sigmund Freud suggests that the creature occupies a sort of extreme abjection.

incomprehensible. Is he the kind of being that results when genius usurps the first great metamorphosis from a creature of nature to a member of human culture?[93]

Denied the first great metamorphosis from a creature of nature to a creature of culture, this creature flies in the face of the nature/culture divide Martin highlights from Rousseau's thought experiment in Book I of *Émile*. Unlike Rousseau's automaton, the creature knows he has a body and takes care to cover it before leaving Victor's laboratory. He seems to have *a priori* knowledge of the cultural convention of modesty. Some of the subtler distinctions (colors, etc.) take the creature time to acquire, but "[t]his man-child" never presents as "a perfect imbecile, an automaton, an immobile and almost insensitive statue" except for in representations of him in films.[94] Here, the creature complicates the Romantic, neo-humanist narratives of genius and *bildung*.

Still naively unconscious of his appearance, the creature is driven by cold and hunger to migrate from the forests surrounding Ingolstadt. Violence born of fear marks every encounter he has with our species, but his encounters with physical violence and terror do not immediately become yoked to any latent capacities he possesses for violence. He does not learn to be violent from violence; he learns to be afraid. In fact, the creature's ambiguous ontological status challenges Martin's idea of education as "a process of change in which the capacities of an individual and the stock of a culture become yoked together."[95] It is his very singularity that tests Martin's unified theory of education as encounter. The creature claims that his "vices are the children" that

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[93] Jane Roland Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 39.
[94] Ibid, 28.
[95] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 14.

resulted from his singularity and abandonment.[96] Abandonment is part and parcel of the monstrous miseducation that transmits the terror curriculum through multiple educational agency. The creature confirms the consequences of short-circuiting the first great metamorphosis when he articulates the ontological questions that arose from his abandonment to multiple educational agency:

> Other lessons were impressed upon me even more deeply. I heard of the difference of sexes; and the birth and growth of children; how the father doated on the smiles of the infant, and the lively sallies of the older child; how all the life and cares of the mother were wrapped up in the precious charge; how the mind of youth expanded and gained knowledge; of brother, sister, and all the various relationships which bind one human being to another in mutual bonds.
>
> But where were my friends and relations? No father had watched my infant days, no mother had blessed me with smiles and caresses; or if they had, all my past life was now a blot, a blind vacancy in which I distinguished nothing. From my earliest remembrance I had been as I then was in height and proportion. I had never yet seen a being resembling me or who claimed any intercourse with me. What was I?[97]

Victor's training in empirical science teaches him to observe and interpret phenomena under "no uncertain" terms, and at the same time, ironically, to operate from a litany of assumptions garnered by his encounters with terror curriculum and especially the fatalism and will to irrationality I associate with the gothic sublime. His metamorphosis into the genius-creator makes him believe he is omniscient. It is monstrous miseducation that allows Victor's will to irrationality, a consequence of an ideology of genius, to mask itself as a logically defensible position.

Victor praises the genius hands that hold the potential and the genius minds that house the promise to master the secrets of the vast material universe. His monstrous miseducation has at best ill-equipped him to function as a moral agent within a

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[96] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 38.
[97] Ibid, 110.

coeducational world. At worst, Victor's monstrous miseducation has taught him to shun the uncouth and abandon the unlovable, illustrating Wollstonecraft's somehow ironic warning that "till society is very differently organized, I fear, this vestige of gothic manners will not be done away by a more reasonable and affectionate mode of conduct."[98] Violating Wollstonecraft's precondition to moral action, what Laird calls "republican coeducation," monstrous miseducation denies its progeny communion with "the thing [it] had put together."[99] Thus denied, the progeny sees itself like Mary Shelley and her creature: "abandoned…an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on."[100] Hence, that second generation cannot but continue the to transmit the terror curriculum. Just as Victor and the creature and just as Godwin/Shelley and Mary Shelley are bound to one another, the one monstrously miseducated generation is terribly bound to the one that follows unless intervened upon by a culture "very differently organized."

It is in retrospect, as Victor offloads his burden onto Walton, that the fatalism and will to irrationality comprising gothic sublimity are most evident. He describes another educational encounter that "regulated [his] fate" while he was still in Geneva happened when he was fifteen years old. After "watching [the] progress" of a "violent and terrible" thunderstorm, he "beheld a stream of fire issue from an old and beautiful oak" and in the next moment saw the same oak "had disappeared, and nothing remained but a blasted stump."[101] When he ventured out to the oak in the morning, he was awe-

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[98] Mary Wollstonecraft (2001) *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. New York: The Modern Library, 94.
[99] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 24.
[100] Ibid, 188.
[101] Ibid, 48.

struck that the tree had been "shattered in such a singular manner" and marveled at something having been "so utterly destroyed."[102] Upon reflection, Victor decides that "nothing would or could ever be known" and "natural history and all its progeny" were ultimately "a deformed and abortive creation."[103] After "a man of great research in natural philosophy" in explaining the theory of "electricity and galvanism…threw greatly into the shade" Victor's alchemists, he turns his mind to the "secure foundations" of "the mathematics."[104]

Ostensibly, Victor tells Walton this story of the "catastrophe" and his subsequent disillusion for the same reason he tells of his enthusiasm for the alchemists: to explain how he became the broken man Walton sees before him. However, the reason this moment in Victor's *bildung* heralds an educational metamorphoses has to do with Victor's feelings of envy and sense of defeat in the face of the *real*, sublime power of "nature" despite the fact that in retrospect he fatalistically concludes:

> Thus strangely are our souls constructed, and by such slight ligaments are we bound to prosperity or ruin. When I look back, it seems to me as if this almost miraculous change of inclination and will was the immediate suggestion of the guardian angel of my life – the last effort made by the spirit of preservation to avert the storm that was even then hanging in the stars, ready to envelope me. Her victory was announced by an unusual tranquility and gladness of soul, which followed the relinquishing of my ancient and latterly tormenting studies. It was thus that I was to be taught to associate evil with their prosecution, happiness with their disregard.[105]

Victor, with the benefit of hindsight, sees his metamorphoses as predetermined sites of epic battles between good and evil "angels" and forces. He learns to distance himself

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[102] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 48.
[103] Ibid, 48.
[104] Ibid, 48. Victor does not name these men, but he is likely referring to Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727), Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), and Luigi Galvani (1737-98).
[105] Ibid, 48-9.

from responsibility for his actions by aggrandizing his destiny as transcendent, an apocalyptic one of creative, destructive, suffering "super-natural" genius.

Drawing on his monstrous miseducation, Victor certainly sees his development as fatalistically guided by "Chance – or rather the evil influence, the Angel of Destruction, which asserted omnipotent sway over me from the moment I turned my reluctant steps from my father's door."[106] But Mary Shelley confounds terror curriculum's deterministic narratives by showing Victor's miseducational transformation into one who makes and suffers in the Deweyan aesthetic sense, but never regains the equilibrium with the environment necessary for a live creature to live among other live creatures. This, Victor's experience of gothic sublimity, an experience that inspires and is inspired by his apocalyptic visions, suggests he has undergone an an-aesthetic experience that leaves him with a fatalistic (ironically) retrospective and a will to irrationality. Like his creator Mary Shelley, Victor ostensibly tells his story for the moral edification of a third party, Walton. And while he insists that his tale is a didactic on the unforeseen consequences of overweening ambition (a pitfall of genius and *bildung* ideals), in his last, dying words, it is unclear whether Victor has learned the lesson he imparts:

> Seek happiness in tranquility, and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries. Yet why do I say this? I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed.[107]

In the wake of his "success," Victor realizes of the enormity of his "failure," yet seems incapable of taking responsibility for it. Incapacitated by despair and guilt, he

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[106] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 51.
[107] Ibid, 185.

opts to look upon his "experiment" as a terrible gothic nightmare and attempts to drive the memory from his mind despite the whispering spirits of his dead loved ones calling to him from the grave. Mary Shelley, too, recorded feelings of being haunted by the spirits of the dead. Guilt, a rather selfish emotion, drives Victor's apocalyptic an-aesthetic of gothic sublimity. After leaving home for the university and becoming smitten with techno-scientific productivity, he virtually abdicated all domestic responsibilities.

It is only after receiving a letter from his father announcing William's murder that Victor finally returns home from Ingolstadt after six years away at the university without a single visit or even a letter home. Outside of the gates of Geneva, Victor visits the site of William's murder and catches his first glimpse of the creature he had abandoned two years before:

> Could he be (I shuddered at the conception) the murderer of my brother? No sooner did that idea cross my imagination than I became convinced of its truth…. Nothing in human shape could have destroyed that fair child.... The mere presence of the idea was an irresistible proof of the fact.[108]

Victor's unshakeable confidence in his ability to recognize the monstrous is a consequence of monstrous miseducation, especially of gothic sublimity. While he suspects, in retrospect, that his "own vampire…let loose from the grave" carries some responsibility for the crime, he blames the carnage on supernatural "will and power" instead of accepting the singular culpability of a mythic creator or a mythic destroyer.[109]

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[108] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 75.
[109] Ibid, 64.

Had he intuited that he had been monstrously miseducated (as his creature intuited) to believe in his genius, he might have rightly blamed the terror curriculum.[110]

But, Victor's Machiavellian *bildung* can only see the living and nonliving world under "no uncertain" terms: because "the idea" crosses "his imagination," it becomes "irresistible proof of the fact."[111] Despite his certainty that the creature killed William, however, Victor does not come forward to defend Justine (another martyred Frankensteinian woman) because he believes that the court would judge him "mad" if he revealed the story of the creature and his "proof" of the creature's guilt (it came into his mind when he saw the creature scaling the side of a perpendicular alpine cliff in a flash of lightening). Instead, Victor's monstrous miseducation allows him to stay silent while the devoutly Catholic Justine is coerced to "confess a lie" in order to obtain absolution before her execution.[112] To distance himself from the terrible injustice done Justine, Victor had to superimpose a fatalistic, irrational mind over the mind his liberal education has trained to be scientific and rational.

Deploying the discourse of gothic sublimity – "artistic madness" *and* scientific progress – Victor "conceives" the idea of "the creation of a human being," endures "painful labour" to assemble it, and "bestow[s] life" in the virtual womb of his laboratory.[113] But the positivistic *bildung* paradigm on which Victor has learned to distinguish the deviant from the normal and the singular mold of genius into which he has poured himself cannot negotiate a middle ground between "extinguish[ing] the spark" he so "negligently bestowed" or abandoning the "detested form" of which he is

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[110] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 76.
[111] Ibid, 75.
[112] Ibid, 83.
[113] Ibid, 56-7.

the "miserable origin and author."[114] Nor can Victor face his gender transgression of co-opting the feminine trait of biological (if also artificial) reproduction. As long as the rhetoric of genius (male artist-creator) referred to an abstract act of creation, Victor could have kept a reverential and safe distance from the experience and object of terror.

Here, Mary Shelley renders both the Burkean and Kantian notions of the sublime as problematic. In the Burkean sublime, power exists in the object and, therefore, may be kept at a safe distance. In the Kantian sublime, power exists in the object and the subject, yet the subject has mastery over the power. In the Frankenstein myth, the object's power (the creature's experience) breaks through the object-subject screen, and subject's experience (Victor's experience) of sublimity becomes terror. Immediately after "birth," the creature reaches out to touch Victor, and Victor turns away in disgust and horror. Terror, in the Frankenstein myth, is not *in* the eye of the beholder; it *is* the eye of the beholder. Power shifts and master Victor becomes slave to his creation.

The terror of the gothic sublime is not sustainable as an aesthetic experience in the Deweyan sense. The live creature cannot regain her/his equilibrium in conditions of abject terror. It would seem, then, that when the artist-creator discovers that he is unable to maintain the thrilling distance from the experience and power over the object of creation, the gothic sublime associated with genius collapses. There is another possible outcome of Victor's project that has little to do with the terror of the sublime and everything to do with openness to the strange stranger: he could have seen a connection between himself and his creation (as a Pygmalion to a Galatea or a tutor to

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[114] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 94.

Emile, however problematic the sculptor/sculpture and gardener/plant models of education). He could have practiced a kind of stewardship over the "thing he had created." His failure to imagine such a connection points to the danger of the *bildung* and genius ideals in education and constitutes the gothic sublime that features in the monstrousness of Victor's miseducation. The experience of sublimity reduced to terror does not allow the subject to identify or empathize with the object, and that is dangerous and monstrously miseducative.

CHAPTER IV

Influence of *Frankenstein* as Educational Thought

Clearly *Frankenstein* is haunted by the canon of educational thought and other texts that might well be identified as educational thought if the definition of what counts as educational thought was broadened to include literary studies as a foundational discipline of educational studies and if what counts as education were broadened to account for intended and unintended cultural reception and exchanges. Equally apparent is the fact that the myth and meme of *Frankenstein* has become idiomatic, at least in the Western world, of hubristic kind of techno-scientific projects that unleash unintended negative consequences on naïve humanity preoccupied with the business of progress. And just as *Frankenstein* has become a meme of popular culture, it has also educated the popular scientific imagination – for better and for worse. Surely, allusions to *Frankenstein* inspire suspicion of unchecked scientific "genius," but not on the educational ideal of genius itself. Doubtless, those same allusions cause us to fear that our creations and our ideologies may grow to be more powerful than their creators, but we do not question the deep structure of *bildung*. Even facing the fear of "making monsters," the educational components of such coming of age stories as that of the creature or his creator's *bildung* disappear in favor of essentially deterministic narratives that neatly ignore social, economic, and political contexts and problems. The cultural influence of *Frankenstein* is undeniable, but what parts and versions of the story does Western culture retell and reproduce? In what forms and with what omissions and additions is this particular item of cultural stock transmitted, for what educational purposes, and with what educational consequences?

Frankenstein *as Educational Myth and Meme*

As I demonstrated in the previous two chapters, the educational character of the questions raised by *Frankenstein* and the lived experience of its creator test prevailing narratives of education by showing the ways in which these humanist myths amount to the modern terror curriculum informing and informed by monstrous miseducation. There has been a plethora of recent scholarship across academic disciplines considering the aesthetic, epistemological, ontological, social, psychological, cultural, economic, political, and historical implications of dividing the world into the monstrous and the "human." This scholarship has critiqued discourses ranging from performance art and body modification to gender continuums and queer theory, from disability studies and addiction sciences to colonial exploitation and genocidal hegemony. Popular culture, too, routinely takes up the monstrous and the monster itself. Frankenstein's creature appears as a comic book hero (a misunderstood force for good), as the subject of popular music (comic and tragic), as an action figure (many different iterations), and in a host of other forms. The pervasiveness of the creature's presence alone suggests that he is an important cultural icon exploited by myriad media, and the pop cultural performance of the "goth" and "steam punk" aesthetic with which *Frankenstein* has become identified must surely have some relevance to monstrous miseducation. The influence of popular culture's multiple educational agency, and its treatment of the monstrous has important educational implications.

It is easy to dismiss the film versions of *Frankenstein* as wildly divergent from Mary Shelley's text, but they do explore the sense of the monster as a teacher. The film tradition of *Frankenstein* is beyond the scope of this project, but it is important to

acknowledge its influence, as film is an educational agent. In the film tradition, most of the educational motifs of *Frankenstein* are either omitted or they are reduced to caricatures of the creature's cognitive and affective development. The most notable film versions include the James Whale classics, *Frankenstein* (1931) and *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935). However, there are hundreds of films featuring "a mad scientist, a raising-from-the-dead theme, or a Creature cameo."[1] In Whale's *Frankenstein*, the credits name Mary Shelley, "Mrs. Percy Bysshe Shelley," while in his *Bride* she is credited as "Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley." In the Percy Shelley/Godwin-less *Bride*, she also features as two characters (both played by Elsa Lanchester): as herself, the author Mary Shelley, and as the creature's bride. Whale's creature (Boris Karloff) certainly does not manage the Miltonic verse of Shelley's creature, but he does learn the word "friend" from his "wild-boy," non-intervention, growth pure and simple education. Of course, this backfires badly. When he calls his bride by the name of "friend," she screams in horror like any number of the human species to which neither the creature nor his bride can claim membership.

Sometimes films portray the creature as possessing only the rudimentary circuits necessary for the eventual commission of violence. Sometimes, the creature is given the "genius" brain of Waldman, Victor's favored professor. Other times, the creature is given the "monstrous" brain of a criminal made and molded in the image of a corrupt society. Whale's bride receives a brain "grown" artificially by Dr. Pretorius amid his archetypical homunculi. These films reduce "Dr. Frankenstein's" dilemma to the hubristic dream of any selfish antihero instead of engaging the ontological,

[1] For a fairly comprehensive list, visit: http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Pop/filmlist.html.

epistemological, aesthetic, and educational questions Mary Shelley posed. Other overtly Frankensteinian-themed films are more sympathetic to the creature than Whale's treatment, offering up that he is misunderstood or misdirected. But for all of their pathos, in these versions, it is the creature's "*human* nature" that turns him violently against the violence and prejudice of our "superior" species.

Although it has not been traditionally classed as a Frankensteinian myth, David Lynch's *The Elephant Man* better engages Mary Shelley's questions about the terror of humanist myths than any film in the gothic/horror genre. Her questions are Dr. Treves's questions in the film: How can I know with any certainty that this being is a human being? And if I cannot be sure of the human status of John Merrick (the actual "Elephant Man" was named Joseph Merrick), how can I be sure that I am human?

At one point in Lynch's film, another surgeon reassures Treves by telling him that his subject is "a complete imbecile."[2] Treves replies, "I pray to God he's an idiot."[3] By allowing her creature to speak for himself, Mary Shelley puts the reader in the position of Dr. Treves. The modern educational problem of terror comes into the picture when she does *not* put these questions in Victor Frankenstein's mouth. Neither genius nor *bildung* models can afford to ask these questions. Importantly, the historical person of Joseph Merrick *was* developmentally and cognitively "delayed," but David Lynch's John Merrick suffers only from physical differences. The actual Joseph Merrick would have failed the test of "being human" according to eighteenth-century Scottish philosopher, James Burnett, Lord Monboddo's (1714 –1796) "linguistic

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[2] David Lynch, *The Elephant Man* (Paramount Pictures, 1980).
[3] Ibid.

evolution"[4] in the same way Jean Marc Gaspard Itard (1774-1838) denied human status to Victor of Aveyron. Monstrous miseducation demands quantitative proof of human status and will question and torture a subject until it passes some equivalent of a Turing Test.[5] Mary Shelley's nameless creature would have passed a Turing Test. His creator, Victor, may not have.

Victor's educational metamorphoses are all but ignored in the film tradition. Rather, he features as an obsessive god-scientist driven mad by his own exalted genius. Sometimes, Victor is painted as "the real monster," a monstrous genius that commits monstrous deeds in the name of "scientific progress," but genius itself is not taken to be monstrous. In fact, Victor does not have to bear the burden of his techno-scientific tortures alone and in secret in these films as he does in the novel. If he does not have a loyal assistant or evil fellow-scientist, at least others in his circle know of his experiments. Generally, these films are self-conscious productions of the horror genre and are often characterized by a camp, hyperbolic violence that, instead of frightening or terrorizing, paradoxically serves to mitigate the threat of violence.

As cultural stock, monster narratives seem to say that monsters do indeed have a great deal to teach about the kind of individuals, good and bad, the human species has the capacity to become. But these cultural artifacts do not necessarily take as a given that it is wrong-headed to cast difference as monstrosity. Nevertheless, much has been made in the humanities over the way monster myths help members of the human

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[4] Stefaan Blancke, "Lord Monboddo's Ourang-Outang and the Progress of Language," in *The Evolution of Social Communication in Primates*, eds. Marco Pina and Nathalie Gontier (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2014), 31-44.
[5] Timothy Morton, *Dark Ecology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 100-102.

species understand themselves as moral actors in the world.[6] In a common language sense, the label monster is rather haphazardly applied to any number of alien, deformed, or menacing beings in popular culture. Perhaps this linguistic carelessness underlies educational philosophy's colossal underestimation of the monster's power to teach. But, like film, the entries listed in the Oxford English Dictionary are not particularly useful toward making the conceptual distinctions. Citing "mythical," hideous crosses between animals and humans, "malformed animals and plants," and "something extraordinary or unnatural," falls rather short of the conceptual categories needed to address an educational sense monsters or monstrousness despite taking its derivation from the Latin, *mōnstrō*.[7] The definition of *mōnstrō*,"to point out, exhibit, make known, indicate, inform, advise, teach, instruct, tell," is highly suggestive of the premise that monsters do teach, from the culture as curriculum standpoint.[8]

Accepting that monsters are persistent cultural stock – makers and shapers – that do seem to instruct individuals for better and for worse, it makes sense to begin seeing them in light of monstrous miseducation and the false educational ideals of genius and *bildung* transmitted in terror curriculum. Powerful beings that exceed the natural laws that bound the physical universe could be termed genius monsters. While perhaps beholden to a host of inscrutable cosmologic regulations ostensibly not of human design, "extraordinary and unnatural" immortal deities and demons are depicted as

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[6] Marina Warner, *Monsters of Our Own Making* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007).
[7] Taken from the *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Last retrieved on 060515 from: http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/cgi/entry/00315137?query_type=word&queryword=monster&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=IO2H-QMmA26-3760&hilite=00315137.
[8] Charlton T. Lewis and Hugh M. Kinsey (1918), *An Elementary Latin Dictionary*. New York: American Book Company, 516.

distinctly not human. Thus, even by the OED's rather amorphous definition, they are genius monsters.

By the same tolken, a *bildung* monster would be suggestive of creature that casts off of the human, "a not-quite-human subject, characterized by its morphic variability, continually in danger of becoming not-itself."[9] Therefore, vampires, werewolves, and other manner of shape-shifting entities might be termed *bildung* monsters. But there is another variety of *bildung* monster: the individual who attempts to move toward becoming human by engaging in human activities despite a typically limited consciousness. Automatons, golems, reanimates, robots, cyborgs, and to a lesser extent, zombies might fit this category.

But, as the exposition argued, Frankenstein's creature occupies both genius monster and *bildung* monster simultaneously, thereby calling into question any essential or exceptional designation "human" rather than uncovering any essential or exceptional qualities that demark "monster." This is the central question of Mary Shelley's text – the one that keeps the creature and his creator alive in the popular and scholarly imagination. This is the stuff of which educational myths are made.

Literature as a Foundational Discipline of Interdisciplinary Studies of Education

The study of myth and literature, especially as they represent the *bildung* and genius terror curriculum of monstrous miseducation, is a largely unacknowledged foundational discipline for the interdisciplinary foundational study of education. Drawing on the disciplines of philosophy and history of education along with that of

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[9] Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

literary and cultural theory, my multi-disciplinary approach to the study of myth as a genre of educational thought aims to hybridize educational and literary aesthetics. Educational studies' neglect of art as a source of educational thought – especially that of historically marginalized and silenced groups – results in the cultural anemia of a closed system. Literary fiction, like education, is not only a cultural production; it is a producer of culture.

What has monstrous miseducation to do with the patriarchal aesthetic that fathered the values, concepts, and hierarchies "at the very foundations of philosophy" that has largely denied literature as a source of educational wisdom?[10] Carolyn Korsmeyer's project continues the work begun by daughters of artist-fathers and male creators like Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and a legion of others.[11] Indeed, the culture has inherited the legacy of "the creator of art" as a "masculine ideal"; hence one aim of feminist aesthetics has been to expose the deep structural flaws that coalesce in the conceptual apparatus of monstrous miseducation.[12] The influence of terror's curricular tenets are staggering and the consequences are enduring. Therefore it is important to understand that the patriarchal educational landscape on which monstrous miseducation enjoys pride of place is not the exclusive province of "fathers."[13]

At the height of the radical feminist movement, Adrienne Rich claimed that it is the invisible workings or deep gender of patriarchy that keep women from organizing for their collective wellbeing against identifiable multiple (mis)educational agency

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[10] Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Feminist Aesthetics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/feminism-aesthetics/>.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 8.
[13] Adrienne Rich, "Toward a Woman-Centered University" in *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1979), 121-134.

within the acknowledged educational institution of the academy. In relation to other women within the academy, Rich argued that women work against their own best interests by complying with the miseducational tokenization a few "exceptional women."[14] Instead of mentoring and supporting the "younger feminist scholar-teacher," the tokenized woman safeguards her own status and survival by alienating them "as if they belonged to a distant tribe."[15] Exceptional women, according to Rich, are most obliged and least likely to use their privilege to make patriarchy visible.[16] Ultimately, Rich's structural critique of patriarchy depicts the academy as a dysfunctional "patriarchal family" in which Miltonic fathers seduce and encourage certain "gifted daughters," and mothers abandon and resent them.[17] This dysfunctional family amounts to double bind in which women cannot but lose: men devalue and objectify women and women dismiss other women in an effort to gain recognition by men. Rich described the gendered double bind of the terror curriculum in which Mary Shelley found herself, a self-perpetuating algorithm of dysfunctional monstrous miseducation.

After all, how can we realize Martin's "'gender-sensitive' educational ideal" – learning and curriculum that account for gender "when it makes a difference" and dismisses it "when it does not" – if difference is naturalized (masculine) by *bildung* or super-naturalized (masculine) by genius?[18] What if, consciously and unconsciously, monstrous miseducation has engendered an aesthetic, "at the 'deep level,'" that denies

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[14] Adrienne Rich, "Toward a Woman-Centered University" in *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1979), 125.
[15] Ibid, 125.
[16] Ibid, 128.
[17] Ibid, 125.
[18] Susan Laird, "Philosophy of Education 30 Years after Martin's Radical Presidential Challenge" (Philosophy of Education Society, Alternative General Session, St. Louis, MO., 2011), 1.

the educational thought of half of our species? [19] Is the virtual absence of women from the historical canon of educational thought analogous to the virtual absence of women from the ranks of "high art" and from the canon of thought on aesthetics? Is the field of educational studies still beset by terror curriculum's false ideologies of a Romantic *bildung* that naturalizes "emotions in women's art" and attributes "fine-tuned" sensitivity and "masculine genius" to "the male artist [who] produces a new creation that transcends the dictates of nature"?[20]

The same terror curriculum that considers practitioner wisdom gleaned from anecdotal maternal teaching and teachings as unworthy of serious academic consideration has historically relegated women's artistic production to the caste of useful "domestic crafts" unworthy of serious aesthetic consideration. Women's "silence" in the academic canons of educational and aesthetic thought has a gendered material history sublimated by terror curriculum that is transmitted generationally via monstrous miseducation. Korsmeyer attributes the absences and silences to the fact that women were "denied the kind of education and training that prepared them for the exacting standards of the public audience."[21] Perhaps, though, women *were* getting a certain kind of education. More precisely, perhaps women were getting a certain kind of education that allowed them insight into monstrous miseducation that masculinity's privilege simply could not see. Because they were not taken seriously as scholars and because they took art seriously, women (surely privileged by being "lettered" at all)

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[19] Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 8.
[20] Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Feminist Aesthetics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/feminism-aesthetics/>.
[21] Ibid.

theorized monstrous miseducation in "certain art forms…such as the prose novel" beginning in the early nineteenth-century when Mary Shelley published the first edition of *Frankenstein* was anonymously.[22] Doubtless, the artistic quality (and the male recognition of the artistic quality) of these novels varies, but these novels archive women's important thought on aesthetics as well as education.[23] It is simply self-defeating for educational studies to ignore the educational thought in these novels.

Arguably for both sexes, these novels were as much theory-works as they were art-works. But especially for historically marginalized and silenced members of society, art (fiction) was a safe place to work out theory, aesthetic and educational. Hence, looking to women's art begins to fill in the historical gaps and silences of women's thought. For good or for ill, art bears witness to "the degree to which philosophy and cultural production travel hand in hand."[24] Surely, a continuity of women's thought exists in the "useful" art of women; it is just buried alive.

Hence, *Frankenstein* as an educational myth of monstrous miseducation and terror curriculum has influenced narratives of development authored by women to theorize their own lived experience within a world that would make that experience monstrous and bury it. Women's educational wisdom regarding monstrous miseducation and its attendant genius and *bildung* terror is buried in diverse imaginative literary sources. Lesser-known texts published a century after the first publication of

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[22] Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Feminist Aesthetics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/feminism-aesthetics/>.

[23] Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* 2nd Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

[24] Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Feminist Aesthetics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/feminism-aesthetics/>.

Frankenstein by American women like Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896), Zitkala-Sa's *American Indian Stories* (1921), Paula Hopkins's *Contending Forces* (1900), and Anzia Yezierska's *Hungry Hearts* (1920) demonstrate the influence of Mary Shelley's educational thought, especially by imagining alternatives to the terror curriculum of monstrous miseducation. Here, I will focus specifically on Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs,* but my hope is that this analysis of Jewett's text as a contrary case of monstrous miseducation will point to the necessity of future scholarship in Zitkala-Sa, Hopkins, and Yezierska.

Frankenstein, Mary Shelley's educational thought experiment, points out how the false ideology of *bildung* and genius are linked by an irreconcilable paradox: perpetual transformation (progressive) *and* essential/exceptional identity (conservative). But while *Frankenstein* hints at alternatives that might have remedied monstrous miseducation, it does not offer any sustainable contrary or borderline cases. In fact, I could not identify a contrary case of a counter-narrative to monstrous miseducation outside of literary fiction. Therefore, I explore the educational thought in Jewett's *The Country* to show the powerful influence of *Frankenstein* as well as to provide a contrary case to modernity's deeply gendered terror curriculum and monstrous miseducation.

The Country of the Pointed Firs *as a Thought Experiment in Maternal Teaching and Teachings and Cyborg Affinity Politics*

It is difficult to give a summary of *The Country* because it does not follow the structure of a traditional narrative. In fact, it might be designated as a counter-*bildungsroman*, or novel of "education," "formation," "coming-of-age," "self-discovery," "apprenticeship," and "development" because it confounds the plot of

individual growth from childhood to maturity. Like Mary Shelley, Jewett calls into question this decidedly Western, bourgeois, patriarchal medium that meant to domesticate frenzied modernity and contain limitless capitalism through gendered narratives of transformation that ironically rely upon Miltonic origin myths of fixed identity – *bildung* and genius. But a century later, Jewett offers a contrary case of monstrous miseducation that imagines Wollstonecraft's "rational futurity" lived relationally through Haraway's cyborg affinity politics, in which the gifts of Laird's maternal teachings circulate.

Indeed, its very refusal to conform to that tradition it imagines an alternative to terror curriculum and monstrous miseducation. However, the obscurity of the text requires a brief summary. *The Country* reads like a bit like travel log narrated by an unnamed professional female author who journeys to Dunnet Landing, on the coast of Maine, for a summer of writing. The narrator boards with Almira Todd but does her writing in an abandoned schoolhouse. Many of Dunnet Landing's odd characters share stories with the narrator, but herbal healer Almira offers the most prolific renderings of the village's "progressive era" and its current decline.

The traditional *bildungsroman* instantiates the paradox of monstrous miseducation, signaling artificial endpoints for personal, social, and national identity, while insisting that singular identity is born of a shared rural ancestor. Jewett's counter-*bildungsroman* names that ancestor, Dunnet Landing, a fictional maritime village in mid-coast Maine – a village in decline on the eve of a new century. But her women profoundly trouble "feminine" narratives of development that posit female maturity as moving from childhood to marriage to motherhood. Jewett's narrative of declension

also confounds the "masculine" plot trajectory of rational self-interest, private enterprise, upward mobility, and forward progress toward the "victory" of absorption into a modernized middle-class. Thus, Jewett's critique of gender identity in personal and social development also critiques narratives of the nation's development.

Modern progress meant economic decline for geographically marginalized mid-coast Maine on the eve of the twentieth century: railroad expansion allowed the nation to access the Great Lakes and Pacific Northwest thereby decimating Maine's lumber industry; refrigeration made Maine's ice industry obsolete; materials like concrete and steel replaced Maine's granite industry; and over-harvesting as a result of fishing technologies destroyed Maine's fishing industry. But at the same time these material industries declined, Maine's tourist industry developed. After the Civil War, middle-class tourists from metropolitan centers called "rusticators" began seasonally colonizing mid-coast Maine. Developers bought up oceanfront property and built hotels to accommodate these middle-class visitors, while wealthier tourists built obscenely lavish oceanfront vacation "cottages." Unsurprisingly, this uneven development displaced local people who sold their property and their labor to these "summer people" in order to survive the economic decline. These "summer people" thwarted attempts to revive traditional industries and initiate economic progress because they wanted the region to remain "rustic," scenic, and sparsely populated for aesthetic and ideological reasons.

Maine's *bildung*, then, becomes the site of tensions between the progressive, forward-orientation of the nation and the regressive, backward-orientation of the region. On the one hand, Dunnet Landing represents a pre-modern myth of America's rural infancy that depends upon a modern rhetoric of America's progressive national adult.

On the other hand, the national "parent," like William Godwin and Victor Frankenstein, depends upon the uneven, arrested development of its pre-industrial, regional "child" to ground itself historically and to identify itself nationally. In this way, Dunnet Landing represents a resistant regional or colonial child independent of its national, imperial parent insofar as the region does not look to the nation for an "official" historical continuity to bind its community. Dunnet Landing, like Mary Shelley and her creature, has its own stories. The nation or the Empire, a busy, modernized parent, looks to its errant regional or colonial child for the imagined roots it believes it may have lost or sold along the boundless path of futurity. Oddly, the region or the colony comes to figure as both parent and child of the nation or Empire. Demonstrating the assumptions propping up this paradoxical relationship between nation and region, Empire and imperial subject, progress and decline, parent and child, future and past, Jewett's nameless, urban narrator projects her own "childish certainty of being the center of civilization" onto the locals of Dunnet Landing in the *first* chapter, provocatively entitled "The Return."[25]

The narrator's perspective changes, but does not develop according to growth rubrics of the feminine *bildung*. She initially imagines finding a lost innocence in the nation's "inner child" she presumes safely tended in the nursery of Dunnet Landing. As a professional writer, like Mary Shelley and Victor, she wants to educate her readership about what has been lost and what might still be found in Dunnet Landing. But surely unlike Victor, Godwin, or Percy Shelley, this narrator begins to realize that her summer

[25] Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 5.

of participatory ethnography may only contribute to the exploitative cultural tourism that she saw herself as having transcended. Finally, though, the narrator maps Dunnet Landing as a "waiting place" where the idiom of the feminine *bildung* finds no purchase. Both narrator and text slip the narrow identity enclosures set by a zero-sum game of imperial cultural tourism and an endgame of feminine spiritual questing.

Surely Jewett's narrator, like Mary Shelley and her creature, learns about the nation's and the Empire's gendered coming-of-age narratives. Like Mary Shelley's return to England after her exiled life of loss with Percy Shelley, Jewett's self-exiled, childless, middle-aged, middle-class narrator must wonder about the America to which she will return. How will her Dunnet Landing education serve her when she returns to the infinitely young, indefinitely progressive, indisputably male-dominated nation from which she has sojourned? Perhaps her "backward view" of Dunnett Landing affords Jewett's narrator, like Mary Shelley, a peculiarly tragic understanding of what lies ahead. Jennifer Fleissner suggests that the "female power" of Dunnet Landing exists in a state of suspended animation between competing "feminist views of domesticity and maternity" enacted by Jewett's women in the shadow of "the hovering presence of an uneasy past."[26] And indeed, the hyper-development of the modern nation and Empire on the backs of the retrograde region and imperial subject labors under the same deep shadow as gender inequity and false educational ideologies like genius and *bildung*.

The narrator's transformative learning experience in the "waiting place" of Dunnet Landing involves gaining full knowledge of what Fleissner names,

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[26] Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 108-10.

"stuckness."[27] This new knowledge about women, learned from women, may allow the narrator to read and write narratives of female development in a new way. But this understanding of stuckness does not signal closure to the question of identity in the way the feminine *bildung* invites the culture to believe heterosexual romance, marriage, and childbearing does. As a thinking woman on the eve of a new century, the narrator's experience of personal, social, and national identity, like Mary Shelley's experience, is initially one of profound loss and longing. But without maternal teaching and teachings, without a cyborg affinity politics, Mary Shelley and her creature would only have the dubious, alienated satisfaction of a wretched recognition of their stuckness.

Despite the fact that Franco Moretti's theoretical lens for the *bildungsroman* is decidedly masculinist, his ideas about youth and modernity are valuable to conceptual analysis of monstrous miseducation. Moretti claims that in the aftermath the "double revolution" (French and industrial) the old world found itself in the new "without possessing a culture of modernity."[28] For Moretti, youth, both in its "formlessness" and its certain end, becomes the central "'symbolic form of modernity,'" and the *bildungsroman* becomes the "great narrative" whereby a shaken culture looks for "meaning in the future rather than the past."[29] Youth, the rhetoric of "reformation" *and* "backwardness" claimed, could weather the experience of modernity's shocking newness. But for all their romanticized "progressive"-mindedness *and* past-consciousness, young Romantics like those of Mary Shelley's circle longed for a

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[27] Jennifer Fleissner, *Women, Compulsion, Modernity* (Chicago: The UP Chicago, 2004), 9.
[28] Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World* (London: Verso, 2000), 5.
[29] Ibid, 5.

containment strategy that the terror curriculum ironically promises. A century later, Jewett refused to be intimidated by the terror curriculum and imagined another way.

By largely excising children from the text, by featuring them as "memories," and, curiously, by infantilizing all of her adults and "queer folks," Jewett disrupts the feminine *bildung* fathered by monstrous miseducation's patriarchal consciousness.[30] The narrator's summer "hire" of the schoolhouse as a quiet sanctuary for writing proves that children do indeed exist in Dunnet Landing. But, it is only when the "small scholars" are away that the narrator can write "with authority" at the teacher's desk.[31] Noting the wild tansy thriving in the schoolyard, Almira remarks that "being scuffed down all the spring" made the flowers stronger "like some folks that had it hard in their youth, and were bound to make the most of themselves before they died."[32] In a *bildungsroman*, Almira's musings would herald a procreative, progressive narrative, but Almira's rough evolutionary logic suggests something else: careless children "scuff" the young plants in the spring, and because of, or in spite of suffering in youth from the indifference of children, the surviving tansy grow stronger. Almira's radical analogy might mean that procreation and parenting builds character through suffering at the hands of children, but neither she nor the narrator is a biological mother. Perhaps Almira alludes to a different kind of parent-child relationship – that of national or imperial parent and regional or colonial child. Almira is wise, though, and knows that the roles have reversed. She recognizes herself as related to the narrator by cyborg affinity politics, as the landlady/mother/teacher/healer who circulates gifts of love and

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[30] Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 51.
[31] Ibid, 11.
[32] Ibid, 11.

survival. Almira is a custodian of cultural wealth. No such custodian intervened in the lived experience of Mary Shelley or her creature. Rather, they were abandoned to unmediated encounters with the cultural liabilities of deeply gendered Western thought transmitted by unconscious or irresponsible multiple educational agency.

In another sketch of an absent child, healer Almira "answers the call" of a worried visitor requesting an herbal remedy for a sick child in a "kind, motherly voice."[33] When Almira returns and picks up her dropped narrative stitch, the narrator attributes Almira's distractedness to "a last considering thought" of the child.[34] The absent child represents a message from the present that interrupts a story from the past, suggesting the preciousness and the precariousness of children in the region or the colony. The past, for the terrifyingly modern creature, was "a blot…a blind vacancy" in which he had always been as he was "in size and proportion," but the present was a place where his "sorrow only increased with knowledge."[35] For Mary Shelley, the past was filtered through Godwin and the present was divined by Percy Shelley. The only mother she knew was in texts that she forbade her creature. Without maternal teaching or teachings, education as a circulation of cultural wealth was impossible for Mary Shelley and her creature. Like Godwin, Shelley, and Victor, Mary Shelley and her creature were "beneficiaries" of cultural stock – assets and liabilities that had not been inventoried – bequeathed (rather than circulated as gifts) patrilineally over generations. Without such cultural bookkeeping, it was a miseducated and miseducative modernity.

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[33] Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 58.
[34] Ibid, 58.
[35] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 109.

It is important to note that Almira's was custodian of a morally neutral pharmacopeia that healed the bodies of children *and* their mothers. The text alludes to pennyroyal, a well-known abortifacient,[36] and the "special herb" of childbirth and menstruation.[37] When Almira takes the narrator to the place where the pennyroyal grows, she shares the secret love, loss, and survival it represents to her: in her youth, Almira gave her heart and her body to another man before she married a "good man" who died at sea "before he ever knew what he 'd had to know if we 'd lived long together."[38] What his death spared him from knowing and Almira from telling is intimately tied to pennyroyal. Another absent child looms over this wild pennyroyal, and that shared secret binds these two women to one another and perhaps to all women in a cyborg affinity politics.[39] Without maternal teaching and teachings, Mary Shelley, like her creature, did not enjoy such affinities. Both lived out the consequences of monstrous miseducation: Mary Shelley driven to silence by an incapacitating sense of loss and the creature driven to violence by a desire for revenge.

By slippery critical arithmetic *Frankenstein* escapes, Jewett's thought experiment in female autonomy is often equated with abortion and lesbianism.[40] Allegations of retaliatory abortion and lesbianism turn Jewett's "pointed firs" into the pointed witch hats of crossed women. Accounting for the text's tendentiousness toward the gender expectations reproduced in the feminine *bildung* in this way reproduces a mythic masculine revenge fantasy for the "original," genius narrative of declension: the Edenic

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[36] George Smith, "Jewett's Unspeakable Unspoken," *Modern Language Studies* 24, no. 2 (1994): 17.
[37] Elizabeth Ammons, "Going in Circles," *Literary Imagination* 16, no. 2 (1983): 91.
[38] Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 40.
[39] George Smith, "Jewett's Unspeakable Unspoken," *Modern Language Studies* 24, no. 2 (1994): 17.
[40] Ibid, 11-17.

fall. Instead, the pennyroyal motif represents maternal teaching through the circulation of gifts and maternal teachings about women's reproductive health – including her biological choices and selected alliances. Again, Jewett's text confounds Godwinian perfectibility and Miltonic identity politics.

It is true, though, actual children almost always interrupt the narrative. The "gay voices and laughter from a pleasure-boat…full of boys and girls" just off the shore of the island remind the narrator of self-imposed isolation.[41] The distant worldly clamor of other people's children remind the narrator that she is an "islanded" woman who deviates from the heteronormative plot trajectory of the feminine *bildung*. When maturity and adulthood mean marriage, children, and becoming the angel of the house, not marrying, not having children, and not enforcing moral order mean perpetual infancy unless one is able to choose affinities with other amalgamated beings. With the maternal teachings of love and survival that Almira circulates, the narrator is able to imagine such affinity unlike Mary Shelley or her creature (or Godwin, Percy Shelley, or Victor). Certainly Jewett's women suffer for their cyborg affinity politics and their transgressions against the terror curriculum, but they are able to acknowledge their fragmented being and to collectively imagine a sustainable, rational futurity.

By listening to Almira's mother, Mrs. Bowden-Blackett's retelling of stories she heard during her own girlhood, we learn with the narrator that at the turn of the previous century, during Mary Shelley's time, long before Maine was a part of the United States, the area was teeming with Bowdens.[42] Mrs. Bowden-Blackett tells the story that her own mother told *her* about a long ago Sunday afternoon when a "scatter-witted little

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[41] Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 65.
[42] Ibid, 76.

bound girl" burst into the stiflingly hot "meetin'-house" and interrupted the minister with screams of "Mis' Bowden, Mis' Bowden!...[y]our baby's in a fit!"[43] The "whole congregation," seemingly comprised of "Mis' Bowdens," abandoned the sermon and fled to their respective homes to check the welfare of their children. Amused, the minister gave "'em the benediction."[44] Almira angrily halts her mother's bequeathing of this once removed story of the "Mis' Bowdens" as a cultural liability that amounts to terror curriculum. It is clear that Almira has not become a "Mis' Bowden" and resents her mother's deployment of her own mother's gendered narrative of development. Almira rejects this version of Bowden foremothers as breeders of weak children dependent upon a man's benediction for their volition as monstrous miseducation.

Cresting the hill above the Bowden's ancestral homestead sitting between two generations of Bowden women, the narrator sees the house as a "motherly brown hen" that raised "five generations of sailors and farmers and soldiers," patiently awaiting the return of her "flock that came straying toward it from everywhere" to hover near her like "huge bees."[45] But amid the images of fecundity and pollination, is a "burying-ground that stood like a little fort."[46] Mrs. Bowden-Blackett reports that "most of the home graves were those of women" because the bones of sailors, farmers, and soldiers who "had been [the house's] children" were "scattered" across the nation – at sea, out West, and on battlegrounds.[47] These images suggest the Bowden homestead serves as a place on which personal, social, and national identity is grafted, but the images that

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[43] Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 76-7.
[44] Ibid, 77.
[45] Ibid, 77.
[46] Ibid, 77.
[47] Ibid, 77.

follow refuse the idea that those identities are stable or essential or exceptional. Rather, Jewett describes the relational quality of cyborg affinity politics that make the circulation of maternal teachings and sustainable, rational futurity possible.

Picturing "the old Bowden house made of durable gingerbread" falling "to ruin at the feast's end," suggests that the rustic homestead simply cannot provide moorings for the family, much less for the nation.[48] The generations of reunited Bowdens marching together absurdly against the backdrop of an always already exploited mid-coast Maine suggests the absurdity of national and imperial myths of identity formation and. Feeding the narrator a slice of American "early-apple" pie embossed with the "whole word *Bowden*," Almira consumes the word "*Reunion*" in a ritualistic communion between region or colony and nation or Empire that acknowledges a shift in the way the region, nation, colony, Empire, and these women must come to know themselves if they are to learn to love and to survive together.[49]

Jewett genders the gingerbread house's "maker" and that of the "brown hen" Bowden house feminine: the former an "artist" reproducing a model and the latter a procreator reproducing Bowdens. Here, among the graves of women, Jewett teaches the durability and transience of the house of Bowden built by women: mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, "those that aren't kin by blood,"[50] and "new folks" like the narrator[51] who might archive a history of women's lives and preserve a tradition of women's art. While the text applauds an artistic idea of domesticity as a social good for women, men, region, and nation, it refuses paternalistic versions of domesticity.

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[48] Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 77.
[49] Ibid, 85.
[50] Ibid, 76.
[51] Ibid, 72.

Instead, it proposes a sustainable, rational futurity that exploits the cultural wealth and eschews the cultural liabilities of the past to foster cyborg affinity politics among those multiple educational agents charged with stewardship and circulation of that wealth.

The narrator learns about alternative versions of development by finding her way into stories of shared girlhood that Jewett allows her women to circulate. Mrs. Fosdick tells of a time when her mother forgot to pack the girl's clothes, and until they reached a port where the prepubescent Mrs. Fosdick could be "fitted out pretty," dressed in her brother's "jacket and trousers."[52] This "spell of freedom" and wildness that "frighten[ed]" Mrs. Fosdick's mother only made the young Mrs. Fosdick feel more acutely the "hem at [her] heels" and that "youth was past and gone."[53] Much like Mary Shelley during her widowed years, a wistful Mrs. Fosdick sees youth as a thing of the past in trousers that was cruelly hemmed in by a present that has never allowed her that remembered volition. But like the evergreen of the pointed firs, the very simultaneity of young and old identity suggests the monstrously miseducative trap of Miltonic identity politics. But instead of reproducing a normative doctrine that signals the endpoint of womanhood as matrimonial motherhood, this text is "laced with destabilizing subnarratives" that teach "the instability of all human positions and perspectives" and suggests the need for an alternative cyborg affinity politics.[54] Dunnet Landing is decidedly not a Godwinian utopia of adult immortal men, relieved of the burden of relearning cultural stock from previous generations. Neither is it a healing "herland" of

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[52] Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 49.
[53] Ibid, 49.
[54] Josephine Donovan, "Jewett on Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Imperialism," *Colby Library Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (2002): 14.

"matrifocal…gynocracies."[55] Rather, it is a safe space where maternal teaching and teachings are circulated, cyborg affinity politics are practiced, and rational futurity is imagined.

Casting this text as counter-narrative of to patriarchal iterations of the *bildung* means that the text reevaluates, remaps, and reeducates the gendered contours of personal, social, and national/imperial development that Mary Shelley theorized in *Frankenstein* but was finally unable to live herself. While *The Country* preserves local folk wisdom and archives disappearing life-ways of mid-coast Maine, it is not regionalist or nationalist propaganda celebrating the "local color" of "white imperialism."[56] Rather, the text offers a kind of queer folk resistance to reductive character valuations and essentialist or exceptionalist gender narratives by radically questioning the terror curriculum's narrow thesis of "self-improvement" and a broad thesis of "progress." By imagining the intergenerational continuity of maternal teaching and teachings as gift circulation in the interests of sustainable, rational futurity necessitated by and necessary for cyborg affinity politics, Jewett allows her characters to select outsider affiliations and non-procreative identities in a way that Mary Shelley did not or could not do in her educational thought experiment, *Frankenstein*. Jewett counters the feminine *bildung* and revisions women's place in the lost and found of educational thought.

The cultural and individual influence of *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley's "hideous progeny," is undeniable. Like its influence, its relevance to modernity, Mary Shelley

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[55] Laurie Crumpacker, "The Art of the Healer," *Colby Library Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (1983): 156.
[56] Elizabeth Ammons, "Going in Circles," *Literary Imagination* 16, no. 2 (1983): 92.

seemed to understand, was always already out of her control. Perhaps its relevance as educational thought, as a modern myth of monstrous miseducation, has been buried alongside much of women's educational thought. Mary Shelley embodies Korsmeyer's claim that "the female artist cannot escape being regarded as an aesthetic object, even while she is actively engaged in producing other aesthetic objects."[57] Her legacy is the troubled legacy of terror curriculum that transmits "messages about a circumscribed feminine ambit of taste and ability" so deftly, "it would be nearly impossible not to internalize at least some of these values."[58] Finally, she could not separate herself from her monster or her monstrous miseducation. Feeling the need to "give account" of herself as an author/authority and the influence of her monster as art/theory some fifteen years after its first anonymous publication, Shelley describes "[h]ow I, then a young girl, came to think of, and to dilate upon, so very hideous an idea."[59]

Writing from the standpoint of a financially (and otherwise) insecure widow in her mid-thirties, in 1831 she mythologized her own creative process and thereby relinquished any creative control (or responsibility) she might have imagined she ever held over *Frankenstein*. She describes her eighteen-year-old self as under the influence of the spellbinding genius: that "[i]nvention consists in the capacity of seizing on the capabilities of a subject, and in the power of moulding and fashioning ideas suggested to it" in the context of voyages of discovery (and conquest), and "the nature of the principle of life" in the context of natural philosophy with Percy Shelley and Lord

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[57] Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Feminist Aesthetics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/feminism-aesthetics/>.
[58] Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 64, 67-8.
[59] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 19.

Byron.[60] In light of the influence of *Frankenstein* and Mary Shelley's avowed faith in its supernatural origins, the creation myth of *Frankenstein* itself is worth quoting at length:

> When I placed my head on my pillow, I did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind…. I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision, —I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion. Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. His success would terrify the artist; he would rush away from his odious handywork, horror-stricken. He would hope that, left to itself, the slight spark of life which he had communicated would fade; that this thing, which had received such imperfect animation, would subside into dead matter; and he might sleep in the belief that the silence of the grave would quench for ever the transient existence of the hideous corpse which he had looked upon as the cradle of life. He sleeps; but he is awakened; he opens his eyes; behold the horrid thing stands at his bedside, opening his curtains, and looking on him with yellow, watery, but speculative eyes.[61]

Surely, *Frankenstein* is one powerfully influential text of "social formation" by which "individuals learn how to be gendered beings through their interactions with cultural discourses."[62] While unspoken, the myth of *Frankenstein* itself has influenced the deeply gendered terror curriculum of war Virginia Woolf takes up in the first chapter of *Three Guineas* even as it bears witness to monstrous miseducation. The apocalyptic trajectory of such an aesthetic – one that miseducates men for the "public" profession of war-making and women for the "private" profession of marriage-making – has had and will have dire consequences for the entire species ("history in the raw")

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[60] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 23-4.
[61] Ibid, 24.
[62] Susan McClary (2002) as quoted in Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 68.

and for individual lives ("biography and autobiography").[63] Woolf knew (but ultimately could not live with) what Mary Shelley and her creations learned and relearned over a troubled lifetime: "education is by no means a positive value."[64]

[63] Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (Adelaide, Australia: University of Adelaide Libraries, 2009), accessed September 10, 2011, http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91tg/, chapter 1.
[64] Ibid.

CHAPTER V

Contemporary Relevance of *Frankenstein* as Educational Thought

The test of monstrous miseducation's relevance and value to educational thought is its pragmatic utility in helping us to draw educational wisdom from contemporary cases of terrorism. Deploying the deep educational structures of *bildung* and genius to explore the aesthetic – making and shaping – power of terror curriculum and monstrous miseducation, this chapter tests the paradigm case of Columbine and the borderline case of The Freedom Writers. It bears repeating here that schooling is only one of myriad educational agents that act as custodians and transmitters of cultural stock, and school violence is but one consequence of monstrous miseducation. While the contemporary consequences of monstrous miseducation are only rarely enacted in school violence, I have chosen Columbine and The Freedom Writers as cases because they most clearly show the contemporary relevance of *Frankenstein* as educational thought.

Columbine: A Paradigm Case of Monstrous Miseducation

Before Tuesday, April 20, 1999, those who cared knew "columbine" as a high desert wild flower. The people of Jefferson County, just outside of Littleton, Colorado knew Columbine as a large, affluent suburban high school that took its name from the fragile flower. After the massacre on April 20, Columbine became a metonym for the "incomprehensible" violence of the terror curriculum's genius terror. Paradoxically, in an effort to make sense of a seemingly senseless tragedy, Columbine has come to represent the outer limits of the violence and misanthropy conceived of and enacted by *children*. Columbine signifies the nightmare stuff of genius terror: pandemonium

designed and directed by what the monstrously miseducated popular imagination has deemed powerful, obscure grotesques, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold.

The etiological myths of *bildung* and genius designed to explain the "natural" and "super-natural" causes of Columbine are legion, but finally the endless inquiries and inadequate explanations only seem to heighten dread and confusion.[1] Could the availability of firearms and the "culture of violence" in the United States be to blame?[2] Could high school hierarchies be to blame? Could violent literature, video games, music, and films be to blame? Could the increase in prescriptions of anti-depressants to children be to blame? Could unregulated internet access, ineffective parenting, and the community values of Littleton be to blame? Could negligent teachers and administrators be to blame? Could mental illness be to blame? Ultimately, the answer to all those questions seems to be yes, to some extent. But Columbine utterly confounds teleological clarity and deeply troubles the *bildung* paradigm of the "natural" growth and development of children. What kind of mutation had these two children undergone in order to adapt to the hostile environment of monstrous miseducation?

Violent Landscape: Miseducative Encounters with Terror Curriculum

Planning the attack on April 19th, Eric intended "Judgment Day" for Columbine to fall on the anniversary of the confrontation at Ruby Ridge in Idaho, the tragedy at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, and Timothy McVeigh's bombing of the Murrah building in Oklahoma City. According to Dave Cullen:

> McVeigh was tried in federal court in downtown Denver and sentenced to death while the boys attended Columbine in the suburbs. The scenes of devastation

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[1] Celvin Soling, *The War on Kids* (Spectacle Films, 2009).
[2] Katherine S. Newman, *Rampage* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 69-70.

> were played over and over…. Oklahoma was a one-note performance: McVeigh set his timer and walked away; he didn't even see his spectacle….[3]

Saavy about the media's educational agency, McVeigh bequeathed the cultural liability of the terror curriculum to Eric who predicted that Judgment Day would "be like the L.A. riots, the Oklahoma bombing, WWII, Vietnam, Duke and Doom all mixed together. I want to leave a lasting impression on the world."[4] Dylan referenced "the holy April morning of NBK (Natural Born Killers)" of terror in Eric's yearbook at the end of their junior year, a year before the actual terrorist event, fantasizing about his genius, "godlike" wrath and "revenge."[5]

Judgment Day had to be delayed until April 20 because Eric wanted more ammunition than he currently possessed.[6] He reasoned that Adolf Hitler's birthday would work just as well on a symbolic level as the domestic terrorist events that marked April 19. Eric planned to level the commons area (the cafeteria) during the peak of the lunch hour rush (meticulously timed) by detonating two bombs placed underneath twin structural pillars. Ideally, the twin pillars would collapse, causing the upper floor library to plummet to the ground floor causing massive, instantaneous death. Guns, therefore, were not Eric's weapons of choice. Columbine was to be a bombing like Oklahoma City (or September 11 or the Boston Marathon), not a shooting.[7] The arsenal of guns and smaller bombs were to be used to "pick off" people fleeing from the carnage of the commons area. Excessive armaments are a hallmark of school rampage shootings. Katherine Newman theorizes that such excessive weapons stockpiles

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[3] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 32.
[4] Cyn Shepard, *April 20, 1999*, 2009, http://acolumbinesite.com/eric/writing.html.
[5] Ibid, http://www.acolumbinesite.com/dylan/writing.html.
[6] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 35.
[7] Ibid, 35.

amount to an aesthetic of overkill that is meant to impress onlookers.[8] I suspect that they are part of the fatalism and will to irrationality that inform monstrous miseducation's apocalyptic and nihilistic vision of the future.

For Eric and Dylan, this was to be a grand theatrical event in three acts (bombing, shooting, and car explosions upon investigation by law enforcement and media – two educational agents), complete with costumes and props. Both boys wore long, black "duster" coats to conceal the guns, rifles, knives, and bombs strapped to their bodies.[9] Eric's t-shirt read, "Natural Selection" and Dylan's read, "Wrath." From the grandiose heights of genius and the insecure depths of teen-angst, Eric wrote: "Sometime in April me and [Dylan] will get revenge and will kick natural selection up a few notches. We will be in all black. Dusters, black army pants...we will have knifes [sic] and blades and backup weaponry all over our bodies...".[10] For the boys, it was as important to look "badass" as it was to conceal the weapons.[11] While they had to depend on third parties to obtain the guns and ammunition, they made the bombs from household materials. The guns were to be primarily for show – to inspire terror. Although he was reasonably sure that he and Dylan would die at the high school on Judgment Day, Eric mused about the possibility of widening their genius terror to include "hijack[ing] a hell of a lot of bombs and crash a plane into NYC with us inside [f]iring away as we go down, just something to cause more devistation [sic]."[12]

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[8] Katherine S. Newman, *Rampage* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 32.
[9] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 41.
[10] Cyn Shepard, *April 20, 1999,* 2009, http://acolumbinesite.com/eric/writing.html
[11] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 34.
[12] Cyn Shepard, *April 20, 1999,* 2009, http://acolumbinesite.com/eric/writing.html

After all, the United States' military, another educational agent, had put on quite a display of aesthetic overkill just an hour before Columbine: the largest single-day bombing of Kosovo. Despite the "best" intentions, those bombs killed indiscriminately. On that day, the targets included a hospital and a primary school.[13] Those bombs were also "homemade"—possibly at the Lockheed Martin factory in Littleton, Colorado. According to Michael Moore's documentary *Bowling for Columbine*, Lockheed Martin, the single largest defense contractor in the world, is the top employer in Littleton, Colorado.[14] While neither Eric nor Dylan's parents worked for Lockheed Martin, a large proportion of Columbine High School's parents *did* work at the weapon's factory. Littleton's wealth and prosperity comes from producing the "weapons of mass destruction" at the heart of the U.S. military-industrial complex and the rationale for campaigns of *bildung* terror and monstrous miseducation on a global scale.[15]

School to World: Miseducative Encounters with an An-aesthetic Environment

The predominantly affluent, white population of Columbine High School numbers just under 1700 students.[16] Prior to April 1999, Columbine was a rather unremarkable, suburban public high school, for better and for worse, much like the "public schools" that Victor Frankenstein attends and Wollstonecraft criticizes for breeding habitual cruelty. Although the names of the ranks have surely changed since Mary Shelley's time, the notion of a hierarchy endures in American high schools like

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[13] Michael Moore, *Bowling for Columbine* (United Artists, 2002).
[14] Ibid.
[15] Goodin, Robert E. *What's Wrong with Terrorism?* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2006.
[16] Sandra Austin, "Lessons Learned at Columbine High School" (paper presented at The Human Side of School Crises - A Public Entity Risk Institute Symposium, Miami, Florida, July 2, 2002). In 1999, Columbine "boasted of a 92 percent graduation rate, a 2 percent dropout rate, and a 79 percent college-bound rate," was comprised of 91% Anglos and only four percent of the school population was eligible for free and reduced lunches (statistical measure used to determine economic level of a school).

Columbine. In descending order, that hierarchy consists of: Preps, Jocks, Cheerleaders; High Achievers; Future Farmers of America, Normals, Straight Arrows (band, church); Nerds, Druggies/Burnouts, Vocational Education; and the outsiders, Goths.[17] Of course there is some mobility and variance among the ranks, but the high school "chain of being" bears out with stunning consistency. Contrary to initial reports, Eric and Dylan were not considered outsiders: Eric and Dylan were "cool brains" because despite being extremely bright, they "smoked, drank, and dated."[18] They both contributed to and resented the hierarchical structure of the high school. They both bullied and suffered from bullying. Despite his nonconformist appearance (longer hair, unshaven), Dylan followed Eric's lead, "he puffed up and acted like a tough guy, then glanced over at Eric for approval."[19] Eric's cult of personality was rather limited, but he had one blindly devoted disciple in Dylan.

Eric and Dylan were uncharacteristically prolific writers, detailing their plans and pain in journals. In good genius form, Eric titled his journal, "The Book of God."[20] Dylan chose a more *bildung* title, naming his, "Existences: A Virtual Book."[21] We never learn what Victor Frankenstein named his journal, but the creature reads it as a "book of God" and "existences," a terror curriculum of the genius and *bildung* variety, a creation myth transmitted to an abandoned creature via educational agency. Mary Shelley does not name *her* journals, but they surely chronicle monstrous miseducation. More important to Mary Shelley, her reading the story of her "filthy creation" in

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[17] Katherine S. Newman, *Rampage* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 133.
[18] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 7.
[19] Ibid, 7.
[20] Ibid, 234.
[21] Ibid, 173.

Godwin's biography of Wollstonecraft like the creature's reading of his creation in Victor's laboratory journal, ushered in an epistemological crisis for both. As for modernity and the larger cultural surround, the exponential growth in literacy rates after 1789 made text accessible on a mass scale. Like the creature, the Western world learned to read and write at an accelerated pace. Eric and Dylan inherited this legacy and were highly literate in a host of media.

They also made a slew of videotapes, the most infamous of which were named, "The Basement Tapes." Eric maintained a website, but took it down when he and Dylan got into trouble for vandalism, bullying, and theft.[22] Eric left lists, maps, and diagrams planning the attack. The common denominator among all of these artifacts is the hubristic nihilism and misanthropic eschatology characteristic of genius terror, but also our failure as a society to recognize it as such. While both journals conveyed a genius admixture of contempt and superiority, the most common word in Dylan's journal was "love" (primarily in the context of being denied love) and the most frequently used word in all of Eric's artifacts was "hate."[23] The hatred ranged from petty and narrow ("'fitness fuckheads,' phony martial arts experts, and people who mispronounced 'acrosT' or 'eXpreso'"[24]) to transcendent and broad ("'I declare war on the human race and war is what it is.'"[25]). Indeed, the boys might have hated based on ethnicity or religion, but more important, like the creature, they learned to hate the species – themselves included. In his performance of genius terror, Dylan often

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[22] A year and a half prior to April 20th, the two boys were arrested for breaking into a parked van and placed on probation. This is the event Dylan vows to avenge in the entry he made in Eric's yearbook.
[23] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 187.
[24] Ibid, 184.
[25] Ibid, 327.

referred to members of our species as "zombies" and distanced himself from our species by naming himself a "god."[26] Eric, too, adopted the identity of "god" for himself, but he called members of our species, "robots." Eric's journals expressed the homicidal inclinations of genius terror while Dylan's tended toward the suicidal. Both were monstrously miseducated in Miltonic identity politics by which they learned them to see themselves as outside of the human species and, like the creature to first "turn[] away with disgust and loathing" and then to seek revenge.[27] While Victor expresses disdain for the miserable fate his godlike genius has wrought, in his final moments he clings to the genius project and the hope that "another may succeed" where he has failed. Mary Shelley, on the other hand, turned her disgust and loathing for our species inward and refused opportunities for violent revenge, a qualitative difference that suggests the deeply gendered nature of terror curriculum. The aesthetic of masculinity seems to demand the spectacle of violence denied to femininity.

Violent Media: Miseducative Encounters with Art and Technology

Eric and Dylan enjoyed violent art, both canonical and popular. Whether violent art may be classed unequivocally as a cultural liability registers an ancient aesthetic debate that matters to monstrous miseducation. While Plato's Socrates would grant that the philosophical imagination is nourished by the play of ideas, he rather notoriously discouraged the inclusion of poetry in the curriculum designed for the guardians of the Just State on grounds that poetic fiction often sheds a less than flattering eye upon the deeds of gods and heroes, tainting aesthetic virtue. Of course, Plato's Socrates could scarcely have imagined the catalogue of misdeeds (in words and images) readily

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[26] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 182.
[27] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 109.

available to a 21st century audience. Martin says that the campaign of the censorship of cultural liabilities ("violence and hatred" for Martin; "cowardice and impiety" for Plato) transmitted via multiple educational agency (*not* primarily schools, but media, museums, corporations, churches, families, and a host of others) has historically elicited two opposing heuristic models: the "cathartic model" and the "imitative model." [28]

In the cathartic model, the beholder of violent or lascivious materials experiences vicarious revulsion or desire, thus purging her of the need for the actual experience. The prevailing contemporary view, however, is that of the imitative model in which the viewer becomes both desensitized to scenes of violence and aroused by images of sexual exploitation. Such desensitization and arousal, the theory goes, leads the viewer to attempt imitation of the scenes to which she has witnessed. Martin argues that while both models present compelling viewpoints, the popular electronic media (along with a host of other educational agents) tends to create what it claims to find in terms of violence and hatred.[29]

Hence, educational agents as "custodians" of a given cultural stock have a responsibility to "staunch the flow" of cultural liabilities.[30] In other words, in a democratic society, one in which all citizens hold office, it is not the responsibility of some mythical, omniscient regulatory institution of the Just State to censor images. Rather it is the responsibility of a given educational agent, first to recognize its status as an educational agent and then make selections based on deliberate consideration (read: ethical) of the material it chooses to hand down to succeeding generations.

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[28] Jane Roland Martin, *Cultural Miseducation* (New York: Teachers College Press), 68.
[29] Ibid, 69.
[30] Ibid, 142.

It should, but does not, go without saying that the curricular considerations of multiple educational agency needs to go beyond the short-term economic advantages of pandering violent images, pornographic scenes, and hate speech. Additionally, other educational agents like family might offer a different set of images to offset those of violence, exploitation, and hatred. Schools, but a single educational agent in a vast array, might ask the entire school population to engage in various projects of cultural bookkeeping to inventory the relative wealth and liabilities status of a "superabundance" of cultural artifacts and ideas that each might be plotted on a dynamic "continuum of preservation."[31] A thin sense of censorship or selection is inadequate to deal with the curricular components of terror curriculum.

In a nation that bemoans the cultural illiteracy of its youth, Eric and Dylan were exceptionally well read in more "elevated" violent literature as well as in violent popular culture. Eric's diverse tastes included John Steinbeck's *The Pastures of Heaven*, William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *The Tempest*, Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, and Euripides's *Medea.* He memorized Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's "Der Erlkönig" (The Alder King) in German and read Friedrich Nietzsche and Thomas Hobbes extensively.[32] Eric acknowledged Mothers' Day in his school-issued day planner by quoting Miranda from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: "good wombs hath borne bad sons."[33] Eric's identification with a "bad seed" narrative suggests that he imagined himself as the defective product of a sort of supernatural genius parthenogenesis, thus absolving his mother from responsibility for her

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[31] Jane Roland Martin, *Cultural Miseducation* (New York: Teachers College Press), 89-95.
[32] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 264.
[33] Cyn Shepard, *April 20, 1999: A Columbine Site*, 2009, http://acolumbinesite.com/eric/writing.html.

"monster." This allusion resonates with the absence of maternal teaching and teachings in Mary Shelley's lived experience as well as that absence in the creature's identification *not* with Milton's Adam, but with the "fitter emblem" of his Satan and with Victor's identification *not* with a parent but as an *übermensch* to a "new species."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Eric was fascinated with National Socialist ideology, writing an extensively well-researched, disturbing paper called, "The Nazi Culture" that "began by asking the reader to imagine a stadium packed with murdered men, women, and children—not just filling the seats but piled high into the air above it."[34] Ironically, Eric's interest in academics coupled with an unfailing public charm, won him approval from the officer overseeing his probation after the "van incident."[35] Among friends, Eric openly praised Heinrich Himmler and Adolph Hitler's policies until they chastised him about "all the damn Nazi shit."[36] When Eric and Dylan were bowling together, a good turn would result in shouts of, "Heil Hitler!" Dylan's mother was Jewish, and this fascist cheer was the extent of Dylan's contribution to Eric's Nazi fascination.[37]

Nationalist and fascist ideologies represent the monstrous dream of *bildung* Godwinian perfectibility and techno-scientific productivity taken to its logical extreme. In a 1923 lecture, Thomas Mann famously praised Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* as "a wonderful anticipation of German progress" that "teaches us to see the element of education as the organic transition from the world of inwardness to that of the objective; how the one grows humanly and naturally out of the other."[38] The narrative of *bildung*

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[34] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 265.
[35] Ibid, 266.
[36] Ibid, 266.
[37] Cyn Shepard, *4-20: A Columbine Site*, 2009, http://acolumbinesite.com/dylan.html.
[38] Thomas Mann as quoted in W.H. Bruford, *The German Tradition of Self-Cultivation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 88.

on the eve of the nineteenth-century and the revival of the myth of *bildung* in the early twentieth-century, shows "the movement of 'education' as a progression from inwardness to action and from theory to praxis" whereby "aesthetics emerges as a highly effective, and profoundly unstable, political force."[39] The zeitgeist of *bildung* would become associated with nationalist myths and fascist ideologies of late modernity the full implications of which Mary Shelley could not have imagined in her educational thought. It can hardly be surprising for a contemporary audience that the monstrously miseducated Eric and Dylan were fascinated by the aesthetic of immortality, techno-scientific productivity, and genocidal ideologies.

Dylan (named after Dylan Thomas) was identified as "gifted" and "by third grade was enrolled in the CHIPS program: Challenging High Intellectual Potential Students."[40] Like Eric, Dylan was interested in literature and philosophy.[41] As he grew older, he began to ponder existential questions through a biblical and philosophical lens, finally believing in a literal Heaven and Hell.[42] Dylan "identified with two powerful characters to convey his torment: the protagonists of *The Downward Spiral* and David Lynch's *Lost Highway*."[43] Resolving to commit suicide, Dylan gave up on school despite the potential consequences he faced with his parents and with the probation officer.[44] His journals portray a boy mired in suicidal despair akin to those of Mary Shelley.[45] Dylan's homicidal rhetoric seemed reserved for Eric's company. Unable to imagine horizontal movement along ascending the progressive developmental track of

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[39] Marc Redfield, *Phantom Formations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 99.
[40] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 126.
[41] Ibid, 134.
[42] Ibid, 173.
[43] Ibid, 197.
[44] Ibid, 266.
[45] Cyn Shepard, *4-20: A Columbine Site*, 2009, http://acolumbinesite.com/dylan/writing.html.

bildung, Dylan plotted a future of punishments along a Dantesque vertical trajectory of genius.[46] Convinced that he was "going down," Dylan began to take some solace in the idea that he could take others with him in an act of genius terror.

Romantic suicides during Mary Shelley's time were idealized as the final act of an autonomous genius. In fact, Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werter*, a text Mary Shelley puts in her creature's hands, is devoted to just such Romantic suicidal ideations. *The Sorrows* reception was a rash of suicides among young, privileged second sons across Western Europe. Mary Shelley's own suicidal ideations are well documented in her journals and she has Victor contemplate suicide on several occasions while she ends the novel with the creature rowing off into the abyss with the avowed purpose of killing himself. After causing his creator's death, the creature has neither a desire to live (*bildung*) nor an idol to worship (genius). Like Dylan, the creature makes good on his threats to "glut the maw of death" with Victor's friends and family, and like Dylan, the creature initially sees this violence as somehow recompense for Victor's having created a being that he "drivest from joy for no misdeed."[47] Again, the because of the paternalism associated with terror curriculum, the monstrously miseducated make terms according to desert. *Is* there a misdeed for which one *ought* to be driven from joy? What kind of (mis)educational encounters with what kinds of cultural stock make and shape an individual and a culture that operates according to such a twisted meritocracy?

Both boys were smitten with the educational agent of industrial rock like Nine Inch Nails, Marilyn Manson, KMFDM (*Kein Mehrheit Für Die Mitleid* roughly

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[46] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Form of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination*, Translated and edited by Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).
[47] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 93-4.

translates into, "no pity for the majority"), Rammstein (connected to Nazi ideology and wear the Third Reich's red, black, and white), and other bands whose message echoes the sentiments of genius and *bildung*. They compulsively watched Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* (NBK).[48] However, the "egotistical, empathy-free attitude" of NBK bore a closer resemblance to Eric than to Dylan. The whole idea that one might be born a "natural" killer resonates with the deterministic narratives of both genius and *bildung* terror. Presumably, a natural born killer would be either violent at her birth or evolve into a violent killer according to some "natural" process. Neither concept takes into account the multiple educational agency that (mis)educates individuals by the transmission cultural stock (liabilities), nor acknowledges that education takes place at a cultural as well as at an individual level. The idea of a natural born killer focuses narrowly on the individual and distracts the culture from the social, political, and economic contexts of violence. This way of thinking about violence neatly takes violence out of the educational realm.

Eric was extremely talented at the video game, Doom. His only real competition was Dylan. They met and became friends at the age of eleven largely due to the time they spent together in Doom's dark, "virtual playground."[49] Eric created a pantheon of gods and monsters armed to the teeth with "medieval armor and submachine guns."[50] Eric and Dylan's virtual victims suffered horrendous deaths – terror curriculum's imaginary at work regardless of the cathartic/imitative debate. At

[48] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 197.
[49] Ibid, 114.
[50] Ibid, 137.

issue is the fact that terror's imaginary arises under conditions of monstrous miseducation void of maternal teaching and teachings.

Like Mary Shelley and Victor Frankenstein, Eric thought of himself as a kind of mythic creator. "I often try to create new things," he wrote in a freshman English paper titled "Similarities Between Zeus and I" in which he hailed Zeus (and himself) as a great leader, finding no fault in Zeus' pettiness or malice, only identifying their shared inclinations: "Zeus and I also get angry easily and punish people in unusual ways," he wrote.[51] As Anne Mellor has suggested, Mary Shelley may have worked out her violent fantasies and her guilt at having "killed" her mother in *Frankenstein* by having her creature kill a child who bore the name of her own child, William, and by "killing" Caroline, Victor's mother.[52] Victor, "the pale student of unhallowed arts,"[53] his "unfashioned" creature, "but half made up,"[54] and Mary Shelley, the girl whose "unbidden" imagination saw this "odious handywork,"[55] would understand Eric's art in all of its sublimely creative *and* destructive glory – the aesthetic hallmark of genius.

According to Newman's research on the phenomenon of rampage shootings, "the contribution violent media makes to violence among youth is inconclusive, although it is suggestive."[56] Discerning whether the violent media initiates violent behavior or whether children likely to engage in violent behavior tend to choose violent media has yet to be analyzed empirically. This nature/nurture question itself is guided by the terror curriculum that operates on a "badness versus madness," genius versus

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[51] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 137.
[52] Anne Mellor, *Mary Shelley* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 47.
[53] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 23.
[54] Ibid, 38.
[55] Ibid, 23.
[56] Katherine S. Newman, *Rampage* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 70.

bildung, dichotomy that is not particularly useful and likely dangerous. But Martin's unified theory of education as encounter suggests that the reciprocal exchange between the individual and the culture accounts for a rather permeable (mis)educative membrane between the two. It makes sense that a violent culture would produce violent individuals and vice versa. At issue for monstrous miseducation, however, is not what can easily be named violence. It is formed by and forms the deeply gendered structures of education, the terror curriculum, which informs violence.

Also, Eric, Dylan, and a host of other children involved in school violence are not here to participate in such a nature/nurture study of violent media and violent behavior because they took their lives. Extreme caution should be taken in making a blanket statement that violent media begets violent behavior not because a relationship does not exist, but because a host of other factors must be considered. Such an assertion is too simple and risks eliminating examination of a variety of causal relationships within terror curriculum and of the cultural transmission of monstrous miseducation.

In *Bowling for Columbine*, Moore addresses the issue of violent children and violent media saying, "Yes our children were indeed something to fear. They had turned into little monsters. But who was to blame?" His question is followed by a litany of violent media outlets (multiple educational agency) vilified by "experts," ironically, from the media. Martin tries hard not to value specific items of cultural stock, but she considers the most detrimental cultural liabilities to be hate and violence and worries that the cultural stock we are bequeathing to our children includes "murder

and rape, terrorism and war, prejudice and discrimination, poverty and greed."[57] Moore shows no such restraint in valuing cultural stock.

After a montage of scenes of U.S. aggression that Noam Chomsky would certainly classify as miseducation and terror, Moore interviews Marilyn Manson, the musician who received the most egregious blame for Columbine.[58] Amid a conversation about the media's "campaign of fear and consumption" and President Clinton's bombing of Kosovo only an hour before Columbine, Manson considers the scale and cause of violence and poignantly remarks on the power of multiple educational agency without naming it as such: "Who's a bigger influence, the President or Marilyn Manson? I'd like to think me, but I'm gonna go with the President." Moore then asks Manson what he would say if he could speak directly to the kids at Columbine. In full "shock rocker" regalia, an extremely articulate Manson responds, "I wouldn't say a single thing to them. I would listen to what they had to say and that's what no one did."[59] This echoes the creature's first request of his maker, "[l]isten to my tale," "hear me," and "[l]isten to me." Terror curriculum's children have a tale to tell that monstrously miseducated adults do not want to hear because the Miltonic identity politics of global terror and the uneven development of Godwinian perfectibility sustain a "quality of life" that depends on keeping the terror curriculum hidden.

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[57] Jane Roland Martin, *Cultural Miseducation* (New York: Teachers College Press), 65.
[58] Noam Chomsky, *Chomsky on Miseducation*, Ed. Donaldo Macedo (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1994).
[59] Michael Moore, *Bowling for Columbine* (United Artists, 2002).

Lost Generation: Miseducative Encounters with the Medical Community[60]

Eric was identified as having an "anger management" problem a year prior to Columbine. In addition to mandatory classes and counseling, his parents sent him to a psychiatrist who prescribed him antidepressants: initially, Zoloft and finally, Luvox. In fact, though Eric would be dead before the news was out, a Marines' recruiter had rejected him on the grounds that he was being treated with antidepressants.[61] Dylan, who by all accounts was deeply depressed, was never prescribed any sort of antidepressant. Toxicology tests on the bodies of both boys revealed no traces of illicit drugs in either body—tests found only the licit drug prescribed to Eric, Luvox.[62]

A study conducted in 2005 published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health,* found a "marked increase" (2.6-fold) in prescriptions of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) like Zoloft and Luvox to children and adolescents between the years of 1995-2002. Researchers concluded "These trends raise concerns regarding the widespread off-label use of antidepressants lacking reliable evidence of safety and efficacy for use in children and adolescents."[63] Profits for pharmaceutical companies must have soared during this period as they do now. The side effects' disclaimers on prescription drug advertisements today have become almost comically dire and ubiquitous, but in 1999 the spectacularly negative consequences of these drugs were still unknown. While speculation into biomedical research may be too far afield from monstrous

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[60] Celvin Soling, *The War on Kids* (Spectacle Films, 2009).
[61] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 209.
[62] Ibid, 209.
[63] Julia Ma, et al, "Depression Treatment during Outpatient Visits by U.S. Children and Adolescents," *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 37, no. 6 (2005), 434-442, http://www.jahonline.org (accessed June 18, 2009).

miseducation, the fact that Eric, who by most accounts was mentally imbalanced, but not depressed, was prescribed an antidepressant at all suggests the need for scrutiny.

An entire generation of children is being treated with medication for depression and anxiety without reliable evidence of safety and efficacy. It is worth considering whether the antidepressant actually boosted the clarity of purpose Eric needed to manipulate those watching him (parents, school, counselor, and probation officer) into thinking he was "cured" and allowed him to focus with more precision on his plans for Columbine. Doubtless, a monstrously miseducated clinical community surely would have medicated Mary Shelley and her Romantic circle just as the monstrously miseducated "man midwife" Godwin called to attend his daughter's birth poisoned Wollstonecraft's blood and recommended heinous after"care" practices. Arguably, monstrous miseducation killed Mary Shelley's mother. Certainly Victor Frankenstein is emblematic of monstrous miseducation in the biomedical field.

Parental Abandonment: Miseducative Encounters with Emotional Unavailability

Eric and Dylan were afforded a great deal of privacy and spent a significant amount of unmonitored time on the internet. On the one hand, Eric and Dylan's "privacy" might be read as a non-interventionist educational policy or neglect by busy, modern parents whose careers have made them emotionally unavailable to their children (and themselves). On the other hand, it could suggest that Eric's and Dylan's parents trusted them. Non-intervention (genius) and emotional unavailability (*bildung*) evidence the generational stress and trauma embedded in terror curriculum. But the rest of the story reveals that neither set of parents trusted the boys as a result of their behavior and monstrous miseducation just does not deal in trust anyway.

When Eric's parents were made aware of his hate-filled online activity, they confronted and disciplined him. In fact, Eric's father, Wayne Harris kept an anecdotal history of Eric's "unwilling" and "unmotivated" transgressions and detailed his parental attempts to correct them.[64] In retrospect, Wayne's assurance to "deal with" Eric's poor sleeping and studying habits by restricting "TV, phone, computer" and his sound-byte demands that Eric "prove to us [his] desire to succeed by succeeding, showing good judgment, giving extra effort, pursuing interests, seeking help, advice," show a *bildung* faith that is chilling.[65] Eric's father was simply acting in accordance with the tenets of Godwinian perfectibility, trying to assert patriarchal authority over behaviors he could not understand because of his own monstrous miseducation. When Alfonse Frankenstein dismisses Victor's interest in Cornelius Agrippa as "sad trash," it only made the adolescent Victor feel powerless and intensified his fascination with the occult.[66] But it was the absence of maternal teaching and teachings in both Eric and Victor's case that was most consequential.

Informed by the *bildung* ideal of their own monstrous miseducation, Dylan's parents took an intellectual approach to discerning misbehavior and designing discipline. When Dylan (with Eric and another boy) was caught vandalizing and looting lockers, they agreed that "Dylan had demonstrated a shocking lapse of ethics," but maintained a philosophical disagreement with the school's choice of suspension as a punishment.[67] It is not clear what alternative punishments Sue and Tom Klebold proposed, but Dylan was ultimately suspended for the offense. Without the written

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[64] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 262.
[65] Ibid, 262.
[66] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 47.
[67] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 196.

record of Wayne Harris, it seems that Dylan parent's meted out similar punishments with regard to restricting Dylan from the privileges he enjoyed.

When Dylan submitted a "disturbing" piece "about a man in a black trenchcoat who brutally murders nine students," his creative writing teacher notified the Harrises at a parent-teacher conference.[68] Dylan said it was "just a story."[69] While they never saw the writing, the Harrises agreed that the paper should be submitted to the school counselor. No one ever followed up on the incident, but in 2009, Sue Klebold wrote an article entitled, "I Will Never Know Why," for *O Magazine* that cited this incident, but not as an example of a missed opportunity for getting Dylan help. Was it a missed opportunity? At Dylan's age, Mary Shelley also produced a "disturbing" piece of writing that she felt the need to justify in her mid-thirties because of pressure from the deeply gendered terror curriculum. Victor Frankenstein was just a few years older than Dylan when he produced his masterpiece, but he could not share his reasoning because he feared the label of madness or because he desired sole ownership of his intellectual property – again, because of the terror curriculum and his monstrous miseducation.

Perhaps Dylan disavowed his masterwork in suicide. During the hours before Judgment Day, he mused, "What fun is life without a little death? It's interesting, when i'm in my human form, knowing i'm going to die. Everything has a touch of triviality to it." But many adolescents produce disturbing art and go on to be lauded as genius adults. The qualitative difference that seems to make the difference for terror's actors is an absence of maternal teaching and teachings in multiple educational agents whose

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[68] Susan Klebold, "I Will Never Know Why," *O Magazine*, November 2009, 4, http://www.oprah.com/omagazine/Susan-Klebolds-O-Magazine-Essay-I-Will-Never-Know-Why. It is exceptional that Dylan's parents still attended parent-teacher conferences during his senior year.
[69] Cyn Shepard, *4-20: A Columbine Site*, 2009, http://acolumbinesite.com/dylan/writing.html.

agency extends far beyond home or school. The qualitative difference that seems to make the difference is the absence of cyborg affinity politics.

The marked difference between the Harrises' and the Klebolds' respective parenting styles centers in the Klebolds' prohibiting Dylan to spend time with Eric. The Harrises' list of restrictions included no such provision. Understandably, as the boys' misdeeds turned criminal, both sets of parents were concerned about the mounting list of wrongdoings dotting the boys' permanent records and affecting their future prospects. Remember that for Dewey an aesthetic environment is one in which the live creature can adjust her whole being to the environment by using wisdom gained in the past, losing and regaining balance in the present, and anticipating the possibilities of the future. In some sense, Eric's and Dylan's parents must have taken comfort in the *bildung* promise that their sons' present "imbalance" amounted to the temporary indiscretions of youth, but in another, they must have intuited the pall hanging over the lives of their children. Wayne Harris would place a 911 call stating his suspicion that Eric was involved in the events transpiring at Columbine in the immediate aftermath of the massacre. The community, the nation, and the world would graft the free-floating sense of terror Columbine inspired onto the Harris and Klebold families. Even as these parents asked themselves in good *bildung* form where *they* had gone wrong, the public blamed them for having gone wrong.

Institutional Blindness: Miseducative Encounters with Systemic Injustice

As the actual event faded into memory, the replays of the event kept it fresh in the minds of ordinary people and the blame radiated out to the school personnel of Columbine High School. Without having a conceptual category, the terrorized public

named the contours of the terror in the teleological terminology of *bildung*, blaming administrative mishandling of bullying, teasing, and harassment at Columbine High School. Doubtless, those complaints carried some validity. Trey Parker and Matt Stone, the creators of the controversial animated television show, *South Park* (surely cultural stock of questionable merit), grew up in Littleton. However, contrary to Michael Moore's insinuation that they attended Columbine High School, neither did. However, Moore's interview with Matt Stone in *Bowling for Columbine* is telling of the an-aesthetic climate of large suburban high schools in "white-bread redneck" bland suburban communities.[70]

> S: Yeah. Painfully, painfully, painfully normal. Just absolutely, painfully, horribly average. Littleton in general is... I remember being in sixth grade and I...had to take the math test to get into Honors Math in the seventh grade. And they're, like, "Don't screw this up. Because if you screw this up, you won't get into Honors Math in seventh grade. And if you don't get in in seventh grade, you won't in eighth grade, then not in ninth grade. And "th" and "th" grade and you'll just die poor and lonely." And that's it, you know? You believe, in high school - and a lot of it is kids, but the teachers and counselors and principals don't help things. They scare you into conforming and doing good in school by saying: "If you're a loser now, you're gonna be a loser forever." So that with Eric and Dylan, people called them "fag." They're like, "You know what? If I'm a fag, now I'm a fag forever." And you wish someone just could've grabbed them and gone, "Dude, high school's not the end of...." A year, a year and a half, was it? I don't even know. You just move out—
>
> M: No, no, they were two weeks away from graduation.
>
> S: Yeah, you're done. It's amazing how fast you lose touch with all those people. They just beat it in your head as early as sixth grade: "Don't fuck up. 'Cause if you do, you're gonna die poor and lonely. You don't want to do that." You're, like, "Fuck, whatever I am now, I'm that forever." Of course, it's completely opposite. All the dorks in high school go on to do great things and all the really cool guys are all living back in Littleton as insurance agents....[71]

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[70] Michael Moore, *Bowling for Columbine* (United Artists, 2002).
[71] Ibid.

It is telling that the interview is steeped in the language of *bildung* and genius. Stone believes that Eric and Dylan saw their high school identities as fixed, genius things because they encountered a hidden curriculum that "whatever I am now, I'm that forever." If they could only have imagined themselves as "cool guys" in the future, Stone laments, perhaps things would have gone in a different direction and they would not have become the Columbine killers. Speaking of schooling's rhetoric of infinitely delayed gratifications of the "real world" and steadily increasing stress on performance at each grade level, Stone blames the institution for stifling creativity and rewarding conformity. This may well be true, but Stone also says that "if somebody could've told" Eric and Dylan that "[a]ll the dorks in high school go on to do great things and all the really cool guys are all living back in Littleton as insurance agents," Columbine might have been averted. This rings a bit hollow because in all likelihood these media savvy boys knew full well that their technological and creative skills were marketable in the world of techno-scientific productivity. And within that context, like Victor, Eric and Dylan *did* have a plan to "do great things," exceptional things, genius things.

A website created by Vanessa West called *The Criminal Mind* details public perceptions of the causes of Columbine and missed opportunities for interventions on Eric and Dylan that betray an abiding faith in the process of *bildung* and the invisible power of genius ideology. Narrating Eric's (screen name, "Rebdomine") online conversations with an anonymous party (identified as "R") in an America Online chat room, West, like others, sees certain points in Eric's life where an intervention could have prevented Columbine:

> In mid March of 1999, R pointed out to Rebdomine that he was taking matters far too personally. In a private message, Rebdomine asked R what he meant by this, to

> which R responded that his (Rebdomine's) point could be better made if he used less profanity and personal attacks. Perhaps because R took the time to reach out to Rebdomine - Eric Harris - a sort of online friendship arose. [72]

According to West, as a result of their "online friendship," Eric trusted R enough to e-mail him some of the book he was writing and a link to his website. R reported that the content of the book was "disturbing," including, "detailed, explicit instructions on how to build pipe bombs and produce homemade napalm, even relating in the instructions how and where to hide gasoline so that one's parents wouldn't discover it."[73] R noted that each page of the Eric's writings bore a copyright with the name, Wayne Harris, Eric's father. No longer able to dismiss Eric's rants as youthful indiscretion or teen angst, R planned to confront Eric in the chat room and to contact Eric's father. R made his decision to intervene on behalf of this troubled child on April 19, 1999, the day before Columbine. This "too lateness" is prevalent in the individualism characterizing monstrous miseducation. To have been short-circuited, modernity's terror curriculum would require a collective effort at cultural bookkeeping toward rational futurity.

Theorizing the "social roots" of school rampage shootings, Newman looks closely at the December 1, 1997 shooting at Heath High School outside of West Paducah, Kentucky, and the March 24, 1998 shooting at Westside Middle School popularly known as, The Jonesboro Massacre. Her study validates the importance of student perceptions of an actual hierarchy, versus the "truth" of de facto equity.[74] Validating another's perceptions (especially those of children) even if we can demonstrate them to be false is important in the interests of justice. The creature

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[72] Vanessa West, *The Criminal Mind*. Tripod.com, 2009. http://www.members.tripod.com/~VanessaWest/columbine-4.html.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Katherine S. Newman, *Rampage* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

articulates the outsider's perception of injustice and outrage at "the strange system of human society" that Newman's study seeks to confirm:[75]

> I learned that the possessions most esteemed by your fellow-creatures were high and unsullied descent united with riches. A man might be respected with only one of these advantages; but, without either, he was considered, except in very rare instances, as a vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste his powers for the profits of the chosen few! And what was I? …When I looked around, I saw and heard of none like me. Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled, and whom all men disowned?[76]

Echoing the damning sentiments of Newman, Stone, Manson, and Moore, West too speaks for ordinary people's perception of the causes of school violence saying, "Violence, in all its forms, is part of the American education curriculum. Kids tease, humilate [sic], and make fun of one another for trivialities of all kinds, never realizing that there is a world beyond high school - a world full of many, many kinds of people."[77] According to Newman's report of Columbine's culture:

> Students…alleged that the football team was sometimes exempted from the random drug tests that are, in theory, administered to all students…whether or not it was actually the case, some…students thought it was…this belief provides one more example of responsible adults supporting a key pillar of the social hierarchy among students: athletes rule.[78]

West seconds Newman's findings, detailing the unspoken tolerance of Columbine administrators, teachers, and students for misbehavior and criminality in the "popular sect," primarily athletes.[79] West claims:

> The school's state wrestling champion was allowed to park his $100,000 Hummer in a 15 minute parking space - all day. A football player repeatedley [sic] teased a girl about her breasts - in class, in front of a teacher - with no fear

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[75] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 109.
[76] Ibid, 109.
[77] Vanessa West, *The Criminal Mind*. Tripod.com, 2009. http://www.members.tripod.com/~VanessaWest/columbine-4.html.
[78] Katherine S. Newman, *Rampage* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 138.
[79] Vanessa West, *The Criminal Mind*. Tripod.com, 2009. http://www.members.tripod.com/~VanessaWest/columbine-4.html. This evidences the educational problem of both overt sexism and deep gender.

> of retribution. And just like any school in America, the sports trophies were displayed in the front of the school, the art in a back hallway.[80]

Painting a rather damning picture of Columbine High School's culture, she goes on to detail a litany of discrimination on the part of the faculty. She describes Columbine in terms of genius terror (rather than taking out their anger on specific targets, Eric and Dylan killed indiscriminately), but sees the anonymity of the violence as responding to larger injustices and human rights violations perpetrated by the institution as a whole.[81] If West's claims are taken seriously, Columbine was both genius and *bildung* terror. West does not condone Eric and Dylan's actions, but she sympathizes with their desire for revenge on "an environment" that, through "varying degrees of cruelty" breeds "feelings of inferiority, hoplessness [sic], and anger."[82] In the vernacular of blogger folk wisdom, West is describing an an-aesthetic environment in which the live creature cannot thrive.

For West, Columbine was a grand statement by two boys who were abused by public schooling. But even while she condemns the institutional forces that conspired to create Eric and Dylan, she focuses on what these dead children have come to symbolize in the public imaginary: "icons for misfits" and "poster boys for evil."[83] With the possible exception of Moore, West stands as a fair representation of the public who see Eric and Dylan as tragically miseducated individuals without addressing educational agency beyond the very limited transmission of the school. Without directly dealing with the (an)aesthetic components of monstrous miseducation, the

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[80] Vanessa West, *The Criminal Mind*. Tripod.com, 2009. http://www.members.tripod.com/~VanessaWest/columbine-4.html.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

response to Columbine illustrates Martin's succinct critique of education's built in "intentionality" clause that neatly "casts the hidden curriculum of school and society outside the educational realm"; denies the first great metamorphosis in order to bolster claims about learners' volunteerism; dismisses the attainment of feelings and passions by "confining education to the achievement of knowledge and understanding"; restricts education's "intended outcomes" to virtues thereby ignoring "vices"; and rendering "education writ large" invisible by imagining "education solely from the standpoint of the individual."[84] Unless we revise our ideas about what education is and is not, terror curriculum will remain hidden and we will need to place blame on singular institutions or sick individuals rather than to see terror as an educational problem with educational solutions for the culture writ large. As a modern myth of education, *Frankenstein* shows the consequences of the very denial, abandonment, and invisibility that allow the public to lay blame on a flawed high school culture and two sick children.

Individual Anomalies: Miseducative Encounters with Psychological Profiling

The wisdom of ordinary people carries a distinct vitality in relation to understanding Columbine or any other disaster that seems to defy comprehension, but what do the "experts" say about Eric and Dylan? Dave Cullen's journalistic book, *Columbine*, on which this analysis has extensively relied, concludes that Eric was a classic psychopath and Dylan was a textbook depressive. Cullen draws his conclusion after exhaustively examining the evidence accumulated over the ten years that had passed since Columbine. During the initial investigation into Columbine, the theory that both Eric and Dylan suffered from profound psychological disorders was put forth

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[84] Jane Roland Martin, *Education Reconfigured* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 44-5.

most credibly by Dwayne Fuselier, an FBI Supervisory Special Agent, clinical psychologist, and parent of a Columbine High School student present and accounted for on April 20, 1999.[85] Fuselier's specialty was hostage negotiation and criminal profiling. As a member of the FBI's Special Operations and Research Unit, Fuselier was called in to negotiate and investigate some of the most notorious hostage situations to date including the Atlanta prison siege, the Montana Freeman standoff, and the Branch Davidian crisis, in which he was the last person to speak with David Koresh before the compound was engulfed in flames.[86] Had his son not been a student at Columbine High School, Fuselier and the FBI would likely never have been called in to investigate. As it happened, Fuselier, like so many of us, became haunted by the question of, "why?" Ultimately, like Godwin with his phrenology and Shelley with his genealogy, Fuselier believed the deterministic narratives of terror curriculum.

After years of analyzing Eric and Dylan's journals and the infamous "Basement Tapes" on which the boys recorded their goodbyes amid a flurry of hate-speech and profanity, Fuselier concluded that while Dylan was depressed, Eric was psychopathic.[87] Dylan, according to Fuselier, fit the profile of a depressive, "self-medicating with alcohol" whose "journal read like that of a boy on the road to suicide, not homicide."[88] Fuselier explains that the condition of depression involves deep-seated anger, but in most cases that anger is turned inward as the case of Mary Shelley shows. In very rare cases, he contends, deeply depressed people will commit a "vengeful suicide" and take the lives of others before taking their own life – an act of *bildung* terror. But Fuselier

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[85] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 108.
[86] Ibid, 31.
[87] Ibid, 239.
[88] Ibid, 187.

believes this scenario unlikely in Dylan's case because "Dylan Klebold was not a man of action. He was conscripted by a boy who was."[89]

The "man of action," in Fuselier's estimation, was Eric, whose view of the human species and its future was distinctly darker. Espousing his philosophy of education in his journal, Eric shows off his deep understanding of *bildung* as a fallacy alongside his abiding faith in the genius ideal and his own humanist exceptionalism:

> ever [sic] wonder why we go to school? besides [sic] getting a so called education. [sic] its [sic] not to [sic] obvious to most of you stupid fucks but for these [sic] who think a little more and deeper you should realize it. its [sic] societies [sic] way of turning all the young people into good little robots and factory workers thats [sic] why we sit in desks in rows and go by bell schedules, to get prepared for the real world cause "thats [sic] what its like". well [sic] god damit [sic] no it isnt [sic]! one thing that seperates [sic] us from other animals is the fact that we can carry on actual thoughts. so [sic] why don't we? people [sic] go on day by day. rutine [sic] shit. why [sic] cant we learn in school how we want to. [sic] why [sic] cant we sit on desks and on shelves and put our feet up and relax while we learn? cause [sic] thats [sic] not what the "real world is like" [sic] well hey fuckheads [sic], there is no such thing as an actual "real world". its [sic] just another word like justice, sorry, pity, religion, faith, luck and so on. we [sic] are humans. if [sic] we dont [sic] like something we have the fucking ability to change! but [sic] we dont [sic], atleast [sic] U dont [sic]. I would.[90]

Eric knew that the monstrously miseducated human species would not understand the genius terror of Columbine. "He might kill hundreds, but the dead and dismembered meant nothing to him. Bit players—who cared? The performance was not about them. Eric's one-day-only production was about the audience."[91] It was about inspiring genius terror and attaining genius immortality. According to Fuselier's monstrously miseducated diagnosis of Eric's psychopathy, there could not have been a great deal done to stop the boy from killing "to demonstrate his superiority and to enjoy

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[89] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 188.
[90] Cyn Shepard, *4-20: A Columbine Site*, 2009, http://acolumbinesite.com/dylan.html.
[91] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 188.

it."[92] Fuselier's conclusion is based on educational thought's deep structures that see the project from an individual standpoint and insist on its intentionality, volunteerism, virtuous aims, and confinement to schooling the intellect. Eric, it seems, would dismantle that project based on his terror curriculum-informed humanist beliefs.

As inheritors of a deeply gendered modern tradition of terror curriculum, Eric and Dylan, like the creature, responded with brutal efficacy to the quality of social relations, parental distress, and environmental pressures of the cultural landscape. They were monstrously miseducated to see the world as a cruel and dangerous place where to get what we need (determined by an unsustainable false ideology of *bildung* and/or genius) we must fight a "good" fight or a "bad" fight, but fight we must. In the political economy of monstrous miseducation, the fight is simply a determined, disembodied "human nature" divorced from the cultural surround. The fight is not a matter of the ends justifying the means in monstrous miseducation because, finally, the end is the fight. In terror curriculum, the *bildung* concept of "cooperation" means building networks that enable singular, self-made genius to increase its functional power to fight exponentially. Cooperation, in this algorithm means "incorporation" not cyborg affinity politics. Monstrous miseducation is behind Eric's and Victor's inability to understand and empathize with Dylan and the creature's desire for a cyborg affinity politics. Absent maternal teaching and teachings, Victor's mind-set of techno-scientific productivity forces his assumption that the creature requests a mate in order to "have a

[92] Dave Cullen, *Columbine* (New York: Twelve, 2009), 239.

companion to aid" him in "the task of destruction."[93] Eric and Dylan are Victor's nightmare made manifest.

The Freedom Writers: A Borderline case of Monstrous Miseducation

The cultural bookkeeping project of The Freedom Writers is a borderline case of monstrous miseducation that provides the beginnings of a counter-narrative to the terror curriculum in spite and because of a monstrously miseducated cultural landscape. Rather than receiving their names from a patriarchal authority like Mary Shelley or naming themselves according to some genius ideal like Eric and Dylan, the Freedom Writers named themselves. After studying the Civil Rights Movement and the Freedom Riders during their junior year at Woodrow Wilson High School in Los Angeles, California, Erin Gruwell asked the social activists in her English classes to think of a name for themselves and for their journals that would convey the hope woven through the narratives they hoped to publish. Gruwell's students began writing the journals that would become *The Freedom Writers Diary* during their turbulent freshman year and during Gruwell's uncertain first year as a classroom teacher.

Upon discovering an offensive caricature of an African American drawn by one of her students depicting another student, Gruwell told them that just such caricatures feature prominently on Nazi propaganda pieces depicting Jews. Her chastisement was met with looks of confusion tinged with curiosity. Gruwell asked how many students had heard of the Holocaust. None raised a hand. Then she asked them how many had been "shot at." Almost every child in the room raised her/his hand. Gruwell discarded her "meticulously planned lessons" and resolved to make "tolerance" the heart of her

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[93] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* ed. Johanna Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 130.

"curriculum" for her "at risk" freshman English course.[94] The concept of tolerance has had a bad time of it in the academy, but in the wake of the L.A. Riots and escalations in racial tensions and gang violence, a curriculum of tolerance at Wilson High School was promising. In an attempt to curb gang activity, the district chose to change the demographics and transferred a number of African American, Latinos, and Asian students to the once-predominantly-"white, upper-class" Wilson High School.[95] Students of color now represented the school's majority population.

This turn marked Gruwell's first act of what would become a rigorous campaign of subversive kindness to combat the violence meted out by compulsory public education and to oppose the monster that created it. The children in Gruwell's were refugees of what they came to call "undeclared war"—urban gang violence and a system of privilege that ultimately profited from the chaos and bloodshed. Without naming it as such, Gruwell circulated maternal teachings of love and survival.

Freshman Year: Encounters with Hybridity

The racially and ethnically diverse group of children enrolled in Gruwell's classes "had been written off by the education system and deemed 'unteachable'."[96] Perhaps being "unteachable" and not its ostensible contrary, "teachable," was ultimately what taught them to love and survive. The adjective "teachable" comes from the Latin word "docilis," from which the English word docile comes. Docile, meaning "apt to be taught; ready and willing to receive instruction; teachable; submissive to training;

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[94] The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 2-3.
[95] Ibid, 2.
[96]The Freedom Writers Foundation, *About Erin Gruwell*, DBurns Design, 2013, http://www.freedomwritersfoundation.org.

tractable, manageable," Gruwell's students decidedly were not.[97] The children shuffling into Gruwell's classroom on that first day of her first year as a teacher were angry, sullen, cruel, racist, and violent—damaged survivors still suffering acutely from the fallout of the recent Rodney King riots and chronically from generations of monstrous miseducation. The prompt Gruwell devised for the students' first journal entry was to detail "their expectations of me and the class."[98] Keenly aware of the complex dynamics involved in the subtext of Gruwell representing "the great white hope," the students unflinchingly shared their interpretation of their enthusiastic teacher and of the *bildung*'s false ideology, giving Gruwell exactly what she requested:

> We all know she's going to treat us like everyone else has…. I'm pretty sure she thinks she's the one who's going to change us. She alone, the "too young and too white to be working here" teacher is going to reform a group of helpless "sure to drop out" kids from the 'hood…I give her a month. [99]

For this group of disaffected, world-wise freshman, Gruwell's "sweetness and light" character had more than a tinge of dishonesty about it. Her character necessarily cast her students as foils. And Gruwell could not proceed on the premise of "colorblindness" because, for her students, it was all about color. But it seemed hardly fair to contend with history's creation of the illegitimate monster of racism. Gruwell had to ask herself how she might learn from the monster might. Watching, listening, and learning what appealed to her students, Gruwell introduced young adult literature, organized field trips, analyzed Rap lyrics, and made space for live creatures' aesthetic expression and experience:

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[97] Taken from *The Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Last retrieved on 061912 from: http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/cgi/entry/50068013?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=docile&first=1&max_to_show=10.
[98] The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 1.
[99] Ibid, 6.

> Ms. Gruwell just asked us to write or draw a picture describing our neighborhood. I can't believe she's allowing me to draw. I wonder if she knows I hate writing…Tagging is what gives me a thrill. The chance to express my talent. To hear people talk about my art gives me the "ganas" (strength) to continue what I do. I never do any of my classwork, so I spend my time in class sketching on my notebook, handouts, backpack, or on anything in sight. I'm an artist and I love what I do. I know it sucks for the people's property, but getting away with it is part of the thrill.[100]

The children's animosity toward Gruwell subsided, but the ethnic rivalries, self-destruction, and self-loathing continued—they trusted Gruwell, but they did not trust each other or themselves and could not realize cyborg affinity politics outside of the classroom. Physical, sexual, and verbal abuse, gang activity, drug use, poverty, vandalism, and a host of other injustice and criminal activity filled the pages of the children's journals. During the fall semester, the journals served primarily as personal cathartic expressions, but those expressions moved far beyond the individual student's desk or life. Increasingly, the students' journal entries began to relate the literature and world stage to their lived experience.

> I can't believe what happened in Oklahoma City. 168 innocent men, women, and children had their lives cut short by one man who was angry with the government…There are many Timothy McVeighs around us every day…like walking time bombs waiting to go off…The ticking often begins with a derogatory comment…No matter what race we are, what ethnic background, sexual orientation, or what views we may have, we are all human. Unfortunately, not all humans see it that way. [101]

Sophomore Year: Encounters with Activism

The reality of genocide forged the vital link between literature, the world, and the children's own lived experience as survivors of an undeclared war. *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo* authenticated the idea that

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[100] The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 21.
[101] Ibid, 40.

the circulating the narrative of one's singular experience set within the context of larger historical narratives constitutes a valuable artifact, a gift. The children's journaling began to whisper of love in a world in which, statistically, the odds were against their survival to high school graduation.[102] The students became activists and Gruwell's room 203 became a safe haven from the educational agency of their streets and homes:

> Zlata and I lost our childhood innocence because we were denied the right to do childlike things, like go to school, talk on the phone, or just play outside. The buildings were burning and people got beaten up just because of the color of their skin, their religion, or ethnicity…. I can't believe that someone I don't even know…could have so much in common with me. [103]

In the spirit of spring, Gruwell and her students made a "Toast for Change" and "seemed to transform themselves into scholars with a conscience."[104] She was pushing these live creatures to undergo an aesthetic experience and regain equilibrium within a shared environment. Gruwell was asking her students to willingly undergo an educational metamorphosis toward a cyborg affinity politics. What began as a writing assignment turned into 150 written invitations asking exiled Bosnian Zlata Filipovic to come from her asylum in Dublin, Ireland to speak to Gruwell's safe asylum in Long Beach, California. Keenly aware that the majority of his time is spent in a war zone, one student concluded his letter to Zlata with an expression of cyborg affinity politics.

> Now that I've read your book, I am educated on what's happening in Bosnia. I would like the opportunity now to educate people on what is happening in my 'America' because until this 'undeclared war' has ended, I am not free! [105]

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[102] Dirk Johnson and Sharman Stein, "The Fight Against Gun Violence" in *New York Times Upfront*, BNet, 1999, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0BUE/is_14_131/ai_n18608981/.
[103] The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 74.
[104] Ibid, 79.
[105] Ibid, 81.

The spring brought two guests from Europe: Zlata and Miep Gies, Otto Frank's secretary and the woman responsible for preserving Anne Frank's diary. When the children called Gies a hero, she quickly reminded them that they were heroes, part of a great chain of heroism: "A legacy left by one girl, carried by one woman, was passed on to a new generation of teens who had the chance to make a difference like Anne's diary did."[106] Gruwell's classroom again became a site where the gifts of love and survival were circulated among those committed to cyborg affinity politics.

Because the children's perceptions of the world had changed did not mean the world had changed. The violence, hatred, injustice, and poverty of the neighborhood and the world continued. But once they learned of it, the children became activists speaking out and acting, in their private and public lives, against a terror curriculum that named them developmentally delayed or existentially violent. Hosting the fifteen year-old Zlata proved an aesthetic experience of that defied Miltonic identity politics.

> I have always been taught to be proud of being Latina, proud of being Mexican, and I was. I was probably more proud of being a 'label" than of being a human being, that's the way most of us were taught. Since the day we enter this world we were a label, a number, a statistic, that's just the way it is. Now if you ask me what race I am, like Zlata, I'll simply say, "I'm a human being." [107]

The year ended with "Basketball for Bosnia," described by one student as "a rebirth."[108] A host of community sponsors contributed to the tournament and the children of Long Beach raised money and collected toys to help ease the suffering of the children of Bosnia. In turn, the children of Long Beach felt their suffering relieved.

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[106] The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 86.
[107] Ibid, 93.
[108] Ibid, 103.

Junior Year: Encounters with Cyborg Affinity Politics

Gruwell was understandably worried about how to "top" the activism of the previous year. She and her students had won the final victory of their sophomore year, pressuring the administration to allow Gruwell to continue with this particular group of students (and new students requesting transfers to Gruwell's class, often from advanced placement courses). The junior English curriculum called for American literature, hence the children began by studying the Transcendentalists, Emerson, and Thoreau. Clearly, the children internalized their own respective concepts of "self reliance."

One journal entry described a fight at school between an African American boy and a Latino boy that spilled over onto a city bus after school. What had begun as a dispute between two boys turned into a battle between twenty representatives from "each side" of the "gangland" divide. When the bus driver threatened to call the police, the group of African Americans exited the bus. A Latino boy walked by the recently ousted group, and they beat him brutally. After what seemed like an eternity to the author of the journal, the police finally came to the broken boy's aid and arrested those responsible for breaking him:

> "Why didn't I do anything to help him?" I asked myself. Maybe it was because I was scared of the consequences. Most likely, I would have been mauled by the crowd. Even though I could have been hurt, I wish I had done something. If Ms. G finds out that I just stood by and did nothing, she'll really be pissed at me. After all, I wasn't being very "self-reliant." I just hope she doesn't find out.[109]

But he knew she would "find out" because he shared his experiences with her in a journal he knew she would read, but somehow he trusted that she would love him.

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[109] The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 117-18.

The students read J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and bemoaned the "phonies" and "conformists" peopling the school, charging teachers (Gruwell, students maintained was an exception) with being "operators running the mind-control factory."[110] Surely, this rhetoric smacks of Eric Harris's journals, yet the presence of maternal teaching and teachings as well as a cultivated cyborg affinity politics was the difference that made the difference for The Freedom Writers.

Reading Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* set the issue of domestic abuse and rape in stark relief and sparked a staggering number of journal entries detailing domestic abuse. Bravely vowing to protect their mothers and themselves, these children began to see a relationship between macrocosmic violence on the world stage and microcosmic violence at home. More important, they wanted to live in a way that would stop it, not to avenge it.[111] Contrary to the creature and his creator, their encounters with maternal teaching and teachings and cyborg affinity politics enabled them imagined a rational futurity where violence could not be sustained as a solution.

Gruwell realized that room 203 had become "a refuge from all the mayhem" and that "outside my classroom walls, anything can happen."[112] As the spring semester progressed, Gruwell found her students staying in the classroom later and later at night. Driving them home, Gruwell's heart sank as she passed "crack dealers," "gangsters hanging out drinking 40s," "flowers and candles adorning the bloodstained concrete."[113] These moments inspired Gruwell to move beyond her privileged, personal guilt (like

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[110] The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 123.
[111] Ibid, 130, 123.
[112] Ibid, 139.
[113] Ibid, 140.

Victor never could) and take action by soliciting corporate support for maternal teaching and teachings. John Tu (already an ardent financial and moral supporter of Gruwell and her student's efforts) donated 35 computers, all of which would be awarded to the 35 out of 150 students who graduated with the highest grade point averages. This incentive seemed to appeal most to the administration who saw grades soar into the A and B range (incidentally, the test scores of Gruwell's student improved vastly after their freshman year) and high school retention rates increase. While this move sounds like success, paternalistic bequeathing based on a meritocracy and on determination of desert by a privileged outsider amounts suggests the Godwinian perfectibility schemes of monstrous miseducation. However, it could be argued that the harnessing resources of privilege to continue circulating maternal teachings of love and survival only makes sense in this scenario. This gift horse made the publication of their journals possible and to look it in the mouth would have flown in the face of affinity.

While the computers enabled the children to compile and share their stories, their study of the Freedom Riders gave them a name and a mission. They became the Freedom Writers and aimed to march on Washington and meet with the Secretary of Education, Richard Riley. Students who identified with different races and genders paired to revise their journals, they noticed striking similarities in the narratives themselves.[114] While preserving the dignity of difference, they began to think of themselves as more than a community, calling themselves a family.

Naming their compiled journals was a group decision. The students rejected first title, *An American Diary…Victims of an Undeclared War* and chose instead, *An*

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[114] The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 151.

American Diary…Voices from an Undeclared War. The "self reliant" objected to referring to themselves as "victims."[115] With bound diary in hand, Gruwell and her students, with the financial support of many, flew to Washington D. C. to meet with Secretary Riley. Explaining the importance of the Freedom Writer's gift, a student who had been injured by gun violence and damaged by racist violence spoke up:

> I guess that's why I want Richard Riley to read my story. I want him to know that the guys with guns were absolute strangers. All they saw was our color because they were ignorant. If they were educated, like I am, they'd to see past shades and beyond exteriors and see people. I guess that's why the Freedom Writers had to write about our lives and share them with him, because he's in a position to educate kids like that.[116]

As they stood together in front of the Lincoln Memorial, "as if on cue, all 150 of them joined hands and began to slowly retrace the same steps Marin Luther King, Jr. walked down over thirty years ago."[117] In unison, the Freedom Writers began chanting, "Freedom Writers have a dream!" – the chant of cyborg affinity politics and "rational hopes for futurity" educated by maternal teaching and teachings.

Senior Year: Encounters with Futurity

During the Freedom Writer's senior year, Gruwell focused on getting them "college bound." Enlisting the help and mentorship of graduate students from the education seminar she developed for National University, Gruwell was able to partner two Freedom Writers with one graduate student. In addition to guiding students through the tedious process of preparing for and scheduling entrance exams and applying to colleges, the graduate student mentors also spent time engaging with their

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[115] The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 157.
[116] Ibid, 177.
[117] Ibid, 272.

mentees socially and taking them on college campus visits.[118] Gruwell and a patron of the Freedom Writers "created a non-profit organization called the Tolerance in Education Foundation" to help offset the financial obstacles facing her college bound seniors.[119] Again, the issue of patronage and philanthropy is a complicated and deeply gendered one that defies cyborg affinity politics and education as a circulation of gifts. However, a monstrously miseducated culture may not have the imagination to construct an alternative and these children went on to live qualitatively better lives because of donors' financial support of their post-secondary education. Imagine the even greater impact that Gruwell's mentorship program and its circulation of gifts might have had if so much of the time together had not been focused on securing financial support and navigating university bureaucracy.

Thinking that she "could teach young girls like me that they too could 'be somebody,' one of the Freedom Writers announced that she planned to become "first Latina Secretary of Education" and "nobody laughed."[120] In fact, the other Freedom Writers expressed concern over the fate of Secretary Riley's job. The Freedom Writers, enjoying quite a bit of celebrity, began mentoring grade school children and circulating the gifts of maternal teaching and teachings driven by a sense of intergenerational commitment to rational futurity and cyborg affinity politics:

> These children are like lotus plants. A lotus flower doesn't grow in a swimming pool, but it grows in a muddy pond. It lives in a dirty environment, but amid the muddy pond lies a beautiful flower emerging from the water.[121]

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[118] The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 193.
[119] Ibid, 194.
[120] Ibid, 203.
[121] Ibid, 208.

In the spring, the Freedom Writers won the Spirit of Anne Frank Award. The Anne Frank Center insisted that the award be accepted in person, but the timeframe would not begin to allow for Gruwell and the Freedom Writers to obtain the funds for 150 students to accept the award. The award committee suggested that Gruwell send a single representative to accept the award. Gruwell refused, saying, "we're a package deal."[122] GUESS clothing company agreed to sponsor 45 of the Freedom Writers to fly to New York City to accept the award. In order to be considered for the trip, the Freedom Writers wrote an essay explaining why they would make good ambassadors for the group.[123] The eloquent 45 were chosen and spent four days together in New York City. In light of monstrous miseducation, this funding source and selection process is problematic. For any number of (equity) reasons, those who might have benefitted most from attending did not meet the criteria set by a corporate sponsor whose educational agency transmits overtly sexist and deeply gendered cultural stock. GUESS rather famously traffics in essentialism, exceptionalism, and crass consumerism; thus it is not shocking that they would tie their patronage to an elite 45. But, the gifts that such narrow patronage enabled to circulate was truly remarkable.

Unlike the trip to Washington when the children got to choose their own roommates, Gruwell made the decisions about accommodations in New York. One student who, because of her father's Miltonic identity politics, had grown up ethnically segregated and had found herself in a room with an Asian, an African American, and a Caucasian girl:

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[122] The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 222.
[123] Ibid, 225.

> My experience made me realize my father's beliefs were wrong…. I believe that I will never again feel uncomfortable with a person of a different race. When I have my own children someday, the custom I was taught as a child will be broken, because it's not right. My children will learn how special it is to bond with another person who looks different but is actually just like them.[124]

The Graduation Class Speaker was a Freedom Writer who circulated the gift of maternal teaching and teachings, the hope of cyborg affinity politics, and the rational promise of sustainable futurity:

> It won't be until Jun 11, 1998, when I can proudly say, "Now my dream of being the first person in my family to graduate is coming true!" I have learned that it doesn't matter if your inspiration in life comes from negative or positive events. The most important thing is to learn and go on. Twenty or thirty years from now, when we have accomplished world peace, when we have succeeded in ending racism and intolerance, the world will remember that the Freedom Writers kept their promise. [125]

The cases of Columbine and The Freedom Writers demonstrate both the need for and the pragmatic utility of monstrous miseducation's conceptual framework and vocabulary toward understanding and mitigating contemporary terrorism. These cases also give rise to a host of questions for future scholarship in interdisciplinary educational studies. What marks the threshold between The Freedom Writers' activism and Columbine's terrorism? The argument that one person or group's terrorism is another person or group's activism seems to be a slippery slope. Where does scholarship intersect in all of this? We all probably have some idea of what scholarship without activism looks like, but what would activism without scholarship look like terrorism? What is the value of an activist or charitable spirit that never really gets off the ground because it is mired in an oddly self-interested sentimentalism? But

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[124] The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell, *The Freedom Writers Diary* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), 228-9.
[125] Ibid, 264.

alternatively, what happens if we cannot even muster patronizing pity in response to schools and society rife with social and economic injustice? Is there some golden mean between terrorism and activism?

CONCLUSION

Getting outside of the endless curricular loop of monstrous miseducation to a safe place where wise decisions about actions and policies might be made and revised is difficult today. Such thought-work and action take time – time we too often imagine that we do not have amid real terror.

Actual terror events and the representation of these rare events take the focus off of empirically guaranteed threats to the survival of all species and the planet itself in the form of myriad ecological disasters and epidemic diseases. These biopolitical threats are democratic in a terrible way, but their workings are largely invisible. That is to say, the living and non-living planet is in the midst of climate disaster from which none of us is immune, but monstrous miseducation makes responsibility invisible because it operates from a utopic or dystopic imaginary that precludes action. We may wince at the irony of believing in the invisible hand of the market even while many scoff at the invisible hand of climate change and healthcare crises, but the move from individualism to corporatism endemic to the ideological underpinnings of monstrous miseducation is rife with just such ironies. Amid the false immediacy of monstrous miseducation, we cannot see the real immediacy of day-to-day individual, social, and ecological violence because terror events absorb that systemic violence makes them invisible. We answer shock and awe with shock and awe. Sometimes awe looks like pity. Pity for victims is contingent upon an imbalance of power that, were it to be balanced, would upset the relief that paternalism promises.

For instance, we were too enthralled with the spectacle of the Boston Marathon Bombing on Patriot's Day of April 15, 2013, to pay much attention two days later to the

causes and consequences of the industrial deregulation that caused the deadly explosion of a fertilizer plant in West, Texas. Resources flooded the investigation and prosecution of the Tsarnaev brothers, but most of us would not even recognize the name of the plant owner, Donald Adair, much less the names of corporate lobby groups who have long protected such facilities from government regulations by opposing safety laws or backing political players who ensure that government agencies responsible for such oversight are woefully underfunded. Indeed, ten years after the plant's last, failed safety inspection, Adair's plant was storing massive quantities of the very same ammonium nitrate that Timothy McVeigh used to bomb the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995. Yet we might hesitate to label the plant explosion as an act of terrorism or Adair, the business lobbies, or the Texas lawmakers who persist in their campaign for decreased government oversight of manufacturing safeguards as terrorists. Of the Tsarnaev brothers and their actions, activists and activism in some troubling sense, there can be little doubt about their terrorist identity and their terrorist plot. Arguably, we could not have anticipated the Boston Marathon Bombing while we could have prevented the explosion at the fertilizer plant.

The myriad conditions leading up to disaster are enmeshed in monstrous miseducation and what we do in the aftermath of disasters of "natural" and human origins, of accidental and intentional design seems intimately linked to the peculiar species of cultural miseducation I formulated from Mary Shelley's lived experience and from her Frankenstein myth. Profound cynicism and nostalgia; morbid desire and fear; blind vengeance and faith; crippling despair and paranoia; and hollow tenderness and smugness characterize our thinking, feeling species in a troubled complex world

without maternal teaching and teachings of love and survival alongside a cyborg affinity politics that accounts for and embraces hybridity.

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