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MARY SHELLEY'S *LODORE*: A ROMANTIC RECONFIGURATION OF *PARADISE LOST*

by

ROBERT GREGORY GAMEWELL

Under the Direction of Lindsey Eckert, PhD

ABSTRACT

Mary Shelley's late novel, *Lodore*, offers an intriguing reconfiguration of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and interrogates the issues of gender identification, the influence of popular media, and the roles of individuals within a family, by shifting the Romantic fascination from Milton's Satan to Milton's Eve.

INDEX WORDS: Mary Shelly, Lodore, John Milton, Paradise Lost, Romanticism, Identity, Gender, Family, Education

MARY SHELLEY'S *LODORE*: A ROMANTIC RECONFIGURATION OF *PARADISE LOST*

by

ROBERT GREGORY GAMEWELL

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2017

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MARY SHELLEY'S *LODORE*: A ROMANTIC RECONFIGURATION OF *PARADISE LOST*

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## DEDICATION

I would like to thank my parents, Steve and Jenny, for their endless encouragement to pursue my passions. Whether traveling abroad alone, driving across the U.S., or living among the bears in New Mexico, they have supported my wild ideas with a healthy dose of skepticism and excitement. My brother and sister, Steven and Aubrey, have always been impeccable role models, and I'm fortunate to have them not only as siblings but friends as well. I would also like to thank Torri Rinker for sharing the joys and struggles of graduate school together. Although our disciplines are quite different—her biomedical engineering and my literary studies—we could often find a middle ground through literature (especially Mary Shelley). Working full-time in a coffee shop throughout my graduate degree, there were innumerable moments of encouragement from coworkers and last-minute schedule shifts so that I could make deadlines and complete my readings. I especially would like to thank Alma Baste, Capucine Bignolas, Nakeisha Glover, and Aaron Shively. I'm thankful for the innumerable number of customers who regularly ask how “the paper” is coming along, and engage in knowledgeable conversations about the Romantics and John Milton. I'm often astounded and encouraged by how many lives are enriched by literature, and I'm grateful to everyone who share those stories with me.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Mary Shelley's late novel, *Lodore*, was generally well-received by critics and readers when published in 1835. With a keen sense of the literary marketplace, Shelley wrote *Lodore* as a novel of manners and sensibility to meet the demand of her readers. The novel follows Lord Fitzhenry Lodore as he flees England with his daughter, Ethel, to live in the isolated wilds of Illinois. After living fourteen years abroad, Fitzhenry is killed in a duel as he attempts to return home to England. Ethel continues the journey to England, only to face societal and economical obstacles as she pursues both marriage with Edward Villiers and reconciliation with her mother, Cornelia Lodore. One critic from *The Examiner* exalted Shelley's ability to imbue her characters—especially male characters—with motives and the agency to carve their own destiny: “There is a force, an individuality, and a subtle investigation of motives, that stamp a reality upon her heroes which rarely belongs to fiction” (323). Similarly, critics from *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* and *The Athenaeum* praised Shelley's originality of plot and depth of character, the latter periodical stating, “There are few creations in modern fiction, sweeter than Ethel Villiers” (*The Athenaeum* 238). Reviewers from *The Literary Gazette* and *The Sun* commended Shelley's prowess of imagination and prose, prompting *The Sun* reviewer to claim, “We have little doubt the tale will be popular, if only from the uniform polish of its style, which flows on like some broad, steady stream, smooth, and without a wrinkle on its surface” (2).

Despite the initial praise of the novel's literary craft, in the decades following the publication of *Lodore* the novel fell out of critical favor and seemed to offer little more than autobiographical insight into Mary and Percy Shelley's early marriage (Vargo 19-20, 26).

Modern critical work by Emily Sunstein, Anne Mellor, and Charlotte Sussman has reassessed Shelley's work in *Lodore* as an example of an author who continued her role "as a powerful social critic ... particularly on behalf of women," rather than a writer who, later in her career, "retreat[ed] from radicalism into self-abnegation" (Sussman 167). The 1997 Broadview edition, edited by Lisa Vargo, indicates a resurgence of interest in *Lodore*. Although the novel is still overshadowed by the staggering quantity of criticism about *Frankenstein* (and to a lesser extent *The Last Man*), *Lodore* broadens our understanding of Shelley's development as an author who refined her critique of modern society throughout her career. Through *Lodore*, Shelley revisits themes central to *Frankenstein* and *The Last Man*, but concludes the text in a uniquely positive style. When readers analyze the novel "in terms of engagement rather than retreat from political and ideological issues," the seemingly unimportant novel about manners and nobility transforms into a nuanced criticism of social and economic hierarchies (Vargo 21).

In her introduction to *Lodore*, Vargo acknowledges how Shelley incorporates a multitude of other works by prominent authors. For example, Shelley introduces each chapter with an epigraph—evidence of her life-long habit of research. Her engagement with the works of prominent authors is a skilled navigation between acceptance of radical views vis-à-vis her parents—Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin—and a subversion of societal norms (Vargo 10-13). Whereas Wollstonecraft and Godwin explicitly called for radical changes in their philosophical writings, Shelley used the novelistic writing conventions of the time to interrogate contemporary social issues. In the case of *Lodore*, Shelley extends the conversation of a young woman's education, a conversation notably found in Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication for the Rights of Women* (1792), under the narrative guise of a domestic drama (12). Vargo highlights how the novel interacts with Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (ca. 1610), Thomas Campbell's

*Gertrude of Wyoming* (1809), Lord Byron's *Lara* (1814), and Edward John Trelawny's *Adventures of a Younger Son* (1831), to name only a few. Some critics have noted Shelley's reference to John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) as Fitzhenry structures his daughter's education after Milton's Eve (see Brackett 205, Vargo 32), but further connections between *Lodore* and *Paradise Lost* remain underexplored.

My thesis investigates how *Lodore* integrates Milton's long poem in more nuanced and interesting ways than in her previous novels. By exploring the Miltonic elements of *Lodore*, I demonstrate how Shelley crafts her novel as a response to the cultural influences of gender identification and marriage. Shelley achieves this, I argue, by fashioning Ethel as a version of Milton's Eve who becomes the role model of behavior within a post-lapsarian and post-Satanic England. What I term "post-Satanic" is not meant to imply an England without evil, or a return to pre-lapsarian Paradise. Instead, post-Satanic gestures toward Shelley's rendition of a nineteenth-century English society populated by readers who have moved beyond the Romantic fascination with Milton's Satan and are aware of the follies in misreading texts that were often deployed to support and justify gender inequality. Shelley gives Ethel agency within a patriarchal society, despite having lost her father at the age of sixteen, and Ethel ultimately reconfigures the post-lapsarian patriarchal family unit into an egalitarian collective of both genders. Although the Fall is irreversible, Ethel's actions push humankind toward a pre-lapsarian existence that disarms individuals who are prideful and envious.

The first section of chapter one, "Romantic Reception and Shelley's Milton," looks at the Romantic response to Milton and *Paradise Lost* in order to contextualize how Shelley's contemporaries incorporated the poet and poem into their own works and worldviews. Whereas the early Romantic writers (1750-1800) heightened Milton's importance to the rank of prophet

poet, or hero prophet, the later Romantic writers (1800-1850) focused on Milton's Satan. Looking at the Romantic fascination with Milton reveals how his work was not only ubiquitous, but instrumental in the formation of a British identity. Shelley's previous, reverential use of Milton's *Paradise Lost* in *Frankenstein* upholds the poem as a pivotal text that defines humanity and the structure of the family unit. Shelley's use of *Paradise Lost* in *Lodore* reveals how her relationship with the text altered over the seventeen years since the first publication of *Frankenstein*. In the rest of the first chapter, I will consider the following guiding questions: What other Miltonic characters, such as Adam and Satan, surface within *Lodore*? How does Shelley frame those characters in the narrative, and how are they relevant and compelling to her contemporary English reading audience? For example, Fitzhenry represents an example of the Byronic Hero, a character type iconized by Lord Byron but based on Milton's rebellious, brooding, and manipulative Satan. Fitzhenry represents a complicated blend between the Miltonic portrayals of God and Satan, one who is both a benevolent creator and a self-serving manipulator.

In the second chapter, "The Disruptive Satan and Reconciliatory Eve in *Lodore*," I focus on the subsidiary characters who enact a narrative loop modeled after the characteristics and motive of Milton's Satan. These characters are the products of societal pressures and gender-based economic discrepancies. I also examine how the representation of self-sacrifice in both Milton (through God's Son) and Shelley (through Ethel and her mother, Lady *Lodore*) can be considered a faulty or a successful means of reconciliation. Both Milton's Eve and Shelley's Ethel become agents attempting to achieve a form of post-lapsarian reconciliation within their respective narratives. Shelley complicates the scenario by fashioning Ethel's creator, Fitzhenry, after the Byronic Hero. In other words, the paternal figure becomes the enactor of both creation

and excommunication. As the novel progresses, Ethel is continuously restricted by Fitzhenry's past decrees that she and her mother should never reconcile. His will and testament, carried through his words even after his death, restrict the reunion of the remaining members of his nuclear family. Ethel marries Villiers, her father's "second" in the duel, in an attempt to fill the absence of a paternal figure. Her steadfast example of self-sacrifice ultimately leads to a refashioned pre-lapsarian world, a conceptual world that exists through the establishment of the "egalitarian bourgeois family unit" (Mellor 211-212). By the conclusion of the novel, Ethel enacts a transformation of Cornelia that is free from her father's decrees, leading to a reunion between daughter and mother. Ethel and Villiers create a family unit that is not based on biological relations alone or hindered by self-pride. In contrast to Fitzhenry, who is unable to overcome pride or the enforcement of his will through violence, the characters of Ethel and Cornelia Lodore are elevated through their achievement of reconciliation outside—and in spite of—patriarchal systems that attempt to reinforce their separation. I will show that Shelley's presentation of the world sidesteps patriarchy and allows for an equal congress of family members. By the end of *Lodore*, Ethel and her mother overcome the legal and emotional hindrances that were erected by Fitzhenry's will, thereby becoming agents of change in the construction of a mutually-agreed definition of family.

My conclusion suggests possible future scholarly investigations based on this thesis. Tracing Shelley's references to *Paradise Lost* can continue to include other Miltonic works, such as *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1644) or *Samson Agonistes* (1671). Additionally, I suggest how future scholars might investigate Shelley's other, lesser-known works to more fully trace the trajectory of the themes I have teased out of *Lodore*. Ultimately, this project

contributes to the existing criticism of Shelley's work by focusing on her novel as a response, and complication, of Milton's more hierarchical structure of gender, family, and identity.

## 2 ROMANTIC RECEPTION & SHELLEY'S MILTON

To understand Shelley's use of Milton in *Lodore*, one must first understand how other Romantic authors, such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, William Hazlitt, and especially William Blake, were inspired by Milton's virtuosity, the scale of *Paradise Lost*, and Milton's compelling rendition of Satan. In *The Romantics on Milton*, Joseph Wittreich offers insight into how Milton became the "literary hero" for Romantic writers (10-11). One of the "incontrovertible truths" that popular Romantic writers held was that "the heroic poet leads a heroic life," and the Romantics idealized Milton into a rebellious individual who described the spiritual underpinnings of religion and offered a new interpretation on how the universe functions (Wittreich, *Romantics* 10-13). Many Romantic authors emulated Milton's poetic style as well, holding *Paradise Lost* and Milton's other writings as a standard of excellence to be replicated or surpassed. Milton was exalted as a poet who could offer insight into the inner workings of the world, and Romantic authors incorporated the poet and his works in order to imbue their poems and novels with poetical depth and political insight.

One of the best examples of Milton's importance to key Romantic writers can be seen in Wordsworth's sonnet, "London, 1802." In the poem, Wordsworth beckons to Milton's spirit as the representation of political and cultural revolution:

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour:

England hath need of thee: she is a fen

Of stagnant waters [...]

Oh! raise us up, return to us again;

And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.

Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea;

Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free... (1-3, 7-11)

Wordsworth laments the timeliness of Milton's life—that Milton was restricted to the human limitation of living and dying within a previous generation. However, Milton's spirit as a revolutionary poet might continue in his verse and restore the cultural consciousness of Wordsworth's England to a previous configuration. As if coming to terms with the finality of Milton's life, Wordsworth attempts to continue Milton's work himself in *The Prelude*, claiming to “settle on some British theme, some old / Romantic tale, by Milton left unsung,” and then praises Milton as “our blind Poet, who, in his later day, / Stood almost single, uttering odious truth” (148, 180). Wordsworth's career highlights how Milton's works dominated the identity of poets in both their lives and their own creative works.

Milton also appealed to the Romantic writers through his “gloomy egoism” that emphasized a brooding quality to the philosophical and poetical mind (Thorsley 43-44). Notably, Milton “made [the] melancholy respectable, associating it with beauty, with saintliness, with wisdom and with a delight in solitary reflection in natural scenes” (Thorslev 43-44). Within that gloomy egoism are the antecedents of Romantic literary criticism. Firstly, Romantics such as Wordsworth used Milton as the ideal model of the poet. That ideal poet is preoccupied with redirecting the readers toward enlightenment and away from contemporary vulgarity (Wittreich, *Romantics on Milton* 14). Secondly, the philosophical analogy—articulated by Wordsworth—that poetry is “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” derived from “emotion recollected in tranquility” is rooted in an appreciation of Milton's works that balanced inspiration and craft, as well as the rational and irrational (*Romantics on Milton* 15-17). Milton rose above other influential authors as “the prophetic soul of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,



and who... is seen as a prophetic tragedian, warning future generations of catastrophes that, if not awake to their missions, they will fail to avert" (Wittreich, *Why Milton Matters* 172).

If the Romantics were fascinated with Milton the poet, they were equally preoccupied with his representation of Satan. One of the most significant literary turns during this time was a reconfiguration of Milton's work from an exaltation of God and Son toward an exploration of Satan as a sympathetic character. Peter McInerney describes how the Romantics were "obsessed with Satanic personalities," and reconstituted Milton's character into a defiant, moody, and ostensibly mad personality type (1). Percy Shelley, for example, declared that "nothing can exceed the grandeur and the energy of the character of the Devil as expressed in *Paradise Lost*," and that Milton's genius was to strip Satan of the "sting, hoof, and horns" and instead "clothe him with the sublime grandeur of a graceful but tremendous spirit" ("On the Devil, and Devils" 270, 272). Percy Shelley is often referred to as one of the "Satanists," though, as Wittreich points out, Percy did not ascribe to Satanic beliefs, or believe in the superiority of Satan as a religious figure. Rather, Percy exalted Milton's literary representation of Satan, one that is ultimately an "irresistibly impressive...poetic creation...hideously repugnant as a creature uninformed by the value of love" ("The 'Satanism' of Blake and Shelley" 828).

Within a historical context, Milton's brooding, rebellious, and isolated Satan resonated within the English national identity as a representation of the captivating and terrifying qualities of Napoleon Bonaparte. Authors such as Coleridge and Robert Southey condemned Napoleon as "the culmination of evil that began with the French Revolution" however, most authors were preoccupied by a political and literary figure that blended Napoleonic ambition and Satanic pride, egotism, and remorselessness (M. Williams 113). Lord Byron took these shared characteristics and championed the archetype known as the Byronic Hero, found notably in

*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-1818), *Manfred* (1816-1817), and *Don Juan* (1819-1824).

The Byronic literary figure reveals how the Romantics reused Milton's works for contemporary purposes. In this case, the preoccupying features of Milton's Satan are expanded, transmuted, and blended with those of Napoleon to become the most dominating literary figure of the Romantic period. According to M. Williams, Byron "was drawn, a number of times, to the figure of Milton's Satan, in his thinking of Napoleon... because each represented, in his own way, a kind of superhuman power" (118). The presence of the Byronic figure in poetry and prose, then, was a method for Romantic writers to explore contemporary philosophical, political, and cultural issues through the literary past they used Milton to establish.

For many Romantics, Milton's portrayal of Satan imbued the quintessentially evil figure with psychological depth, offering readers a character with relatable emotions, logical (albeit wayward) thinking, and a quizzical opportunity to empathize with a figure utterly alienated from Heaven and God. Peter J. Kitson posits that the Romantics were interested in the fallen angel's "indomitable will" and especially his position as a rebel against a spiritual government (474-477). Satan became "an emblem of a powerful mind cut off from human sympathy and finding in its own desires the supreme motive for action," which became alluring character traits for the Romantic authors to explore agency, identity, and one's mobility within a social class structure (476).

Certain Romantic authors found difficulty sympathizing with Milton's Satan or even Milton himself. On plate 6 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, William Blake wrote that "the reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of angels and God, and at liberty when of devils and Hell, is because he was a true poet, and of the Devil's party without knowing it" (35). Blake's reading implies the need for Milton to express his membership with actual Satanists, a

claim that has reverberated even into modern criticism, such as Denis Saurat's bold claim that "the hero of *Paradise Lost* is Milton himself" (220). If a reader of *Paradise Lost* situates Milton as the narrator of the poem, then the text is open to a semi-biographical interpretation that Milton held sympathy for Satan. However, both Blake and Saurat hold a semi-biographical interpretation that Milton's creation of Satan was a cathartic method of expelling "passion, pride, and sensuality" in literary form (220). And, if Romantic readers found an authorial revelry in presenting Satan, then that "deep pleasure [Milton] takes in his creation of Satan is the joy of liberating, purging himself of the evil in himself" (220-221). Shelley might have similarly channeled her thoughts into Satanic characters, but her method of purgation in *Lodore* is to remove those characters from the fictive world. The first volume is dominated by Fitzhenry Lodore, who is killed in a duel, and the following two volumes offer other variations of Satanic characters, each of whom are purged from the narrative. The surviving characters are echoes of Milton's post-lapsarian Eve, all of whom establish a family unit that is anchored in both nature and spiritual communion with God.

Since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Milton scholarship has moved beyond the Romantic interpretation, including a resistance to the perceived authoritarian and misogynistic worldview that Milton is purported to embrace and a more recent abandonment of that resistance based on an expansive reading of Milton as a socially progressive author.

Modern critical analyses on the Romantic interpretation of Milton has broadened the scope of writers and critics to include female authors and poets. In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf briefly touches on her struggle with Milton and his literary influence on the experienced world. Woolf epitomizes her daily, domestic world through the figure of her aunt, whose "legacy unveiled the sky to me," a view previously obstructed by "the large and imposing

figure of a gentleman, which Milton recommended for my perpetual adoration” (30). When Woolf advises readers to “look past Milton’s bogey, for no human being should be shut out of the view,” the meaning is ambiguous (86). Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar expand on the ambiguity of the phrase, suggesting that the bogey could refer to Milton—“the real patriarchal specter”—or Adam, or Milton’s “inferior and Satanically inspired Eve” (188). Although Gilbert and Gubar settle on an interpretation based on Gertrude Stein’s writings, that the bogey represents “the misogynistic essence of...patriarchal poetry,” they concede that “the ambiguity of [Woolf’s] phrase may have been deliberate” (188).

Gilbert and Gubar’s work has marked Milton’s work as anti-feminist, yet subsequent criticism since their essays and books have endeavored to refute the claim. Leah Marcus describes the trajectory of Miltonic studies since Gilbert and Gubar as increasingly pluralistic: “In the intervening decades, poststructuralist critics have continued the project of dismantling the ‘Milton bogey’ by chipping away at its associations with a patriarchal culture that is itself appearing more dispersed and localized than it did to feminists in the 1980s” (46). Marcus describes the interchangeable gendering of the narrator’s voice, not as an attempt to inhabit and control the voices of both genders, but to open the poem to a plurality of messages and “an array of interpretations that are mutually contradictory in terms of logic and yet all valid” (54, 61). Most recently, the 2004 collection of essays, *Milton and Gender*, attempt to refute the claims of anti-feminism that recede as far back as Samuel Johnson’s *Life* and have still thrived in recent decades (Martin 1). Selections in the book further Marcus’s claims for Milton’s plurality of voices by reflecting, itself, a collection of essays that contradict and operate within different parameters of each other. In “Gender, Sex, and Marriage in Paradise,” Karen Edwards notes that the “hierarchy [that] seems to underlie *Paradise Lost*” is translated through “Satan’s usual

concerns about rank and status,” which deflects some of the claims about Milton’s misogynistic worldviews onto a character who suffers from a perpetual state of psychological turmoil, rather than the poet himself (149). For Edwards, Milton’s description of Adam and Eve as “not equal” weighs heavier on the difference in gendered virtues rather than equality (IV.296; 149). Adam’s “independent individuality and philosophical speculation” might be more highly respected than Eve’s “enabling [of] human relations . . . communion and communication,” yet both sets of virtues are “necessary for productive human existence” (149).

In many ways, Shelley’s novels resemble the current readings of Milton that emphasize a plurality of voices, a blurring of role expectations, and the creation of a narrative world that allows contradictions to exist simultaneously.

## 2.1 Shelley’s Initial Engagement with *Paradise Lost*

From the beginning of her writing career, Shelley engaged and interrogated the cultural influence of Milton’s works by simultaneously accepting and rebelling against the interpretations prevalent in her time. This is most notably observed by the title page of the first publication of *Frankenstein* (1818), in which Shelley frames her novel with an epigraph from the tenth book of *Paradise Lost*:

Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay  
To mold me man? Did I solicit thee  
From darkness to promote me? (X.743-45)

Although quoting another author’s work was common in Shelley’s day, her use of *Paradise Lost* is a choice to inherit a considerable amount of cultural information, and to incorporate the underlying systems, narrative structure, and themes of Milton’s work. Shelley engages with the

hero poet at a time when the Romantics transitioned their fascination toward the alluring and ambiguous Satan. The epigraph is lifted from a moment in *Paradise Lost* in which a post-lapsarian Adam questions God's role as creator, ponders his own role as created, and then wonders how that system can exist in a world based on free will:

Thus what thou desir'st  
 And what thou fear'st, alike destroys all hope  
 Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable  
 Beyond all past example and future,  
 To Satan only like both crime and doom.  
 O conscience, into what abyss of fears  
 And horrors hast thou driv'n me; out of which  
 I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged! (X.837-44)

Here, Adam questions the logic of justice within the world if an individual can pursue a goal that is both desired (to join Eve) and detested (disobeying God). Adam laments how the human race is positioned in a system that is seemingly contradictory and unclear. Even more puzzling is how the guidance faculty of the human condition—the conscience—shares similarities to that of Satan. Adam's monologue in the poem represents a moment of rebellious and critical thinking, which Shelley transplants to the beginning of her novel as an interpretive guide.

Beyond the title page, Shelley imbues *Frankenstein* with Miltonic characters and scenarios that echo *Paradise Lost*. Captain Walton, whose psychology is represented through the epistolary narrative structure, endeavors to find the fabled Northwest Arctic Passage. His aspiration to see “a part of the world never before visited” and to “tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of man” echo Satan's penetration of physical barriers in order to reach a

new portion of the world, Paradise (52). Walton's endeavor is not entirely new. The search for a shortcut between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans began as early as the 1530s (Curran, "Passage") and could hardly be described as "things unattempted yet," (I.15). Yet Milton as a poet is invoked through Walton as he describes his childhood self-education through his passionate consumption of books. He "became a poet, and for one year lived in a Paradise of [his] own creation (*Frankenstein* 52). Walton's poetic aspirations resemble that of Milton, to "obtain a niche in the temple where the names of Homer and Shakespeare are consecrated," but Walton ultimately fails (52). Although Walton forgoes a legacy borne through "heroic poetry," he still aspires to live a "heroic life" (*The Romantics on Milton* 10). Walton substitutes poetry for naval exploration, yet retains the grandiose goals that metaphorically resemble Milton's "advent'rous song" that will "assert eternal providence, / And justify the ways of God to men" (I.13, 25-26). Walton attempts to fashion a connection between two disparate geographical locations—to "tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of man" and to "discover the wondrous power which attracts the needle"—an ambitious project metaphorically similar to Milton's self-proclaimed position as a conduit between two realms, heaven and humankind (51-52). By her emphasis on the poet's position in creating a worldview, Shelley stresses the limitations of narratives, whether poetical or scientific, that are created by humans. Such narratives are driven by personal interpretation and embody the strengths and failures of their creators. Walton is the sole purveyor of Victor Frankenstein's story, and as such, the burden of credibility falls upon the shoulders of one person who, like Milton, commits a narrative to paper concerning the creation of a new species. As Gary Kelly asserts, "the narrative structure of the novel is in fact a chain or series of confessional narratives, each contained in the other, and each with a similar moral: passion, that inward imperative and sign of authentic selfhood in Romantic

fiction, isolates the individual from society, destroys the domestic affections, and brings the individual to the edge of self-obliteration” (188). The entirety of the novel could be read as an alternative version of *Paradise Lost*, “a re-reading (or re-writing) of Milton’s cosmographical epic” (Kelly 189). This re-reading is told through prose and letters—a less polished and more fragmented manner than twelve books of poetry—and transmits an altered hierarchy of literary roles, such as creator-versus-created and member-of-society-versus-outcast.

Shelley explicitly refers to these roles, and how the reading process might influence the reading audience, by positioning the long poem within *Frankenstein* as one of the three vital books that convey the essentials of human experience to Victor’s Creature. He reads *Paradise Lost* “as a true history,” and finds a literary precedent in both Adam and Satan to describe his unique existence: “Like Adam, I was created apparently united by no link to any other being in existence . . . many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition” (143-44). The Creature is misdirected in his strict reading of human behavior according to the Miltonic roles of Adam and Satan. His violence is an adherence to actions associated with the role of a destructive Satan: “I, like the arch fiend, bore a hell within me. . . I declared everlasting war against him who had formed me, and sent me forth to this insupportable misery” (149). Readers may identify with the Creature as individuals processing information and determining how much that information will affect their own relation to the world. In effect, Shelley offers readers a view of themselves as products of the literature they read. Readers are not entirely inactive recipients of information nor are they completely beyond the realm of influence of the literature they consume. Walton, as an author, has the of control over the readers’ perceptions of Victor and the Creature, and his authorial voice is subsumed by the various narrative shifts in perspective.



John Lamb calls attention to the Creature's method of forming an identity through language, notably through the reading of *Paradise Lost*, and his frustration and ultimate failure in finding his own placement in the world. Lamb argues that "*Paradise Lost* functions in [*Frankenstein*] exactly as it did in nineteenth-century culture: as a literary repository of restrictive patterns of self-identification, so deified by tradition as to have become, as the monster claims a 'true history' of what we are" (306). For Lamb, the poem is a form of hegemonic culture that offers a "master narrative" encoded with "possible ontological choices" (315). Those choices, for the Creature, are the identities inherited through Milton's depiction of Adam and Satan. Shelley calls attention to the false notion of isolated selfhood by placing the Creature in a position of deciding between literary-based identities. As Lamb states, "the very moment the self claims its greatest autonomy may be the moment that is most marked by the cultural predeterminants of identity...self is always a social construct" (318). Additionally, Shelley attempted "to silence Milton's voice" by rebelling against the ubiquity of Milton's literary legacy that persists in influencing not only an English national identity but also the identities of individual readers (319).

Shelley's use of Milton's epigraph is a method to incorporate Milton's models for roles, such as creator and created, ruler and ruled, devoted and insurgent. Shelley then blurs and transposes those roles with other characters, a technique that Shelley implemented throughout her career, and especially in *Lodore*. Baldick points out: "When Victor and his monster refer themselves back to *Paradise Lost* -- a guiding text with apparently fixed moral roles -- they can no longer be sure whether they correspond to Adam, to God, or to Satan, or to some or all of these figures" (44). Lamb refers to this confusion of identities as "cultural schizophrenia," which is the "disruption of the self's relation with the world and with itself," a technique that Shelley

implemented and refined later in her career notably through *Lodore* (307). Shelley's use of the gothic in *Frankenstein* also "calls into question the ideology of the real and of the hegemonic" through Victor's fantastical assemblage of parts to construct a new identity (Lamb 318). Shelley's *Lodore*, written seventeen years later, similarly explores the dangers of inheriting a culturally-constructed identity. Rather than using the fantastical "vaults and charnel houses" of the gothic genre, Shelley uses the domestic drama of contemporary England, thereby anchoring her message within a believable rendition of the world that her reading audience experiences (*Frankenstein* 78). Her use of *Paradise Lost* is subtle and more embedded within the fabric of *Lodore*, which reflects how Milton's poem was ubiquitously influencing individuals in her time, even if those influences were based on misreadings of Milton's works.

## 2.2 Fitzhenry & Milton's Satan

Shelley's initial interrogation of Miltonic figures in *Frankenstein* is extended through *Lodore*, but Shelley's engagement with the poem is a more nuanced interrogation of identity development. Whereas Shelley uses science fiction to introduce the roles of creator and created in *Frankenstein*, she anchors the Genesis scenario of *Lodore* within contemporary social and gender issues that developed in part from the influence of Milton's popular works. Like *Frankenstein*, *Lodore* features an "engineered" creation in Ethel, who is crafted after Milton's Eve by her father, Fitzhenry Lodore. Fitzhenry takes his infant daughter from England into the frontier of America, and raises Ethel through her teenage years in isolation from peers and adults. In her descriptions of Fitzhenry's training of his daughter, Shelley explicitly refers to Milton through quotations of his work, and molds the characters in *Lodore* after the archetypes established by Milton's poem. For example, over the course of fourteen years, "Fitzhenry drew

his chief ideals from Milton's Eve" and carefully controlled his daughter's environment and education until she became "the embodied ideal of all that is adorable and estimable in her sex" (Shelley 65). Although well-intentioned, Fitzhenry "was the reverse of a philosopher; and the more he gazed and considered, the more imperfect and distorted became his perception" (123). Fitzhenry provides an analog to the Romantic readers of Milton who "gazed [at] and considered" Milton's work and developed a misinterpretation of the Genesis story that denigrates Eve's position within the poem's spiritual hierarchy into a disempowered representation of womanhood (123). Fitzhenry's attempt to craft an ideal woman leads to the construction of a person with little agency or ability to separate her identity from that of her father (123). As creators, both Victor and Fitzhenry construct their products in isolation and release those creations into a fictive world that is abrasive to the nature of their existence: Victor's Creature is a physical distortion of the human condition and is endowed with too much agency in a world that categorically rejects him; and Fitzhenry's Ethel is raised to fulfill her father's wishes despite living in a world without that father. Once Fitzhenry dies, though, Ethel's characteristics as Milton's post-lapsarian Eve grants her agency toward the successful formation of a family unit.

Until the age of sixteen, Ethel's life is dependent upon her father's presence. She spends her days waiting for Fitzhenry to return from hunts and explorations within the wild Illinois, often reading in his study or drawing landscapes in her studio. This daily habit is shattered by the introduction of Ethel's first peer, Whitelock, an art instructor whose presence threatens Fitzhenry's control over Ethel. Fitzhenry decides to leave Illinois immediately and return to England in an attempt to resume his noble identity and reconnect with his wife, Cornelia Lodore. Before leaving America, however, Fitzhenry is killed in a duel over the honor of his name, and

the following two volumes of the novel portray the challenges Ethel faces while functioning within a patriarchal society without a father, the creator of her co-dependence.

Fitzhenry dominates the first volume of *Lodore* as a Satanic Hero, yet also shares qualities similar to Milton's portrayal of God. His character possesses an abundance of admirable traits, refined skills, and Promethean capabilities, while simultaneously being mysterious, brooding, and overly proud. As a whole, Fitzhenry's character is imbued with youthful promise and alluring attractiveness, and the potential of those admirable traits go unfulfilled with his death, precipitated by pride and an inability to achieve self-forgiveness.

Fitzhenry's character, much like Milton's Satan, is described as an outsider and autonomous. In the opening chapter, Shelley describes the entire lineage of the Fitzhenry family through separation and difference, being "cut off from the rest of the world" while living in "solitary splendour" of the Great House of Longfield "from time immemorial" (*Lodore* 50). Shelley introduces Fitzhenry's place in this lineage as a mysterious addendum to his sister's life: "it was believed that Mrs. Elizabeth's brother still lived," and what is known about Fitzhenry's life is beset by "very strange circumstances" since his departure from Longfield (51). For those who remember him as a youth, Fitzhenry was "a fine, bold handsome boy – generous, proud, and daring" who was the best hunter and rider in the town, and "attract[ed] the admiration of the village maidens at church by his tall elegant figure and dark eyes" (51).

Rather than initially providing psychological insight into Fitzhenry, Shelley develops his mysteriousness by relaying his actions through the point of view of outsiders. The citizens of Longfield gossip over Fitzhenry's now unknown location. Their suppositions are "whispered, as a wonder and a secret" (51). The reader is implicitly placed on the same side as the villagers, outsiders to the "truth" of Fitzhenry's fate and motivations for his actions. As such, Shelley

introduces Fitzhenry not only as a mysterious figure but also as an individual independent from the normal machinations of society—a person who does not conform to the expectations of those closest to him—and who operates according to his own agenda. This description of Fitzhenry from the outside inward, is mirrored by the narrator’s geographical movement from Longfield—which resides in a “desert...fifty miles from London”—to the Fitzhenry family’s Great House—a structure separate from Longfield. One might expect to find Fitzhenry within the mansion but instead the house is occupied solely by Elizabeth, “a somewhat ancient but most amiable maiden” (51). As an outsider might attempt to peer into the Great House to gain insight into Fitzhenry’s fate and psychology, the reader is introduced to the narrative with a dramatic desire to discover the supposed truth of Fitzhenry’s extenuating circumstances. Fitzhenry operates in isolation from his lineage, home, and family, a condition borne from his prideful actions, and Shelley introduces Fitzhenry in a state of agonizing isolation similar to Milton’s introduction to Satan, “his pride / Had cast him out from Heav’n” (I.36-7). Although Satan is joined by “his horrid crew” in Hell, Milton isolates Satan even further into the most extreme experience of isolation: “his doom / Reserved him to more wrath” (I.51, 53-54).

Fitzhenry is not only estranged from his home village and from his only living family member. He also stands apart from all of humanity. To Elizabeth, “[Fitzhenry], in exile and obscurity, was in her eyes, the first of human beings; she looked forward to the hour, when he would blaze upon the world with renewed effulgence, as to a religious promise” (53). Fitzhenry has the potential to return to his previous nobility, to usher in changes within society, and to fulfill some higher, divine mission. However, he fails in this charge. Elizabeth does not see him again, nor does his eventual desire to reconnect with Cornelia come to fruition. Instead, Fitzhenry’s character represents the dangerous hopes that are enforced on someone through the

process of myth-making. His life spent as “a demigod among the villagers” inevitably degrades, and his efforts “to quell the smallest resistance to his desires” remain unchecked by others (80-81). Fitzhenry’s life on a pedestal makes him blind to the psychology of others: “he scarcely knew that his fellow-creatures had any feelings at all, except pride and gladness in serving him, and gratitude when he showed them kindness” (81). His life in Illinois is a continuation of his life in Longfield, one defined through isolation and an assumed higher status:

[T]here was an insurmountable barrier between [Fitzhenry] and the other inhabitants of the colony. He never [attended] their feasts, nor mingled in the familiar communications of daily life; his dwelling, situated at the distance of a full mile from the village, removed him from out of the very hearing of their festivities and assemblies. He might labour in common with others, but his pleasures were all solitary, and he preserved the utmost independence as far as regarded the sacred privacy of his abode, and the silence he kept in all concerns regarding himself alone. (55)

Fitzhenry’s mysterious origins and intentions outside the activities and society of the small village create a permanent boundary that fixes him in the role of the eternal outcast. These barriers between Fitzhenry and the rest of humankind are written into his character, such that he realizes his grandiose self-identity: “he involuntarily looked upon himself as of a distinct and superior race to the human beings that each day crossed his path” (57). He condescendingly judges the men in the nascent village to be full of “personal courage, honesty, and frankness,” and the women are defined through their “simplicity and kindness” (59). A similar judgment comes from Satan as he sits atop a tree in Paradise and gazes at humankind’s first domestic scene, noting Adam’s “true authority,” “valor,” and “broad shoulders,” and Eve’s “softness,” and

“sweet attractive grace” (IV.295, 297-98, 301, 303). Both Fitzhenry and Satan look upon the traditional domestic scene from the position of an outsider. Fitzhenry witnesses “instances of love and devotion in members of families” that he imagines are impossible because his view of the family unit is restricted to a conservative hierarchy—in contrast to the more egalitarian family unit Shelley presents at the end of the novel. Fitzhenry’s “sigh[s] to be one of them” (59) are suggestive of Satan’s initial view of the “Fair couple, linked in happy nuptial league” (IV.339). Upon viewing the first domestic relationship of humankind, Satan reveals his contempt by saying “Oh Hell,” but also reveals his admiration for their creation:

Creatures of other mold, earth-born perhaps,  
 Not spirits, yet in Heav’nly spirits bright  
 Little inferior; whom my thoughts pursue  
 With wonder, and could love, so lively shines  
 In them divine resemblance, and such grace  
 The hand that formed them on their shape hath poured. (IV.360-65)

Any glimmer of envy Satan has toward Adam, Eve, and God, is quickly transformed into a resolution to disrupt their position within the spiritual hierarchy. Satan and Fitzhenry’s status as an outcast allows them to develop knowledge for the intent of manipulating the hierarchical system; or, in other words, both Fitzhenry and Satan are autonomous individuals who gaze upon the arbitrary power structures within their worlds and attempt to exert control over those structures. However, the extent of their manipulation is limited by their inability to overcome self-centered motivations.

The full capacity of Satan and Fitzhenry’s free will in their respective narratives is ambiguous, since both are described in terms that seemingly limit their capacity to change. Both

Fitzhenry and Satan are trapped in a mental anguish that restricts their perspectives. Milton describes Satan's turmoil as an endless loop that increases and strengthens:

horror and doubt distract  
 His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir  
 The Hell within him, for within him Hell  
 He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell  
 One step no more then from himself can fly  
 By change of place: Now conscience wakes despair  
 That slumbered, wakes the bitter memory  
 Of what he was, what is, and what must be  
 Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue. (IV.18-26)

Satan's faulty reasoning shapes his character as an inwardly-misdirected figure who projects his faults onto the outer world. His plan, spoken through Beëlzebub during the council meeting in Pandæmonium, is to seduce humankind to the party of fallen angels until "their God / May prove their foe, and with repenting hand / Abolish his own works" (II.368-70). Satan desires to disrupt "Earth with Hell / To mingle and involve" and alter humankind's placement in the world by twisting the humans' understanding of God's creation and structure of the world (II.383-84). Satan's motives for his plans are rooted in vanity. He is unable to overcome his pride, and even his supposed self-sacrifice to disrupt Paradise is rooted in self-serving gratification. That pride is precisely what prevents him from moving higher in the angelic hierarchy, and Satan is blind to his own faulty reasoning.

Similarly, Shelley describes Fitzhenry's psychology as a perpetual loop that is exerted upon the outside world, "there was an abstracted melancholy in his dark eyes – a look that went



beyond the objects immediately before him, that seemed to say that he often anxiously questioned fate, and meditated with roused fears on the secrets of futurity” (69). Fitzhenry is never at peace with his location or his position within the world. Even in the seemingly paradisiacal setting of Illinois, Fitzhenry leaves his house for the isolation of the nearby woods every day. There, he hears a voice that asks, “How long will you be at peace” (69). The voice is a disembodied representation of his tormented psychology: “Such warning voice startled him in the solitude of the forests: he looked round, but no human being was near, yet the voice had spoken audibly to his sense; and when a transient air swept the dead leaves near, he shrunk as if a spirit passed, invisible to sight” (69). Shelley imposes an isolation upon Fitzhenry arising from his own conscience. Fitzhenry’s awareness of his perpetual isolation and torment extends only to the point that he knows he should move toward a reconciliation with his wife—thereby unifying the biological family unit—but he is perpetually undone by pride.

Fitzhenry, like the Creature in *Frankenstein*, read *Paradise Lost* and found an analogous character for his life. Unlike the Creature—who admits to superimposing his psychological state onto Satan—Fitzhenry unknowingly acts like Milton’s Satan despite his attempts to act like God and Adam. Shelley emphasizes that Fitzhenry read the text and uses the poem as a guide in crafting an ideal of womanhood. Since he “had been a patron of the fine arts; and thus he had loved books, poetry, and the elegant philosophy of the ancients,” his exposure to Milton’s poetry could have taken place as early as his youthhood (59). However, his passion for knowledge, specifically textual knowledge, flourishes in Illinois. Literature became “the most precious [commodity] on earth” (59). Fitzhenry replaces any interaction with the already-distanced Illinois villagers for the company of his books: “beings with human forms and human feelings he had around him; but, as if made of coarser, half-kneaded clay, they wanted the divine spark of

mind and the polish of taste. Books became his friends” (59). Unlike the Creature, who directly adopts a self-image after Satan, Fitzhenry’s role as outcast is a social construct forced on him from the outside, and his internal Hell occurs because of that estrangement. Rather than solely adopting an identity found in a text—like the Creature—Fitzhenry’s distance from the villagers of Longfield and Illinois is supported and reinforced through the pre-established cultural and economic barriers between nobility and non-nobility. The villagers look toward Fitzhenry as a “demigod,” and Fitzhenry looks upon the villagers as mere servants. Through literature, Fitzhenry finally achieves congress with other human intellects, except that the technology of the written language is itself a barrier and does not fulfill the desires of human interaction on a physical or romantic level, nor do the books allow him to participate in the traditional family roles that previously caused him to “sigh” with desire (59). Shelley’s use of novels and other literary genres in *Frankenstein* suggested how an estranged semi-human can mistakenly misrepresent their self through the reading process; in *Lodore*, Shelley’s use of novels and literature reveals how a reading public—as embodied in Fitzhenry—can mistakenly disrupt their pursuit of a domestic life.

Additionally, whereas *Paradise Lost* is foregrounded and explicitly referenced in *Frankenstein*, Shelley embeds Milton’s work within *Lodore* as a force through which normal humans exclude or manipulate others. Because the world of *Lodore* is not as fantastic as the one in *Frankenstein*, Shelley’s use of Milton in the later novel reveals the dangers of defining real people according to literary types. In a sense, defining someone as Byronic causes that person to be treated as Byronic, which enacts a regressive reinforcement of certain qualities and traits. Fitzhenry becomes an example of how an internal Hell is realized from the estrangement of others; is unaware that he is acting in a way that could be deemed Satanic. Extreme

individualism is crippled by an extreme loneliness inherent within societal isolation. As Percy Shelley heralded Milton's ability to remove the "sting, hoof, and horns" of the traditional depiction of Satan, Mary Shelley further dissolves the Satanic figure into the nature of society as the creator of that individual, allowing for isolation to distort the mind and follow the path of destruction established by Milton's theodicy ("On the Devil, and Devils" 388).

In an attempt to escape that internal Hell, Fitzhenry is "seized" by the "mania" of travel (86). His geographical movement becomes a physical manifestation of a desire to escape the emptiness within. He sets out from Longfield to attend school at Eton but does not complete his studies. As with Walton's character in *Frankenstein*, much of Fitzhenry's youth and early adulthood is spent traveling. His "aimless rambles" take him to Jena, Italy, Poland, Russia, and eventually North America (86). The act of perpetual traveling uproots Fitzhenry from eligibly returning to his noble and political career in England, and exposes him to enough alternative thought processes that he becomes "unnationalize[d]" (86). When settling in Illinois, the prospect of anchoring himself to one location for the rest of his life becomes yet another Hell:

[Fitzhenry's] passions were powerful, and had been ungoverned... He groaned beneath the chains that fettered him to the spot, where he was withering in inaction... [R]emorse, regret, and restless impatience usurp the place of more wholesome feeling: every thing seems better than that which is; and solitude becomes a sort of tangible enemy, the more dangerous, because it dwells within the citadel itself. (57-58)

Shelley's description harkens to a reader's first view of Satan in *Paradise Lost*, who is banished from Heaven by God and held underneath "adamantine chains" atop a lake of "penal fire" (I.48). Fitzhenry ostensibly reigns his portion of the Illinois village, which blends elements of both

Milonic Hell and Milonic Eden. Similar to the creation of Pandaemonium in Hell (I.663-751), “like magic, a commodious house was raised on a small height that embanked the swift river” (54). Shelley describes Fitzhenry’s settlement from the perspective of the Illinois villagers, who note “the number of acres which [Fitzhenry] bought... the extent of his clearings, and the number of workmen that he employed, both of which were... on a far larger scale than that of any of his fellow colonists” (54). The numerous workmen are guided by Fitzhenry’s knowledge of architecture—similar to the “brigade” in Hell, led by Mammon, who “Ransaked the center, and with impious hands / Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth / For treasures better hid” (I.675, 686-88)—as well as Fitzhenry’s unnationalized knowledge of harvesting that “differed often both from American and English modes of agriculture” (55).

Fitzhenry’s settlement also resembles the Garden of Eden, in that “every vestige of forest disappeared from its immediate vicinity, replaced by agricultural cultivation, and a garden bloomed in the wilderness... golden harvests shone in his fields, with the dark forest, or untilled plain, seemed yet to set at defiance the efforts of this fellow settlers” (54). In both instances are acts of construction. Satan’s Pandaemonium is built by desecrating the soil to build upward, and God’s creations are brought forth through the Son, verbally generated through God’s commands rather than the toil of manual labor. The construction of Fitzhenry’s settlement shares attributes of both Hell—through the presence of workers—and also Eden—through Fitzhenry’s ability to control the land in unknown ways. Shelley imbues the construction with a hint of the unreal by the seemingly spontaneous accrual of “luxuries, [that] appeared in the abode and reigned in the domestic arrangements of the Englishman” (54). Fitzhenry’s approach to Illinois vacillates between abhorrence and an acceptance of endless tranquility. Ultimately, though, Fitzhenry

forsakes the settlement, and decides to return to England. The appealing decision for a “change of place, of circumstances” betrays the garden’s ameliorative properties:

“Peace! was I ever at peace? Was this unquiet heart ever still, as, one by one, the troubled thoughts which are its essence, have risen and broken against the barriers that embank them...” and thus, governed by a fevered fancy and untamed passions, Fitzhenry forgot the tranquil lot which he had learnt to value and enjoy; and quitting the haven he had sought, as if it had never been a place of shelter to him, unthankful for the many happy hours which had blessed him there, he hastened to reach the stormier seas of life, whose breakers and whose winds were ready to visit him with shipwreck and destruction. (76-77)

Shelley allows for Fitzhenry’s settlement to resonate on at least two different levels: as a fertile space for the creation of Ethel’s identity and a location surrounded by thick, dark forests that threaten to overtake unattended land, isolated from almost all of society. The properties of the settlement are the same regardless of Fitzhenry’s point of view, but it is precisely Fitzhenry’s point of view that determines his contentedness in the domestic space that he creates. Shelley’s narrator follows Fitzhenry’s lead, and the descriptions of Illinois resemble his internal psychology. When he is happily raising Ethel, “his forest home became all in all to him,” and when he decides to depart, “all appeared dark and turbid to his heated imagination” (64, 76). Doing this subtly reveals how one’s own approach to the domestic space determines the success or failure of the family unit. In essence, the domestic space can become either an Eden or a Hell, depending on one’s perspective, which mirrors Satan’s psychological state that “Can make a Heav’n of Hell, a Hell of Heav’n” (I.255). Fitzhenry sees his domestic sphere through the lens of

the “gloomy egoism” made popular by Milton, as well as a transcendent egoism, and the reader is left to decide where Illinois falls between the extremes of Hell or Eden (Thorslev 43).

The fate of Fitzhenry differs from that of Satan. Milton’s God punishes the fallen archangel into the form of a serpent, and Satan seemingly spends eternity in Pandaemonium with his fellow fallen angels, who are also annually transformed into snakes (X.504-47). In *Lodore*, Fitzhenry is killed at the end of the first volume. Satan’s punishment allows him to continue eternally, albeit in an altered form, but as one who still cannot overcome the hell of his own mind. Fitzhenry’s death is predicated on an inability to overcome his pride, as if caught in a loop that he reinforces through violent proclamations of selfhood. Namely, Fitzhenry attempts to punch his way out of situations. His departure from London occurs after he punches Casimir, the son of the Polish Countess Lyzinski (the intricacies of Fitzhenry’s motives in punching Casimir are extrapolated further in chapter two). Casimir attempts to insert himself between Fitzhenry and Cornelia in an odd replay of Fitzhenry’s own insertion of himself between Cornelia and Lady Santerre. Upon embarking on a return journey to England fourteen years later, Fitzhenry’s path crosses with Mr. Hatfield, who is still retelling the story of Fitzhenry’s seemingly cowardly departure from a duel with Casimir. Fitzhenry, predictably, punches Mr. Hatfield, which prompts yet another duel, one that Fitzhenry does not refuse. His death halts his personal endeavor to reconcile his marriage and to reform his family into a traditional and socially acceptable unit. However, Fitzhenry’s death removes him as the last agent of aggressive selfhood. Cornelia and Ethel’s eventual reunion could not exist without removing the dominating Satanic figure and the regressive pride his character embodies.

Shelley’s incorporation of the Satanic character, his psychology, and position in the first volume of *Lodore* is not merely a retelling or recreation of Milton’s poem. As a skilled author,

Shelley positions the rise and fall of Fitzhenry at the beginning of the novel in order to allow her characters to reside in a narrative world without those overwhelming roles. The world she portrays afterward is one in which both the creator and the manipulator have perished, and what is left is the danger of inherited legacies that limit the connection between individuals and family members. Ethel remains a steadfast representation of post-lapsarian Eve, allowing for the possibility of an identity based on literary history that can enact reparative changes to a disrupted narrative world.

### 3 THE DISRUPTIVE SATAN & RECONCILIATORY EVE IN *LODORE*

In the previous chapter, I traced the role of Fitzhenry as a Satanic figure who came to a fatal end in the first volume of *Lodore*. Here, I will explore how Mary Shelley populates the subsequent volumes of her novel with additional Satanic figures, each of whom also enacts their divisive qualities upon various family units, and then promptly disappear from the narrative. Shelley pushes the narrative of *Lodore* beyond the influence of these Satanic individuals and toward a resolution that reconnects, reconciles, and unifies Ethel, Cornelia, Villiers, Horatio, and Elizabeth into a non-traditional familial unit. The majority of Shelley's narrative is thus propelled toward a post-Satanic world, a unique trait among Shelley's other works that primarily center on Satanic and Byronic figures. By the end of *Lodore*, Shelley empowers female characters—namely Ethel and Cornelia—who actively pursue reconciliation and resemble the regenerative and unifying qualities of John Milton's Eve.

In *Lodore*, Shelley repeatedly fashions scenarios that resemble Adam and Eve's decision to defy God's hierarchy, as depicted by Milton. The scenario involves an outsider inserting themselves between two people whose companionship is emotionally, spiritually, or biologically natural. Whereas Milton presents all three types of companionships with Adam and Eve, Shelley teases out the various types of relationships and how they are susceptible to insurgency. The role of the insurgent in *Paradise Lost* is Satan, and in *Lodore*, the role is filled by different characters at various points in the novel. In this chapter, I will explore how certain Satanic characters arise in the novel. My first example, Lady Santerre, is a product and proponent in the process of generational exploitation, in that her parents attempted to disrupt her marriage just as she also attempts to disrupt her daughter's marriage. Cornelia then takes up the mantle of the



generational exploitation against her own daughter, Ethel. Through my second example, I will examine how the Countess Lyzinski and Casimir are also Satanic characters who are compelled to destroy. Lastly, I will look at Whitelock as an example of one who wishes to elevate himself within the hierarchy of society, sharing Satan's desire "To set himself in glory above his peers / He trusted to have equaled the Most High" (I.39-40). The identities and motives of Shelley's characters mirror each other, and she uses fragments of Milton's work to reassemble and recreate the events of *Paradise Lost* within contemporary society. Shelley's insurgent characters are often spurred by pride and a jealousy over the emotional connection of others, but those emotions are in response to the restrictions inherent in an economic- and gender-based class system. Just as the public view of Fitzhenry created and reinforced the identity of an outcast, Shelley shows that the hierarchical system within contemporary England forces individuals to act in ways that resemble Milton's Satan. In the last section of this chapter, I will examine the end of the novel, wherein Shelley shifts her focus onto Ethel and Cornelia as redemptive, Eve-like figures, creating a new series of repetitions based on the construction, rather than destruction, of the family unit.

Lady Santerre is perhaps one of the most compelling Satanic figures in *Lodore* because of her extensive devotion to thwarting the emotional bond between Fitzhenry and her daughter, Cornelia. In describing Lady Santerre's motives, Shelley creates a lineage of abuse upon women that is fueled by financial and legal powerlessness. As a result, Shelley effectively reframes the Satanic figure as a product of gender inequality within contemporary English society and the patriarchal system itself as the producer of outcasts who inherit abuse rather than support. The lineage of abuse, selfishness, and divisive behavior has been passed onto Lady Santerre and threatens to continue through Cornelia, who eventually interprets Fitzhenry's love for their

daughter, Ethel, in the same selfish way that Lady Santerre uses Cornelia as an object to transcend economic restrictions. Shelley offers the recurrence of the scenario—a couple divided—as the symptom of an inherited system of gender inequality that could potentially continue in perpetuity.

Lady Santerre is prompted by her own experiences earlier in life as a victim of the economic system of inheritance. In her pursuit of marriage as a young woman, her family and in-laws attempted to “illegalize the match” because of her husband’s higher economic status (95). The couple were alienated from their parents, and although “a reconciliation with his family never took place,” Lady and Mr. Santerre enjoyed some years moving in the fashionable circles and cherishing the birth of Cornelia. The death of Mr. Santerre’s father promised an inheritance that would secure financial stability for the family, but Mr. Santerre was killed on the way to the legal proceedings in a horse-riding accident. Within the legal system of patriarchal inheritance, Lady Santerre and Cornelia are denied any financial security because of their gender; had Cornelia been a son, the inheritance would have continued for Lady Santerre’s children and grandchildren. The power over inheritance is then granted to the next male, Lady Santerre’s brother-in-law, who “was excessively irritated by the variety of debts, and incumbrances, and lawsuits,” and blamed Lady Santerre for the situation altogether (95). As a widow and single mother, Lady Santerre’s only resource for financial gain in this system is to view her daughter as a commodity who can generate wealth through marriage to nobility.

In *Marriage, Writing, and Romanticism*, Eric C. Walker states that “for most of the Romantic century, official marriage was a narrowly prescribed legal action based almost exclusively in the established church and, once on the books, [was] effectively unbreakable” (2). The three main “legislative attempts to police marriage [that] bracket the Romantic period” are

Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753, the Marriage Act of 1836, and the Divorce Act of 1857 (2). Marriage was defined more through laws than a psychological compatibility between a couple, a connection that Milton describes as the first couple's participation in "All rational delight," and which he further explores in his *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1644) (VIII.392). Most of those laws, according to Anne K. Mellor, "were based on the feudal institution of villeinage: in law, the wife was the property of the husband" (413). Not until the Divorce Act of 1857 were ordinary women permitted legal escape from overbearing marriages (Walker 2). Until that time, women were treated as "property and prisoners of men, confined in their own houses, in jails, and on the streets of prostitution" (Mellor 414). Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichan summarizes marital laws leading up to 1854, three years before the Divorce Act:

A man and wife are one person in law; the wife loses all her rights as a single woman, and her existence is entirely absorbed in that of her husband. He is civilly responsible for her acts; she lives under his protection or cover, and her condition is called coverture.

A woman's body belongs to her husband; she is in his custody, and he can enforce his right by a writ of habeas corpus.

What was her personal property before marriage, such as money in hand, money at the bank, jewels, household goods, clothes, etc., becomes absolutely her husband's, and he may assign or dispose of them at his pleasure whether he and his wife live together or not...

The legal custody of children belongs to the father. During the life-time of a sane father, the mother has no rights over her children, except a limited power over infants

[while she is breast-feeding them], and the father may take them from her and dispose of them as he thinks fit. (6)

Through these laws, mothers and wives were restricted from social and economical movement, and those without husbands were even more disempowered through the disgrace of singlehood. Lady Santerre operates within this framework of gendered power discrepancy. Her only option is to assume the role of creator and raise Cornelia to embody the ideals held by wealthy men seeking a young woman for marriage. Cornelia becomes “the loveliest, fairest, and most sylph-like girl, that ever trod the earth” (99). She possesses “a child-like innocence, a fascinating simplicity, joined to an expression of vivacity and happiness” that attracts both men and women, and especially Fitzhenry, her future husband (99). Readers could potentially sympathize with Fitzhenry as he is drawn into Lady Santerre’s swindle: she offers Cornelia as “the completion of feminine beauty,” but that companionship is based upon the promise of sharing Fitzhenry’s wealth and rank, thereby transforming marriage into a contractual obligation rather than a companionship between equals. Lady Santerre orchestrates Fitzhenry’s interactions with the young Cornelia to the extent that “every thing was calculated to excite his interest” (96). He follows Lady Santerre’s twisted logic and wonders, “How proud a part was his, to gift her with rank, fortune, and all earthly blessings, and to receive in return, gratitude, tenderness, and unquestioning submission!” (96). By offering her daughter as a wife with a price tag, Lady Santerre is pursuing the only means of survival within a system that prioritizes male wealth over the well-being of women and the non-aristocratic. Whereas Shelley’s other works, notably *Frankenstein*, form “a critique of the legal structures—primogeniture and paternal possession” through “the motif of the absent mother,” Shelley populates *Lodore* with mothers who act in unmotherly ways because of their powerlessness within the system of inheritance (Anolik 214).

The English historical roots for the right of primogeniture, or “the right of succession and inheritance due to a firstborn, especially a firstborn son,” are traced to the feudal systems introduced through the Norman conquest and still reinforced in Shelley’s lifetime (“primogeniture,” Jamoussi 18). In the same year that Shelley submitted the first volume of *Lodore* to her publisher, the English Parliament passed the Dower Act of 1833, a form of legislation “whereby wives lost the absolute right to inherit” (Vargo 14, McCalman 13). Iain McCalman further describes the Dower Act of 1833 as:

The most powerful indicator of the way in which the identification of women with the family in [the Romantic Period] was inextricably linked with the loss of individual rights for women...The dower was originally based on the idea of ‘provision’ as part of aristocratic property arrangements. Within middle-class property arrangements, however, the idea of provision worked in such a way that male trustees had access to the woman’s capital to use in the pursuit of their own economic interests.

(133)

The composition of *Lodore* is anchored at a point in English history in which the rights of women are increasingly limited not only by culture but also by law. Individuals caught in such a system could presumably behave like Lady Santerre, and, in providing an example of generational exploitation, Shelley expands the responsibility beyond the individual. In this case, Lady Santerre is a product of and an agent within the larger infrastructure that restricts economic maneuverability to a select few who inhabit the top ranks of a gendered hierarchy. By her assertion that “poverty is a tyrant, whose laws are more terrible than those of Draco,” Shelley offers a reason for how Lady Santerre can distort her offspring into a commodity; however, Lady

Santerre's choice to pursue the emotional destruction of companionship between her daughter and Fitzhenry is a choice toward evil much like Milton's Satan (95).

Lady Santerre's bait-and-switch tactic recalls Satan's appeal to Eve through a false promise of transcending barriers in order to gain the knowledge that will allow her to better serve God. Satan tells Eve that he himself has eaten the fruit and is the better for it: "Look on me, / Me who have touched and tasted, yet both live, / And life more perfect have attained than fate / Meant me, by vent'ring higher than my lot" (IX.687-90). Satan ponders aloud the repercussions of Eve's eating the fruit, that she and Adam might surpass the hierarchical system and become "of human gods" by "participating godlike fruit" (IX.712, 717). However, upon eating the fruit, Eve is cast out of God's grace, and her character and world are transformed into a post-lapsarian existence. Similarly, Lady Santerre offers Cornelia as the fruit that promises a new type of existence (marriage) for Cornelia's husband. Shelley elevates Cornelia to the realm of a contemporary angel through the framework of public opinion; the people of Longfield gossip about her as "an angel bright with celestial hues, breathing heaven, and spreading a halo of calm and light around, as it winged swift way amidst the dusky children of earth" (52). Fitzhenry assumes marriage with Cornelia would be "the consummation of human happiness," one that "offers a bright view of lengthened days of peace and contentedness" indefinitely (96-97). He becomes self-aware to the extent that he sees the limitations of his own self—which are the hallmarks of the Byronic: perpetual brooding, estrangement, a tragic death—and that marrying Cornelia will elevate him beyond that fate into a "life more perfect" (IX.689). Both Eve and Fitzhenry seek to lift themselves to something greater than their current situation, and then follow after the false promises offered by a tempter. However, just as Eve and Adam discover that Satan's proposed results from eating the fruit were the opposite of what occurs (the Fall),

Fitzhenry's marriage—a companionship based on economy but framed in positive emotional, transformative qualities—ends in the exact opposite of Lady Santerre's promise. Shelley links Lady Santerre's twisted logic to Milton's Satan by describing her philosophy in serpentine terms: “she was by nature framed to prefer the zig-zag to the straight line” (100). Ultimately, Lady Santerre's efforts are successful, and Fitzhenry is unable to elicit sympathy or any emotions beyond detestation and scorn from Cornelia. His attempts to appeal to Cornelia are redesigned by Lady Santerre to reveal his authoritarian control. Shelley might have left the character of Lady Santerre as a villain with Satanic aspects whom readers could identify as evil; however, Shelley explains Lady Santerre's motives beyond a self-serving attempt “to make good her second entrance on [the world's] stage” (100). By revealing the social and economical factors that can construct an antagonist such as Lady Santerre, Shelley creates a character who elicits sympathy just as Milton makes Satan a sympathetic figure.

Lady Santerre's role as matchmaker for Cornelia and Fitzhenry focuses on the monetary and social benefits of marrying her daughter to someone with the title of Lordship, rather than a search for companionship between equals. Once Cornelia and Fitzhenry are married, Lady Santerre stands as a vigilant guard against any emotional connection between the husband and wife. Much like Satan's use of warped logic to entice Eve to eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, Lady Santerre twists Fitzhenry's words and meanings against him. Her skills of manipulation are akin to that of a “magician” who conjures an “insurmountable barrier” and creates an artifice of politeness that defies any hard evidence of her divisive efforts (100).

Later in the novel, Cornelia takes up the same divisive role as Lady Santerre. Cornelia is aware of Edward Villiers's interest in her daughter, Ethel, and manipulates the social opinion of their union until Edward withdraws his courtship. Her motives for sabotaging their marriage are

two-fold: pride and economics. Cornelia resents Fitzhenry's forced separation between her daughter and herself, and Ethel's choice to marry reminds Cornelia how much time has passed without her presence in her daughter's upbringing. Cornelia's scorn for Edward is also based on his lower economic status. She thinks of Edward as a "ruined man" and that believes Ethel "will be wedded to care and indigence" (231). At an opera, Cornelia questions Horatio Saville, Edward's cousin, about the reasons that Edward has seemingly disappeared from their shared social circles. Saville answers that Edward has been courting someone away from London, and tells Cornelia that the young woman is Ethel Fitzhenry without knowledge that Cornelia is Ethel's mother. Shelley describes Cornelia's reaction in terms of estrangement and pride, qualities that resonate with Milton's rendition of Satan. Cornelia's estrangement deepens the distance between her own expectations as a mother and the reality of her powerlessness. She passively reflects upon her failure: "it was sad, indeed, to hear of her child as of a stranger; and to be made to feel sensibly how wide the gulf was that separated them" (231). Cornelia is motivated by pride:

The baleful part of Cornelia's character was roused by these reflections; her pride, her self-will, her spirit of resistance...she indulged in this emotion of revenge; the most deceitful and reprehensible of human feelings. (231)

Cornelia perpetuates the prejudice held against those without economic maneuverability. Just as Lady Santerre's in-laws attempted to separate Cornelia's parents, Cornelia enacts a plan to "prevent this ill-judged union" that will not betray her as the source of Ethel's failed relationship (231). Cornelia follows the mode of behavior learned from Lady Santerre, who "in the ruin of [Cornelia's] best affections...substituted noxious passions of many kinds – pride chief of all"



(231). When Edward arrives at the opera to join Saville, Cornelia insults Edward's penurious status under the guise of playful jests. Her movements within the social interaction, much like the skills of her serpentine mother, exploits Edward's powerlessness in the economic hierarchy by focusing on his relative poverty (232). Cornelia and Lady Santerre approach their daughters' marriages with the same divisive philosophy; however, there is a slight inversion. Whereas Lady Santerre encourages Fitzhenry to marry Cornelia for financial reasons, all the while barring emotional companionship, Cornelia discourages Edward to marry because of his poverty, despite Edward and Ethel establishing a genuinely fulfilling emotional connection. In both scenarios, a parental figure maintains the disruptive force that withholds positive marital relationships.

### **3.1 Ancillary Satanic Figures: Lyzinski, Casimir, & Whitelock**

Beyond Lady Santerre and Cornelia, Shelley populates *Lodore* with other examples of characters who insert themselves between couples, and in doing so, Shelley shapes a society with multiple manifestations of the Satanic character. Rather than restricting the qualities to a singular person, the proliferation of this divisive figure points to a facet of modern society that produces disruptive personalities, and continuously repeats the narrative of humankind's fall from grace. Relationships are constantly threatened of dissolution by rebellious agents who enforce societal norms, attempt to achieve a higher level of economic status, and develop jealousy over a psychological connection they are unable to attain.

While Fitzhenry lives in London with Cornelia and newborn Ethel, he is visited by the Polish Countess Lyzinski and her son, Casimir. Both are traveling through England to rendezvous with Lyzinski's husband in Paris. Lyzinski claims "that motives of curiosity had induced her to take this country in her way to Paris," although the implicit reason for her

presence is to complicate Fitzhenry's life (109). She and Fitzhenry had an affair fifteen years prior, resulting in the birth of Casimir. Fitzhenry traveled extensively across Europe in his early adulthood in an attempt to escape his extreme guilt through self-imposed isolation and constant geographical change. Casimir and Cornelia are unaware that he is her son-in-law and upon meeting each other, Casimir "attracted [Cornelia's] more peculiar attention" (108). Since "they were pretty exactly the same age," they pair off under the guise of Cornelia teaching Casimir the English language and idiosyncrasies of European culture. Eventually Casimir becomes "almost domesticated at her house" and calls upon Cornelia throughout the day and into the evening (109-10). Fitzhenry is unable to share his inner turmoil with anyone, since revealing his role as father would irreversibly change his marriage and public image as a nobleman. Moreover, it would place him at the whims of Lyzinski. The Countess "appeared to observe him indeed, and sometimes it seemed as if she regarded the angry workings of his heart with malicious pleasure," while at the same time "her sweetest smiles were for Cornelia" (108-10). Lyzinski's gambit reduces the effectiveness of Fitzhenry and Cornelia's agency, yet the scenario reveals the weaknesses of their marriage as one based on economic pressures and false assumptions of their roles as husband and wife:

Cold and polite to each other, the noble pair were not in the habit of disputing. Lady Santerre guarded against that. Any thing as familiar as a quarrel might have produced a reconciliation, and with that a better understanding of each other's real disposition...As Lord and Lady Lodore proceeded towards [the house of the Russian ambassador], he, with pointed sarcasm of manner, requested her to be less marked in her attentions to Count Casimir. The unfounded suspicions of a lover may

please as a proof of love, but those of a husband, who thus claims affections which he has ceased to endeavour to win, are never received except as an impertinence and an insult. Those of Lord Lodore appeared to his haughty wife but a new form of cold-hearted despotism, checking her pleasures whencesoever they might arise. (110-111)

Shelley reveals the points of view of both Fitzhenry and Cornelia to show their inability to connect on even a basic emotional level. Fitzhenry is entirely engrossed in his own pride, and Cornelia is engrossed in her own victimization, learned through Lady Santerre. Neither appears capable of outgrowing the limits of their personality, in part because of Ethel's mother, but also because of their incompatibility as mates. Fitzhenry's ideals of a wife are based on a misreading of the relationship of Adam and Eve, and that misreading informs his first meeting with Cornelia, a topic explored later in this chapter.

Another divisive character is Whitelock, a young artist whose plan to inherit the Fitzhenry's wealth is based on his cultural misconceptions of women. The death of Whitelock's parents left an inheritance of only a few hundred pounds, which is a small amount for survival but "debt, difficulties, with consequent abstraction from his profession, completed his ruin" (71). Whitelock travels to America "in search of an uncle, on whose kindness he intended to depend," but the death of this relative leaves Whitelock destitute in a foreign country (71). He hears of Fitzhenry's wealth and ingratiates himself with Fitzhenry by first appealing to their shared nationalistic identity, and then by offering his services as a tutor for Ethel's burgeoning drawing skills. Whitelock schemes to exploit Ethel's naivety. He manipulates her into believing that she is falling in love with him, essentially selling her the idea of a romantic coupling, while his aim is actually to obtain a wealthy inheritance (72-73). During Fitzhenry's absence on an extended

survey of the surrounding Illinois territory, Whitelock continues tutoring Ethel and moves forward with his scheme, professing how his love for Ethel has made him distraught for weeks, and by insisting that she is capable of ending his misery if she were to accept him as a suitor. Ethel returns home and, upon seeing a portrait of her father, she “felt abashed [by]...the dark, expressive eyes of her father she fancied to be before her, penetrating the depths of her soul, discovering her frivolity, and censuring her lowly vanity” (75-76). When Fitzhenry does return home, and Ethel discloses what happened in his absence, Fitzhenry “heard her with indignation and bitter self-reproach” (76). He instantly decides to leave Illinois, his house, and the tranquility he had assumed would sustain his life with Ethel until he died. As the novel progresses, and the reader becomes familiar with the various divisive characters who have attempted to manipulate Fitzhenry, his sudden decision to flee America for England makes sense. Whitelock reminds Fitzhenry of his own youthful self, when he acted as a destructive force in Lyzinski’s life by having an affair and leaving her to raise Casimir as the son of her husband. Whitelock is also reminiscent of Fitzhenry when he attempts to court Cornelia and remove her from Lady Santerre’s selfish influence. Lastly, Whitelock is much like Casimir, who wishes to dissolve Fitzhenry and Cornelia’s marriage, but in this instance Whitelock attempts to break apart the natural paternal-daughter bond between Fitzhenry and Ethel. In each of these instances, the rebellious figure erects barriers between couples, either married or biologically related, and reappears within various forms, in perpetuity. Regardless of the platonic nature of the relationship, the insurgent attempts to destroy the relationship they are looking upon. Each character attempts to elevate themselves within the hierarchy and, as a result, their actions disrupt the natural, spiritual, and universally accepted bond between two individuals. Much like Milton’s Satan gazing upon the first couple, each of these characters view a natural connection as

an opportunity for exploitation, and single out one member of the coupling for manipulation.

Shelley populates the narrative world of *Lodore* with this cycle to signal its eventual disruption at the end of the novel through the figure of Eve.

Fitzhenry attempts to break out of this cycle by pursuing reconciliation with Cornelia; however, he is unable to sacrifice his personal pride for the sake of the family unit. From Illinois, he plans to travel back to England with Ethel, appeal to Cornelia—who has been living outside the influence of the now-dead Lady Santerre—and reform the family unit with his wife and daughter. He thinks of himself as Milton’s Adam, in that “the world was before him” (76). However, his interpretation is a misreading of the moment in *Paradise Lost* when Adam and Eve face their post-lapsarian existence *together*, as a couple: “The world was all before them” (XII.646). His faulty appropriation of the Miltonic sentiment betrays the essentially selfish reasons for his attempt at reconciliation. That plan is then derailed by Fitzhenry’s death just days before he and Ethel would sail to England. His path crosses that of an American, Mr. Hatfield, who had witnessed Fitzhenry punch Casimir and then subsequently flee from the duel. Assuming Fitzhenry a coward, and not knowing that Casimir is Fitzhenry’s illegitimate son, Mr. Hatfield insults Fitzhenry’s courage. Fitzhenry then punches Mr. Hatfield, and a duel—“that sad relic of feudal barbarism”—results in Fitzhenry’s death (160). The details of Fitzhenry’s actions offer possible reactions to the role of the Satanic figure. His mode of dealing with Whitelock was to flee the situation in pursuit of reconciliation with Cornelia, but he is ultimately unable to achieve that reconciliation because of his propensity to use violence to resolve conflict. In both situations, the events leading up to Fitzhenry’s punching Casimir and the events leading up to Fitzhenry punching Mr. Hatfield, Shelley constrains the character until the overwhelming emotions produce a physical outburst. Physical violence becomes the model of how male

characters approach conflict, which is counterpoised with the verbal and communicative reconciliation between Ethel and Cornelia later in the novel.

### 3.2 Perceptions & Pursuits of Milton's Eve in *Lodore*

In addition to Fitzhenry's misreading of *Paradise Lost*, Shelley depicts how a young male reader might inherit and perpetuate gender stereotypes based on the popular negative interpretation of Eve. When Whitelock approaches Ethel and conveys his false devotions to her, his speech reveals how gender identification was based on conventions of the time:

[Whitelock] spoke of misery and despair; he urged no plea, sought no favour, except to be allowed to speak of his wretchedness. Ethel listened – Eve listened to the serpent, and since then, her daughters have been accused of an aptitude to give ear to forbidden discourse. He spoke well, too, for he was a man of unquestioned talent. It is a strange feeling for a girl, when first she finds the power put into her hand of influencing the destiny of another to happiness or misery. She is like a magician holding for the first time a fairy wand, not having yet had experience of its potency. Ethel had read of the power of love; but a doubt had often suggested itself, of how far she herself should hereafter exercise the influence which is the attribute of her sex. (75)

Shelley emphasizes the cultural rendition of a woman's perceived weakness and waywardness and traces that misconception to the first couple. Since Ethel is crafted by Fitzhenry as "Milton's Eve," her character represents a Romantic reading that heralds the ideal woman's "celestial beauty" as "a creature half poetry, half love – one whose pure lips had never been tainted by an

untruth – an enthusiastic being, who could give her life away for the sake of another, and yet who honoured herself as a consecrated thing reserved for one worship alone” (65). Nicholas Williams draws attention to Shelley’s use of the feminine ideal and claims that “*Lodore* can even seem a founding text in that fantasy of ideal femininity that would dominate the British and American social imagination of the nineteenth century” in that Ethel is a new type of domestic idea, one “who, despite her sometimes maddening passivity, stands as the peerless paragon of repository of value” (398). These lofty expectations of women don’t necessarily correlate with the dynamics of a contemporary English or even American society, as evidenced by Ethel’s initial sway toward Whitelock as a potential suitor. Even then, Shelley calls attention to her character’s the gross misreading of Milton’s Eve that foregrounds her beauty before her virtues and erroneously frames Eve’s actions leading to the fall as predestined. Shelley asserts that women “are accused” rather than actually in *possession* of “an aptitude to give ear to forbidden discourse,” which questions the assumptions made of women as weak, frail, or naturally corrupted (75). This point is subtle though indicative of Shelley’s awareness that assumptions based on gender differences can be bolstered through literary sources, even if those readings misconstrue the text.

Shelley also notes the lineage of assumptions that society has developed and placed on women, based on Eve’s actions. Even if Eve is entirely to blame for the fall of humankind—“Eve listened to the serpent”—centuries of women since then are assumed to share the same traits that lead to a loss of grace (75). The “power” to which Shelley refers is a woman’s decision to pursue companionship and marriage; however, that power is limited when women are viewed as an object to manipulate in order to acquire wealth. The system of male inheritance grants women a superficial power based on a flawed definition of “love,” since those emotions

are exploitable and altogether unknown to young, inexperienced women. Whatever power a woman is assumed to have is restricted to the realm of emotions, which males can still feign for deceptive purposes, or manipulate through speech. Given the restricted power that women possess, Shelley does imply a system of free will for women to exercise judgment toward a potential spouse. There is potential for free will, as exemplified by Ethel's eventual pursuit and marriage to Edward Villiers, but there is not a guarantee that the choice is always available, as shown through Cornelia's orchestrated marriage to Fitzhenry. Referring to Ethel's budding awareness of her agency in matters of companionship through the metaphor of "magic" and "fairies" reveals both her young sensibilities when facing new facets of life, and the deficiencies of Fitzhenry's education of his daughter. Like Eve, Ethel is raised in relative isolation, and her inexperience leaves her vulnerable to the whims of others.

Shelley's awareness of how fictional texts can perpetuate false assumptions of gender identity is no doubt informed by the writings of her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft juxtaposes the dangerous, popular interpretation of Milton's Eve as a model for contemporary women and her personal interpretation of Eve, which emphasizes the equality between the genders. Wollstonecraft points out that society holds Eve as a model for young women to emulate; however, the Eve that is portrayed in contemporary society is taken from only one portion of Milton's poem:

Women are told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness of temper, *outward* obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man; and should they be beautiful, every thing else is needless, for, at



least, twenty years of their lives. Thus Milton describes our first frail mother; though when he tells us that women are formed for softness and sweet attractive grace, I cannot comprehend his meaning, unless... he meant to deprive us of souls, and insinuate that we were beings only designed by sweet attractive grace, and docile blind obedience, to gratify the sense of man when he can no longer soar on the wing of contemplation. (126-127)

Wollstonecraft contrasts this interpretation with a passage of *Paradise Lost* that emphasizes the equality of the genders. In this portion of the poem, Adam asks God for companionship:

Has thou not made me here thy substitute,  
 And these inferior far beneath me set?  
 Among unequals what society  
 Can sort, what harmony or true delight?  
 Which must be mutual, in proportion due  
 Giv'n and receiv'd; but in disparity  
 The one intense, the other still remiss  
 Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove  
 Tedious alike: of fellowship I speak  
 Such as I seek, fit to participate  
 All rational delight... (VIII.381-92)

Wollstonecraft questions the assumption that women should model themselves after a docile, superficially beautiful Eve not only because *Paradise Lost* is a fictional text but because the argument does not hold up within Milton's work itself. Shelley revisits this disparity between

textual interpretations and cultural expectations through the narrative of *Lodore*. Ethel is raised in a manner that Wollstonecraft criticizes, and Fitzhenry clings to the dangerous interpretation of feminine identity that was popular in the Romantic period, an identity based on emotional or sexual thinking, a denigrated status in marriage, and one that resists cooperation with Nature (*Romanticism and Gender* 107). Like Wollstonecraft, Shelley notes the susceptibility of children who adopt the philosophies and morals of their primary adult figures, just as “a parasite [with] tendrils by which to cling, not knowing to what – to a supporter or a destroyer” (65). Shelley then describes the weakness in Fitzhenry’s philosophical approach by not only raising Ethel to become dependent upon a man but to become dependent upon him as the sole model for her companionship: “she was connected with the mass only through another – that other, now her father and only friend – hereafter, whosoever her heart might select as her guide and head” (65). Ethel’s education is flawed from Fitzhenry restricting her interactions from any society other than her father and servants:

A lofty sense of independence is, in man, the best privilege of his nature. It cannot be doubted, but that it were for the happiness of the other sex that she were taught more to rely on and act for herself. But in the cultivation of this feeling, the education of Fitzhenry was lamentably deficient. Ethel was taught to know herself dependent; the support of another was to be as necessary to her as her daily food. She leant on her father as a prop that could not fail, and she was wholly satisfied with her condition. (65)

Removed from Shelley’s depiction of Ethel, though, is the overwhelming cynicism that powers Wollstonecraft’s radical writings. By framing Ethel’s “sexual education” in a narrative form,

Shelley complicates a complete redaction of Fitzhenry's child-rearing technique by allowing for such a figure to remain dutifully focused on repairing a lost connection (321).

Notably, for all the criticism that Shelley provides of Ethel's rearing as a completely dependent person, Ethel is the main force that leads to reconciliation between mother and daughter. She, unlike Fanny—the independent, philosophical, and bookish daughter of Fitzhenry's childhood friend, who exemplifies an alternative method of raising daughters—is the main subject throughout all three volumes of the novel. Shelley's representation of Eve suggests that the model of the first woman is not always destined to enact the fall of humankind. When contrasted against the multiple permutations of divisive Satanic characters within *Lodore*, the singular Ethel becomes a steadfast agent toward reconciliation. In *Milton's Eve*, Diane Kelsey McColley argues that “readings of *Paradise Lost* in which Eve appears to be inclined toward sin before the Fall have been colored by expectations that Milton hoped to reform, and that his portrayal of her stands in radiant contrast to the sly or naive temptresses who bore her name in the works of Milton's predecessors and contemporaries” (4-5). Similarly, Shelley's Ethel might appear completely naïve and subservient to Fitzhenry, but she accomplishes what her father was never able to achieve: a companionship with an equal, Edward, and reconciliation with Cornelia.

However deficient her education, Ethel was unable to exhibit destructive behavior in the environment that Fitzhenry constructed. His form of child rearing is in contrast to Lady Santerre's rearing Cornelia into a proponent for destruction and separation. Fitzhenry's own close relationship with Ethel might resemble that of Lady Santerre's manipulation of Cornelia and the dependence she instilled in her daughter, but Shelley offers both creators/parents in pursuit of different character types: Cornelia as Satan, and Ethel as Eve. The reconciliation between the two could not have taken place with the presence of their respective parents, which

is why Fitzhenry's death represents the figurative end of violence, pride, and dominating male figures that is necessary to enact a genuinely positive connection between individuals. These Satanic figures are manifested through a fallen, patriarchal system through laws that limit the freedom and mobility of women, and through the cultural denigration of women's worth beyond feeble attractiveness.

Shelley contrasts Fitzhenry's success in raising Ethel to his failure in tutoring Cornelia, which reveals the mistaken assumptions that wives should be treated as children. The difference in age between Fitzhenry and Cornelia causes a conflict of assumed roles, and Fitzhenry confuses the role of teacher with the role of husband. Shelley points out the strange intersection between those two roles of daughter and wife:

He found the lovely girl somewhat ignorant; but white paper to be written upon at will, is a favorite metaphor among those men who have described the ideal of a wife...She was very lively, witty, and full of playful fancy...Lodore now really found himself in love, and blessed the day that led him from among the fair daughters of fashion to this child of nature.

(96)

Fitzhenry conflates the naivety of childhood with the ignorance of a rustic individual, and transforms Ethel's lack of life experience into an expectation of submissive indoctrination. He interprets their meeting as similar to Adam and Eve, modeling Ethel's "white paper to be written upon" after Eve's declaration that Adam is "[Her] author, and disposer!" (IV.636). Although Fitzhenry's pursuit of Cornelia was partly the result of Lady Santerre's skills of manipulation—and despite the sympathy a reader might grant Fitzhenry for falling prey to the scheme—the

unfavorable marriage between Cornelia and Fitzhenry is also a result of his own erroneous expectations of a woman.

Shelley invokes Milton throughout *Lodore*, and the prevalence of his work deepens the poet's importance and influence upon the Romantic period as the purveyor and perpetuator of certain moral standards. In the case of *Lodore*, Shelley gestures toward Milton's poetry during moments of genuine companionship and redemption. Ethel and Edward's companionship is solidified on a spiritual level even before their marriage, and Milton's words are used as an example of that spiritual seal: "[Edward] was already wedded to [Ethel] in soul, and would sooner have severed his right arm from his body, than voluntarily have divided himself from this dearer part of himself" (250). Shelley develops Edward's line of reasoning to identify with Adam, specifically Milton's Adam, without referring to either by name. Edward sees Ethel as his "other half" and that he had "lent / Out of his side to her, nearest his heart; / Substantial life, to have her by his side, / Henceforth an individual solace dear" (IV.482-5). As a result, Milton's poetry provides the validation for their companionship, and the poet essentially marries the couple before their legal ceremony occurs and before the newspapers pronounce their marriage. Milton's description of the first couple's bond as "one flesh, one heart, one soul" is echoed through Edward's corporeal and spiritual devotion to Ethel (VIII.499). Their connection exists before and beyond any public or legal recognition, which subverts marriage to the contractual flow of wealth and titles. Shelley describes the events leading up to and surpassing the ceremony in short declarative sentences:

Lady Lodore was in Scotland. No Answer came. The promised day  
approached; but still she preserved this silence: it became necessary to  
proceed without her consent. Banns were published; and Ethel became the

wife of Villiers on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October. Lord Maristow hastened down to his Castle to kill pheasants: while, on her part, Mrs. Fitzhenry took her solitary way to Longfield. (251)

Shelley tucks the ceremony away as if it were inconsequential, since their connection occurred earlier and beyond worldly concerns. Their connection as a couple is the psychological equivalent of Milton's *Paradise* without the geographical boundaries; a connection that does not falter in the face of economic deprivation and the threat of becoming social outcasts. Shelley invokes Milton again as Edward attempts to erase the increasing debts that his father incurs through gambling and excessive loans. They are separated, Edward meeting with solicitors in London, and Ethel in Longfield. Ethel resolves to volunteer her presence despite the implications and dangers of traveling as a lone woman. Once they reconvene, amidst the dark and dingy accommodations, their presence creates a moment in the narrative that is unlike any other. Shelley breaks up the narrative flow with an abundance of references to *Paradise Lost* (the relevant references are provided in footnotes):

“Imparadised”<sup>1</sup> by each other's presence – no doubt – no fear of division on the morrow – no dread of untoward event, suspicion, or blame, clouded the balmy atmosphere which their hearts created around them. No Eden was required to enhance their happiness; there needed no

“Crisped brooks,

Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold;”<sup>2</sup> –

no

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<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost* IV.506

<sup>2</sup> *Paradise Lost* IV.237-8

“Happy rural sea, with various view,”<sup>3</sup>

decked with

“Flowers of all hue,<sup>4</sup>

“All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;”<sup>5</sup> –

nor “cool recess,”<sup>6</sup> nor

“Vernal airs,

Breathing the smell of field and grove.”<sup>7</sup>

In their narrow abode – their nook of a room, cut off from the world,  
redolent only of smoke and fog – their two fond hearts could build up  
bowers of delight, and store them with all of ecstasy which the soul of  
man can know, without any assistance of eye, or ear, or scent. (296-297)

Shelley chops the narrative and assembles snippets of prose with quotations of Milton’s poetry to create a unique moment in the narrative that stands apart from the rest of her work. Shelley effectively creates a psychological space that oscillates between contemporary England and a blissful state of existence, and the couple disappears briefly among the quotations. Shelley refers to Milton’s Eden as a model of perfect geographical space that is unnecessary for a couple to achieve Paradise; Milton’s metaphors and verse become the Paradise that individuals use to convey their connection. Shelley adopts Milton’s perspective that “The mind is its own place,” and instead of dwelling on the Satanic psychological transformation that “Can make a Hell of

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<sup>3</sup> *Paradise Lost* IV.247

<sup>4</sup> *Paradise Lost* IV.256

<sup>5</sup> *Paradise Lost* IV.217

<sup>6</sup> *Paradise Lost* IV.258

<sup>7</sup> *Paradise Lost* IV.264-5

Heav'n," she confirms that—even in the post-lapsarian world—one can make a “Heav’n of Hell” (I.254-5). That psychological state of heaven is achievable specifically among two individuals who act in non-Satanic fashion: “So rich, and prodigal, and glorious, in its gifts, is faithful and true-hearted love, - when it knows the sacrifices which it must make to merit them, and consents willingly to forego vanity, selfishness, and the exactions of self-will, in unlimited and unregretted exchange” (297).

Near the end of the novel, Ethel’s friend, Fanny Derham, is disconcerted by the increasing level of debt and legal complications that Edward’s father has placed upon the couple. Fanny visits Cornelia and requests her help. For the first time in the narrative, Cornelia visits Ethel intentionally, seeking her daughter outside of the realm happenstance meetings. Cornelia’s redemption as a character begins in the presence of Ethel, whom Shelley describes in angelic terms similar to Cornelia when she was the same age. Shelley focuses on Ethel’s constancy in devotion as the transformative quality in others, and Cornelia remarks upon how “her eager imagination now exalted [Ethel] into an angel. There was something heart-moving in the gentle patience, and unrepining contentment with which she bore her hard lot. [Ethel] appeared in [Cornelia’s] eyes to be one of those rare examples sent upon earth to purify human nature, and to demonstrate how near akin to perfection we can become” (366). Cornelia returns to her home in order to will away all her wealth and property that still remains in her possession to Ethel and Edward, and then outcasts herself to a house outside of Longfield. Cornelia’s extreme sacrifice removes her from practically all trappings of contemporary society associated with wealth and the title of Ladyship, effectively killing her identity within the hierarchical system. She recognizes that this fallen status will complicate the lives of Ethel and Edward, if she were to remain in London, and so she sacrifices her presence in her daughter’s life. Shelley offers



Cornelia as a mother who now chooses absence in order to improve the lives of her daughter, rather than Lady Santerre, who was unable to relinquish any control over Cornelia. Her self-sacrifice is similar to Milton's depiction of the Son of God offering himself as an agent for humanity's salvation.

In "Beyond Sacrifice," Gregory Chaplin explores the nuances of the Son's sacrifice, and how Milton offers a unique depiction of the Son as a volunteer rather than a martyr. The truly heroic act is in the "active collaboration with God's will," which requires an individual to both understand and choose to fulfill God's designs for the world (361). The Son demonstrates this in Book III when conversing with God in Heaven. The Son recapitulates God's desires for a redeemer, the ramifications of leaving the Father's side, and the necessity of mercy within the world. Only after revealing his understanding of the sacrificial costs, the Son offers himself as a redeemer for humankind. Similarly, Shelley transforms Cornelia by detailing her internal perspective as she processes her sacrifice and the way that sacrifice will benefit her child: "Her only companions would be villagers; or, at best, a few Welsh gentry, with whom she could have no real communication. Sympathy, the charm of life, was dead for her, and her state of banishment would be far more complete than if mountains and seas only constituted its barriers" (385). Given all the potential drawbacks, she pursues the course of action that allows her daughter to pursue her own life, and Cornelia takes up residence in Longfield. There, much like Eve, she tends nature and maintains the surrounding gardens.

Cornelia's gardening brings the narrative ever closer to a Miltonic pre-lapsarian geographical and spiritual understanding of the universe. As Acosta asserts, "The key to Milton's new gloss [of the book of nature] is the proposition that labor is the path toward perfectibility and God...The work of Adam and Eve in the garden parallels their need for

obedience and decorum in their internal lives” (65). Cornelia’s life in self-imposed exile contrasts with that of Fitzhenry’s in Illinois. Whereas Fitzhenry looked upon the world with tormented eyes, Cornelia contemplates her gardens and understands how “the operations of nature filled all her world” (441). Fitzhenry commanded others to reform the land in Illinois and projected his suffering onto the landscape. Cornelia, though, resolves to work alone, and interprets nature through positive, regenerative properties: “The weather was cheerful, the breath of spring animating. She watched the swelling of the buds – the peeping heads of the crocuses – the opening of the anemones and wild wind-flowers, and at last, the sweet odour of the new-born violets” (441).

For the first time, Cornelia’s character has insight into the religious underpinnings of her world and implores women to “turn your steps to the habitation which God has given as befitting his creatures...it is better to love, to be of use to one of these flowers, than to be the admired of the many – the mere puppet of one’s own vanity” (443). In contrast to the continual degradation of the Satanic figures, such as Lady Santerre, Whitelock, and even Fitzhenry, Cornelia’s transformation elevates her above her previous lot as a Satanic character. She is rewarded for her efforts when they are based on sacrifice and the benefit of another. As she tends the garden, she is unaware that Edward has found her location, and Ethel is nearby, en route to an unexpected reconciliation. In a moment of utter relinquishment, she exclaims, “My own sweet Ethel! I have sacrificed every thing except my life for your sake, and I would add my life to the gift, could it avail you” (444). Her sacrifice is akin to what Chaplin terms “Heroic Martyrdom,” which is “the highest expression of love...the willingness to die so that someone else might live” and modeled through the Son’s offering of himself for the benefit of humankind (362).

## 4 CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to show that Shelley's *Lodore* deserves a larger place in the growing body of scholarship on Milton and Romanticism. My intention has been to recognize the relevance of Shelley's work by examining a novel that scholars largely overlook in favor of *Frankenstein* or *The Last Man*, and to present *Lodore* as a key text within the progression of critical Miltonic interpretation. Although previous scholarship on *Lodore* has mentioned Shelley's reference to Milton's Eve, no one has focused in depth on the various other references to *Paradise Lost*, which convey Shelley's attempt to put pressure on ideological and social issues. To that end, I have given examples of how Shelley populates the beginning of her novel with Byronic characters who exude qualities that resemble Milton's portrayal of Satan in *Paradise Lost*. By the novel's conclusion, Shelley extinguishes the efficacy of those Satanic individuals in favor of Ethel, who is a stand-in for Milton's Eve. Crafting the plot in this way diverts attention onto an ideal and empowered female role model of self-sacrifice, forgiveness, and inclusiveness. My reading of *Lodore* employs a modern pluralistic understanding of Milton's long poem that emphasizes an equality among genders, especially in Milton's portrayal of marital companionship as "fellowship ... fit to participate / All rational delight" (VIII.389-91).

From the work I present in this thesis, other scholars can explore further Shelley's intertextuality in a variety of directions. Below are brief descriptions of some potential trajectories of inquiry: how Shelley crafts *Lodore* as a response to the work of her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft; what additional works by Milton does Shelley incorporate into *Lodore*; and how does the optimistic ending of *Lodore* complicate the themes found in Shelley's darker, uncompromising novels?

My reading of *Lodore* is purposefully focused on Shelley as an author responding to influential texts; however, further research that incorporates autobiographical information could reveal fruitful connections between the work of Shelley and her mother, Wollstonecraft. In particular, reading *Lodore* as a response to Wollstonecraft's unfinished novella, *The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria*, could offer different philosophies on the idea of generational abuse. *Lodore* and *Maria* dwell on the role of writing as a means of educating and forming the personalities of children, specifically daughters. In "Daughter of the Revolution," Charlotte Sussman begins the process of connecting Shelley and Wollstonecraft by formulating the idea of literary matrilineage (158-63). Sussman also recovers Shelley from the criticism that describes her work in terms of retreat rather than radicalism, which is productive and enlightening, though limited to novels that scholars have long favored: *Frankenstein*, *Valperga*, and *The Last Man*. Scholars will find Sussman's argument useful in pursuing the literary and autobiographical links to Shelley's other novels, specifically *Lodore*, as a response to Wollstonecraft's fiction.

Although this thesis explores the restrictions of marriage in England during Shelley's life, a modern reader might wonder why an unhappy couple would continue with the marriage at all. Fitzhenry's extreme reaction to his dismal marriage prompts a reflection on the options—or lack of options—available to couples. Put simply: Shelley does not explicitly refer to divorce in *Lodore*. However, the absence of divorce in the novel might speak volumes on how rarely those legal separations took place. The Divorce Act of 1857 opened the possibilities of legal separations but until that year, for the entirety of the Romantic period, divorce was "a process so expensive and unusual as to place it virtually out of reach of the middle class" (Rose 11). Shelley composed *Lodore* long before the introduction and implementation of the legislation, and so the scenario of a father taking his daughter out of the country—however absurd and

traumatizing that “resolution” might appear to modern readers—was legally permitted. Shelley gives a voice to a mother’s suffering through Cornelia, who writes to Fitzhenry:

I demand my child – restore her to me. It is cruelty beyond compare, to separate one so young from maternal tenderness and fosterage. By what right – through what plea, do you rob me of her? The tyranny and dark jealousy of your vindictive nature display themselves in this act of unprincipled violence, as well as in your insulting treatment of my mother. You alone must reign, be feared, be thought of; all others are to be sacrificed, living victims, at the shrine of your self-love. (131)

Cornelia’s marriage to Fitzhenry is arguably worse than widowhood. Her description of maternal strife parallels Wollstonecraft’s character of Maria in *The Wrongs of Woman*, in that both women suffer the loss of a child because of a legal system that favors patriarchal rights.

Building on my work here, a scholarly thread on the topic of divorce might incorporate connections between *Lodore* and Milton’s works beyond *Paradise Lost*. For example, a further reading of *Lodore* might focus on how the marriage of Fitzhenry and Cornelia exemplifies a coupling that Milton would consider viable for divorce. In *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton’s argument in support of divorce was based on scripture and the spiritual underpinnings of Christianity. Both Fitzhenry and Cornelia “lack emotional compatibility” and “mutual respect,” which “render[s] marriage a merely formal commitment that serves only to move each party away from God” (Suzuki 390). One might read Fitzhenry and Cornelia’s marriage as individual “retreat[s] into solitude” and that Fitzhenry’s death frees Cornelia from the restrictive marriage, which allows for Cornelia’s eventual communion with God at the end of the novel (Suzuki 390).

Lastly, a more thorough comparative study of *Lodore* within Shelley's body of work can reveal further insight into her development as an author. *Lodore* is the rare story that Shelley concludes in an overwhelmingly happy tone, in contrast to the bleak deaths of Victor and the Creature in *Frankenstein*, and all of humanity in *The Last Man*. Barbara Johnson briefly comments on this happy ending as Shelley "accept[ing] the fact that she and her mother were different types of women," and that Shelley "bid [Wollstonecraft] good-bye with this tribute" (95). Shelley might have found productivity within a positive message beyond marriage between equals and the formulation of a functional family unit, and future scholarship can reveal how *Lodore*'s optimistic ending interrogates her previous, darker renditions of themes within other novels. Due to the popularity of *Frankenstein*, a comparative study between the two texts might further highlight the complexity of *Lodore* and the ways that the latter novel portrays issues such as the psychological bond between the roles of slave and master; the replenishing and destructive qualities of nature; the use of letters and correspondence to convey truth and validate claims; and the gothic traits of the commonplace spaces within contemporary England. With all hope, this thesis will encourage other scholars to analyze Shelley's body of work, especially her later novels, and explore how her writing both represents and at times also challenges Romantic ideals.

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