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From Filthy Type to Truth: Miltonic Myth in *Frankenstein*

LESLIE TANNENBAUM

“God, in pity, made man beautiful and alluring, after his own image;
but my form is a filthy type of yours, more horrid even from the very
resemblance.”

—*Frankenstein*

WHEN *Frankenstein*'s monster, after reading *Paradise Lost*, begins to draw parallels and contrasts between his own situation and those described in Milton's epic, he is merely making explicit a process that has been going on from the beginning of the novel and that continues until the end. In *Frankenstein* Mary Shelley is engaged in a continual dialogue with Milton, expressed by direct and oblique allusions to *Paradise Lost*. The presence of this dialogue is hardly surprising and was perhaps inevitable, given the Miltonic associations of the Villa Diodati, where the novel was conceived; given Shelley's reading of *Paradise Lost* aloud and Mary's own reading of the epic during the gestation of her novel;¹ and, most importantly, given the novel's concern with Promethean rebellion and the problem of evil in a world apparently devoid of divine agency. For, as Northrop Frye observes, the Miltonic allusions in *Frankenstein* serve to “indicate that the story is a retelling of the account of the origin of evil in a world where the only creators that we can locate are human ones.”² Here Frye also suggests a point that has not

1. See *Mary Shelley's Journal*, ed. Frederick L. Jones (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1947), pp. 68–69, 73. All citations of *Frankenstein* are from the 1818 text, ed. James Rieger (New York and Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1947). All citations of *Paradise Lost* are from *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957).

2. Northrop Frye, *A Study of English Romanticism* (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 45.

been sufficiently explored: the Miltonic allusions serve the novel's ironic vision.³ Mary Shelley establishes parallels with *Paradise Lost* in order to emphasize important differences and in order to penetrate the self-delusions that are masked by narrative point of view, thereby reinterpreting the Christian myth of the Fall as a collapse into subjectivity and revealing the world created by her modern Prometheus to be a degenerate version of the universe envisioned by Milton.

The allusive texture of *Frankenstein* is immediately established by the emphatic praise of *Paradise Lost* in Shelley's Preface (p. 6) and by the epigraph taken from Milton's epic (x.743-745):

Did I request thee, Maker, from my Clay
To mould me Man, did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me?

An acknowledged cavil in its original context, this quotation becomes a just defense against Frankenstein's abhorrence of his creation. In terms of Shelley's Preface and Mary's Introduction to the third edition, the epigraph also becomes an ironic commentary on the novel itself. Having entertained the initial proposition of a man's using modern science to imitate God's creative powers, the writer is rebuked by the novel—her own "hideous progeny" (p. 229)—and the reader is forewarned against the possibility of any adverse reaction resulting from the pursuit of the novel's theme to its logical conclusion.

Within the text of the novel, the first Miltonic allusion appears in the entry from Walton's diary that introduces Frankenstein, where Walton describes his icebound ship: "Our situation was somewhat dangerous, especially as we were compassed round by a very thick fog" (p. 17). This echo of Milton's "with dangers compass round" from the invocation to the seventh book of *Paradise Lost* carries a richness of ironic association. The solitude of Walton—whose ambitions leave him almost literally rapt

3. Christopher Small, in *Ariel Like a Harpy: Shelley, Mary and Frankenstein* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1972), pp. 57-60, 64-67, points out some important parodic elements and contrasts with *Paradise Lost* that the novel contains, but he does not attempt a sustained analysis of this kind of ironic allusion. James Rieger's discussion of the novel's transposition of Milton's moral geography, in *The Mutiny Within: The Heresies of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (New York: George Braziller, 1967), pp. 81-85, does not extend beyond that particular theme.

above the pole—is contrasted to Urania’s graceful visits that break Milton’s solitude. However, Walton’s solitude is also about to be broken, since Frankenstein—himself having penetrated the secrets of creation—will descend upon him as a potential Urania figure, filling Walton’s need for inspiring companionship. But this visitation will surround Walton with greater dangers than he is aware of because his attractive guest will behave more like that less gracefully descending Miltonic figure, Satan. Frankenstein will tell Walton his tale ostensibly to prevent Walton from experiencing a “fall erroneous,” yet Frankenstein is so self-divided that his actions undercut his intentions. He will tempt Walton’s crew to self-destruction and try to persuade Walton to kill the monster.

While Frankenstein may appear noble and heroic to Walton, Mary Shelley’s allusions to *Paradise Lost* underscore the young narrator’s naiveté. Walton sees Frankenstein in much the same way that Milton intended his audience to first perceive fallen Satan, as can be seen in Walton’s allusions to the Satan of the first two books of *Paradise Lost*. The young explorer describes his companion as “being even now in wreck so attractive and amiable” (p. 22) and “noble and godlike in ruin” (p. 208), echoing Milton’s Satan addressing his legions, “Majestic though in ruin” (II.305). Similarly, Walton notes that Frankenstein “seems to feel his own worth, and the greatness of his fall” (p. 208), which is reminiscent of Satan at the council scene in hell, “Above his fellows, with Monarchal pride / Conscious of highest worth” (II.428–429). Frankenstein contributes to this identification with a heroic Satan when, narrating his pursuit of the monster to the point at which he reaches the Arctic Ocean, he exclaims, “Oh! How unlike it was to the blue seas of the south!” (p. 203)—a rhetorical echo of “O how unlike the place from whence they fell!” (I.75). He also explicitly identifies himself with the image of Satan as a Promethean rebel: “‘All my speculations and hopes are as nothing; and, like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence, I am chained in an eternal hell’ ” (p. 208).

Frankenstein seems to be a representative and Walton an advocate of the kind of Satanism that is popularly attributed to the Romantics, but this is not the position that Mary Shelley endorses or expects her readers to endorse.⁴ Walton’s failure to see the full implications of the Satanic parallels

4. Citing Shelley’s interpretation of Milton’s Satan in *An Essay on the Devil and Devils* and in the *Defence of Poetry*, Small observes: “For Shelley it was simple: Satan, the justified rebel

in Frankenstein's condition is evinced by one of the young captain's eulogistic outbursts: "Such a man has a double existence: he may suffer misery, and be overwhelmed by disappointments; yet when he has retired into himself, he will be like a celestial spirit, that has a halo around him, within whose circle no grief or folly ventures" (p. 23). This statement is belied by Frankenstein's narrative and by his explicit mention of the hell that he carries within him (pp. 86, 201). Another unattractive Satanic parallel is Frankenstein's continual gnashing of his teeth (pp. 20, 83, 87), which makes him resemble the Satan who is wounded by Michael, "Gnashing for anguish and despite and shame" (vi.340). When Walton invokes the Miltonic Satan by calling Frankenstein a "divine wanderer" (p. 24), he is unconsciously creating an oxymoron that reminds the reader that wandering in *Frankenstein* carries the same negative moral significance that it does in *Paradise Lost*, especially because the moral norm of the novel is rooted in domestic affection.⁵

As in Walton's narrative, the ironic Miltonic parallels in Frankenstein's tale undercut the narrator's point of view, especially because Frankenstein, despite his few conscious self-identifications with Satan, does not appear to be fully conscious of the moral implications of this self-image; nor does he seem to be of a single mind about it. In some passages—even in those in which he likens himself to Satan—Frankenstein insists upon identifying the monster with Satan and upon claiming divine sanction for his own desire for revenge (pp. 200, 201, 206, 214). He warns Walton that

was virtuous, God the tyrant was evil. But [in *Frankenstein*] the moral ambiguity was restored by Mary" (p. 59). It should be noted, however, that Small oversimplifies Shelley's "Satanism." Even though he later (p. 222) quotes Shelley's apparently contradictory position expressed in the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, Small does not call attention to or explain this discrepancy. A fuller account of Shelley's views of Milton's Satan is made by Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr., "The 'Satanism' of Blake and Shelley Reconsidered," *Studies in Philology*, 65 (1968), 816–833. For discussions of Romantic Satanism and its background, see Calvin Huckabay, "The Satanist Controversy of the Nineteenth Century," in *Studies in English Renaissance Literature*, ed. Waldo F. McNeir, Louisiana State University Studies, Humanities Series, No. 12 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 197–210; and Arthur Barker, "' . . . And on His Crest Sat Horror': Eighteenth-Century Interpretations of Milton's Sublimity and His Satan," *The University of Toronto Quarterly*, 11 (1941–1942), 421–436.

5. The novel's moral emphasis upon "the amiableness of domestic affection" is explicitly stated in Shelley's Preface (p. 7). The Miltonic theme of wandering is discussed in Isabel G. MacCaffrey, *Paradise Lost as "Myth"* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1959), pp. 188–202.

the monster is a potential tempter whose cunning rhetoric must be guarded against (p. 206), yet it is Frankenstein who is clearly the tempter in the final segment of the novel. He is the one who, even in his moment of lucidity, “‘induced by reason and virtue’” enjoins Walton to kill the monster (p. 215). It is Frankenstein whose speech tempts the crew to seek self-destruction—“Even the sailors feel the power of his eloquence” (p. 210). As the accumulated allusions to the first two books of *Paradise Lost* set the context for it, this second temptation is implicitly compared to Satan’s address to his legions in Book II of the epic. Here the image of Frankenstein as a powerful and heroic rebel is also most obviously undercut by the crew’s decision to ignore Frankenstein’s plea. At the end of the novel, Frankenstein’s self-delusion reveals him to be the victim of his own egoism, and thus he becomes more like Milton’s Satan than he himself realizes.

The disparity between Frankenstein’s self-justification and the moral significance of his behavior is emphasized by references to Satan’s encounter with Sin and Death. As Christopher Small has pointed out, Frankenstein sees the monster as Milton’s Death, whose horrible grin and whose attempt to detain him are cause for revulsion. Small also notes that an important contrast is established by the allusion: unlike Death, the monster does not wish to harm or catch Frankenstein. Rather, he wishes to detain his creator “As one man will stop another for conversation.”⁶ But as even more important contrast is that Satan at least confronts Death and acknowledges him as his own creation, whereas Frankenstein flees. In the dream that the monster’s appearance has interrupted—where Frankenstein kisses Elizabeth, who thereupon turns into his mother’s corpse (p. 53)—the symbolism suggests the incestuous union of Satan and Sin that gave birth to Death, reflecting the perversion of true affection that resulted from Frankenstein’s ambition. An allusion to the encounter of Satan and Death also occurs in the meeting between Frankenstein and the monster on the *Mer de Glace*, and here the irony is strongest because of the fury of Frankenstein’s moral indignation. Inveighing against the monster’s foul crimes, Frankenstein has not only lost his sense of physical proportion—he calls the monster a “vile insect”—but his loss of moral proportion is betrayed by his reacting to the monster with the tone of disdain and con-

6. Small, p. 160.

tempt that Satan initially applies to his son. The monster is described as rushing toward his creator “with superhuman speed” (p. 93), reminiscent of the “horrid strides” (ll.676) of Satan’s rapidly advancing offspring. Again, the comparison reminds one that Satan ultimately acknowledges, indeed embraces, the corruption he has created, whereas Frankenstein will not acknowledge the monster whose corruption is merely a mirror of his own self-absorbing ambition.

It is this picture of Satan as an author of perverted creations that Mary Shelley emphasizes in her comparison of Frankenstein with Milton’s fallen angel, and the corrupt nature of Frankenstein’s work is particularly stressed by a Miltonic symbol, the blasted tree. The fifteen-year-old Frankenstein’s encounter with the lightning-destroyed tree is interpreted as a visitation of grace because it deters his thoughts from alchemy and renews his interest in the natural sciences (p. 35). Yet, as it turns out, the pursuit of natural science leads him back to his original arcane interests, and in the end Frankenstein identifies himself with the tree: “But I am a blasted tree; the bolt has entered my soul” (p. 158). The symbol is taken from *Paradise Lost*, where it is used to describe Satan’s legions (l.612–615) as well as to indicate God’s grace to fallen man through the “slant Lightning” that kindles trees and introduces man to fire (x.1075).⁷ As the natural analogue of the Prometheus myth, the symbol effectively unites the Promethean and Satanic contexts in *Frankenstein*. In Milton, however, it is only Satan and his legions who actually become identified with the tree itself—thereby implying that Frankenstein’s Prometheanism, like Satan’s, becomes sterile and destructive because he does not possess the kind of love that can turn destruction into creation.

Like Satan, who can create only a parody of the divine order, Frankenstein, in his attempt to assume godlike creative powers, becomes a distorted version of Milton’s God. While this point is already implied by the similarities between Frankenstein and Milton’s Satan, direct allusions to the God of *Paradise Lost* reveal that Frankenstein, in his relationship to his creation, is being measured against Milton’s God and is found wanting. Frankenstein’s failure to fulfill the godlike obligations that he has incurred is emphasized by the monster’s narrative, which has the most frequent recourse to Miltonic comparisons. The intercourse between Frankenstein

7. See MacCaffrey, p. 127.

and the monster in the monster's hut is a gruesome parody of the exchange between Adam and Raphael.⁸ Urging Frankenstein to hear his tale, the monster says, "The sun is yet high in the heavens; before it descends to hide itself behind yon snowy precipices, and illuminate another world, you will have heard my story and can decide'" (p. 96). So Adam detains Raphael to hear about Satan's revolt and to tell his own story:

And we have yet large day, for scarce the Sun
Hath finisht half his journey . . .
(v.558-559)

now hear mee relate
My Story, which perhaps thou hast not heard;
And Day is yet not spent. . . .
(viii.204-206)

Raphael replies to Adam's second attempt to detain him:

Nor are thy lips ungraceful, Sire of men,
Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
Abundantly his gifts hath also pour'd
Inward and outward both, his image fair.
(viii.218-221)

This eager delight of Adam's auditor contrasts sharply with Frankenstein's reluctant decision to listen to the tale of his "odious companion" (p. 97). In his account of his first moments, the monster, like Adam (viii.254-258), is first aware of and attracted to the sun, but the first sensations of light are oppressive to the monster (p. 98). Both Adam and the monster fall asleep on a shady bank, but Adam awakens in the garden of Eden (viii.295-314), while the monster awakens to the pain and suffering of natural deprivation (p. 98). The monster's vision of himself in the pool (p. 109) parodies Eve's attraction to her own reflected image (iv.456-465). These parodic visions of familiar Edenic scenes from *Paradise Lost* serve to show that Frankenstein is unable to justify his ways to his creation, as the monster's own indictment explicitly states: "Unfeeling, heartless creator! you had endowed me with perceptions and passions, and then cast me abroad an object for the scorn and horror of mankind. But on you only

8. This point is suggested by Small, p. 60.

had I any claim for pity and redress . . . ’ ” (p. 136). Nowhere does Frankenstein offer the monster an explanation for his botching and then abandoning his creation. On the contrary, it is the monster who must justify his ways to his creator, an irony which informs the whole of the monster’s narrative.

Not only exposing Frankenstein’s failures as a creator, the ironic parallels to Milton in the monster’s narrative also underscore the bitterness of the monster’s condition. While Milton’s Adam is at a loss to describe his own origins—“for who himself beginning knew?” (VIII.251)—the monster is blessed by his creator with that piece of privileged information, as he receives from Frankenstein’s journal “ ‘the whole detail of that series of disgusting circumstances’ ” (p. 126). Describing his moment of greatest elation, on a spring day among the De Laceys, the monster exclaims, “ ‘Happy, happy earth! fit habitation for gods . . . ’ ” (p. 111), which echoes Adam’s lament at having to leave paradise:

Must I thus leave thee Paradise? thus leave
Thee Native Soil, these happy Walks and Shades,
Fit haunt of Gods?
(XI.269–271)

It is a brilliant touch because it foreshadows the soon to be related disruption of this paradise. When the paradise of the De Lacey cottage does fall, it happens in terms of implicit contrast with *Paradise Lost*, as the monster’s interview with De Lacey parallels Satan’s temptation of Eve—but with important differences. Like Satan, the monster seeks to be alone with the one member of the Edenic community who would be most susceptible to his advances, and, however unintentionally, he exposes the limits of the De Laceys’ virtue and causes them to fall. The important difference of course is that unlike Satan—and appropriately, like Frankenstein—the monster has completely benevolent motives, but the nature of the world in which he is created causes him and the De Laceys to enact the Miltonic pattern.

In this world in which the only visible creators are human, creation fails because humans seem to be incapable of giving or receiving grace. The characters in the novel are either destroyed in their innocence or suffer a fall—sometimes a series of falls—from which there is no possibility of

redemption. During the trial of Justine Moritz, Elizabeth attempts to act as an instrument of mercy by being the only one to defend Justine's character. However, instead of melting the stony hearts of the jurors, her generosity produces the opposite effect, as "public indignation was turned with renewed violence, charging [Justine] with the blackest ingratitude" (p. 80). The condemnation and execution of Justine cause Elizabeth to fall into deep despair: "'Alas! Victor, when falsehood can so look like truth, who can assure themselves of certain happiness? I feel as if I were walking on the edge of a precipice towards which thousands are crowding, and endeavoring to plunge me into the abyss'" (p. 88). The context of these comments is painfully ironic to her auditor, who is responsible for her present vision of the world and for her eventual plunge into the abyss. The irony of the situation is multiplied because not only is Frankenstein impotent in the face of Elizabeth's immediate need of comfort and support, but when Elizabeth—in spite of her own despair—offers comfort to Frankenstein, he is totally unable to accept it. Without grace, he is condemned to live in a tormented world in which the mind is its own place, as the constant Satanic allusions undercut Elizabeth's comforting words: "'We surely shall be happy: quiet in our native country, and not mingling in the world, what can disturb our tranquility?'" (p. 89). The monster's experience of grace denied is explicitly emphasized in such comments as, "'I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed'" (p. 95). But this deprivation is also implicitly underscored by the possibility and the failure of the De Laceys as instruments of grace. When De Lacey promises to help the monster, the monster says, "'You raise me from the dust by this kindness . . .'" (p. 130), an allusion to the God of *Paradise Lost* who is praised for raising Adam and Eve from the dust (iv.415–416, v.516). The monster's rejection by the De Lacey family is the most important fall for him, as he compares it with the expulsion of Adam and Eve: "'And now, with the world before me, whither should I bend my steps?'" (p. 135).

In rejecting the monster, the De Laceys cause their own fall and expulsion, an act which is the moral center of the novel. Themselves victims of ingratitude and prejudice, the De Laceys should be the human beings most receptive to the monster's needs, and the Edenic associations that the monster attaches to these cottagers lead us to believe that they are the

closest that modern man can come to recapturing original innocence. They are certainly, along with Frankenstein's parents, the most morally exemplary characters in the novel. However, when tested against the monster's deformity, they too fail, revealing the limits of natural goodness. De Lacey's moral strength lies in his blindness, which protects him from the lust of the eyes but renders him impotent as a moral agent; he depends upon Felix, Agatha, and Safie, whose senses deceive them into thinking that the monster will harm the old man. Since this family cannot find or act upon a love that will transcend the senses, they too must fall. The significance of this fall as the equivalent of the fall of Adam and Eve is underscored by a remark of Felix's companion that the monster overhears: "'Do you consider that you will . . . lose the produce of your garden?' " (p. 134). Part of this produce would be the friendship of the monster, their "good spirit" (p. 101) who had performed anonymous acts of kindness. Through their decision to flee, the De Laceys deny themselves and the monster the love upon which their idyllic existence depended.

The scene stresses the novel's continuing emphasis, that man is completely responsible for his fallen condition and is doomed to remain fallen as long as he attempts to build a morality upon empirical grounds. Frankenstein's attitude toward his creation, based purely upon inductive observation, is attacked through an ironic parallel between his limited vision and a transcendent vision in *Paradise Lost*. When Frankenstein decides to abandon his attempt to create a mate for the monster, he implicitly compares himself to Adam on the hill of vision (XI.411–414): "... I now felt as if a film had been taken from before my eyes, and that I, for the first time, saw clearly" (p. 168). While Adam was given a vision of ultimate redemption, Frankenstein falsely believes that he can redeem his past errors by refusing to accede to the monster's request for a mate. He decides to commit, in the name of humanitarian motives, a further act of denial toward the monster and refuses to do the one act that would most rectify his previous mistakes. Of course, the basis for this decision is his refusal to believe that the monster is capable of giving or receiving love. Redemption is denied to the monster and to Frankenstein because love is denied.

Frankenstein approaches Milton's God only in terms of the characteristic that the Satanist view of *Paradise Lost* most frequently attributes to him,

his vindictive nature. The monster suggests this view, no doubt because of his own experience, when he says that he was impressed by Milton's "‘picture of an omnipotent God warring with his creatures’" (p. 125). The escalation of Frankenstein's belligerence is marked by a striking irony that underlies his description of his recovery from insanity: "I awakened to reason, at the same time awakened to revenge" (p. 196). Actually, he is no more reasonable than he was before, and the implication is that he is well enough to return to human society because the desire for revenge is a form of madness that is socially acceptable.⁹ His revenge becomes his religious calling, as he deludes himself into believing that divine providence is guiding his pursuit of the monster. He acknowledges his vindictive passion to be a vice, but then describes his mien toward the Genevan magistrate as "something, I doubt not, of that haughty fierceness, which the martyrs of old are said to have possessed" (p. 198). The comparison could not be less apt because Frankenstein's fanatic hatred makes his eventual martyrdom the antithesis of Christlike self-sacrifice. As an apostle of hatred, Frankenstein, with his creation, fulfills Elizabeth's fallen vision of humanity in which "‘men appear . . . as monsters thirsting for each other's blood’" (p. 88).

This vision and its fulfillment are the logical outcome of the metaphysic that Frankenstein has embraced. As the novel details the self-destructive results of a world predicated exclusively upon empirical knowledge, the Miltonic parallels emphasize man's inability to prevent justice from becoming vengeance, appearance from becoming reality and creation from becoming destruction. Unlike the homeostatic world of Milton's epic, the world of *Frankenstein* is degenerative, a universe of death which follows a pattern of progressive loss without any form of compensation. Frankenstein dies without enlightenment, and the flames that will engulf the monster promise neither purgation nor illumination.¹⁰ Walton, compelled by his crew rather than by his own volition, will return to his sister a sadder but not necessarily a wiser man. The domestic warmth toward which he sails does not appear to offer compensation for his loss of

9. Rieger, in *The Mutiny Within*, p. 84, notes that in *Frankenstein* "Reason and revenge are sides of a coin. Fire and ice, Promethean desire and polar hate, are both opposed to love. . . ."

10. See Rieger, *The Mutiny Within*, p. 87.

both an esteemed friend and his own “hopes of utility and glory” (p. 213); nor is this domestic affection a force capable of redeeming Frankenstein and the De Laceys or of clarifying the darkness and distance to which the monster and the problem of evil are consigned.

As a transmutation of the traditional Christian myth of the fall from paradise into the Romantic myth of a fall into self-consciousness,¹¹ *Frankenstein* makes ironic use of Miltonic myth to define the terms in which Miltonic themes have been transposed. The novel reveals the nature of fallen consciousness by depicting Frankenstein and Walton as Satanists who readily draw attractive comparisons between Frankenstein and Milton’s Satan, but who are unconscious of the many unattractive points of resemblance that the Miltonic parallels reveal. In this manner, the allusions define fallen consciousness to be a fall into solipsism, exposing Walton’s and Frankenstein’s lack of awareness of precisely how far they are really fallen. Frankenstein’s Satanic identification also raises and answers the important question of whom or what this modern Prometheus is rebelling against. When the monster explicitly states, “‘I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed’” (p. 95), he emphasizes the nominal identification of Frankenstein with Milton’s God, but other allusions in this scene and elsewhere indicate that Frankenstein is Satan and that the monster is identified with Death. Frankenstein’s double identification with God and Satan thus describes his rebellion as self-division, a point which is also reinforced by the Satanic qualities that Frankenstein shares with his creation.

The complex pattern of shifting, mistaken, and half-recognized mythic identifications in the novel serve to undercut the faith in empirical knowledge that is the initial cause of Frankenstein’s fall.¹² Describing a world that contains no absolutes, no truths beyond the evidence of the senses, Mary Shelley shows this world to be a Miltonic Hell, a world beyond re-

11. See Frye, *A Study of English Romanticism*, pp. 17–19, for a discussion of this aspect of Romantic mythology.

12. The problem of knowledge in *Frankenstein* and its Romantic context are discussed by L. J. Swingle, “Frankenstein’s Monster and Its Romantic Relatives: Problems of Knowledge in English Romanticism,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 15 (Spring 1973), 51–65. Rieger, in his Introduction to *Frankenstein* (p. xxix), notes the concern with ontological and epistemological questions that Mary Shelley’s novel shares with Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* and *St. Leon*.

demption, either by Christian agape or by eros. Whenever the possibility of redemption is held forth, it is always denied—and the Miltonic parallels are used to emphasize this denial. The Miltonic allusions thus reveal that as an anthropodicy, *Frankenstein* is a calculated failure, exposing man's total inability to come to terms with the problem of evil. As a filthy type of *Paradise Lost*—more horrid even from the very resemblance—*Frankenstein* points to the need for the kind of redemptive vision that the world it describes so flagrantly lacks.

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