The Importance of Being "Ernest" in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*: A Study in Literary Onomastics

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In *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley utilizes the names of her characters to simultaneously distance the reader from the characters and to make ironic comparisons between the true identity of a character and the identity a character portrays. Furthermore, parallels are made between separate characters as well as between the character Margaret Saville and the author Mary Shelley. The novel uses a multiple-frame format where no single character directly presents the entire story and characters' names are introduced in a manner that serves their role thematically. Notably, Ernest, whose name suggests an honest disposition, is the only character in the Frankenstein family who is spared from tragedy. Ernest's survival resonates as a warning to those who irresponsibly chase scientific progress. Shelley's automatization of names in Frankenstein sets the reader up for the de-automatization of Ernest's name and his symbolic development into a young man who produces for his country rather than threatens its existence with scientific pursuit.

Learn from me, if not by my precepts at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge. – V. Frankenstein

Unquestionably, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* reigns as "the most frequently read of all nineteenth-century English novels" (Robinson, 1996b: 49). Read and interpreted variantly as a family romance, a *roman à clef*, science fiction, horror fiction, phantasmagoria, and juvenilia, the novel easily lends itself to biographical, feminist, psychological, historical, philosophical, scientific, and textual criticism[1]. Leonard Ashley has suggested that "[l]ess fashionable in criticism these days than the feminist or hermeneutic criticism, as interdisciplinary as the psychological or sociological, as solid as the genre or archetypal, as strict as the rhetorical or structuralist, as

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scientific as the philological or linguistic, is the onomastic critical approach," succinctly defined as "a study of the origin and history of proper names." From a Greek term meaning "names," onomastics is concerned with the "folklore of names, their current application, spelling, pronunciations, and meanings . . . and, in literary onomastics, with an examination of names and the way in which they reflect or expand . . . our understanding and appreciation of a work" (1979: 261). Critical attention has been paid to the altered character names in *Frankenstein*, most often for editorial and bibliographical ends[2]. This paper, however, focuses more on the artistic design and purposes underlying Mary Shelley's name choices[3]. Of the twenty characters mentioned in the entirety of *Frankenstein*, eleven defy the ravages of disease, murder, and suicide, but within the fictional Frankenstein family and inner circle of friends, nine of whom are named in the text, only one survives[4]. Analyzing literary onomastics within the text offers insight into the story's meaning: the story emphasizes the importance of being "Ernest" in *Frankenstein* as a matter of survival and by so doing brings deep social criticism to unfettered scientific "progress"[5].

In *Frankenstein*, names serve two primary functions, one structural and one semiotic. Consistent and interwoven with the multiple-frame narrative technique of the story, the structural function employs names to distance the reader from the characters. The semiotic function utilizes names to point to and unlock the meaning of the story[6]. Both functions are carried out by the allusive and ironical uses of names. While allusive usage in *Frankenstein* will be touched on in this essay, the focus is on the ironical, which plays an especially important and unacknowledged role: throughout the *Frankenstein* text, Mary Shelley uses names, not mimetically, as a way of encoding a character's personality, but ironically, to highlight contrasts of portrayed self and real self. It is certain, for example, that for Justine Moritz, no justice is served. Victor Frankenstein, defeated by the very monster he creates, is not

victorious in his pursuit of the "elixir of life." Felix is unmistakably unhappy and is described as the saddest creature on earth. Even the names of minor characters, such as Daniel Nuggent, encode an ironical twist; Daniel, "judgment of God," proclaims judgment against Victor Frankenstein for the murder of Henry Clerval, but does so wrongly. With one exception, the name(s) of each character in the text—except Ernest, of course—can be said to be ironic, in terms of action taken either by or toward the character. Such ironical usage distances the reader from the characters, because the reader does not, and cannot, truly know the character[7]. In literature, such distancing "aids the satirical intention by making the audience observers rather than participants, by emphasizing the critical, evaluative faculties rather than empathetic, nonjudgmental attitudes" (Burelbach, 1986:171). The reader does not interact with the fictional character empathetically but treats the character as an intellectual object.

Mary Shelley's character-naming technique, distancing the reader from the characters, as it does, underscores the narrative distancing already in place with the multiple-frame format of the story. At the same time, the multiple-frame format is also a vehicle that supports the distancing function of names by providing a sequence of entries into the story, allowing a delayed and fragmented introduction of characters' names. A proper understanding of the multiple-frame story will uncover the essential distancing function of the story's structure and allow a more insightful view of Shelley's naming technique.

In *Frankenstein*, four distinct narrative voices emerge: Robert Walton's, Victor Frankenstein's, the monster's, and, both much more embedded and much less accessible, the author's, Mary Shelley's[8]. While each narrative voice semantically and syntactically embeds a distinct mode and level of empathy/identification with other characters and events within the text, the author of the text sustains a common mode of distancing the reader from the story's events

and characters. The reader never hears the story directly from any one character. We read Walton's letters—which, in Letter IV incorporates his journal entries—to his sister, but never read about her reaction(s) to his words. We read Walton's version of Victor Frankenstein's tale, not Frankenstein's words. And we read Walton's record of Frankenstein's version of the monster's tale; we do not directly hear the monster's tale. While Walton's letters appear to shroud the incredible story of Victor Frankenstein in some sense of normalcy and credulity, the epistolary, reportive nature of the text also displaces the reader—at least doubly, sometimes three-fold—from the narrated events[9].

Mary Shelley's "Introduction" provides a detailed explanation of the nightmarish origins of the story, suggesting a reason for her choice of the multiple-frame structure for the story. Mary Shelley writes that during the summer of 1816 "incessant rain often confined" her company indoors. To pass the time in their Switzerland abode, she and her companions (Percy Bysshe Shelley; Claire Clairmont; Lord Byron; and Byron's physician, Polidori) read ghost stories, and, then, at the suggestion of Lord Byron, held a ghost story telling competition. Byron developed his theme, as did Percy Bysshe Shelley and Polidori, but Mary Shelley "busied" herself "*to think of a story*" (169)[10]. She explains that she listened as Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley "talked of the experiments of Dr. Darwin" and that some discussion ensued about the possibility of re-animating a corpse (170). Mary Shelley noted that on that particular rainy evening, her "imagination . . . possessed and guided" her images of "the effect of any human endeavor to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world" (170). If Walton's letters serve to add a sense of normalcy to Frankenstein's incredible story, the author's introduction gently reminds the reader that the story is a printed nightmare with a moral; the story is a myth about the effects of random, non-consummated, non-consecrated creation, and perhaps, as well, a commentary on the dangers

of scientific exploration. The author of Frankenstein's nightmarish endeavors to create a living being out of a corpse provides important information about the efforts she undertook to increase distance between the text and the reader. Typical of myth, the story of *Frankenstein* is a record of an oral transmission, the written record of a story of a story of a story—a story at a distance. Presenting the story at a distance makes it that much easier for the reader to contemplate its horrific aspects and to entertain its implied criticism of contemporary scientific thought.

The clearly demarcated narrative frames emphasize the written record of the oral transmissions and provide the framework for the introduction and development of names. Attributed to the voice of Robert Walton, the opening sentence of the novel bears witness to the controlling "voice" of the text, Robert Walton's. The tale begins with a series of four letters (dated Dec. 11th, 17-; 28th March, 17-; July 7th, 17-, and August 5th, 17-) addressed "To Mrs. Saville, England" and signed variantly from "R. Walton," "Robert Walton," and "R.W." The fourth letter remains unsigned and contains the entirety of Victor Frankenstein's "narrative" (25), including Frankenstein's account of the monster's "tale." Regardless of the fact that Walton remains the dominant source and subject of his narrative in all four letters, Walton's full name and identity remain masked until the end of Letter II.

Mrs. Margaret Walton Saville is fully identified by the end of Letter I and the first character in the text to be fully named, becoming known only through the correspondence of her brother. Although Walton himself employs endearments such as "my dear sister," "dear Margaret," and "my dear excellent Margaret," clear expressions of empathy and identification, Walton maintains a first-person narrative focusing on himself and his (mis)fortunes: "I arrived here yesterday"; "I try in vain . . ."; "I shall satiate my ardent curiosity"; ." . . I may again and again testify my gratitude . . ." (15). Even in the first sentence of Letter 1, which reads, "You

will rejoice to hear that no disaster has accompanied the commencement of an enterprise which you have regarded with such evil forebodings" (15), we cannot infer that Robert is thinking of anyone but himself and his adventures. Readers might suppose, at first glance, that Mrs. Saville, the antecedent of "You" will play a dominant role in the narrative structure because "You" is in the subject position. However, as the tale proceeds, Walton emerges as the dominant source and subject of his narrative; in sum, the first four letters of the *Frankenstein* text contain 185 instances of the first-person pronoun "I," all but 15 of them referring to Robert Walton, and all in subject position[11]. As the primary audience of Walton's letters and journal entries (recorded over a nine-month time span from Dec. 11th, 17- through the following September 12th), Mrs. Margaret Walton Saville serves no apparent semantic role other than recipient of Robert Walton's letters[12]. The subject pronoun "You" in sentence 1 serves the function of a typical vocative, acknowledging Margaret as the addressee, but not engaging her or identifying with her point of view. In fact, Robert Walton's letters contain very little, if any, inquiry about Margaret; moreover, the letters reflect a certain measure of negativity and dismissiveness towards her. Somewhat chided in the first sentence that "no disaster has accompanied the commencement of an enterprise which you have regarded with such evil forebodings" (15), Margaret further suffers the reproach of Robert's interrogative: "And now, dear Margaret, do I not deserve to accomplish some great purpose" (17). In Letters II and III, Robert simply asks Margaret to "Continue to write . . . by every opportunity: I may receive your letters (though the chance is very doubtful) on some occasion when I need them most to support my spirits" and to "[r]emember me to all my English friends" (20). Robert Walton's married sister appears to play the traditional nineteenth-century female role—that of "the silenced Other" (Mellor, 1988: 176).

Margaret, meaning "precious" and "pearl," certainly does not appear precious to Robert Walton. Although

semantically suppressed, Margaret semiotically preserves her brother's story and, by extension, is the only one in the story to create or birth something viable: the published story of Frankenstein and his created monster. The very name of Margaret Walton Saville, whose initials, MWS, bear the authorial fingerprint of Mary Wolstonecraft Shelley, evidences the import of character names in *Frankenstein*. If Mary Wolstonecraft Shelley, vicariously through Margaret Walton Saville, stamps the text with her signature in the first pages of the novel, as I suppose she does, she does so for a purpose: to indicate the seriousness with which she endorses the myth she has created[13]. MWS thus becomes a fourth frame for the story, a validation/authentication frame, and one that alerts the reader to the significance of names for the meaning of the story.

The identification of Mary Wolstonecraft Shelley with Margaret Walton Saville through the initials of their names raises the parallels that exist between the two. It also calls up the intricate and effective use of the *doppelgänger* motif in *Frankenstein*, by which parallels among characters are interwoven throughout the text[14]. Robert Walton, for example, parallels several other characters in the text, most notably Victor Frankenstein. The numerous parallels between Robert Walton and Victor Frankenstein, like those (described below) between Frankenstein and Prometheus, range from "the study of mathematics" to the desire to "discover," to a sense of loneliness, and by the novel's end, to a sense of defeat. The identification of author and character through the MWS initials also brings attention to the semiotic contribution that names make to the meaning of the story, in particular the contribution of another striking parallel among characters, the ironic use of their names.

The surname Walton, a locally derived English name meaning "woodsman" (Arthur, 1857: 160), is an anomaly for the self-described "naval adventurer" who hopes to "arrive at the "North Pacific Ocean through the seas which surround the

pole" (16). Robert, too, seems an ironical character name choice for the self-educated explorer. Robert, meaning "famous in counsel" (Arthur, 1857: 287), offers little counsel to Victor and ignores the counsel of his crew. Robert Walton reports that he was anxious to hear Frankenstein's tale out of a "strong desire to ameliorate his fate," and yet, when Walton returns to writing his letter to Margaret on August 26th, 17-, he relates that Frankenstein counsels *him* to "[s]eek happiness in tranquility, and avoid ambition, even if it only be the apparently innocent one of distinguishing [him]self in science and discoveries" (25, 160). Robert Walton further records that the crew threatened mutiny, then made good on their threat, noting that the crew "feared that if, as was possible, the ice should dissipate, and a free passage be opened, I should be rash enough to continue my voyage, and lead them into fresh dangers" (157-58). Clearly, Robert Walton's name presents more than a hint of irony and suggests that, in *Frankenstein*, names are a means to the deliberate end of unlocking Shelley's criticism of self-aggrandizing technocrats. In fact, such ironic usage of names is highly systematic in the text, calling direct and dramatic attention to the moral implications of scientific experimentation.

As Robert Walton's name is pressed into the service of irony, so too is Victor Frankenstein's. Initially shrouded in Walton's vague periphrastics, Frankenstein is first identified as an "interesting creature" and "the stranger," names that, not accidentally, parallel the monster's periphrastic names throughout the text (Duyfhuizen, 1995: 477-92). The "stranger" commences his narrative with a generalized and markedly vague geographical/ethnic identifier, as well as an equally generalized and vague acknowledgement of established socio-economic status: "I am by birth a Genevese; and my family is one of the most distinguished of that republic." The "stranger," later to be identified as Victor Frankenstein, reveals that he "delighted in investigating the facts relative to the actual world" (28) and that he pursued "the philosopher's

stone and the elixir of life" (30). Like Robert Walton, Victor focuses on himself and his misery: "I began the creation of a human being," "I suffered," "I passed a night of unmingled wretchedness," "I was a wretch, and none ever conceived of the misery that I then endured," "I will never consent," "I will hover near, and direct the steel aright" (40, 57, 63, 66, 107, 154).

For all of his self-focus, however, Victor Frankenstein never explicitly identifies himself. How can he fully identify himself if he cannot—or will not—recognize and name his psychological "other," his created monster? Walton indirectly comes to know that Frankenstein's given name is Victor when the young Frankenstein quotes his father as saying: "'Ah! Cornelius Agrippa! My dear Victor, do not waste your time upon this; it is sad trash'" (29). Such an indirect method of introduction, one placed several pages within the text, again highlights the distancing effect pervading the myth-like story. The surname *Frankenstein* remains undisclosed to Walton until after the creation scene (placed by Mary Shelley in the fourth chapter of Volume I in the 1818 text)[15]. Like the indirect disclosure of his given name, Victor's surname is also revealed through another character in the text, Henry Clerval. As Victor roams the streets "in the sickness of fear," after creating and then abandoning his monster, Henry Clerval arrives on the Swiss diligence, alights from the coach, and claims "'My dear Frankenstein . . . how glad I am to see you" (44). Like the delayed full identification of Margaret Walton Saville, then Robert Saville, Victor's indirect disclosure of identity further distances the reader from the text, and, like any good myth, creates a good story.

Frankenstein, literally meaning "marked in stone," conjures images of the ruined castle Mary Shelley described in her 1814 travel log and published in 1817 in the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour through France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland*[16]. While the geographical and historical referent adds credence to biographical interpretations of the text, perhaps the surname functions as a metonymic device, as well: all but one

of the Frankenstein family members lies dead, the family surname marked in stone above their cold tombs, a chilling reminder of Victor Frankenstein's inability to accept moral responsibility for his creation. The full title of the text, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus,* adds yet another well-discussed layer of meaning over the entombed Frankenstein family[17]. The appositive title, "The Modern Prometheus," provides a literary allusion that, from the very start, suggests that the effect of unchecked applications and/or knowledge is certain and extreme distress—if not death itself. Just as the mythical Prometheus of ancient Greece fashions man out of clay, Victor Frankenstein creates a manlike creature out of unearthed corpses[18]. As Prometheus "studied architecture, astronomy, mathematics, navigation, medicine, metallurgy, and other useful arts," Victor, too, studied "natural philosophy" and mathematics (31). Just as Prometheus, chained naked to a pillar in the Caucasian mountains as punishment by Zeus for giving "knowledge" to mankind, suffered from exposure to frost and cold year-in, year-out while a vulture tore at his liver, Victor Frankenstein suffered from "cold, want, and fatigue" (150). At Justine's jail cell Victor acknowledges that a "never-dying worm [lives] in [his] bosom" (65), and near the end of his tale, Frankenstein suggests that the gods and fate have punished him: "You may give up your purpose [Frankenstein tells Walton]; but mine is assigned to me by heaven" (159)[19]. Mary Shelley's deliberate renaming of Victor Frankenstein as the Modern Prometheus undoubtedly underscores the mythical allusion associated with the name Frankenstein.

Some characters in the *Frankenstein* text are known only by a surname (Beaufort, De Lacey, Kirwin, and Krempe, for example), one character only by a given name (Safie), and still others are known by their full name—both a surname and a given name (Margaret Walton Saville and Justine Moritz, for example). The monster, however, as playwrights and critics alike note, is known only through periphrastic naming, a fact

further enhanced by the monster's expressions of himself (Duyfhuizen, 1995). When he confronts his creator near the summit of Montanvert, the monster tells Frankenstein: "I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel" (74). The monster refers to himself as Victor's "creature" (73), as "a poor, helpless, miserable wretch" (76), even as a "monster" (84). In his discussion with Victor Frankenstein on the icy mountainside of Mer de Glace, the monster/creature reveals that he questioned himself and his creator: "Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled, and whom all men disowned?" (89). Finally, broken in spirit from the rejection of his self-perceived benefactors and patrons, the De Laceys, the monster uses metaphors of "wild beast" and "arch fiend" to describe his heart-wrenching howlings.

As Duyfhuizen has suggested, "the absence of a [given] name, of a signifier that constructs identity before the first glimmerings of subjectivity enter consciousness, marks [the monster's] alienation by and from the world of human existence." Likewise, the impossible "naming of the unnameable" signifies his "lack of a family and his exclusion from a chain of generation[s]" (1995: 480). The monster's reported self-reflection reveals the depth of his despair and the power of his persuasion upon both the psyche of Victor Frankenstein and the sympathy of the reader. The monster explicates his discovery of human life practices: "the strange system of human society was explained to me. I heard of the division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty; of rank, descent, and noble blood" (89). Yet he questions Frankenstein,

> But where were my friends and relations? No father had watched my infant days, no mother blessed me with smiles and caresses . . . I had never yet seen a being resembling me, or who claimed any intercourse with me. What was I?
>
> . . . God in pity made man beautiful and alluring, after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of your's,

> more horrid from its very resemblance. Satan had his companions, fellow-devils, to admire and encourage him; but I am solitary and detested. (90; 96)

In September of 1823, Mary Shelley wrote to Leigh Hunt after viewing a stage version of *Frankenstein*, noting that the "nameless mode of naming the unnameable" was particularly "good" (1980-1988, *Letters I*: 378). The monster, the created creature with no name, defies even the basic tenets of creation in classical mythology, the ritualistic symbolic event by which the creator "exercises an authority over the named" (Robinson, 1996a: lvii). Thus, Mary Shelley forces the reader to attribute a "name" to Frankenstein's created—monster, creature, horror, object of sympathy—and thus forces the reader to accept some measure of responsibility for the moral qualms and implications of scientific experimentation (Robinson, 1996a: lviii).

From the unnameable monster to the ironic character names of Victor and Robert to the symbolic character name of Margaret Walton Saville, Mary Shelley's onomastic practices follow a predictable pattern; character identities are dramatically delayed. Once named, moreover, a character's name becomes an ironic symbol of the effects of ambitious applications. Foreshadowed by the delayed unmasking/naming of Robert Walton and his sister, Margaret, the narratives of both Victor and the monster also follow a delayed naming pattern, a pattern enabled by the narrative's multiple frames.

The monster's narrative introduces four characters to the *Frankenstein* text—De Lacey, Felix, Agatha, and Safie. Following Mary Shelley's aforementioned pattern, the characters are first introduced through periphrastic names, such as "the cottagers," " lovely creatures," and "gentle beings" (81, 82). As the monster learns and applies words, he comes to recognize the names of the cottagers themselves (83). De Lacey, the monster tells Frankenstein, was an old, blind man, known also as "father" (83). The monster further reveals

that De Lacey "was descended from a good family in France, where he had lived for many years in affluence, respected by his superiors, and beloved by his equals" (90). At first glance, the name seems descriptive of the gentle De Lacey since the name is a local name derived from the birthplace of Sir De Lacey of France (Arthur, 1857: 28, 177), connecting the two through geographical location of birth and alluding to gentle birth, national identity, and class position. The name De Lacey, however, carries a bit of history. Sir De Lacey accompanied William the Conqueror to England and triumphantly established a wealthy line of successors. To the contrary, the De Lacey in Frankenstein's tale was imprisoned and then "condemned . . . to a perpetual exile" which reduced him to utter poverty (93).

Like De Lacey, the names of both Felix and Agatha encode an ironical twist. The name Felix means "happy" (Arthur, 1857: 279), an irony from the start since the monster describes Felix as miserably unhappy: "his features were moulded with the finest symmetry; yet his eyes and attitude expressed the utmost sadness and despondency" (81)[20]. "Felix," the monster reveals, "appeared . . . miserable" and "the countenance of Felix was melancholy beyond expression" (85, 86). Though "every trait of sorrow vanished from his face" when Felix beheld the beautiful Safie, his happiness is short-lived, replaced by "horror and consternation" at the sight of the monster (86, 100). Agatha, too, is horror stricken at the sight of the monster. Agatha, a name derived from the Greek word for "good," seems an apt description of the young cottager who gives up her food for her ailing father (Arthur, 1857: 291). For all of her goodness, however, Agatha faints at the sight of the monster, unable to offer him the goodness she so readily offers to others. The choice of Agatha points to yet another layer of meaning encoded in the names: some names in the text are obviously ironic (Victor, Justine, Felix), while others play a more subdued role (Agatha, William). Agatha and William are sympathetic characters (one because of her

goodness, the other because of his innocence as a child) who draw attention back to the horror of the created monster, for whom we might have developed sympathy precisely because he is unnamed. In subtle irony, the meaning of their names and the character traits of Agatha and William, in particular, force the reader to confront the horrific aspects of the monster.

The monster's delayed naming of De Lacey, Felix, and Agatha foreshadows the delayed naming of Felix's Arabian fiancée, Safie. First known through the periphrastic phrases "the stranger" and the "Sweet Arabian," Safie's name, like Victor Frankenstein's, is indirectly revealed through another character: "Felix kissed the hand of the stranger, and said, 'Good night, sweet Safie'" (86, 87). Historically, *Frankenstein* critical commentary has postulated that Safie is an anglicized version of the Greek "Sophia," from *sophis,* meaning "wisdom" (Robinson, 1996a: lviii; Mellor, 1988: 118). Such an interpretation of Safie's name reflects the expected irony of name usage throughout the text: her seemingly wise decision to abandon her father results in the death of her attendant and leads to the conclusion that her innocence is tainted by deceit.

I am not alone in suggesting, however, that the name "Safie," is possibly an anglicized form of the Arabic Safiyya, derived from the feminine form of *safiyya,* meaning "confidante or bosom friend." "Safiyya" also denotes the "best part or lion's share of something," from the Arabic *safa,* meaning "to be pure and select" (Baker, 1990: 380)[21]. Like other characters in *Frankenstein,* Safie's name, as viewed through the Arabic etymology, seems a perfect fit for her personality. She abandons the father who betrayed Felix, and, having been "instructed in the tenets of [Christianity] . . .and taught to aspire to higher powers of intellect," traveled alone to Germany in search of her fiancé (91). Described by the monster as exhibiting "angelic beauty and expression," Safie's music draws "tears of sorrow and delight," and her presence lifts the spirits of the De Lacey family (86, 87). Seemingly a bosom friend, however, Safie deserts her future in-laws when she sees

the monster: "Safie, unable to attend to her friend rushed out of the cottage" (100). Safie's behavior toward the De Laceys forces a review of her behavior toward her father: she essentially "pilfer[s] gold and steal[s] forth in quest of her beloved Felix," a behavior that at least one critic has noted as "dispassionately willful" and lacking "moral justification" (Garrett, 2000: 141, 152). Surely, the name/character of Safie encodes yet another ironical twist in the story, for the confidante and bosom friend, the pure, select, Arabic Christian, thinks only of herself when she sees the monster, and, like so many other characters in *Frankenstein*, denies the monster as a psychological double[22].

While the monster's narrative introduces four characters to the text, including the central figure of Safie, Victor's narrative introduces fourteen of the twenty characters in *Frankenstein*, including Victor himself, as well as his monster. The characters introduced by Victor fall into three general categories: acquaintances (Kirwin, Krempe, Waldman, and Daniel Nuggent), friends of the Frankenstein family (Beaufort, Justine Moritz, and Henry Clerval), and family members (Alphonse, Caroline, Elizabeth, William, and Ernest). Even the names of the acquaintances of the Frankenstein family highlight the irony between apparent self and real self. Daniel Nuggent, for example, "swore positively" that the boat Victor used and that of Clerval's murderer were the same. Ironically, the given name Daniel comes from the Hebrew prophet by the same name: "judgment of God" (Arthur, 1857: 277). But Daniel Nuggent is neither prophet nor judge. In fact, Daniel can not even accurately describe the past, stating that "as far as he could judge by the light of a few stars," Victor Frankenstein's boat was the same one seen leaving the murder scene (130). Daniel's lack of judgment is underscored by his use of the verb "judge," emphasizing the irony not only of name but also of action.

A brief study of the friends of the Frankenstein family provides further evidence that names are used ironically

throughout the text. Beaufort, whose name means "from the fine or commodious fort" (Arthur, 1857: 67) "was a merchant, who, from a flourishing state, fell, through numerous mischances, into poverty" (26). Beaufort, Frankenstein reveals, "could not bear to live in poverty and oblivion" and so retreated to Lucerne, a town where he could live "unknown and in wretchedness" (26). He dies leaving his only daughter an orphan and a beggar. Justine Moritz, unjustly accused and convicted of William Frankenstein's murder, dies having confessed the crime: "I did confess; but I confessed a lie . . . Ever since I was condemned, my confessor has besieged me; he threatened and menaced, until I almost began to think I was the monster that he said I was. He threatened excommunication and hell fire in my last moments, if I continued obdurate" (64). Though innocent, "Justine was condemned," laments Frankenstein; "Justine died; she rested; and I was alive" (63, 67).

Mary Shelley's name choice for Victor Frankenstein's most intimate boyhood friend, Henry Clerval, further illuminates the irony of names throughout the text. The given name "Henry" is a Saxon derivative of both Einrich, meaning "ever rich" and Honoricus, meaning "honorable" (Arthur, 1857: 281). Mary Shelley twice amended Henry's surname, most likely following a progression first from Carignan to Clairval and then from Clairval to Clerval, finally choosing Clerval[23]. With a likely biographical allusion to Charles Clarimont (Mary Shelley's step-brother who, like Henry Clerval, had an intense interest in languages) the Clairval surname was amended to replace the "ai" with an "e," leaving Clerval (Robinson, 1996a: lix). Clerval, according to Arthur, is a variant of "Clair," derived from the Latin word "*clarus*," meaning "pure, renowned, illustrious" (96). Larousse's *Dictionnaire étymologique des noms de lieux de France* lists Clerval as a variant of Clairavaux, meaning "vallée clair," valley of light (Dauzat and Rostaing, 1963: 197, 193)[24]. Like Agatha and Safie, Henry Clerval's name seems descriptive, even mimetic,

of his personality: he nurses Victor to some semblance of stable mental health, keeps the Frankenstein family informed of Victor's recovery, and "again taught [Victor] to love the aspect of nature, and the cheerful faces of children" (52). Furthermore, the character of Clerval balances, even illuminates, that of Frankenstein. While Victor Frankenstein "investigated the facts relative to the actual world," Henry Clerval "wrote a fairy tale" (28). At the University of Ingolstadt, Victor studied natural philosophy and chemistry; Henry studied languages. Frankenstein created a "wretch—[a] miserable monster," while Clerval "invented tales of wonderful fancy and passion" (43, 52). Even Frankenstein notes the contrast, telling Walton:

> Alas, how great was the contrast between us! He was alive to every new scene; joyful when he saw the beauties of the setting sun, and more happy when he beheld it rise, and recommence a new day . . . I was occupied by gloomy thoughts, and neither saw the descent of the evening star, nor the golden sun-rise reflected in the Rhine. (114)

Interestingly, Clerval, the ever-honorable friend who nurses Victor Frankenstein back to health, doesn't accompany his best friend home for the funeral of William, choosing instead "to undertake a voyage of discovery" (45). Moreover, at the insistence of Frankenstein, Henry Clerval parts ways with his friend outside of Perth, leaving Victor to create a companion for the hideous monster. Clerval's fatal mistake is two-fold: he pursued knowledge at the expense of his friend and he withdrew the light from his friend's dark project.

Mary Shelley's ironical choice of names for members of the Frankenstein family, save Ernest, provides the most dramatic demonstration of the dangers inherent in applications. Alphonse Frankenstein "was respected by all who knew him for his integrity and indefatigable attention to public business" (26). He provides for the orphaned Caroline, eventually taking her as his wife, adopts Elizabeth, and offers

Justine a permanent position in the household. The name Alphonse, a Gothic name derived from *helpuns*, meaning "our help" (Arthur, 1857: 274), seems a good authorial choice for the man who gives his life completely to public service and then completely to family. Victor, however, blames his father for neglecting to properly discourage him from studying the writings of Agrippa: "If . . . my father had taken the pains to explain to me, that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded . . . it is even possible that the train of my ideas would never have received the fatal impulse that led to my ruin" (29-30). In the end, Alphonse Frankenstein, wearied by the losses of his wife, his son William, and his dear Elizabeth, "could not live under the horrors that were accumulated around him" and succumbed to a fatal apoplectic fit (146). Sadly, the patriarch who helped so many, the dear father who hastened to the jail cell of his son, could not help Victor understand the cruel lessons of science gone amok.

The name of the family matriarch bears a strikingly similar twist of irony. Caroline, derived from Charles and meaning "manlike, strong, and daring" (Arthur, 1857: 292), at first glance seems an appropriately mimetic name; she is described as possessing "a mind of an uncommon mould," as being a courageous girl who "contrived to earn a pittance . . . sufficient to survive" (26). For ten months, Caroline tends her father, providing for him and caring for him, as a man would normally provide for his family. In the tenth month, Beaufort dies in Caroline's arms. Devastated by her father's death, she gives herself to the "protecting spirit," of Alphonse Frankenstein, who subsequently places her under the protection of a relative and then, two years hence, takes her as his wife (27). As the wife of Alphonse, Caroline becomes the stereotypical wife and mother, "commit[ing] herself to his care" and partaking of, not directing, the family enjoyments (32). Several years later, Caroline insists on tending Elizabeth, who was recovering from scarlet fever. As Frankenstein notes, "the consequences of this imprudence were fatal" (32). Thus,

Caroline, in a moment of feminine weakness, a moment when a mother's love for her sick child overcomes any anxiety or fear for self, succumbs to death.

The cousin/foundling promised to Victor Frankenstein in marriage, Elizabeth, bears a Hebrew name meaning "the oath/promise of God" or "God hath sworn." The biblical Elizabeth, cousin of the Virgin Mary, was known for her righteousness and for giving birth, late in life, to John the Baptist (the fulfillment of God's promise)[25]. In the 1831 text, Frankenstein relates that Elizabeth was presented to him as a "promised gift" (84). Indeed, even in the 1818 text, Caroline Frankenstein "determined" that Victor and Elizabeth would become man and wife (27). Described as "gentle and affectionate," Elizabeth Lavenza exhibited a "luxuriant" imagination and "loved application" (27, 28). She also bore Victor's "secret stores of knowledge," keeping his hopes of discovering the elixir of life in strictest confidence (30). Upon Caroline's death, Elizabeth assumes the role of mother, as she "consoled" Victor, "amused her uncle," and "instructed" William and Ernest (33). Indeed, Elizabeth seems upright and righteous, even defending Justine in court. For Elizabeth, however, the promised union hangs in danger; she writes to Victor, asking "Do you . . . love another?" (138). On their wedding day, Victor tells Walton, Elizabeth was "melancholy" and "a presentiment of evil pervaded her" (142). Who but Frankenstein could have predicted that Elizabeth, "the promise of God," would be taken by the hideous monster whose prophetic message was not one of hope and redemption but one of death and destruction—"I'll be with you on your wedding night"?

The name William comes from the Germanic "Wilhelm," meaning "the shield or defense of many" (Arthur, 1857: 290). Young William, however, described as "a most beautiful little fellow" by Victor and as "a little darling" by Elizabeth, taunts the monster, screaming: "'monster! Ugly wretch! You wish to eat me, and tear me to pieces—You are an ogre—Let

me go or I will tell my papa . . . Hideous monster!'" (49,105). Little William, the shield of many, defenseless himself, is the first and most troubling victim of Frankenstein's science. He bears, too, a troubling biographical allusion, as well; Mary Shelley's son, William, was born in January 1816—just six months prior to Mary's development of the story.

Mary Shelley's poignant use of irony in the names of all but one of the members of the Frankenstein family provides a sharp contrast for a character study of Ernest. Throughout *Frankenstein,* Mary Shelley automatizes character names as ironic. Automatization, the stylistic and/or semantic conditioning and expectation employed by an author, generally acts as a set up for those parts of the text that are de-automatized or foregrounded. The expectation in the story, where name after name is ironic, is that names will be ironic. The de-automatized text, the text that begs for attention, is a character, one named Ernest. A study of how Ernest differs from other characters in the text points emphatically to a crucial feature of the story: the moral implication of unchecked technological and scientific experimentation can be monstrous, catastrophic, even evil.

Descriptively, the 1818 text of *Frankenstein* includes sixteen occurrences of the given name Ernest and an additional thirteen occurrences of derivative variations of "earnest" (3 uses of earnest; 7 uses of earnestly; and 3 of earnestness). *The Frankenstein Notebooks,* containing Mary Shelley's draft notebooks A and B, differs slightly from the 1818 text. *The Notebooks* contain nineteen occurrences of the given name "Ernest" and an additional twelve occurrences of derivative variations of "earnest" (2 uses of earnest; 7 uses of earnestly; and 3 of earnestness). "Ernest" first occurs in paragraph two on page 45 (Robinson, 1996a: 31, 37) in Part A of *The Notebooks*[26]. This first occurrence reads "Ernest the second of our family" and is canceled. The second occurrence also appears on page 45 in *The Notebooks* and reads "Ernest was five years younger than myself." Between the draft

Notebooks and the 1818 edition, this sentence was amended to read: "Ernest was six years younger than myself." There are seventeen other occurrences of "Ernest" in *The Notebooks*—twelve in Part A on pages 88, 89, 104 (appears twice), 115, 116 (appears three times), 117, 118, 145, and 148 (Robinson, 1996a: 123, 125, 155, 177, 179, 181, 183, 237, 243) and five in Part B on pages 143, 145, 159, 167, and 168 (Robinson, 1996a: 523, 527, 555, 571, 573). Between *The Notebooks* and the 1818 text, two occurrences of "Ernest" are cut, most likely for stylistic reasons[27].

Of the twelve derivative occurrences of "earnest" in *The Notebooks*, five occur in Part A on pages 3 (most likely among the missing pages of *The Notebook*), 105, 118, 123, and 128 (Robinson, 1996a: 3, 157, 183, 193, 203) and seven occur in Part B on: insert page 102, unpaginated insert immediately succeeding insert page 102, 156, 159, 164, 168, and 184 (Robinson, 1996a: 433, 435, 549, 555, 565, 573, 605). Of these occurrences, three include authorial emendations to the notebook draft itself, those on pages 573, 605 [additions to the text] and one on page 156: "I most [erne cancelled] earnestly entreat . . ." (Robinson, 1996a: 549). Between the last draft and the 1818 text, Mary Shelley apparently also added "earnest" to the adverbial phrase "had often expressed an earnest desire" placed in Volume 2, Chapter 1, paragraph 10, sentence 4: "I had been there before, but Elizabeth and Ernest never had; and both had often expressed an earnest desire to see the scenery of this place, which had been described to them as so wonderful and sublime."

Mary Shelley's minor changes to both her use of Ernest and her employment of derivatives related to his name (earnest, earnestness, and earnestly) indicate that there was little uncertainty about the understated role of Ernest/earnestness in the text. Ernest stands alone—and alive—at the end of *Frankenstein* because he violates the general pattern of other named characters in the text. Unlike Victor Frankenstein, Robert Walton, or any of a number of

others, Ernest does not ardently pursue "applications." Unlike Felix, William, or Caroline, Ernest's name is a true reflection of his character traits. Whether he farm, as Elizabeth decides he will in the 1818 text, or serve in the armed forces, as he chooses to do in the 1831 version, Ernest's future would involve little application or scientific study. The most telling passage about Ernest occurs embedded in a letter written by Elizabeth to V. Frankenstein. Elizabeth writes:

> Ernest . . . is so much improved, that you would hardly know him: he is now nearly sixteen, and has lost that sickly appearance which he had some years ago; he is grown quite robust and active.
>
> My uncle and I conversed a long time last night about what profession Ernest should follow. His constant illness when young has deprived him of the habits of application; and now he enjoys good health, he is continually in the open air, climbing the hills, or rowing on the lake. I therefore proposed that he should be a farmer . . . the most beneficial of any. (47-48)

In the 1831 text, Mary Shelley revises Elizabeth's letter as follows:

> How pleased you would be to remark the improvement of our Ernest! He is now sixteen and full of activity and spirit. He is desirous to be a true Swiss and to enter into foreign service . . . Ernest never had your powers of application. He looks upon study as an odious fetter; his time is spent in the open air, climbing the hills or rowing on the lake." (112)

In her 1831"Introduction," Mary Shelley notes that alterations to the text "are principally those of style," claiming that she "changed no portion of the story, nor introduced any new ideas or circumstances" and that any changes "are mere adjuncts to the story . . . [which] leave the core and substance of it untouched" (171). Indeed, there are notable similarities in the 1818 and 1831 versions of Elizabeth's letter to the recovering Frankenstein. In both versions, Ernest is much

improved over his previous sickliness; in both texts, he is sixteen; in both, he enjoys "climbing the hills." The differences, however, are equally notable. In the 1818 text, Elizabeth decides that Ernest should follow the profession of a farmer; in the 1831 text, Ernest chooses his own profession, that of a foreign serviceman. Mellor suggests that Ernest's profession in the 1831 text, that of "a destructive military soldier," reflects a shift away "from a constructive farmer" and reflects, perhaps, Mary Shelley's philosophical shift away from a world empowered with free will towards one governed by fate (1988: 176, 170). But perhaps Mary Shelley chose to change Ernest's profession for another reason.

As a farmer, Ernest offers no hope for a country figuratively at war within itself and against itself. As a member of the foreign service, Ernest stands as a defender and protector of the country, and therefore offers some hope of a defense against technology unbalanced with morality. By placing Ernest in the foreign service, Mary Shelley underscores the very need to defend the country—indeed, to defend mankind—from the perils of unregulated scientific exploration. Ernest, derived from "earnest" and meaning "serious," "intense," "sincere," also means "ardour in battle" (Arthur, 1857: 279), proffering a foretaste of what is to come if humanity fails to heed the warning Frankenstein so aptly puts forth to Walton: "Learn from me, if not by my precepts at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge" (39)[28]. Indeed, the importance of being Ernest in *Frankenstein* is truly a matter of survival.

An investigation of the names in *Frankenstein* opens the door to investigating naming practices in other works by Mary Shelley, as well as those practiced among the Romantics and other nineteenth century writers. Perhaps further investigation will shed light on a powerful tool, whether subliminal or conscious, of the literary artist—the art of naming within the text and how such practices illuminate meaning and characterize a period, century, or genre of writers.

Notes

1. For a general discussion of critical approaches, seen through lenses of biography and feminism, see both Mellor (1988) and Sunstein (1989). For a generalized summary of psychoanalytic criticism and applied Lacanian theory, see Franco (1998 and Eleanor Salotto (1994). For a discussion of *Frankenstein* as a family romance, see Crisman (1997); this essay provides a brief history of critical views of the family structures in the novel. For a discussion of *Frankenstein* as phantasmagoria, see Moers (1979).

2. Altered character names imply the existence of an ur-text to both Robinson (1996a) and Ketterer (1995). A study of altered character names enables each of these scholars to suggest more reliable dates for the composition and structure of *Frankenstein*. Moreover, Robinson notes that ten character names were altered in the draft, most likely for artistic purposes. In the *Notebooks,* the character name Ernest does not appear to have been altered or emended. Both references are hereafter cited in the text.

3. It is not my intention to engage in a discussion of how conscious Mary Shelley was of the ironical usage of names in *Frankenstein,* nor do I contend that she designed the novel around the ironical usage of names. Rather, I intend to demonstrate that names in the text, *de facto,* offer an entrée into an understanding of the work. An examination of names and naming in the text underscores popular interpretations of the tale, adding a layer of understanding that corroborates both bibliographical details of the text as well as theoretical interpretations. Jakobson (1987) contends that "a complex verbal design may be inherent" in a work of literature "irrespective" of the author's "apprehension and volition" (251). In applying Jakobson's theory of poetics, I propose that the particularities of naming in a literary work, including the selection, accumulation, juxtaposition, distribution, and exclusion of other possibilities "cannot be viewed as merely negligible accidentals governed by the hand of chance" (250).

4. The unnamed monster/creature is not included in the count of Frankenstein family members and friends, although he is included in the sum total of the 20 characters mentioned in the text.

5. For critical discussion of potential biographical sources for the names in *Frankenstein*, see Mellor (1988: 72-80), Sunstein (1989: 123), Ketterer (1995: 250-56, including notes), and Robinson (1996a: lvii-lx).

6. In the "Introduction" to the *Mary Shelley Reader*, Bennett notes that the novel symbolizes "a central dilemma of the early nineteenth century: how will the dawning age establish moral values and keep pace with rapidly changing technological advances and political ideologies?" (1990: 3). Hetherington concludes her allegorical study of Frankenstein, "Creator and Created," by suggesting that "Mary offered no comprehensive system through which to understand the self-regulating universe of the new science, and hence no single key with which to unlock her fiction" (1997: 33). Mellor suggests that Frankenstein offers a "penetrating literary analysis of the psychology of modern 'scientific' man, of the dangers inherent in scientific research" and that the story "so probe[s] the collective cultural psyche of the modern era that it deserves to be called a myth, on a par with the most telling stories of Greek and Norse gods and goddesses" (1988: 38).

7. This sort of knowing is best expressed by the French *connâitre* (to know deeply, to empathize, to understand) in contradistinction to *savoir* (to know through learning).

8. Salotto recognizes three narrative voices, those of "Walton, Frankenstein, and the creature." She notes that "The subject cannot present itself directly: it does so through the screen of another's voice" and that "the frame narrative thus disturbs the notion of unitary identity" (1994: 190). Basing her essay on Lacan's theory of representation of self, Salotto argues that "*Frankenstein* is concerned with the story of origins, with a myth of origins that would replay a fantasy of self-generation . . . the aim of autobiography" (191). Salotto further postulates that Mary Shelley's work "shatters" the perception that the self can be definitively identified and "engenders a dis-membered subject who discloses the fiction behind the mask of unified subjectivity" (201).

9. Near the end of Letter IV, Walton writes: "I have resolved every night, when I am not engaged, to record, as nearly as possible in his own words, what he [Frankenstein] has related during the day. If I should be engaged, I will at least make notes" (25). Frankenstein's narrative follows, and Frankenstein recounts the monster's tale. Frankenstein reports the monster's tale as though it were direct quotation: "I consented to listen [to the monster's plea for compassion]; and seating myself by the fire which my odious companion had lighted, he thus began his tale" (75-76). The monster's tale is entirely encapsulated in quotation marks, which serve at least two functional roles, both semiotic in nature: the quotations demarcate the monster's tale from Victor's, marking the

inner tale of three concentric narratives; and the marks, like Walton's letters, add a sense of credibility to an unbelievable story. Victor, not unlike Robert Walton, regulates his narrative. Just as Walton commands the narrative of the first four letters of the text, Victor Frankenstein commands the narrative throughout the text proper. In fact, Walton notes that "Frankenstein discovered that I made notes concerning his history: he asked to see them, and then himself corrected and augmented them" (155). Walton's journal entries, however, provide the final commentary in the novel. Garrett has also noted the distancing effect of the multiple frames of the story, ultimately concluding that through the concentric narratives Mary Shelley "attempted to distance herself as 'author' from her first literary child" (2000: 139-40).

10. All *Frankenstein* quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from *The Mary Shelley Reader* (1990: 11-171). This edition of *Frankenstein* includes the 1818 manuscript version of the text and both Percy Bysshe Shelley's 1817 "Preface" and Mary Shelley's 1831 "Introduction."

11. In terms of first person dominance in the first four letters that comprise the *Frankenstein* text, there is no significant difference between the 1818 text and the 1831 text. In both texts, Walton emerges as the dominant source and subject of the narrative and the number of first-person referents, I's, referring to the arctic navigator remains unchanged.

12. Many critics note the allegorical nature of the nine-month time period covering Walton's letters (which parallels the approximated nine-month time period it took Mary Shelley to write the story). In "The Library as Laboratory," Robinson discusses the metaphor of creation through the text—and the writing of the text (1996b: 50-51). Mellor suggests that Frankenstein is a myth about "what happens when a man tries to have a baby without a woman" (1988: 40).

13. Does this identification of MWS (Margaret Walton Saville) and MWS (Mary Wolstonecraft Shelley) imply that Shelley thinks of her story as a pearl, a precious commodity? If so, then Shelley also implies that her story and her ideas will be treated as Margaret is in the text, an irony substantiated by her choice to publish the novel anonymously. The narrative technique and distancing are brilliant in this regard because they enable the reader to more rationally contemplate Mary Shelley's criticism of science and society. See also Mary Lowe-Evans (1993: 29).

14. Many critics note that *Frankenstein* employs a *doppelgänger* motif. For a very brief discussion of Victor Frankenstein and other psychological doubles, see Robinson (1996a: lvii). For a detailed discussion of the critical history of the *doppelgänger* motif in *Frankenstein,* see Alexander (1997), a work that not only traces the history of critical reviews regarding the *doppelgänger* motif in *Frankenstein,* but also contextualizes the motif among other Romantic writers.

15. In the 1831 revision of *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus* [1831], ed. Maurice Hindle, (1985), Mary Shelley places the Frankenstein surname a bit "earlier" in the text, in the middle of the seventeenth paragraph of Chapter 3. Here, too, however, Mary Shelley employs an unusual way of revealing the surname. Victor describes the point at which "the words of Fate" entered his soul and sounded discord there: "So much has been done, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein . . ." (96). In the 1831 text, Frankenstein sees his soul as already severed from himself. As he tells his story to Walton, Victor is undoubtedly aware that he has already committed "psychic suicide," as Robinson terms Victor's lack of responsibility for his creature (1996a: lvii).

16. The *History of a Six Weeks Tour* contains the description of "a ruined tower, with . . . desolate windows" inland and up a tree-filled rocky cliff in Germany (62). Critical commentary citing the *History* as a source of *Frankenstein* abound. See Mellor (1988: 123) and Florescu (1996), especially chapter four, "Castle Frankenstein and the Alchemist Dippel."

17. Critical introductions to *Frankenstein* often discuss the Promethean myth as a prototype for Mary Shelley's tale. See, for example, Hindle's introductory comments (1985: 23-27). See also "Promethean Politics," the fourth chapter of Mellor's biography of Mary Shelley (1988), for an analysis of Promethean figuring among the Romantics.

18. See, for example, Hetherington, "Creator and Created," which details the allusions to the Promethean myth in "Creator and Created," an applied analysis of both the ancient Greek and Judeo-Christian creation myths in *Frankenstein.* All references to Prometheus can be found in Robert Graves (1992: 143-149).

19. Duyfhuizen notes that "The title, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus,* reflects both a known and an unknown. 'Frankenstein,' the titular character was unknown to early readers before they entered the text; indeed, his name is not even recorded in the narration—doubly displaced by the frame narration of Walton's

letters and journal. On the other hand, 'Prometheus' was a well known name from Greek and Roman mythology, prestructuring for the reader a mythic foreground to the story" (1995: 478).

20. The name Felix suggests interpretations associated with *felix culpa*, the distinctly Christian paradox of the fortunate fall, or, more literally the "happy fault." In contradistinction to the complexities of the Christian perspective of a paradise gained through mankind's sin (as exemplified in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, for example), the Romantic view of the *felix culpa*, according to Lucy Newlyn, can be simplified to signify "gain through loss" (1993: 64). Moreover, Newlyn suggests that for the Romantics, falling is, itself, a form of "liberation" (7). Applied to Felix and Safie, the allusion to the *felix culpa* provides an intriguing interpretation to the young lovers' predicament: Felix breaks the law in order, *de facto*, to gain the hand of Safie, an act that results in Safie's liberation from a tyrannical father and a descriptively suppressive society.

21. "Safie" seems an unlikely phonemic transcription of the Greek "Sophie," especially in light of the fact that Mary Shelley studied Greek, jotting more than a dozen notations in her journal between 1814 and 1815: "translate Greek," "read in the Greek grammar," and "learn Greek all morning" *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814-1844* (1987, Vol. I: 33, 41, 42, 81). Furthermore, as *The Notebooks* reveal, other name choices Mary Shelley considered for the character eventually named Safie were also distinctly Arabic. Ketterer has suggested that the series of Arabian names Amina/Maimouna/Safie are the names of three of Muhammad's twelve wives, the three who appear in *Tales of the East*, a book on Mary Shelley's reading list for 1815 (1995: 270-72).

22. The *doppelgänger* motif may be applied to Safie and the monster, as both find sanctuary in the De Lacey's cottage, both learn letters at the hand of Felix, and both "improved rapidly in the knowledge of language" (87-88).

23. Carignan has been noted as a name to the a spa town Thonon where the second-in-line- to the throne rousseauesque historical character—Charles Albert Savoy-Carignan bore the name Carignan (Robinson, 1996a: lviii).

24. See also Deirdre Coleman, who notes that "clair" "acquired currency in French revolutionary discourse, meaning openness and authenticity, as opposed to secrecy, dissimulation and intrigue" (1999: 316).

25. The biblical Elizabeth was the wife of Zechariah, a priest who belonged to the division of Abijah. Both Zechariah and

Elizabeth were upright, but they had no children because Elizabeth was barren and well advanced in age. However, the angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah, telling the priest that Elizabeth would bear a son, who was to be named John. Elizabeth gave birth to John, known as John the Baptist, the prophet who called on the Israelites to "Prepare the way of the Lord." Luke 1: 1-60 NIV

26. As Robinson notes (1996a), Mary Shelley apparently inserted several additional pages into her draft notebooks; written on different paper (and likely composed at different times), the insert pages were "occasioned by a trauma in the text" (xxxvi-xlii). None of the inserted pages contains emendations to the description of Ernest; nor do the inserted pages contain the name Ernest or any derivational usage of earnest.

27. The instances of Ernest that were cut between *The Notebook* and the 1818 edition both occur in the final full paragraph on page 116 of Part A of *The Notebooks*. As Robinson notes in footnote 1818 text:23, Mary Shelley inserts one of these back into the 1831 text (1996a: 179).

28. See the *Oxford English Dictionary* for the complete etymology of earnest, including the historical usage of earnest to mean "ardour in battle."

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