"SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE"

IN THE NOVELS OF WILLIAM GODWIN

"SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE:" A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND IMAGINATION IN THE NOVELS OF WILLIAM GODWIN

BY
CHARLES IAN ROTHERY B.A.

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
MASTER OF ARTS

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
October, 1967

MASTER OF ARTS (1967)
(ENGLISH)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
HAMILTON, Ontario.

TITLE: "Shadow and Substance": a Study of the Relationship between Philosophy and Imagination in the Novels of William Godwin.

AUTHOR: Charles Ian Rothery, B.A. (Leeds)

SUPERVISOR: Professor G. S. Vichert

NUMBER OF PAGES: 115

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

Introduction

> Sir, -- The author of Mandeville is one of the most illustrious examples of intellectual power of the present age. He has exhibited that variety and universality of talent which distinguishes him who is destined to inherit lasting renown from the posessors of temporary celebrity.[1]

When Shelley wrote thus to The Enquirer in 1817, Godwin was already sinking fast into the oblivion in which, apart from tracing his undoubted influence on most of the major Romantic poets, critics have been satisfied to leave him drowning until the past two decades or so. Even in 1958, Patrick Cruttwell was able to write:

> I suppose we have all heard of William Godwin. He exists, if he hardly lives, in that literary limbo peopled by those who were "connected with . . .," "who had influence on . . . ," who are "of historical interest." We know him as the long discredited philosopher whom Wordsworth and Shelley -- it is hard to see why -- were taken in by; we know him as the husband of the Rights of Women and the father of Frankenstein; we know him as Shelley's comic-pathetic Micawber of a father-in-law. We don't in fact know him at all.[2]

Yet, Shelley's opinion, biased as one may suspect it to have been, coming from a son-in-law and a disciple, was neither the only, nor the latest authoritative prophecy of immortality for the old philosopher. In 1825, Hazlitt asserted that, although "Mr. Godwin's person is no longer known [and] he is to all intents and purposes dead and buried; . . . the

---

[1]Shelley, The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Ingpen and Peck (London, 1929), "VI, 219".

[2]Patrick Cruttwell, "On Caleb Williams", Hudson Review XI (1958), 87.

author of Political Justice and Caleb Williams can never die, his name is an abstraction in letters, his works are standard in the history of intellect."[1]

He goes on to describe Godwin's reputation as it was in 1793, the xenith of his fame;

> No work in our time gave such a blow to the philosophical mind of the country as the celebrated Enquiry Concerning Political Justice. Tom Paine was considered for the time as Tom Fool to him; Paley an old woman; Edmund Burke a flashy sophist. Truth, moral truth, it was supposed, had here taken up its abode; and these were the oracles of thought. 'Throw aside your books of chemistry', said Wordsworth to a young man, 'and read Godwin on Necessity'.[2]

What was the cause of the 'fatal reverse' in this popularity that led to his almost total disappearance from the literary scene after The Enquirer (1797)? It seems that it lay largely in the reaction against all radical thinkers, which came around 1797, and carried along with it both poets and proletariat. "Even the starving labourer in the ale house became a champion of aristocracy". In his Thoughts Occasioned by a Perusal of Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon (1801), Godwin says of this period: --

> After having for four years heard little else than the voice of commendation, I was at length attacked from every side, and in a style which defied all moderation and decency . . . The cry spread like a general infection, and I have been told that not even a petty novel for boarding school misses now ventures to aspire to favour unless it contains some expression of dislike or abhorrence to the new philosophy.[3]

---

[1]William Hazlitt, The Spirit of the Age (London, 1964), pp. 183-4.

[2]Ibid., p. 183.

[3]William Godwin, Thoughts Occasioned By . . . Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon (London, 1801), p. 7.

From that time onwards, political prejudice rather than critical judgement effected an eclipse, not only of the offending Political Justice, but also of his novels -- two of which, Caleb Williams and St. Leon, says Hazlitt, "are two of the most splendid and impressive works of the imagination that have appeared in our time".[1] He was classed with Bage and Holcroft and dismissed to the pages of literary history, by critics who had allowed themselves to be blinkered by a Victorian disgust with his politics and with the more outrageous principles in Political Justice. A case in point is Edward Dowden, who comes to his remarks on Caleb Williams after damning the politics, warning that "Such men as Godwin, narrowed in by a doctrinaire, a contracted imagination, and the egoism of unwavering self esteem are dangerous".[2] Of the novel, he complains, "In a work so calculated, we miss the joy which comes with a sense of free imaginative growth".[3]

The implied recognition of a relationship between Caleb Williams and Political Justice, between his art and his ideology, has been the cause of much controversy and more misunderstanding throughout the history of Godwin criticism. It began with the Monthly Review of 1794 (vol. XV, September to December), which remarked that:

> Between fiction and philosophy there seems to be no natural alliance: yet philosophers, in order to obtain for their dogmata a more ready reception, have often judged it expedient to introduce them to the world in the captivating

---

[1] William Hazlitt, op. cit., p. 190.

[2] Sir Edward Dowden, The French Revolution and English Literature (London, 1897), p. 48.

[3] Ibid., p. 69.

> dress of fable. It was not to be supposed that the energetic mind of Mr. Godwin would condescend to employ itself in framing a whining love tale; which, after having drawn a few tears from the eyes of a number of tender virgins, would have reposed in eternal peace on the loaded shelves of some circulating libraries. In writing The Adventures of Caleb Williams, this philosopher had doubtless some higher object in view; and it is not difficult to perceive that his object has been to give an easy pass-port, and general circulation to some of his favourite opinions.[1]

Godwin gave this judgement the stamp of authority when, in the second edition (1795) he published a preface, intended for the first edition but withdrawn "in compliance with the alarms of booksellers". Dated May 12, 1794,[2] the preface states that "it was proposed, in the invention of the following work to comprehend as far as the progressive nature of a single story would allow, a general review of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism, by which man becomes the destroyer of man".[3] He emphasised this point with a prefatory quotation:

> Amidst the woods the leopard knows his kind;
> The tyger preys not on the tyger brood:
> Man only is the common foe of man.

In July 1795, three months before the second edition with the restored preface was published, he wrote a letter to The British Critic, anticipating

---

[1]Cited by Weekes, William Godwin as a Novelist, (Doctoral Dissertation, Toronto, 1961), Appendix 2, p. 373.

[2]Significantly the date when Thomas Hardy was arrested. He was the first of the twelve radicals who were tried for treason, and whose trial brought forth Godwin's Cursory Stricutres on the Charge Delivered by Lord Chief Justice Eyre to the Grand Jury, October 2, 1794.

[3]William Godwin, Caleb Williams, ed. George Sherburn, (New York, 1960), p. xxiii.

the preface, and 'reaffirming his doctrinal and propagandist purpose?'

> [Your Correspondent] supposes that my book was written "to throw an odium upon the laws of my country". But this is a mistake into which no attentive and clear-sighted reader could possibly fall. The object is of much greater magnitude. It is to expose the present system of civilised society; and having exposed them, to lead the enquiring reader to examine whether they are, or are not, as has commonly been supposed, irremediable; in a word, to disengage the minds of men from presupposition, and launch them upon the sea of moral and political enquiry. . . . Your correspondent comes nearer the point when he . . . states my object to be: "the laws of this country, and the mode of their execution"; or rather, as he ought to have stated, the administration of justice and equity, with its consequences, as it exists in the world at large, and in Great Britain in particular.[1]

Later, speaking of Mandeville, Shelley considers this 'propagandist' purpose as common knowledge, and as part of the value of the novel.

> If the varieties of human character, the depth and complexity of human motive, those sources of the union of strength and weakness, those useful occasions for pleading in favour of universal kindness and tolerance are just subjects for illustration and development in a work of fiction. Mandeville yields in interest and importance to none of the productions of the Author.[2]

For Shelley, the interrogative note of his critique is purely structural, but for other critics, the fourth proposition he makes is questionable

---

[1]Cited by D. G. Dumas, "Things as they were: The Original Ending of Caleb Williams", Studies in English Literature, 6 (1966), 583.

[2]Shelley, op. cit., p. 221.

indeed, particularly when 'pleading in favour of universal kindness and tolerance', includes an exposé of 'Things as they are', with what seem to be revolutionary motives.

Despite these assertions, it is clear that Godwin's novels are something more than moral fables. Sir Leslie Stephen, obviously puzzled and perhaps disturbed by his sense of the power of Caleb Williams, compares the author to "Lowell's description of an orator who tries in vain to get his subject properly laid down. He makes desperate attempts, wanders off in many directions and in his last contortion "Sees his subjick a-nosin' round arter him agin".[1] A more recent critic, Arnold Kettle, notes that the same novel ceases to be a moral fable "from the moment that the new discovery emerges . . ., the discovery that the Falkland-Williams relationship is something vital, complex, many-sided, passionate."[2] This proposition can, however, be taken too far. In a thesis at the University of Toronto in 1961, H. V. Weekes seems to ignore Godwin's own words (without really commenting upon them), in his determination to prove that his novels have really very little to do with Political Justice. "As a social philosopher," he admits, "Godwin was vitally aware of the thoughts and feelings of Eighteenth Century England, but he offered his solutions to its problems without any great concern for their popularity. As a novelist, Godwin was equally aware of his audience, but now he sought to please his readers, and if he sometimes wrote like a philosopher, it

---

[1]Sir Leslie Stephen, Studies of a Biographer, (London, 1902), "3, 149-50".

[2]Arnold Kettle, An Introduction to the English Novel, (London, 1962), "I, 58".

was incidental to his story telling purpose."[1]

It might be worthwhile to review some of the arguments which support Weekes' thesis, in order to achieve a balanced view of what Godwin's real aim could be expected to be. Ford K. Brown feels that

> His account of his planning of the book makes it perfectly clear that it was primarily a story, and not a social tract. Only the peculiarly unkind irony of Fate could cause him to be classed with Mrs. Hannah More.[2]

He mentions that Mrs. Inchbald warned Godwin about the "incidental remarks' [Weekes] of a moral and political nature that Caleb is made to say from time to time, fearing they might tend to injure the success of the book.[3] So it seems that at least some of Godwin's close circle of friends saw the work more as a story than as propaganda.

Moreover, Godwin wrote all his novels in times of severe financial crisis. As a literary hack, he had always been close to the 'bread-line', and even at the peak of his success and popularity, in 1793, he was "obliged to look around and consider to what species of industry I should next devote myself". "My agreement with Robinson," he explains, "was that he was to supply my wants while the book (Political Justice) was in the train of composition. Finally, I was very little beforehand with the world on the day of its publication."[4] In a fragment of an analysis of

---

[1]H. V. Weekes, op. cit., p. 39.

[2]F. K. Brown, The Life of William Godwin, (London, 1926), p. 87 cited by Weekes, Ibid., p. 93.

[3]Cited by Weekes, Ibid., p. 93.

[4]William Godwin, Fleetwood (London, 1832), p. vi.

his own character written about 1800, he again attributes the origin of Caleb Williams to pecuniary necessity.

> I commenced my Caleb Williams with no further design than that of a slight composition, to produce a small supply of money, but never to be acknowledged.[1]

The case was similar when he sat down to write St. Leon. After Mary's death, he was left with two young children at a time when his reputation was suffering the first violence of reaction. Woodcock describes how "he was already in debt to Wedgewood and others, and he had little immediate prospect of earning any large quantity of money". When he remarried, in 1801, he added another three children to his family, and by 1803 his wife had borne him a fourth. From then on he was fighting a losing battle against poverty which eventually placed him in the ignominious sinecure of 'Yeoman Usher of the Exchequer', in direct contravention of all he had felt and written about pensions and sinecures. It was also from this time on that he began to earn the reputation which, in the eyes of Shelley's biographers, and from thence to the literary world, has effectively vitiated his principles and his art for the past century and a half.

Nevertheless, he also says that he wrote Caleb Williams under the inspiration of that afflatus which had guided him through Political Justice; "it was the offspring of that temper of mind in which the composition of my Political Justice left me", and it affords, "no inadequate image of the fervour of my spirit".[2] St. Leon it will be remembered, was written little

---

[1]Cited by Charles Kegan Paul, William Godwin: His Friends and and Contemporaries (Boston, 1876), "I, 361".

[2]Cited in C. K. Paul, op. cit., "I, 78".

more than a year after the death of his first wife, Mary Wollstonecraft, and very shortly after his Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Women (1798), and the figure of his dead wife is central to the plot and the ideology of that novel. In fact, both of these novels are so clearly the 'offspring', of his spiritual situation at the time they were written, that however much he was driven to compose by the need for money, such a need could hardly have dissipated its effect, to the extent of encouraging him to write what would sell rather than what he felt should be said.

He was, however, aware that a novel is not simply a moral fable, and in an essay "Of Choice of Reading" in The Enquirer (1797) he speaks slightingly of:

> Authors who have no other characteristic but that of the torpedo, and the principal tendency of whose literature is to drive all literature out of the world.[1]

Earlier on in the same essay he speaks of the difficulties of authors who would be 'moral':

> If the moral be invented first, the author did not know where the brilliant lights of his story would fall, nor of consequence where its principal power of attraction would be found. If it be extracted afterwards he is often taken at a disadvantage, and must extricate himself as he can.[2]

Such a firm reminder of the dangers of the 'Intentional fallacy', from an author who seems to make his intention so clear, is very appropriate.

---

[1] William Godwin, The Enquirer (London, 1797), reprinted in 'Reprints of Economic Classics' (New York, 1965), p. 139.

[2] Ibid., p. 134.

Since Caleb Williams was written three years before this essay, it is, perhaps, reasonable to conjecture that Godwin was aware of this problem as it manifests itself in that novel. What the author says about his book, he affirms, is of no importance, it is the 'tendency'[1] rather than the moral which is important, and that "cannot be completely ascertained but by experiment."[2]

It is this 'tendency' that I want to examine. I have taken my title from Shelley's Defence of Poetry, where he tries to define the distinction between Reason and Imagination. He sees them as essential parts of each other:

> Reason is the enumeration of quantities already known; imagination is the perception of the value of those quantities, both separately and as a whole. Reason respects the differences, and imagination the similitudes of things. Reason is to the imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance.[3]

How much of 'shadow' and how much of 'substance' is there in Godwin's novels? Is Reason the instrument, or is it the be-all and end-all of his art? By answering these questions, I hope to be able to come to a clearer view of just how much he is a novelist, and thus test the predictions of Shelley and Hazlitt against a just appreciation of this art.

---

[1]He defines tendency as "the actual effect [a novel] is calculated to produce upon the reader" Ibid., p. 136.

[2]Loc. cit.

[3]Shelley "A Defence of Poetry", Peacock's Four Ages of Poetry etc. (Oxford, 1921), p. 23.

CHAPTER II

Art and Ideology

> Abstractions and generalities are subjects of our moral reasonings: while we contemplate them, we are conscious of a certain elevation, that is flattering to the mind of man: but it is only through the imagination, and when we apply our reflections to an individual, when the subject upon which our thoughts are occupied comes before us clothed in flesh and blood, and presents a set of features and a sensible reality, that our passions are roused through every fibre of the heart.[1]

Godwin did not write in an age which was eminently successful in the task of clothing ideas with flesh, blood and passions, although it was a task which many attempted, Holcroft, Bage, Hannah More and Mary Wollstonecraft among them. However, despite the fact that his ideology represented the quintessence of abstraction, his portrayal of character, if not of flesh and blood, was more successful than most, because he had a great respect for the individual and a great interest in his psychological development. Dowden notes that in Political Justice "the reigning personage . . . is the revolutionary abstraction Man",[2] but any reading of Godwin's novels must convince the reader that this analysis is not true of those. His conception of the individual is not only psychologically acute, it is also romantic. The man of common sense has been

---

[1] William Godwin, Mandeville (Edinburgh, 1817), "II, 45-6".

[2] Sir Edward Dowden, op. cit., p. 64.

replaced by the flawed hero -- Falkland and St. Leon become archetypes of Manfred, Melmoth and Schedoni.

Although the great principle of Political Justice is that "sound reasoning and truth, when adequately communicated, must always be victorious over error",[1] Godwin was not so much an idealist that he did not see the necessity for active participation in the task of persuasion. The extent to which the truth will prevail is dependent upon 'adequate communication', the responsibility of which he rests squarely upon the shoulders of those liberal and enlightened 'men of study and reflection', to whom Political Justice is addressed. They were to prepare the way for the progress of perfectibility by remoulding the climate of opinion, since, without such preparation, "the most dreadful tragedies will infallibly result". He clearly sees himself as one of these remoulders of public opinion, and he does not doubt the utility of his own work as a writer; it was in helping to prepare for this change, putting his talents to the most beneficial use. Thus, in the preface to Caleb Williams, he explains that the novel is designed "to communicate to persons whom books of philosophy and science are never likely to reach . . . (the truth) now known to philosophers, that the spirit and character of government intrudes itself into every rank of society".[2] He had already expressed the hope that Political Justice was a work "from the perusal of which, no man should rise without being strengthened in habits of sincerity,

---

[1] William Godwin, Political Justice, ed. Priestley (Toronto, 1946), "I, 86".

[2] Caleb Williams, p. xxiii.

fortitude and justice",[1] and at the end of his life, in Thoughts on Man, he was to speak of his "vocation as a missionary of truth" -- 'a conviction that had infused all the varied work that he had accomplished'.[2]

Thus as a missionary of the abstract truth of Political Justice, and a novelist with a Romantic conception of character, a tension is generated in his novels, the recognition of which goes a long way towards explaining the peculiar power of such novels as Caleb Williams and Mandeville.

His concern with the individual is as important in Political Justice as it is in his novels, because he sees man as separate from society although influenced by it, and his enquiry is into the motives and the effects of this influence. Society should exist, he says, only to promote the happiness of individual men. It is:

> An ideal existence, and not, on its own account, entitled to the smallest regard. The wealth, prosperity and glory of the whole are unintelligible chimeras. Set no value on anything, but in proportion as you are convinced of its tendency to make individual men happy and virtuous.[3]

The movement from ideal to individual exhibited in this quotation from Political Justice, is more clearly applied to the novel in the passage in Fleetwood where McNeil tries to make his position

---

[1] Political Justice, "I, vii".

[2] Cited by Burton R. Pollin, Education and Enlightenment on the Works of William Godwin (New York, 1962), p. 158.

[3] Political Justice, "II, 145".

clearer by an illustration, that is, by imagining a certain person in a certain situation:

> "I have sometimes had the thought" continued Mr. McNeil, "of composing a little novel or tale in illustration of my position. I would take such a man, as my friend Fleetwood, for example, who looks with a disdainful eye upon his species, and has scarcely the patience to enter into discourse and inter-course with anyone he meets: I would put him on board a ship; he will of course be sufficiently disgusted with every one of his companions: all of a sudden I would raise a most furious tempest: I would cause him to be ship-wrecked on a desert island, with no companion but one man, the most gross, perverse and stupid of the crew: all the rest: -- the captain who, though sagacious, was positive, the surgeon who, though skilful, was tiresome by his pedantry -- I would without mercy send to the bottom. What do you think I would represent as the natural result of this situation! My fastidious misanthrope would no longer have a world or a nation, from which to choose his companions, and after trying all, to reject all: he would be wholly deprived of the power of choice. Here, sir, I would show how by degrees he would find a thousand resources in this despised sailor. He would find him active, spirited and alert. Where before he believed without examination, that all was stupefaction, he would find by a variety of tokens good sense and sagacity. How these two companions would love one another! How they would occasionally spend their live-long night in delightful chat! How they would study each other's virtues and attainments -- even each other's foibles! With what daring and super-human courage would they defend each other from danger! -- And do not be perverse enough to believe that all this anxiety would be the fruit of selfishness! They would have discovered in each other inestimable qualities, a large stock of sound judgement and excellent sense, and an inexhaustible fund of kind and benevolent propensities. After some years, I would bring my misanthrope to England. Sir, he would never be able to part with his companion on the desert island. He would believe that there was not a creature in the world, take

> him for all in all, so valuable. Yet observe, he would only entertain this opinion of him, because he knew him more thoroughly than any of the rest of his species! I took my sailor merely as a specimen of human nature in one of its most unfavourable forms.[1]

I have quoted this passage at such length because it illustrates another point I want to make in connection with Godwin's concern for the individual. Taine, in volume I of his Origins of Contemporary France finds two elements in the 'revolutionary spirit': the classical reductio ad abstraction, and the 'progress of natural and experimental science with an application to the study of human society'.[2] In McNeil's plan for his novel, this 'application of science to the study of human society', is very much in evidence. His misanthrope is carefully placed in a situation from which certain reactions can be expected to take place. This is Godwin's technique too, although he is much more sophisticated.

The method is defined in the introduction to Fleetwood, where he talks of "exploring the entrails of mind and motive" with a "metaphysical dissecting knife".[3] It has something in it of those experiments in education popularised by Rousseau, which were carried on by people like Thomas Day. He, for example, had cultivated rough and unsophisticated manners in himself, and taken two orphan girls, intending to educate them according to the precepts of Émile and then

---

[1] Fleetwood, pp. 197-8.

[2] Vide Dowden, op. cit., chapter I.

[3] Fleetwood, pp. xi-xii.

choose the most perfect one as a wife. (The choice was, however, unfortunately taken out of his hands when one of them kicked his shins in an argument and left home. The second proved more tractable, but Day was disappointed in her reaction to one of his tests: this involved shooting at her skirts with a blunderbuss, in order to discover whether she was subject to any fashionable diseases, such as the 'vapours'. She proved to be only too subject to this form of hysterics, and so, after bringing her round, he learned to dance and looked elsewhere for a bride.)

Such a technique involves a close study of the character of the individual who is to be experimented upon, and is probably seen at its most intense in Mandeville. Not until Dostoevsky was there to be another exploration of insanity and its causes, as powerful as this by Godwin. It is also, however, a very gloomy book, and the gloom was attacked with varying degrees of severity when it was first published. Peacock called it "the morbid anatomy of black bile", and he went on to attack the theory behind the creation of such a character in these terms:

> If I were to take all the mean and sordid qualities of a money-dealing jew, and tack on to them, as with a nail, the quality of extreme benevolence, I should have a very decent hero for a modern novel; and should contribute my quota to the fashionable method of administering a mass of vice under a very thin veneer of virtue, like a spider wrapped in a bit of gold leaf, and administered as a wholesome pill.[1]

Clever as this criticism is, it is not true of Mandeville. The technique of slowly discovering "the involutions of mind and motive" is

---

[1]Thomas Love Peacock, Nightmare Abbey (London, 1961), p. 222.

carried almost as far as it will go here, so that the emphasis of the novel's 'intellectual tendency' is placed, not on ameliorating the hero's character, (the very name Man-deville, suggests possession, as Peacock himself points out) but on accounting for it by uncovering the accidents of environment and education that have gone towards warping it. An examination of this process in Mandeville shows quite clearly why Godwin felt education to be so important: his theory of environmentalism is applied very carefully to the novel.

The first period of Mandeville's life was spent in the turmoil of revolutionary Ireland. He sees his parents massacred, and is only just rescued himself, by his Catholic nurse, who risks her life to take him to safety. At length she meets Hilkiah Bradford, a narrow Presbyterian minister, who, horrified that a protestant child should be entrusted to a Catholic nurse, dismisses her and takes over the rôle of the child's protector. So, amidst heart-break and bigotry, he is removed from Ireland, and from the affection that Godwin recognised as early as St. Leon, to be important to the growth of a healthy mind:

> [His nurse] had congratulated herself on her success, when she had escaped from the lines of the rebel Irish, into a town that was at this moment filled with English, fugitives and others. But she found herself further from the purpose of her affectionate heart here than before . . . was it to be endured that she, who had nursed and fed me from her own breast from the hour of my birth, and who had just brought me hither unhurt through a thousand hair-breadth escapes, should now be thrust out from me with contumely, as one whose touch henceforth would be contamination and pestilence to me? . . . [However] Bigotry was lord paramount on every side, and strode along triumphant, unhearing and cased in triple adamant, over the ruins of every feeling of the heart.[1]

---

[1] Mandeville, "I, 40-42".

Yet the study of the young Mandeville's environment does not begin here; it is taken still further back, to the relations between his tyrannical grandfather, and his uncle Audley. Commodore Mandeville felt that he had "an absolute and uncontrolable power" over his children, and he exercised this power to prevent Audley, for class reasons, from marrying Amelia, with whom he was deeply in love. "Do you not know, that the marriage of the heir is the most considerable event that can happen in a family like ours?" He asks his son,

> Have you never heard, that the king is always consulted upon it, and that, if you were left without a father, he would be your guardian, and could give you in marriage to whomever he pleased, without your having the smallest voice in the matter? The power that would be vested in him, if you were an orphan, while I live, is fully in me. Do you think, because I take but little notice of you, and judge it a misfortune to my race that I should have such a son, that I will allow you to run your own course, and be the ruin of our house to the latest posterity?[1]

This, of course, is an example of the direct interference of government in the affairs of the private man. The effect that it has upon Audley is to make him a melancholy hermit, imprisoning himself in the walls of his gloomy castle, and renouncing society and happiness. Since it thus modifies the environment in which his nephew is to live, the interference has an indirect effect on his education because:

> The actions and dispositions of mankind are the offspring of circumstances and events, and not of any original determination that they bring into the world.[2]

---

[1] Mandeville, "I, 65".

[2] Political Justice, "I, 326".

The poisonous effect of this interference illustrates one of the main principles of Political Justice, that

> As long as parents and teachers in general shall fall under the established rule, it is clear that politics and modes of government will educate and infect us all. They poison our minds, before we can resist or so much as suspect, their malignity . . . So false is the opinion that has too generally prevailed, that politics is an affair with which ordinary men have little concern.[1]

Mandeville is educated under the patronage of his uncle in the gloomy atmosphere that his uncle's melancholy requires should pervade his home. Its physical situation adds to the gloom; a castle in the process of decay, surrounded on three sides by the sea whose rhythm weaves itself into the monotonous rhythm of the life which his uncle pursues -- or rather, in which he stagnates. On the fourth side is a marsh, sending up 'an endless succession of vapours, I had almost said steams, whose effect holds unmitigated war with healthful animal life", whilst on the other sides, "the tide threw up vast quantities of sargassos and weeds, the corruption of which was supposed to contribute eminently to the same effect".[2]

Added to these disadvantages, his education is left in the hands of the bigoted Hilkiah Bradford, who instills in him a rigid system of religious prejudice. The mainspring of Hilkiah's theology was a belief that the Pope was Anti-Christ, -- and since Mandeville had been orphaned by Catholic Irish in a rebellion that was basically religious in motive, he was quite prepared to believe what his tutor wished to tell him.

---

[1] Political Justice, "I, 49-50".

[2] Mandeville, "I, 49-50".

This anti-catholicism enables Godwin to use some of the arguments against the catholics that he himself had learned whilst training for the ministry, but this only serves as a reminder of the author's skill in submerging his own personality, and writing 'in character'. His main purpose is not religious, although it contains a strong element which is anti-religious, but the sometimes fine rhetoric he achieves in these denuciations serves simply to delineate the atmosphere of bigotry in which Mandeville was educated, in order better to explain his subsequent madness.

Hilkiah was subject to the worst kinds of religious supersition, and at one point Mandeville says, "We were not without some apprehension, that . . . his wits would have been unsettled, and that he would have been rendered a qualified candidate for the cells of Bedlam".[1] This was bound to have an unfortunate effect upon his pupil, especially since, as Godwin notes in Political Justice, "Children are a sort of raw material put into our hands, a ductile and yielding substance".[2] He was encouraged to read books of superstition, such as Fox's Acts and Monuments of the Church, in which:

> The representation of all imaginable cruelties, racks, pincers and red-hot irons, cruel mockings and scourgings, flaying alive, with every other tormenting method of destruction, combined with my deep conviction that the beings thus treated, were God's peculiar favourites, the ornaments of the earth, the boast and miracle of our mortal nature, men 'of whom the world was not worthy', -- produced a strange confusion and horror in my modes of thinking, that kept me awake whole

---

[1] Mandeville, "I, 135".

[2] Political Justice, "I, 47.

> nights, that drove the colour from my cheeks, and made me wander like a meagre and well-laid ghost to the wonder and alarm of the peaceable and well-disposed inhabitants of my uncle's house.[1]

Hilkiah's religious bigotry is well suited to his pupil's warped and uncultivated mind, but Mandeville cannot accept his religious humility. When he is lectured upon his pride, and told that, 'in the sight of God', he is equal with a beggar, then his soul rebels, for such doctrines are 'hard to flesh and blood'. Moreover, he can never find out what exactly his tutor expects of him:

> he commented with great rigour upon my supposed defects in this nature; and what is worse, in a style so general and loose, as conveyed no distinct ideas to my mind. If my preceptor had so designated my faults, that I could have had a clear apprehension where the error lay, I have that conviction in my own candour, particularly at this early stage of human life, as to be persuaded that I should have ingenuously and sedulously applied myself to the remedy . . . . [Thus] If I desired to correct myself in conformity to his admonitions, I knew not where to begin. I understood that it was querulous and severe, but that was all. . . . I regarded my tutor as censorious and cynical; I believed him to be unreasonable and unjust.[2]

He is, therefore, all the less willing to do the menial tasks that Hilkiah feels are necessary to a full education. Echoing Political Justice, Mandeville comments on this period, that "there cannot be a particle of good moral sense implanted by what is done under the bare influence of authority".[3]

---

[1] Mandeville, "I, 136".

[2] Ibid., pp. 146-7.

[3] Vide Political Justice "I, 319".

When he goes to Winchester, sullen, solitary and proud, he finds himself eclipsed by Clifford, and finally ostracised by the whole community because his cynical detachment from Clifford's idealistic panegyric on the beauties of poverty is misunderstood. He is accused of being purse-proud. Various other buffets to his reputation occur at school, at Oxford and in his attempts to join the Cavalier cause, and each of them seem to involve, although innocently, this same Clifford. He becomes obsessed with an unreasoning hatred of his eternally successful rival, until, for philanthropic reasons which are grudgingly acknowledged, Clifford turns Catholic. Then all the old wounds of his education come to the surface, and with a masterful touch of irony on Godwin's part, Mandeville thanks God that he can now hate his imagined foe with a clear conscience and good cause. Finally, he allows himself to fall into the hands of unscrupulous lawyers, who, fostering his delusions for their own ends, push him over the brink into madness.

With Fleetwood, the case is rather similar. As a child he is brought up in wild scenery without the affection of a mother or the ameliorating influence of a family group, which, after Caleb Williams, becomes an important factor in Godwin's conception of the ideal education.[1] In accordance with Godwin's environmentalism, the Welsh scenery; the mountains and precipices, the roaring of the ocean and the dashing of the waterfalls, says Fleetwood, "gave a wildness to my ideas, and an uncommon seriousness to my temper" which, unrestrained

---

[1] Vide Pollin, op. cit., p. 246.

by domestic intercourse, leads him to excessible subjectivity and egotism. It is true that his father "did not require I should render myself subservient to the habits of my elders",[1] and his tutor "did not shackle my mind with complex and unintelligible creeds" as Hilkiah had done to the mind of Mandeville, "nor did he exhibit that monastic coldness and squareness of character which is too frequently the result of clerical celibacy".[2] This is ideal as far as Godwin's educational theories extend; in his Account of the Seminary that will be opened . . . at Epsom in Surrey, (1783), he claimed that:

> In those nations of antiquity, most celebrated for fortitude and heroism, their youth had never their haughty and unsubmitting necks bowed to the inglorious yoke of a pedagogue.[3]

However, in Fleetwood's case, there was this 'peculiarity';

> Though I learned from my preceptor everything valuable that he was able to teach, I never looked up to him. His foibles were obvious and did not escape my observation. The understanding of my father was incomparably greater than this inmate of our family; nor did my father always refrain from ridiculing in his absence, and even sometimes alluding in a passing sarcasm in his presence to my tutor's weakness. I secretly despised the good gentleman's sonnets and odes, and listened with an unattending ear to his mythological mysteries. I never dreamed for a moment that it would be less than sacrilege to measure his understanding with mine.[4]

---

[1] Fleetwood, pp. 1-2.

[2] Ibid., p. 5.

[3] William Godwin, Four Early Pamphlets, introd. B. R. Pollin. (Gainesville, 1966), p. 173.

[4] Fleetwood, p. 7.

This unfortunately nullifies the good effects of his tutor's tolerance, because "the reverence which is due from a child to his senior in age and experience falls under the same rules as have already been delivered. Wherever I have good reason to believe that another person knows better than myself what is proper to be done, there I ought to conform to his direction. But the advantage he possesses must be obvious, otherwise I shall not be justified in proceeding".[1] The tutor's lesser understanding only serves to confirm and exaggerate Fleetwood's egotism.

It is in Cloudesley where the education which most approximates to Godwin's ideal is delineated. Julian is brought up in a happy family atmosphere with his 'father' constantly attentive to his education. The family moves from Austria to Lombardy because Cloudesley believes that the climate there would be of "incalculable advantage to a child between his fourth and tenth year". In Lombardy "his blood would flow cheerily and his spirits would be for ever gay and airy . . . Thus would he be led to the idea that existence itself was a joy".[2] Then, when he is old enough to be able to appreciate art and letters, they move to Florence, where he is put to school at the Liceo Fiorentino. This choice is justified in a long historical outline of the province under the Medici, which concludes on an admiring description of the work of the Princess Violante, whose brilliant 'conversazione' had made Florence the most cultured of European capitals.

Whilst in Lombardy, he had been instructed by a student who became more a friend than a tutor. In accordance with Godwin's ideas

---

[1] Political Justice, "I, 336".

[2] William Godwin, Cloudesley (London, 1830), "II, 94".

in the Account of the Seminary etc., he was taught latin at a comparatively early age, "but all this without formality. The inflections of nouns and verbs were treated as a sort of game".[1]

Once, however, this tutor unjustly accused Julian of 'saying the thing that is not', and Cloudesley immediately resolved to dismiss him. It is here that what is the flaw in so ideal an education becomes apparent. Cloudesley had been influenced by the outmoded notion that Julian was 'out of his proper place', and he had surrounded him with "a sort of atmosphere of prerogative which no vulgarity and rudeness must be allowed to touch".[2] This 'molly-coddling' proves fatal when Julian is faced with the rough, unloving Borromeo, who is not used to being anything but severe. The youth rebels against this severity, and runs away to join his friends in the mountains; he does not realise that they are bandits, and thinks that they are simply "noblemen attached to the pastoral life". However, when, after more adventures, he is eventually restored to his fortune, then his education proves to be in the highest degree useful.

Godwin is clearly not concerned with creating ideal figures in ideal situations. The divergence between his educational theory and his artistic practice is due, not to different aims in each field, but to a firm concern with 'things as they are'. He writes to expose the system rather than to create a utopia. His hero's errors of

---

[1] Cloudesley, "II, 168".

[2] Ibid., p. 94.

judgement are all explained and linked to the state of society. In Deloraine, for example, the fact that Traver's father failed to free the negro slaves is not the result of his misplaced idealism, (his project is not inconsistent with the true interests of the proprietors), but that he is opposed from sheer prejudice and inertia by 'man as he is'. Even the negroes themselves are encouraged to blame him for their bad conditions and eventually to hate him. The same is true of St. Leon in Hungary. Godwin's view of man was affected, as were the views of most of his contemporaries, by the French Revolution. He admits as much in the preface to Political Justice, and in any case, there is sufficient evidence throughout his writing that he has no ideal conception of essential virtue in man as he is. It is with man's potentialities that he is mainly concerned and Godwin sees that he can excite man towards fulfilling these potentialities only by freeing him from the depressing stasis of the present. This process will not be achieved by portraying him in idealistic terms, these are not true to his experience, and cannot therefore be taken seriously; it can only be achieved by showing him to himself through what Jean-Paul Sartre calls "perspectives of change".

> Man's error lies, (says Godwin), not in tolerating the worst forms of government for a time, but in supposing a change impracticable and not incessantly looking forward to its accomplishment.[1]

He therefore visualises a society, not changed, but in the process of change, so that his readers might be encouraged to look forward to the

---

[1] Political Justice, "I, 104".

accomplishment of change in their own society.

This may well seem odd at first, especially considering that all the major characters except Fleetwood end in misery. Caleb Williams finds that he is only truly miserable when he has succeeded in establishing his accusation against Falkland. Mandeville and Deloraine end up with the mark of Cain physically or spiritually inscribed upon them; Earl Danvers (Lord Alton) dies, having lost all his family before him, and his much-prized reputation is destroyed in his death. Perhaps St. Leon's case is the most terrible, condemned as he is, to walk the world eternally alienated and miserable. However, apart from Caleb Williams, which will be considered later, the next generation is always on the horizon at these harrowing conclusions, and in Charles, Julian, Catherine, or Clifford and Henrietta, the process of amelioration is 'enacted'. St. Leon, for example, concludes on this optimistic note:

> I am not blinded by paternal partiality -- but no! he was indeed what I thought him, as near the climax of dignity and virtue as the frailty of our nature will admit . . . I am happy to close my eventful and somewhat melancholy story with so pleasing a termination. Whatever may have been the result of my personal experience of human life, I can never recollect the praise of Charles and Pandora without confessing with exultation, that this busy and anxious world of our yet contains something in its stores that is worth living for.[1]

P. N. Furbank[2] places Godwin's novels in the genre of the confessional novel, and it is easy to see why. All the major novels are

---

[1] William Godwin, St. Leon (London, 1831), p. 478.

[2] P. N. Furbank, "Godwin's Novels", Essays in Criticism, V (1955), 214-28.

seen as expiatory by their supposed writers, although, in Cloudesley, this is complicated by the introduction of a narrator. However, it is still basically Lord Alton's story told in his own words. Their stories are meditations on their mistakes, whose folly is enhanced by considering them in the light of reason. Persuaded of their folly, they all (except Mandeville, who is insane) regret it, in accordance with Godwin's faith in the power of Truth, and his belief that "It is characteristic of the mind of man to be capable of improvement".[1] Thus, not only societies, but individuals also, are seen in 'perspectives of change'.

The individual develops through the novel towards the recognition of his error, it is not an imposed recognition. This has to be so in order to render their repentance and regret sufficiently convincing. Godwin, therefore, does not only trace 'the involutions of mind and motive' in particular actions, he also traces the consequences that spring therefrom. It is these consequences that affect the views of his heroes, and develop their characters -- not the application of an external doctrine. This is not true in all cases; the rapid conversion from misanthropy to benevolence of Borromeo in Cloudesley, for example, seems to be conditioned by Godwin's desire for a suitable and sentimental ending. It is however true in most cases, and those the most important ones, and it usually involves a tragic sense of waste, since because the recognition of error is post facto, it comes after the point of no return.

---

[1] Political Justice, "II, 299".

Caleb Williams is a particularly interesting case in point, especially since the point of recognition comes at the end of the novel. It begins with the "faint idea that posterity may by this means be induced to render me a justice, which my contemporaries refuse",[1] But ends on a very different note, as Weekes points out:

> I began these memoirs with the idea of vindicating my character. I have now, no character that I wish to vindicate.[2]

Originally the beginning would have received dramatic and shocking emphasis by the deleted ending which carries the persecuted Williams into madness, and ends in a world of chaos and unreason. With the revised ending, however, Caleb finds justice, but recognises his responsibilities towards, and his emotional ties with, the defeated Falkland. So strong are these ties that his retaliation proves essentially self-defeating. The progress of the novel was one of discovery for Caleb, not as he thought, of justification and the fact that the original ending was deleted suggests that it was also a process of discovery for Godwin.

This is the general pattern for all his novels in fact, and it probably explains why he found it most convenient to write in the first person. By adopting this technique, moreover, not only does he escape more easily the charge that he is manipulating his characters, he also escapes the temptation to do so. There are, of course, other reasons: it suits his principles of absolute personal freedom, that there should be no suggestion of the puppet master in his novels. Moreover, the hero seems to speak directly to his reader with frankness and feeling

---

[1] Caleb Williams, p. 3.

[2] Ibid., p. 378.

that makes his message all the more effective.

Throughout Political Justice and throughout his novels, Godwin insists upon this sort of candour and sincerity. Confession is one way to achieve it:

> It has been justly observed, that the popish practice of confession is attended with some salutary effects. How much better would it be, if instead of an institution thus equivocal, and which had been made so dangerous an instrument of ecclesiastical despotism, every man were to make the world his confessional, and the human species the keeper of his conscience.[1]

This is exactly what Godwin's heroes do; they make the world their confessional. It is through the practice of honesty that the future of mankind will be assured. "The improvement of mankind", he asserts, "rests upon nothing so essentially, as upon the habitual practice of candour, frankness and sincerity".[2]

This air of enquiry developing into exposé which pervades all his novels, flows directly from a typically Augustan sentiment: abhorrence of hypocrisy and secrecy. These vices undermine society and virtue, opening the way to private misery and public chaos. This is made quite clear, while it is treated with ironic humour, in his early pamphlet -- Advice to A Young Statesman, where he sees the machinations of 'secret advisers' overturning the whole democratic system:

> Responsibility in a republican government is carried as high as possible. In a limited monarchy it stops at the first ministers, the immediate servants of the crown. Now to this system nothing can be more fatal, than for the

---

[1] Political Justice, "I, 328".

[2] Ibid., p. 204.

> public measures not really to originate with administration, but with secret advisers who cannot be traced. This is to cut all the nerves of government, to loosen all the springs of liberty, to make the constitution totter to its lowest foundations.[1]

The sentiment also finds expression in Godwin's treatment of disguises. The mask has always been a symbol of hypocrisy and in both Caleb Williams and Deloraine, the necessity for the central character to disguise himself is lamented in no uncertain terms, although both Williams and Deloraine are adepts at this art. Nevertheless they both dispense with the necessity as soon as possible. Deloraine is even prepared to give himself up to the cold machinery of the law, rather than submit any further to this dishonesty. It is, he says, against all principles of social behaviour, and if generally practised, would lead to anarchy and barbarism:

> The system of the world is such, that, amidst the thousands of millions of creatures that inhabit this globe of earth, each one is individualised by his features, his figure, his voice and a multitude of almost unassignable particulars, so that he is at once identified by the most superficial observer. . . . Were it not for this, what would become of the moral and civil government of mankind? . . . We are members of a community, and can scarcely be said, anyone of us, to have a rational existence independent of our fellows. . . . Who can tell how few are those individuals who would be withheld from invading the property of others, infringing their freedom, or breaking into the chamber of their lives, were not the rest of mankind set as it were, as a watch upon their actions, and did not severely retaliate, by legal proceedings or otherwise, upon the aberrations of the transgressor? . . . Few men have the power,

---

[1] Four Early Pamphlets, p. 88.

> of imposing upon their fellows by the obliteration of their identity . . . A man must be held under the terror of an alternative no less awful than that of life and death, before he can prevail upon himself for a continuance thus to divest himself of nature and become the creature of art.[1]

In Imogen, Roderic the magician disguises himself as Edwin, Imogen's lover, and attempts to seduce the girl. The attempt is unsuccessful, but its implications are wide. It tends to alienate virtue so that it is in danger of turning in upon itself instead of flowing outwards to infuse the moral world of the pastoral utopia. Thus the very utopia itself is in danger of collapsing because the external world is a reflection of the inner, and it can only remain innocent while individuals can trust each other as much as they can trust themselves.

> Oh, how wretched you have made me! [complains Imogen] How you have shaken all my most rooted opinions in the residence of virtue among mankind! Am I alone, unspotted in her cause? How forlorn and solitary do I seem to myself![2]

The end of all morality, Godwin insists, is happiness for the individual man, and disguise destroys that happiness as much as it threatens society. Perhaps the personal misery it brings is best seen in St. Leon, where the very nature of the hero's secret entails hypocrisy upon him like a curse. The evolution of his benevolent intentions is seriously hampered by the obscurity of his source of wealth, which eventually causes his imprisonment in the inquisition

---

[1]William Godwin, Deloraine (London, 1833), "III, 215-7".

[2]William Godwin, Imogen, intro. Marken (New York, 1963), p. 89.

and the twelve year stagnation of his benevolent intentions. Much worse, however, the secret which thus alienates him from mankind, alienates him from his family, because he cannot tell his secret even to his wife and son. Like Blake's 'invisible worm', it destroys the intimacy their love has built up, and with that, the life of Marguerite (his wife). There is, perhaps, no more moving passage in all Godwin's novels than that where, confronted but unrecognised by his son after years of separation, he recognises that he has lost all identity and innocence:

> I was all a lie; I was no youth; I was no man; I was no member of my species. The past and the future were equally a burthen to my thoughts. To the eye that saw me, I was a youth, flushed with hope, and panting for existence. In my soul I knew, and I only knew, that I was a warn out veteran, battered with the storms of life, having tried everything and rejected everything, and discarded for ever by joy and hope.[1]

The secret, that which cannot be communicated to one's fellow men, is the source of much of the misery that besets Godwin's heroes. Falkland's secret, which when discovered by Caleb, becomes his secret also, is the direct cause of the orgy of self-destruction that follows the discovery. Fleetwood's wife keeps the affair between Kenrick and Louisa a secret from her husband, and thus precipitates the catastrophe of that novel by throwing his jealous suspicions upon herself. The secret guilt which Lord Alton's treachery entails upon himself has a mysterious and destructive effect upon his family, whilst it brings to him

---

[1] *St. Leon*, p. 448.

a torturing complex which eventually destroys him.

In the cases of Caleb, St. Leon, and Fleetwood's wife, the 'secret' results from a promise made to others. Godwin makes it quite clear in Political Justice, that the 'promise' is, more often than not, pernicious, since it removes the freedom of the individual and thus involves grave moral danger, and this proves true in all these cases. Cloudesley has been trapped into a similar position by Lord Alton, and even though his conscience eventually revolts from the betrayal of his patron, and his beloved ward, that the compact involves, his own moral position is deeply undermined and he finds himself reduced to exhortation instead of action.

The pattern is repeated in the story of Ruffigny in Fleetwood. As a child, his uncle had left him in Lyons with the intention of disinheriting him, and he had impressed upon him the importance of concealing his identity, threatening him with 'the most terrible misfortunes' if he were ever to reveal his true name. Ruffigny acknowledges that "these phrases . . . excited in me a mysterious sensation of reverence and awe",[1] which was enhanced when, on two occasions where he was on the point of discovering his secret, things happened which seemed supernatural, to interfere in his conversation. Once he had fallen and sprained his ankle, and the other time he had been interrupted by a clap of thunder. "I felt", he said, "like one of those unhappy beings we read of in books of supernatural adventures, who are

---

[1] Fleetwood, p. 88.

placed in the hands of some powerful genius, invisible to mortal sight, who dare not move lest they should meet with his hand, nor speak lest they should offend an unknown and never absent auditor."[1] Considering that this impression of tyranny was imposed upon the child in order to deprive him of his just rights, it becomes evident exactly why Godwin condemns the promise so vehemently. It is an offence against reason and justice.

Godwin's hero is a man enslaved. He is enslaved, not directly, but by his own passions and opinions. Falkland and St. Leon are enslaved by their love of chivalry, Lord Alton and Mr. Scarborough (in Fleetwood) by reputation, Deloraine and Fleetwood by jealousy, and Mandeville by bigotry and madness. Their actions are a direct consequence of their ruling passions, and they are voluntary in so far as these passions constitute their opinions about the things that are most worth striving for. "The actions of men", Godwin argues "originate in the state of their minds immediately previous to those actions. Actions therefore which are preceded by a judgement "this is good", or "this is desirable", originate in the state of judgement or opinion upon that subject. It may happen that the opinion may be exceedingly fugitive; it may have been preceded by aversion and followed by remorse; but it was unquestionably the opinion of the mind at the instant in which the action took place".[2]

---

[1] Fleetwood, p. 102.

[2] Political Justice, "I, 58".

It then remains to show how the mind which forms these opinions is formed itself by external accidents. Then it is but a step further to the basic principle of Political Justice restated in the preface to Caleb Williams that, through its control of these external circumstances, the government "insinuates itself into our personal dispositions, and insensibly communicates its own spirit to our private transactions".[1]

The major concerns of Political Justice then, education, the necessity for frankness and candour, the perfectibility of the human race, and the encouragement of a spirit of healthy enquiry, are the major concerns of Godwin's novels also. Everything expressed in his favourite phrase, "man as he is" is subject to certain exigencies, of passion, of government and of environment, and without being too optimistic at once, man must be shown his errors. It then becomes his individual responsibility to remove the pernicious tendencies in the systems of government and education that could affect their children maliciously, and through them, the future generations of mankind. The message of Godwin's novels is not so much evangelical as educational, he shows 'man as he is' to 'man as he is'. He seeks to lay before mankind, its failings, and the reason for its failings, in the hope that once recognised, men will try to improve themselves and Man will become gradually better and better, happier and happier.

At the beginning of Political Justice ("I, 1-2") he sets out the objects of the work:

---

[1] Political Justice, "I, 4".

> How may the peculiar and independent operation of each individual in the social state most effectually be preserved? How may the security each man ought to possess, as to his life, and the employment of his faculties according to the dictates of his own understanding, be most certainly defended from invasion? How may the individuals of the human species be made to contribute most substantially to the general improvement and happiness? The enquiry her undertaken has for its object to facilitate the solution of these interesting questions.

The novels take these large aims and apply them to particular individuals, but they are the same aims, and the same solutions. Godwin simply gives human 'substance' to the shadows of abstract reason.

CHAPTER III

The Rôle of the Imagination

Godwin's account of the conception of Caleb Williams is frequently quoted as an example of his careful planning and as an explanation of the intensity which the novel engenders. Yet the extent of his control over the story is considerably in doubt. The original ending which never got any further than the manuscript would have enforced the moral that he set for himself:

> to comprehend as far as the progressive nature of a single story would allow, a general review of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism, by which man becomes the destroyer of man.[1]

In the process of writing, however, the characters of Falkland and Williams developed in ways that their creator, it seems, had not originally planned; so that, for some reason not to be explained within these moral terms, the first ending was deleted. Thus while there is a close and deliberate relationship between the theory and the art of the novels, this is not the whole truth. The rôle of the imagination is a more important one that it seems at first to be.

In Fleetwood, for example, the Ruffigny story has wider implications than its firm moral structure would seem to allow, and these implications finally overturn that structure. It has already been noticed that the

---

[1] Caleb Williams, p. xxiii.

story is designed to condemn 'the secret' and particularly the aura of superstition with which it is surrounded, because it leads to oppression -- in this case depriving Ruffigny of his birth-right. This 'moral fable', carries the discussion of the evils of secrecy into the political field, where the child becomes a symbol of mankind cheated of their birthright by what Burke calls 'salutary prejudice', or 'useful delusions'; the theory amongst conservative politicians that the best way to engage the loyalty of a citizenry is by some state mystique surrounding the centre of government. The symbolism of the story becomes quite clear as Ruffigny decides to take his grievances to Versailles.

While very young, his mind had been filled with the glorious and benevolent exploits of Francois I and Henri IV, and "a King of France appeared in my eyes, the most gallant of mortals".[1] Therefore, the eight year-old child sets off from Lyons to Paris, and with Godwin straining to wring the last drippings of sentimentality from the situation, he does not fail to make Ruffigny comment upon the foregone futility of such a venture, as he exclaims in a flurry of mixed metaphors:

> The King of France! -- was ever poor wretch misled
> by such an ignis fatuus? Did ever condemned criminal
> brave the fury of the ocean in such a cockle shell.[2]

He takes pains to make the reader aware that the child's glorification of Louis XIV is the other side of the coin to his superstitious fear of

---

[1] Fleetwood, p. 106.

[2] Ibid., p. 134.

his uncle's secret. He had bought a portrait of the monarch, and treated it with that religious reverence with which a Catholic would treat his ikon of the Blessed Virgin:

> On Sundays, when I had wandered in to the most obscure retreat I could find, I held it (the portrait) in my hand; I set it before me, I talked to it, and endeavoured to win the goodwill of the King. Sometimes I worked myself into such a degree of enthusiasm, that I could scarcely believe but that the portrait smiled upon me, and with a look of peculiar benignity seemed to say, "Come to Versailles and I will make your fortune."[1]

When this imagined prophecy is applied to the context of the story, it soon becomes evident that it actually came true. Had the child not gone to Versailles in answer to the Royal summons, he would not have met the elder Fleetwood; and it was this meeting outside the Palace gates, that gave him the opportunity to make his fortune. It seems, therefore, that Godwin has overplayed his hand and thereby contradicted his whole moral intention. The problem becomes, in the last analysis, one of 'control', and 'control' is to be a very important factor in the discussions of the novels and their ideology. How far does Godwin's ability or inability to control his imagination affect his presentation of the theory which underlies his novels? This chapter will concern itself in finding the answer to that question.

In Political Justice, Godwin has called marriage "a monopoly, and the worst of all monopolies", and then gone on to outline a system which would entirely nullify the domestic virtues:

> I shall assiduously cultivate the intercourse of that woman, whose moral and intellectual accomplishments strike me in the most powerful manner. But "it may

---

[1] Fleetwood, p. 108.

> happen, that other men with feel for her the same preference that I do." This will create no difficulty. We may all enjoy her conversation; and her choice being declared, we shall all be wise enough to consider the sexual commerce as unessential to our regard. It is a mark of the extreme depravity of our present habits, that we are inclined to suppose the sexual commerce necessary to the advantages arising from the purest friendship. It is by no means indispensible, that the female to whom each man attaches himself in that matter should appear to each the most deserving of her sex.[1]

His views changed when he married Mary Wollstonecraft, but not in self-defence. He explains quite clearly that he married Mary from a sense of responsibility when she became, pregnant, not because 'Love' had persuaded him to a more sanguine view of the situation. The change came rather with the influx of feeling that his wife brought to his 'cold philosophy'. "She was a worshipper of the domestic affections",[2] and instilled some of her worship into Godwin; his Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Women, bears a powerful and moving witness of his deep regard for her moral and intellectual accomplishments, and to their effect upon his own outlook:

> A companion like this, excites and animates the mind. From such a one we imbibe, what I principally wanted, the habit of minutely attending to first impressions, and justly appreciating them. Her tastes awakened mine; her sensibility determined me to a careful development of my feelings.[3]

The preface to St. Leon should be quoted at length, because it is the first indication of this change of attitude, and also because it is the key to the whole novel:

---

[1] Political Justice, "I, 511".

[2] William Godwin, Memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft (London, 1928), p. 108.

[3] Ibid., p. 132.

> . . . far more than four years now I have been anxious for opportunity and leisure to modify some of the earlier chapters of that work (Political Justice) in conformity to the sentiments inculcated in this. Not that I see cause to make any change respecting the system there delivered but that I apprehend domestic and private affections inseparable from the nature of man, and from what may be styled the culture of the heart, and am fully persuaded that they are not incompatible with a profound and active sense of justice in the mind of him that cherishes them. True wisdom will recommend to us individual attachments for with them our minds are more thoroughly maintained in activity and life than they can be under the privation of them; and it is better that man should be a living being than a stock or a stone. True virtue will sanction this recommendation; since it is the object of virtue to produce happiness, and since the man who lives in the midst of domestic relations will have many opportunities of conferring pleasure, minute in detail yet not trivial in the amount, without interfering with the purpose of general benevolence. Nay, by kindling his sensibility and harmonising his soul, they may be expected if he is endowed with a liberal and manly spirit, to render him more prompt in the service of strangers and the public.[1]

It can easily be seen that far from an inconsistency, the argument that true benevolence can best be promoted through the family group was an obvious step for Godwin to take once he had been introduced to the pleasures of family life, and to the potentialities for benevolence that a family provides. It was a firm tenet of Political Justice -- and one central to his rejection of benevolent despotism -- that one man could not alter the world by himself:

> for one man to undertake to administer the affairs of millions, to supply, not general principles and perspicuous reasoning, but particular application, and measures adapted to the necessities of the moment, is of all undertakings, the most extravagant and absurd.[2]

---

[1] St. Leon, pp. ix-x.

[2] Political Justice, "II, 32".

But he now feels that through the family, the spirit of benevolence can at least be exercised and kept active without absurdity, and the opportunity thus provided may prove advantageous to all mankind.

St. Leon hoped that the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life would exalt their possessor above this mortal limitation, and the novel is an allegory of his disillusionment. When he first feels this power he rhapsodises about its potential for good; its possessor

> can remove forests, and level mountains, drain marshes, extend canals, turn the courses of rivers, and shut up the sea with doors. He can assign to every individual in a nation, the task he pleases, can improve agriculture and establish manufactures, can found schools and hospitals and infirmaries and universities. He can study the genius of every man and enable every man to pursue the bent of his mind. Poets and philosophers will be fostered, the sublimest flights of genius be produced and the most admirable discoveries effected under his auspicious patronage. The whole world are his servants, and he if his temper be noble and upright, he will be the servant of the whole world.[1]

The cost of this benevolent dream to the unfortunate possessor of these miraculous gifts is the joys of family life and friendship. Gradually he is estranged from his son, from his wife and from the whole of mankind.

In the first part, the joys of domesticity are outlined at length and put to the test of adversity, so that the value of what St. Leon has to pay can be more readily appreciated. The happiness of the hero and Marguerite his wife is described in somewhat similar terms to those in which Godwin describes his own marriage to Mary in the Memoirs, and this

---

[1] St. Leon, p. 163.

is not surprising since Holcroft recognises Mary as the model from which Marguerite was drawn.[1]

Encouraged by his curiosity and his ambitions, St. Leon is persuaded by a beggar whom he succours from the inquisition, to accept the secret of immortality and boundless wealth, but he finds that the keeping of a secret from his wife destroys the perfect intimacy upon which their relationship is based. He unwisely exhibits his wealth before the nobles from whom his poverty has previously estranged him, and they call his honour into question. His son leaves him because St. Leon is unable by the nature of his secret to vindicate himself. After many adventures his wife dies of a broken heart, his family breaks up, and he is arrested and imprisoned by the inquisition. Twelve years later he escapes, and after applying the elixir, sets off for war-torn Hungary to put his plan of benevolence into operation.

> I resolved to pour the entire stream of my riches like a mighty river, to fertilise these wasted plains, and revive their fainting inhabitants. Thus proceeding, should I not have right to expect to find myself guarded by the faithful love of a people who would be indebted to my beneficence for every breath they drew? This was the proper scene in which for the possessor of the Philosopher's stone to take up his abode.[2]

The experiment produces no 'worker's paradise'; it proceeds on basically capitalistic lines with St. Leon employing the peasants or else, occasionally, making 'pretended loans' to assist other individuals to institute similar systems upon their own initiative. He is careful

---

[1] Vide Paul, op. cit., "II, 25".

[2] St. Leon, p. 369.

"to commit the least practicable violence upon the genuine action of human society in pursuit of the means of subsistence",[1] and prefers to act as an architect and corn merchant rather than a paternal land-lord, dispensing as few actual gifts as possible -- although these are sometimes necessary because of extreme poverty. The success of his scheme is indubitable until the labourers become impatient as the harvest is late. Their impatience is combined with superstition, and St. Leon is accused of presuming to take over from God the provision of his people, and eventually forced to call upon the government to prevent them from destroying what they had built up.

St. Leon forgets, however, that the peasant's ingratitude reflects 'things as they are', the anarchy of war and the selfish greed of the Bashaw's government which has it as a principle that effective rule is achieved by controlling man's passions and opinions, that "The man from whom they believe they have the most to fear and the most to hope, will always be their master".[2] Gratitude, says Godwin, is a pernicious sentiment, and instead of the peasant's condition exciting St. Leon's pity and benevolence as it should have done, his disappointment of gratitude brings him close to the point of misanthropy.

> My nights were restless; my thoughts were in arms. What was it that it became me to do in the present emergency? Sometimes in the bitterness of my heart, hating myself, hating the endowments of the stranger, hating a race of beings who denied all credit to the most unheard of exertions for their advantage,

---

[1] St. Leon, p. 374.

[2] Ibid., p. 389.

> I determined to withdraw unobserved from my attendants and clients; and bid adieu to Hungary for ever.[1]

Some time earlier, while living in Spain, St. Leon had been threatened by a superstitious mob, but his friend the Marchese Filosanto, had dissuaded him from taking any notice of it. The Marchese was an optimist, "always contemplating the world on its brighter side"[2], and he was proved disastrously wrong when St. Leon's home was burned down by this mob:

> When the Marchese beheld what, till seen, he would never admit to be possible, he burst out into a sort of transport of misanthropy. . . . He saw that there was a principle in the human mind destined to be eternally at war with improvement and science. . . . He saw in the transactions of that night, a pledge of the eternal triumph of ignorance over wisdom.[2]

Throughout this novel the constant message is that idealism is, in the nature of 'things as they are', doomed to disappointment. With this comes the warning which St. Leon's night thoughts and Filosanto's agony put into words; a warning against despair and misanthropy. The spectre of misanthropy haunts Godwin's novels from St. Leon to Cloudesley, and has most serious effects upon his artistic control in Fleetwood, but here Godwin is demonstrating a thesis in which the hero has to continue as a figure of benevolence, so the tendency to misanthropy is carefully plucked out. This 'purification' emphasises the novel's allegorical tendencies and from now on the story takes on certain qualities of the Faerie Queene. In the same way, for example, that the perfection of Una produces its opposite in Duessa, Bethlem Gabor is produced by the

---

[1] St. Leon, p. 383.

[2] Ibid., pp. 289-90.

perfection of St. Leon's personification as universal benevolence. There is a deep attraction between the two characters, which develops sexual overtones although here there is no intermediary like the Red Crosse Knight to provide a battleground where the conflict can take place. Thus the two forces are locked in a stalemate for several months whilst Gabor has St. Leon imprisoned in his castle. He finds this imprisonment almost completely satisfying to the 'scope of his misanthropy', since St. Leon seems to have taken it upon himself to be the 'parent of mankind':

> You wish to be a father to the human race; and I shall deem the scope of my misanthropy almost satisfied while in your restraint I image myself as making the human race an orphan.[1]

The spell is finally broken when his son, Charles, who has taken on his mother's name, and therefore represents, for St. Leon, his wife and child, defeats Gabor and destroys the castle. Charles is moulded into a symbol of the Family by a vision which recurred to his father whilst he was in prison. He sees a male knight who turns into a female angel and rescues him, and this vision comforts him whilst Gabor grows more and more desperate. Finally Gabor releases him, and as the externalisation of his own misanthropy dies in 'the last dike of his fortress' St. Leon flies, unrecognised, to the protection of the forces that rescued him, only to be brought to an even stronger realisation that this protection is lost to him for ever.

The last few chapters show St. Leon assisting his son to marry

---

[1] St. Leon, p. 421.

Pandora, and bringing the same calumnies, the same ingratitude upon his head when he tries to exercise the powers for benevolence that have failed him before. In this attempt the disguise which the elixir of life has forced upon him nearly destroys their happiness altogether, and finally involves the father in a duel with his son. Thus the destructive potentialities of his single-handed attempt to reform the world are finally collected into a symbolic and tragic irony. In this case, however, although it seems at first that his failure to benefit his son without entailing similar consequences to those which accompanied his other attempts at benevolence, undermines the moral thesis which Godwin sets out to prove, in effect it simply underlines it. The would-be benevolent man can, without absurdity and worse, only act through his family circle; St. Leon had destroyed his family in a futile attempt to become the father of the human race. All that he is left with is the tragic recognition of the truth which came as prophecy whilst he was contemplating the potentialities of limitless life and wealth:

> I felt that human affections and passions are not made of this transferable stuff, and that we can love nothing unless we devote ourselves to it heart and soul, and our life is, as it were, bound up in the object of our attachment.[1]

Thus, carefully and consistently, from preface to conclusion, Godwin works out what he evidently came to regard as an extension to Political Justice, and by his Thoughts Occasioned by a Perusal of Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon, (1801) he was quoting the preface in answer to Parr's attack on his doctrine of marriage in that work.[2]

---

[1] St. Leon, p. 164.

[2] Op. cit., Vide p. 24.

The carefully controlled handling of St. Leon's misanthropic tendencies points to a danger inherent in Godwin's own philosophical system. Since this system combines an emphasis upon the individual in society with an idealist conception of the potentialities of abstract man, a very delicate balance must be maintained between realism and idealism, and a tension amounting to parodox is created. The misanthropist hero is produced by this tension, because he can find it possible to love 'John and Matthew and Alexander', but hate mankind.

Dumas notes that in the first edition of Political Justice, this tension often reveals itself in 'rhetorical postures'. Godwin distinguishes between 'practical' and 'abstract' truths; the one relating 'to the daily incidents and ordinary commerce of human life', the other to 'certain general and abstract principles'. It is however, to the practical truth that the virtue of sincerity belongs, and as Dumas points out, it is in reference to this virtue that Godwin makes exaggerated claims regarding the power of truth to convince instantaneously. These claims contradict his insistence upon the preparation of opinion and the slow process of perfectibility. In the second edition however, the more exaggerated claims for the power of truth were deliberately removed, and in the new chapter "The Voluntary Actions of Men originate in their Opinions" he even denies some of these affirmations.[1]

When Godwin was writing St. Leon, however, this tendency to over-emphasise idealism had been almost completely reversed, and from a more critical view of man the figure of the misanthropist began to loom

---

[1]Dumas, op. cit., loc. cit., pp. 588-90.

large. This can be seen very clearly, for example, in his Thoughts on Parr's Spital Sermon, where at one point he seems to hover on the brink of misanthropy himself; there is a definite ring of bitterness in the following passage:

> It is not man as I frequently see him that excites much of my veneration. I know that the majority of those I see, are corrupt, low-minded, besotted, prepared for degradation and vice, and with scarcely any vestige about them of their high destination. Their hold is therefore, rather upon my compassion and general benevolence, than upon my esteem.[1]

The operation of the balance is almost physically felt here, particularly in the word 'hold'.

Fleetwood; or the New Man of Feeling (1805) sets out to relate "Things often done but never yet described",[2] and consists, so Godwin says, 'of such adventures, as for the most part have occurred to at least one half of the Englishmen now existing, who are of the same rank as my hero".[3] The emphasis is therefore to be upon realism, or what I have called the 'critical' view of man as opposed to the idealistic one, but such an emphasis might tend to destroy the balance between individual and ideal. In large terms this seems to be what happens; Godwin, indeed, struggles hard to control the novel within his own ideological terms but he fails to do so because the character of Casimir Fleetwood develops through a rhetoric of egotism that will not adapt itself to the dialectic which contains the ideology.

---

[1] Thoughts Occasioned by a Perusal of Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon etc., p. 24.

[2] Fleetwood, p. xv.

[3] Loc. cit.

In this hero, Godwin creates an egotistical and inward-looking nature which contracts misanthropy at an early age, partly as a result of his education -- particularly at Oxford -- and partly because his travels have shown him 'nothing of the world but its unfavourable specimens':

> What can be more ignoble and depraved, than the manners of a court and a metropolis, especially of such a court and metropolis as those of the last years of the reign of Louis XV?[1]

This 'disease', as he calls it, is exaggerated by his experience in further travels, and in the English Parliament.

Eventually, he comes into contact with the benevolent McNeil, a friend of Rousseau, and goes to stay with him and his family in their Utopian Lake-District home. During the course of his visit the two friends begin a debate upon the true estimate of the human species. Fleetwood takes up what might be regarded as Godwin's position, were Godwin's not a paradoxical one, and explains that when he compares what man could be with what man is, then he is forced to despise mankind.

> I thought, so to express myself, too highly of the human mind in abstract, to be able to consider with patience man as he is. I dwelt upon the capacities of our nature, the researches of a Newton, the elevation of a Milton, and the virtues of an Alfred; and having filled my mind with these, I contemplated even with horror, the ignorance, the brutality, the stupidity, the selfishness, and as it seemed to me the veniality and profligacy, in which millions and millions of my fellow creatures are involved.[2]

McNeil's estimate of man is over-optimistic, derived, not from a conception of man's perfectibility but one of his past perfection in

---

[1] Fleetwood, p. 162.

[2] Ibid., p. 195.

a golden age. He finds in man 'the seeds of a good husband, a good father and a good friend'.

> Whenever I see a man, I see something to love, -- not with the love of compassion, but a love of approbation. I need not put the question to him -- I know without asking, that he is fully prepared and eager to do, a thousand virtuous acts the moment the occasion is afforded to him.[1]

Godwin distrusts this sort of optimism. It is certainly not his own, which as the Thoughts express it, is drawn, not from a love of approbation, but from compassion. Moreover, he always speaks slightingly of the idea of the 'golden age'.[2] It is atavistic in that it leads men to consider their past rather than their future and thus militates against perfectibility, hiding from them a true recognition of their potentialities. Godwin, therefore, leaves Fleetwood unconvinced by McNeil's argument.

This is obviously a crucial point in the ideology of the novel; two strands of optimistic thinking are opposed to each other within a dialectic further complicated by the fact that the Godwinian, or meliorationist strand is conceived of in its own dialectic state that lies in the opposition between its general optimism, and the pessimistic view which would result from a due consideration of 'things as they are' without the restraint imposed by a faith in perfectibility. Since he leaves the argument open at this point it seems probable that he hopes to resolve the dialectic and demonstrate where the real truth lies.

When McNeil advises Fleetwood to get married as an antidote to

---

[1] Fleetwood, p. 196.

[2] Cf. Political Justice, "I, 15 and 105".

his ennui, it becomes plain that the dialectic is to be resolved on the now familiar battle field of the domestic hearth. Burton R. Pollin notes that "after his discovery of the worth of the domestic affections, Godwin finds his utopia in the family group",[1] and it is in such a group that Fleetwood would surely find activity enough to keep his mind from misanthropy:

> Sit down every day at table with a circle of five or six persons, constituting your own domestic group (McNeil tells him). Enquire out the young men on the threshold of life, who, from regulations of society, have the best claim on your assistance. Call them round you; contribute to their means; contribute to their improvement, consult with them as to the most promising adventure in which they can launch themselves on the ocean of life. Depend upon it, you will not then find a vacuity.[2]

The advice he gives like Filosanto's advice to St. Leon proves uniformly disastrous. Fleetwood's marriage replaces ennui with jealously and when he invites his two nephews to stay with him at Bath, one of them, Gifford, plays upon this jealousy and drives him to the point of madness. There is a movement into pure allegory here that is similar to that in St. Leon, but this time it is triangular rather than polar; Fleetwood remains firmly in the middle and the two nephews become externalisations of his own malicious and benevolent tendencies. Torn between these two angels, Gifford and Kenrick, Fleetwood like Dr. Faustus, is gradually drawn

---

[1] Pollin, op. cit., p. 221.

[2] Fleetwood, p. 199.

towards the evil one and the destructive forces that his evil represents. His relations with Mary, his wife are the first to suffer; Gifford convinces him that she is being unfaithful with Kenrick, and that Kenrick is the real father of the child she is carrying. He is easily persuaded through his passionate and jealous egotism, and without asking her to explain the behaviour that has caused his suspicions, he immediately leaves for the continent and begins divorce proceedings. Here the destructive nature of his egotistical madness is emphasised by a grim little scene in which he destroys wax representations of the mother, the child and Kenrick on the day that his wife gives birth to the child.

It is, however, Kenrick, his benevolent nature, who rescues him at the last moment from the clutches of the murderous Gifford. He had gone over to France accompanied by his prospective father-in-law, Mr. Scarborough, and a peasant family who owed their happiness to Fleetwood's former benevolence, (thus emphasising Kenrick's rôle as externalisation of this benevolence) in order to explain the confusion that had resulted in his suspicions. In the denouement which follows, he is brought to repentance and remorse by the recognition of his folly and by the forgiveness of those whom he has injured. However, there is for him no point of recognition as there was for St. Leon; he repents his irrational jealousy, but that repentance does not extend to a recognition that its cause lies in his own egotism. The novel concludes on a note of revenge couched in the same rhetoric of egotism that characterised his earlier rejection of Mary:

> I have always regarded with horror those sanguinary laws, which under the name of justice, strike at the life of man. For his sake I was willing to admit of

> one exception . . . Die, then poor wretch, and let the earth which labours with thy depravity be relieved.[1]

This last image, with its connotations of birth, strikes an ominous note when the passage goes on:

> On the seventh day from that in which Mary and I met in the manner I have described, Kenrick and Louisa were united: and Mr. Scarborough, who had shown himself so harsh and austere as a parent, became the most indulgent of grandsires.[2]

What seemed to be a final note of optimism, suddenly becomes a sinister challenge to that perfectibility in which Godwin put his faith. The happy family group that is a structural part of that ideology of improvement that has been discussed in Chapter II is totally destroyed by this final stroke of rhetoric.

In the preface Godwin acknowledged that he was unable 'to weave a catastrophe, such as I desired, out of ordinary incidents', hence the melodrama of the third volume. The catastrophe that he has imposed, however, is an abortive one, it fails to resolve the dialectic of the novel which, therefore, concludes with misanthropy triumphant through an image threatening future corruption for the human race.

It is in Mandeville the dialectic is finally resolved. This is the only novel where the hero is deliberately cheated of that recognition which comes at the catastrophe of the tragedies he enacts. Here the recognition belongs to the reader; a sudden although carefully prepared

---

[1] Fleetwood, p. 371.

[2] Loc. cit.

for, realisation that Mandeville is mad. It comes when he is explaining his hatred of Clifford to Henrietta; the explanation, in the historical context of narrow religious prejudice, seems reasonable enough until he is suddenly seized by a fit of hysteria, and Henrietta, Chorus-like, recognises that the rumour of her brother's insanity is no imposition:

> Henrietta was shaken by the solemnity of my address. Her resolutions in my favour had been strong, and of the most disinterested sort . . . She was . . . in a high degree surprised by the style in which I addressed her. She found in it energy and pathos . . . It would have been absurd, if it had been otherwise. She found in it no touch of insanity.
>
> . . .
>
> This was a moment, that was worth more than all the mines in Golconda. Henrietta, who was the jewel of the earth to me, and to whom all the rest of the world was only the crust and setting, was mine . . . Henrietta was saved, saved from pollution, from blasphemy, from the most execrable of crimes, saved for her sex, for her country, for her age and for me. I can never recollect this moment without an agony, a frenzy, beyond all frenzy, and to which everything else that bears the name, is like the mummery of a personated clown, and the antics of children.
>
> . . .
>
> By me this precious harvest of spotless virtue was marred. What could possess me? My soul was wrought too high; the chord by which everything that was dear to me was suspended, could hold no longer. My understanding had once been unsettled; and it could maintain its balance only to a certain point. At this moment, this critical, this tremendous moment, my eyes flashed fire, my brain fermented like a vessel of new wine placed for that purpose by the hands of the maker. I raved.[1]

The sustained and tremendously effective piece of melodrama, from which these passages are taken reveals an undertone of incest ringing with his religious mania and it shows how far his egotism and prejudice have

---

[1]Mandeville, "III, 332-4".

taken him beyond the bounds of sanity. At the same time, it marks a step forward for Godwin. Misanthropy is no more a danger to his art, the spectre has been laid as it were; he only had to introduce the concept of an 'an original taint', and the problem could be dismissed as a form of perversion. Mandeville uses this concept to explain his nature to his own satisfaction, but it is not really necessary in the terms of the novel; his childhood environment and the bigotry of his tutor were quite sufficient to induce both madness and misanthropy, and the relationship between the two is more emphatically felt when it is recognised that both grew from the same root. By the time that he came to write Cloudesley, he was able to deal much more easily with the misanthropist phenomena, and it is perhaps from the kathartic effect which the resolution in Mandeville had upon Godwin's art, that the novel has the intensity that it has.

It was however, this struggle with the hidden implications of his central doctrine of perfectibility, or the "progressive nature of man, in Knowledge, in virtuous propensities, and in social institutions"[1] as he calls it in the Thoughts, that catalysed his imaginative processes, even in Caleb Williams. With the resolution of the problem his art suffers. In Cloudesley, he returns to Political Justice for his inspiration, but the fire has gone out of his perception of social injustice. Hazlitt notes that "He has changed the glittering spear which always detected truth or novelty, for a leaden foil. We cannot say of his last work (Cloudesley), -- 'Even in his ashes live his wonted fires'. The story is cast indeed

---

[1] Thoughts Occasioned by a Perusal of Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon etc., p. 46.

some thing in the same moulds as Caleb Williams; but they are not filled and running over with molten passion, or with scalding tears."[1]

It is in fact too obviously a reworking of some of the themes of Caleb Williams, particularly that of remorse, so that its comparative lack of inspiration makes it seem worse than it really is. There is a clever polarisation of moral attitudes between Alton and Cloudesley that is very effectively symbolised by the physical environments of these two central figures, with Julian as the touchstone, as it were, by which their moral and spiritual development can be evaluated. Alton is entirely confined to his castle in Ireland, symbolising the narrowness of his moral scope and the basic egotism behind his remorse. Cloudesley, on the other hand, roams over all Italy in an active attempt to expiate his crime by preparing the young Julian to take over the rôle that is rightfully his.

Nevertheless, the novel seems to draw its moral intention much more obviously and in a less sophisticated manner from Political Justice. The result is that it seems fragmentary, and it does lack control.

The mainspring of the action again lies in Lord Alton's upbringing; he was a second son and was therefore a victim of the system of primogeniture "which disinherits every other member of a family, to heap unwholesome abundance upon one".[2]

---

[1] William Hazlitt, Complete Works ed. Howe, (London, 1933), "XIV, 394".

[2] Political Justice, "II, 95".

> My father and mother directed all their attention to the advantage of their eldest son. I was seldom judged worthy to be the subject of a smile, a caress, the smallest encouragement. I seemed only to stand in the way, to be a being that had intruded himself into a world where was not wanted. Or, to speak more accurately, I was scarcely the object of notice; my parents never, but when they could not avoid it, so much as recollected that there was such a being in existence.
>
> Meanwhile, my brother was a subject of perpetual solicitude. Every gratification that could be procured, was copiously showered upon him. If his little finger ached, the whole house was set in commotion.[1]

It is due to this treatment that the desire to be someone of importance becomes too powerful for Lord Alton when the opportunity to do so arises from his brother's death.

His opportunity is precipitated through another of the atavistic vices of the aristocracy, that of duelling. Like Falkland, Alton's brother did not like duelling, but when his honour was engaged it became a question of necessity. In an argument defending the Greeks -- his wife's nation, -- Arthur loses his temper and strikes an Italian, Fabroni, 'who had all his country's pride of race and haughtiness of soul'. In this duel Arthur is killed, and Godwin, under the thin veil of Alton, gives a horrified sermon on the evils of such a practice:

> What a dreadful practice is this of duelling which seems to be so rooted in the habits of Modern Europe! The best and most generous of our race are more exposed to its tragical consequences, than the ignoble and base . . . What can be more barbarous than that two men should go in cold blood to stand out as a mark, or even to press forward as a mark, against the life

---

[1] Cloudesley, "I, 119".

> of a fellow creature, for some unintelligible point of imaginary honour, (We all confess this; and yet the evil is not remedied! Surely the wit of man ought strenuously and unintermittingly to be applied to find the cure for so tremendous an evil.[1]

When, shortly after this, his brother's wife dies in child-birth, Alton finds Cloudesley willing to connive in concealing the child, and he takes over his brother's estates and title.

He finds however, that the crime has destroyed his peace of mind, and lives from thenceforth under a perpetual sense of guilt mixed with uncertainty as to how safe his secret will remain in the hands of Cloudesley. In this respect at least, he is comforted a little when he reflects that society, in providing him with wealth and a title, has put into his hands an effective way of controlling a recalcitrant servant:

> It is no trifling undertaking, to thrust from his place a nobleman, whose title is authentically recorded, and who has been admitted to the possession of the estates and income annexed to that title. What a delightful resource is to be found in the procrastination of the law, where the steps to be multiplied on behalf of the rich man are eternal, and every step requires all but the purse of a monarch, before it can be surmounted.[2]

This is of course in accordance with Political Justice:

> Rarely indeed does it happen that there is any crime that gold cannot expiate, any baseness and meanness of character that wealth cannot shroud in oblivion.[3]

The lesson that he learned in St. Leon has been forgotten.

Cloudesley is also provided with ideological roots for his character.

---

[1] Cloudesley, "I, 272-3".

[2] Ibid., p. 272-3.

[3] Ibid., "II, 142".

He had been imprisoned when young, for debts contracted by a friend for whom he had stood as guarantor, and who had absconded. Prison had affected him in just the way that Political Justice had said that it would:

> Jails are, to a proverb, seminaries of vice; and he must be an uncommon proficient in the passion and practice of injustice, or a man of sublime virtue, who does not come out of them a much worse man than he entered.[1]

Cloudesley was neither of these; he had been indifferently educated, as Alton points out, and the effect of the prison "affords a striking example of the disadvantages arising from a defective and neglected education".[2] As it was:

> he came out of prison a totally altered man . . . In proportion to the original integrity of his nature, was the bitterness of his soul, when he became so flagrantly the victim of an unmerited calamity. As before, he had loved all men, so it seemed now that it was sufficient to present anything in human shape to excite his antipathy.[3]

There develops in his mind a conflict between this induced misanthropy and his natural good feelings, which would have triumphed had 'his mind been unfolded in the least degree of literature'.[4] The misanthropy never really shows itself in the colours of Godwin's great misanthropists, but it is useful as an excuse for his conniving with Alton to betray his patron's child.[5] It is never actually resolved in Cloudesley himself, and although his better feelings are continually uppermost, it is re-iterated in volume

---

[1] Political Justice, "II, 385".

[2] Cloudesley, "I, 210-211".

[3] Ibid., p. 209.

[4] Ibid., p. 211.

[5] One of the manifestations of his misanthropy is a determination "that he would fight his own way in the world, regard less of the wishes, the prejudices, the joys and the sorrows of others". (Ibid., p. 213).

three, when Borromeo is introduced.[1] Borromeo is a much purer example of this phenomenon than Cloudesley and takes over his misanthropy just as he takes over the guardianship of Julian.

Borromeo "viewed his fellow beings with ineffable contempt", but unlike Gabor in St. Leon, he was an idealist; another manifestation of the real-ideal tension in Godwin's art:

> This man was eminently a moral being. He had certain rules of right to which he rigidly adhered, not for the sake of the good to result, but as certain theologians inculcate in their systems, from the simple love of justice, and without care for the consequence to result.[2]

Godwin demonstrates the way that he has overcome the misanthropy problem by the ease with which even a confirmed misanthropist like Borromeo is converted to the doctrine of love. However, this conversion is not a resolution, it is simply a sacrifice to sentimentality. This becomes obvious when Meadows, Boswell-like, expresses his eagerness to witness the conversation between him and Julian. What follows is directly in the sentimental tradition:

> It was a striking spectacle to view the workings of Borromeo's mind, as they expressed themselves in his countenance, or, perhaps more strictly speaking, in the action of his body and limbs. He drew Julian towards him with all the energy of affection; he then motioned him to retreat, that might more carefully peruse the nobility of his air, and the beauty of his physiognomy. He laughed like one transported with the victory that had been gained, and the high fortune that had succeeded to and dispersed the adversity under which the gallant youth had suffered. To his laughter succeeded a gush of tears of joy, the melting of the heart. He embraced

---

[1] Cloudesley, "III, 61".

[2] Ibid., p. 57.

> him with the utmost fervour. Julian saw that Borromeo was bursting with emotion, and, in a style of the truest delicacy, gave way for his feelings to ease themselves in words.[1]

The happy ending is also in this tradition. Julian is arrested for aiding his bandit friends when they seek to escape from the government soldiers who have set out to make the country safe. These banditti represent a force for anarchy and lawlessness even though, as in Caleb Williams, they do have some justifying philosophy behind them. St. Elmo, for example, the bandit leader, was a high born and patriotic Corsican who had rebelled against the rule of the Genoese. He was arrested and narrowly escaped execution. "Henceforth he swore upon the altars of immutable justice an everlasting war against all governments, and an open defiance to all law. He regarded what is called civilised society as a conspiracy against the inherent rights of man, and determined to pay no attention to its regulations".[2] This violent Rousseauism does not, however, impress Godwin and at least in the earlier part of the third volume it appears that he fully approved of the resolute action of Don Carlos:

> At the period of his accession Don Carlos was only eighteen years of age; but he immediately fixed his residence in the capital of his dominions, and in no long time began to distinguish himself by many judicious regulations in behalf of the happiness and good government of his people. Among other things he expressed a determination to root out the gangs of banditti throughout his dominions, to put an end to the licentiousness with

---

[1] Cloudesley, "III, 341".

[2] Ibid., p. 109.

> which they were accustomed to invade solitary houses and even small villages, to free the high-roads from their molestations, and to diffuse a general face of civilisation and security.[1]

Julian was therefore doing wrong in opposing the police in the execution of their duty, especially since fifteen of them were killed in the battle which resulted. In Political Justice, Godwin had said of a similar situation:

> It is the . . . duty of individuals to take an active share upon occasion, and in such parts of the existing system, as shall be sufficient to counteract the growth of universal violence and tumult.[2]

He had done the opposite of this and was, therefore, in justice bound to suffer the same consequences as his fellows were to suffer. He is released from this necessity, not by the fair process of the law taking into consideration extenuating circumstances, but simply because Lord Alton reveals that he is high in the list of the English aristocracy. Godwin had earlier said of pardons:

> He therefore that pardons me, iniquitously prefers the supposed interest of an individual, and utterly neglects what he owes to the whole. He bestows that which I ought not to receive, and which he has no right to give.[3]

The conclusion of the novel is filled with condemnations of capital punishment, and this accords with all that was said on that subject

---

[1] Cloudesley, "III, 236-7".

[2] Political Justice, "II, 364".

[3] Ibid., p. 414.

in Political Justice, but that does not make the pardoning of Julian any more just. Even though it is right that he should not be executed, it is the principle behind his pardon that matters and that is one of rank injustice. Godwin is so taken up by the sentimentality of the situation that the deviation from his principles is not even commented upon. The novel ends therefore on a strict note of injustice, an injustice which the author applauds from sentimentality, and which he has already condemned in reason.

It has also been asserted that Caleb Williams is vitiated by sentimentality. In an essay for Studies in English Literature (vol. 6, 1966, pp. 575-597) Gilbert Dumas discusses the original manuscript ending to the novel, and by comparing it to the published ending comes to valuable and judicious conclusions about the effect of what he calls Godwin's 'schizophrenic tendency'; that tension between a critical and a utopian view of man that has already been discussed in connection with some of his heroes. The deleted ending carried the Political Justice theme to its logical conclusion; Caleb ends up in prison under sedation, Falkland maintains his 'icy hypocrisy' before the magistrate who was to hear Caleb's accusation, and finally dies without his honour being spotted in any way.

Dumas takes up the usual explanation of the new ending that Godwin is proving his belief in sincerity and the all conquering nature of truth. He quotes Hazlitt's affirmation the Caleb 'overthrows (Falkland) on the vantage ground of humanity and justice',[1] but goes on to point out

---

[1]Hazlitt, op. cit., p. 394.

that "Repeatedly the novel has been telling us that truth cannot triumph so dramatically as the collapse of Falkland suggests".[1] After outlining the paradox between idealism and realism that is found particularly in the first edition of Political Justice, he argues that the same wrong emphasis upon idealism is found in the novel, and that this emphasis is basically sentimental:

> The narrative's implicit argument moves from a political generalisation legitimately derived from a representative sampling to an ethical one fallaciously derived from a single instance.[2]

He thus regrets the new ending, which he sees as 'a piece of artistic witchcraft sacrificing thematic logic to dramatic immediacy'.[3] In so doing, he claims, Godwin has tried to combine this sentimental doctrine of the power of truth with a romantic view of tragedy ("How have the mighty fallen"). He has therefore, not only limited his novel's effect to a literary period, but cast dangerous aspersions upon his main thesis:

> Warm appeals to love and reconciliation, sincerity and confidence, personal responsibility and selflessness, while compatible to Christian and intuitionist constructions in ethics, serve to invalidate the moral arithmetic of a cool and rational ultilitarianism and suggest to the reader that the imperfections of men rather than of political and social institutions are responsible for the injustice of things as they are. At best such a suggestion would, in Godwin's ratiocinative moments, be rejected by him as a dangerously misleading half-truth which makes its appeal not to reason but to what in Political Justice he terms in one place "a brute and unintelligent sympathy".[4]

---

[1] Dumas, op. cit., loc. cit., p. 585.

[2] Ibid., p. 590.

[3] Ibid., p. 594.

[4] Ibid., p. 593-4.

This is of course very true, but a hint from Arnold Kettle suggests that it might be an over simplication of the novel as it stands. Kettle sees it in terms of its social rather than its theoretical background; and feels that the Falkland-Williams relationship is intense enough to remove the novel from his 'moral fable' category:

> This theme of the fatal fascination of the villain Falkland . . . is clearly the element in the story which had escaped even the meticulous Godwin's calculations. It is the element which gives the book what vitality it has and it also -- if we compare Godwin's description of the novel in comparison with the finished work -- the element of discovery in it. It is not as it stands, for all its interest, a very valuable discovery. On the contrary, the vitality it brings the book is a sort of hysteria, something uncontrolled, unrealised, neurotic.
>
> The fascination which Falkland excercises upon Caleb (and Godwin) is indeed a fatal one, the fascination exercised by a decadent order on those who would like intellectually to free themselves from it, but emotionally are unable to do so. And Godwin because he does not understand the nature of this problem, is not able to turn it into art.[1]

It is not quite fair to say that Godwin 'does not understand the nature of the problem', because he sees the role of Falkland in different terms to those that Kettle outlines. Falkland is not a figure from whom Godwin or Caleb want to free themselves. On the contrary it is Falkland who has to free himself from the false idealism that is preventing him from taking his proper place as a leader of opinion. Burton R. Pollin has shown that the theory of Political Justice involves an intellectually élite class which is bourgeois, enlightened and largely literary in profession:

> Like Locke, he respects the products of a liberal education and entrusts them with the function of leader-

---

[1]Arnold Kettle, op. cit., pp. 57-8.

> ship above all others. In practice, it is the task of the professional author; he will be foremost in "assisting the progress of truth.[1]

Clare is obviously one of the foremost of this class. Godwin, as Caleb, regrets his retirement to the country in terms that make this quite clear:

> Mr. Clare certainly found few men in this remote situation that were capable of participating in his ideas and amusements. It has been among the weaknesses of great men to fly to solitude, and converse with woods and groves, rather than with a circle of strong and comprehensive minds like their own.[2]

Clare recognises in Falkland his true successor. After reading his Ode to the Genius of Chivalry, he praises the poem and exhorts its author to follow his high destiny:

> They are such as you, sir, that we want. Do not forget however, that the Muse was not given to add refinements to idleness, but for the highest and most invaluable purposes. Act up to the magnitude of your destiny.[3]

On his death bed, he looks to Falkland to carry on his work as an apostle of universal benevolence.

> The general welfare, the great business of the universe, will go on, though I bear no further share in promoting it. That task is reserved for younger strengths, for you Falkland, and such as you. We should be contemptible indeed if the prospect of human improvement did not yield us a pure and perfect delight, independently of the question of our existing to partake of it.[4]

---

[1] Burton R. Pollin, op. cit., p. 154.

[2] Caleb Williams, p. 27.

[3] Ibid., p. 30.

[4] Ibid., p. 38.

Falkland at first tries to live up to Clare's expectations; he pleads with Tyrrel for the unfortunate Hawkinses and for Emily Melville, and he always acts with kindness and humanity. His education, however, proves too much for him, and with one stroke, one which Clare had feared, he destroys these expectations, subjecting himself to the slavery of having committed a crime -- as Lord Alton says in Cloudesley, "There is but one thing that can truly humble a man and that is crime. . . Homer says that the day that takes from a man his personal liberty, takes away half his worth. How much more truly may this be affirmed, of the day takes from a man his integrity and innocence."[1]

Like Alton, Falkland's concern for his reputation, once he has forfeited all claim to it, is exalted into an obsession, and this is why once Caleb discovers the secret, he is mercilessly pursued and persecuted.

The Tyrrel and Emily sub-plot throws some light on the meaning of this relationship between Williams and his master. Tyrrel is also obsessed, this time by a hatred of Falkland, and when Emily falls in love with his enemy, her cousin pursues her to death. It is the State which gives Tyrrel the power to carry out this persecution to its final unlooked-for consummation; when he decides to arrest her for debts incurred whilst she was living on his charity, and a shocked servant remonstrates with him, it is to the State that he looks for justification:

> Ass! Scoundrel! I tell you she does owe me, -- owes me eleven hundred pounds. -- The law justifies it. -- What do you think laws were made for? -- I do nothing but what is right, and right I will have.[2]

---

[1] Cloudesley, "III, 31."

[2] Caleb Williams, p. 94.

The implication is that laws were made so that the rich can more conveniently persecute those who are less fortunate, but it soon becomes clear that this is not the case. When he learns of Emily's death his reaction is not quite as certain. It degenerates into bluster characterised by a strong undertone of pathos:

> "I am come sir," said she to Mr. Tyrrel, "to inform you that your cousin, Miss Melville, died this afternoon."
> "Died?"
> "Yes sir. I saw her die. She died in these arms."
> "Died? Who killed her? What do you mean?"
> "Who? Is it for you to ask that question? Your cruelty and malice killed her!"
> "Me? -- my? -- Poh! she is not dead -- it cannot be -- it is not a week since she left this house."
> "Do you not believe me? I say she is dead!"
> "Have a care woman! this is no matter for jesting. No: though she used me ill, I would not believe her dead for all the world."
> Mrs. Hammond shook her head in a manner expressive of grief and indignation.
> "No, no, no, no! -- I will never believe that! -- No, never!"
> "Will you come with me and convince your eyes? It is a sight worthy of you; and it will be a feast to such a heart as yours!" -- Saying this Mrs. Hammond offered her hand as if to conduct him to the spot.
> Mr. Tyrrel shrunk back.
> "If she be dead, what is it to me? Am I to answer for everything that goes wrong in the world? -- What do you come here for? Why bring your messages to me?"
> "To whom should I bring them, but to her kinsman, -- and her murderer?"
> "Murderer? -- Did I employ knives or pistols? Did I give her poison? I did nothing but what the law allows. If she be dead, nobody can say that I am to blame.
> "To blame? -- All the world will abhor and curse you. Were you such a fool as to think, because men pay respect to wealth and rank, this would extend to such a deed? They will laugh at so barefaced a cheat. The meanest beggar will spurn and spit at you. Aye, you may well stand confounded at what you have done. I will proclaim you to the whole world, and you will be obliged to fly the very face of a human creature!"

> "Good woman," said Mr. Tyrrel, extremely humbled, talk no more in this strain! -- Emmy is not dead! I am sure -- I hope -- she is not dead! -- Tell me that you have been deceiving me, and I will forgive you everything -- I will forgive her -- I will take her into favour -- I will do anything you please! -- I never meant her any harm!"
> "I tell you she is dead! You have murdered the sweetest innocent that lived! Can you bring her back to life as you have driven her out of it? If you could I would kneel to you twenty times a day! -- What is it you have done? Miserable wretch! did you think you could do and undo, and change things this way and that as you pleased?"[1]

Tyrrel is as much a victim of the power the law puts at his disposal as Emily was. The real villain is the system which gives him too much power and allows him to destroy himself with it, together with anyone else who stands in his way. Emily's death cost Tyrrel his own life in the end and brought about the waste of Falkland's talents.

Falkland is also a victim of the system in a similar way to Tyrrel. Whose pursuit of Emily parallels Falkland's pursuit of Caleb. In one of his fits of conscience he excalims:

> Detested be the universe, and the laws that govern it! Honour, justice, virtue are all the juggle of knaves! If it were in my power I would instantly crush the whole system into nothing![2]

But it is not in his power, and he can do no more about it than Williams can. The responsibility for changing things lies in the whole of society as Hawkins recognises in his letter;

> If we little folk had but the wit to do for ourselves, the great folks would not be such magotty changelings as they are.[3]

---

[1] Caleb Williams, pp. 104-5.

[2] Ibid., p. 135.

[3] Ibid., p. 132.

However, the Hawkinses cannot, by themselves, change the institutions that seem formed to serve their overlords; and the very fact that they do stand up for their rights causes their downfall. It is the part of Falkland and those like him, not to change the world by themselves, but to prepare the intellectual climate for such a change. In the terms of the novel, however, he is as much a captive of the system as they are.

The bandits seem to find one way out of this stalemate, but their solution is an abortive one. Treachery and the link which it retains with the law is still within their province, as Caleb finds to his cost, but even before that he was voicing doubts about the utility of their solution:

> I saw that in this profession were exerted uncommon energy, ingenuity and fortitude, and I could not help recollecting how admirably beneficial such qualities might be made in the great theatre of human affairs; while in their present direction they were thrown away upon purposes diametrically at war with the first interest of human society. Nor were their proceedings less injurious to their own interests than incompatible with the general welfare. The man who risks or sacrifices his life for the public cause is rewarded with the testimony of an approving conscience; but persons who wantonly defy the necessary, though atrociously exaggerated precautions of government in the matter of property at the same time that they commit an alarming hostility against the whole, are, as to their own concerns, scarcely less absurd and self-neglectful than the man who should set himself up as a mark for a file of musqueteers to shoot at.[1]

The last image is a telling one. It emphasises the point that outlawry is conditioned by the law, it is not an escape from it.

---

[1] Caleb Williams, p. 263.

Thus it is not true to say, as Dumas does, that the novel with its published ending "suggests to the reader that the imperfections of men rather than political and social institutions are responsible for the injustice of things as they are". It is only in the new ending that the full implications of the novel are fully realised, as Caleb recognises the waste which Falkland's education and character had precipitated, and the suffering that his own curiosity had caused, physically symbolised in the broken man who stood before him:

> I can conceive no greater shock than that I received from the sight of Mr. Falkland. His appearance on the last occasion on which we met, had been haggard, ghost like, and wild, energy in his gestures and frenzy in his aspect. It was now the appearance of a corpse. He was brought in a chair, unable to stand, fatigued and almost destroyed by the journey he had just taken. His visage was colourless; his limbs destitude of motion, almost of life.[1]

Falkland, like Tyrrel has pursued his victim to the breaking point but it was his own breaking point as well as that of Caleb. Emily died but Williams revolts. His decision to end the persecution, framed in angry rhetoric, is the clarion call of revolution, and as a last effort, it is designed to be successful one way or another:

> This is a moment pregnant with fate. I know -- I think I know -- that I will be triumphant. But should it be otherwise, at least he shall not be every way successful. His fame shall not be immortal as he thinks. These papers shall preserve the truth: they shall one day be published, and then the world shall do justice on us both. Recollecting that, I shall not die wholly without consolation. It is not to be endured that falsehood and tyranny should reign for ever.[2]

---

[1] Caleb Williams, p. 369.

[2] Caleb Williams, p. 365.

Thus it is assumed that truth will prevail one day, so a deliberate alteration in order to prove that it will is not necessary. The ending is not really as sentimental as Dumas feels it to be. Indeed, it is much more true to the art of the novel, because although one has to agree with Dumas' objection to the sentimentality and the speciousness of Falkland's retraction, Caleb's remorse is inherent in the novel's portrayal of his master's character and worth. This remorse contradicts the easy assumption that the aim of the conclusion is to show truth triumphant; it suggests on the contrary that there are some truths that are best concealed.

He had exposed Falkland on the consideration that it was:

> a mere piece of equity and justice such as an impartial spectator would desire, that one person should be miserable in preference to two, that one person rather than two should be incapacitated from acting his part and contributing his share to the general welfare . . . It is true Mr. Falkland was mortal but notwithstanding his apparent decay, he might live long. Ought I to submit to waste the best years of my life in my present wretched situation? . . . He would probably . . . leave a legacy of persecution to be received by me from the hands of Gines or some other villain equally atricious, when he should himself be no more.[1]

This is quite clearly sound enough utilitarian reasoning, and yet thinking about his character and his potentialities, Caleb exclaims with pain "There must have some dreadful mistake in the train of argument that persuaded me to be the author of his hateful scene. There must have been a better and more magnanimous remedy to the evils under which I groaned."[2]

Dumas is right in rejecting the 'better way' which Caleb later

---

[1] Caleb Williams, p. 370.

[2] Ibid., p. 371.

feels he should have pursued:

> I now see that mistake in all its enormity. I am sure that if I had opened my heart to Mr. Falkland, if I had told to him privately the tale I have now been telling, he could not have resisted my reasonable demand.[1]

His whole development is from a naive belief in the efficacy of truth, to a recognition that in the world of things as they are prejudice is often much stronger. As Dumas says "The plain fact is that we need not have read the novel with uncommon attention to know that Caleb did try to open his heart to Falkland; indeed Caleb in expressing such regret contradicts his assertion, stated only a moment before that "The restless and jealous anxiety of Mr. Falkland would not permit him to repose the least atom of confidence. (374)".[2]

Kettle sees the novel in class terms and he is right to do so. But Godwin's perception of the class struggle is conditioned by his age, by the French Revolution and the reaction of his own circle to that epoch-making event, to its promise and to its horror. The novel properly ends with Caleb's bewildered certainty that "there must have been a better way"; it is of no consequence that he fails to suggest what this better way was. With this ending it discards the mantle of allegory and assumes the proportions of myth. It becomes a symbol of the era of revolution, when Englishmen, aspiring to those ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity which had inspired France, looked over the channel and saw Terror.

---

[1] Caleb Williams, p. 374.

[2] Dumas, op. cit., loc. cit., p. 591.

> Almost every day was marked with blood; almost all that was greatest and most venerable in France was immolated at that monster's (Robespierre's) shrine, the queen, Mme. Elizabeth, Vergniaud, Gensonné, Roland, Mme. Roland, Bailli, Lavoisier (one could add Condorcet); it were endless to recollect a tithe of the bloody catalogue.[1]

The true friend of liberal aspirations could only shake his head as those of the social and intellectual aristocracy of France fell victim to the guillotine, and feel with Caleb Williams that "There must have been some dreadful mistake in the train of argument . . . There must have been a better way."

Godwin contradicts himself it is true, and perhaps he does not understand what exactly he has said, but there is no doubt at all that this novel is greater than his more controlled ones because it reflects, not the attempts of a philosopher to resolve or extend the implications of his philosophy through art, but the bewilderment of an age unsure of itself in the chaos which surrounds it.

Shelley pinpoints this phenomenon in his Defence of Poetry when he discusses the independence of the imagination from the intention of the poet -- by poet, of course, he means any creative writer:

> It is impossible to read the compositions of the most celebrated writers of the present day without being startled with the electric life which burns through their words. They measure the circumference and sound the depths of human nature with a comprehensive and all-penetrating spirit, and they are themselves perhaps the most sincerely

---

[1] Thoughts Occasioned by a Perusal of Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon etc., p. 4.

> astonished at its manifestations; for it is less their spirit than the spirit of the age.[1]

Perhaps this explains Godwin's own wry comment on the art of the novel in The Enquirer.[2]

This is true to a certain extent in St. Leon and Fleetwood, perhaps also in Mandeville, and it helps to explain some of Godwin's sentimentalism and Gothicism, but more important in the context of this chapter, it does bring the discussion of control away from the ideological motives of the author of Political Justice, and help to focus interest upon the novelist, as an imaginative writer.

---

[1] Shelley, "The Defence of Poetry," loc. cit., p. 59.

[2] Vide supra Chapter I, p. 9.

CHAPTER IV

Convention and Originality

It should now be quite clear that although Godwin's novels have a definite ideological aim, this aim is complicated and to some extent diffused, by the 'shaping spirit' of his imagination. How far then, do current literary fashions and frailties affect the process of this imagination? In the introduction to Mandeville, he insists that:

> I have never truckled to the world. I have never published anything with the slightest purpose to take advantage of the caprice of the day, to approach the public on its weak side, or to pamper its frailties. What I have produced was written merely in obedience to that spirit, unshackled and independent, whatever were its other qualities, that commanded me to take up my pen.[1]

It is clearly important to examine the validity and the implications of this claim in order to discuss more fully the nature of the relationship of imagination and art in his novels.

The novels come basically within the genre of 'roman philosophique', but as Weekes notes they stand at the confluence of many streams.[2] Furbank places them in the 'confession' tradition, which flows from Rousseau to Dostoevsky, and from what has already been said in chapter II about Godwin's confession technique, he is quite justified

---

[1] Mandeville, "I, xii".

[2] H. V. Weekes, op. cit., Chapter II.

in doing so.[1]

There is also a very good case for seeing them in the tradition of the educational novel. It has already been seen, again in chapter II, that he is very much concerned with the education of his heroes and that there is a certain quality of enquiry present in the novels where he deals at length with educational matters; particularly in Mandeville and Cloudesley. The answer which this 'enquiry' will provide is, of course, the one that Godwin intended should be given, but it is nevertheless there, giving to novels like Mandeville something of the 'case-book' feel. Yet, while they clearly belong to this tradition, Godwin has a much more integrated approach to the theme. In Day's Sandford and Merton, Brookes' Fool of Quality, and Mrs. Inchbald's Nature and Art, there is a careful balance between the example of a good education and the example of a bad one. Godwin's major interest is in the product of a given educational system, and in explaining through the education of his chosen individual certain characteristic traits which might be good or bad. Thus, whilst Mandeville's education looms large in that novel, and Clifford does provide a Sandford-like contrast (especially since "The virtues by which he was distinguished, rather drew their birth from the admirable predispositions which nature had endowed him, than any pains that had been taken with his moral education"[2]), nevertheless, it is still the consequences of that education which are important, and the educational aspect is integrated into an overall

---

[1] P. N. Burbank, "Godwin's Novels", Essays in Criticism, V (1955), 214.

[2] Mandeville, "III, 55".

psychological study.

There is also a movement towards Victorian school stories like Tom Brown's Schooldays, and Talbot Baines Reed's Fifth Form at St. Dominic's in the trial scene of Mandeville and Waller at Winchester. It will be remembered that a book of cartoons ridiculing King Charles was found in their apartment, and although it belonged to Waller, in a fit of panic he accused Mandeville of being its owner. Once he had told this lie he knew that it could never be retracted because he would be driven out of the school and the shame of it would break his father's heart. Mandeville scorns to expose his cowardly roommate and takes the punishment instead. Although he could not yet manage the fabled 'stiff upper lip' the general plot is a familiar one to anyone brought up amongst English school stories.

Godwin's work also belongs in the genre of the psychological novel. His interest, as he says in the preface to Fleetwood, is in 'tracing the involutions of mind and motive', and whether he concentrates on the relationship of a Falkland and a Williams, the egotism of a Fleetwood, the madness of a Mandeville, the guilt complex of an Alton or the sexual jealousy of a Deloraine, this interest is always foremost. This interest encouraged him to read Richardson, the first of the psychological novelists, who proved to be a firm influence on the early novels of Godwin. As a teen-age youth he had written 'Abridgements of Richardson', and tried to 'compose an imitation from day to day in walking'.[1] His second novel, Italian Letters, was

---

[1] An autobiographical fragment shown to B. R. Pollin by Marken and quoted in Pollin's introduction to Italian Letters, p. xii.

written in epistolary form and reproduces the basic plot of Clarissa, whilst Pamela provides not only the name of Williams, but also, the basic relationship pattern. Squire B. finds it quite simple to have Parson Williams thrown into gaol on a pretext very similar to the one Falkland uses when their respective protégés become troublesome to their peace.

Mandeville, Cloudesley and to a lesser extent St. Leon, belong to the historical novel tradition. In St. Leon, this means about as much as it meant for Walpole or Mrs. Radcliffe, although there is a certain amount of actual historical detail such as the account of the battle of Pavia, but in Mandeville, the carefully documented background of the Irish insurrection is used with the skill of Sir Walter Scott's handling of the Porteus riots in The Heart of Midlothian. Not only is the Irish rebellion an important influence on the development of Mandeville's character, it also sets the atmosphere which characterises Mandeville's mind and through his mind, the whole of the novel. In Cloudesley, he develops a theory of historical fiction, which centres on the portrayal of character and thus links it with the psychological novel. He had said as early as 1783, that:

> The mere external actions of men are not worth the studying: Who would have ever thought of going through a course of history if the science were comprised in a set of chronological tables? No: it is the hearts of men we should study. It is to their actions as expressive of disposition and character, we should attend.[1]

---

[1] "An Account of the Seminary etc.", in Four Early Pamphlets, p. 191.

In Cloudesley he takes this theory one stage further and insists that historical fiction is more dependable than that history "which is to be drawn from statements, documents, and letters written by those who were actually engaged in the scene":

> The writer collects his information of what the great men on the theatre of the world are reported to have said and done and then endeavours with his best sagacity to find out the explanation, to hit on that thread, woven through the whole contexture of the piece, which being discovered, we are told,
>
> no prodigies remain,
> Comets are regular, and Wharton plain.
>
> But man is a more complex machine, than is 'dreamed if in our philosophy' and it is probable that the skill of no moral anatomist has yet been consummate enough fully to solve the obscurities of any of the great worthies of ancient or modern times.
>
> The folds of the human heart, the endless intermixture of motive with motive, and the difficulty of assigning which of these had the greatest effect in producing a given action, the desire each man has to stand well with his neighbours, and well with himself, all render the attempt to pass a sound judgement upon the characters of men to a great degree impossible.
>
> Analysis is in this respect a science more commensurate to human faculties than synthesis. When the creator of the world of imagination, the poet, or the writer of fiction, introduces his ideal personage to the public, he enters upon the task with a preconception of the qualities that belong to this being, the principles of its actions and its necessary concomitants. He has thus two advantages: in the first place, his express office is to draw just conclusions from assigned premises, a task of no extraordinary difficulty: and secondly, while he endeavours to aid those conclusions by consulting the oracle in his bosom, the suggestions of his own heart, instructed as he is besides, by converse with the world, and a careful survey of the encounters that present themselves to his observation, he is much less liable to be cribbed and cabined in by those unlooked-for

> phenomena, which, in the history of an individual, seem to have a malicious pleasure in thrusting themselves forward to subvert our best digested theories.[1]

He goes on to put this theory into practice in his delineation of the character of Biren, the lover of the Empress Anne of Russia, who through his control of the Empress, ruled her empire by himself. It is interesting to see the way in which he creates the character, turning a historical figure into an abstract of tyrannical energy similar to Gabor, but although the historical background is well documented and well written, it is irrelevant to the main scene of action. There, while he does make use of historical facts about Florence and Sicily, he never reaches the point of achievement that was attained in Mandeville.

However, the fact that his use of history has a theoretical basis helps to highlight an important truth about Godwin's relationship to the literary conventions of his age; that whilst they have tended to condition his attitudes, his own position is based on a system of strict and considered principles, derived from the body of his own political and moral thinking. This is certainly true of his sentimentalism.

There can be no doubt that Godwin is sentimental. Indeed he sees it as part of the novelist's missionary task to engage the feelings of his reader either towards or against some aspect of 'things as they are':

---

[1] Cloudesley, "I, vi-xi".

> In subjects connected with the happiness of mankind, the feeling is the essence. If I do not describe the miserable effects of fanaticism and abuse, if I do not excite in the mind a sentiment of aversion and ardour, I had better leave the subject altogether, for I am betraying the cause of which I profess to be the advocate.[1]

Yet it should be remembered that the loose optimism and the belief in the essential goodness of mankind is shown to be highly unsatisfactory. McNeil and Filosanto are dangerously naive, as Fleetwood and St. Leon discover to their cost. Henrietta in Mandeville reads her brother a lecture from Shaftesbury, 'a favourite author', (and Godwin apologises for the anachronism), but despite the good intentions her words engender, they are unable to cure him of his obsession, in fact they make it worse:

> It was a vehement and terrible effort that I had made, to suppress my nature, to substitute mildness for my native ferocity, to be kind, and forbearing and benign, when it was my nature's hint to be restless, and stubborn, and dark of soul; and, in proportion to the exertions that it had cost me was the vehemence of the recoil, when the bough that had been bent was constrained no longer. Philosophy, how specious is thy name and how mighty thy vaunts![2]

Throughout his main novels -- and this is also true of his first novel, Damon and Delia -- the main theme is the disappointment of idealism and the necessity for a philosophy which sees beyond man as he is. It is apparent in St. Leon, for example, that gratitude must be rejected because it cannot be expected from Man as he is seen in the novel; anything which tends to diminish the responsibility of the

---

[1] Political Justice, "I, 269".

[2] Mandeville, "II, 208-9".

individual to look to man's future, and encourages him to expect present rewards, is pernicious because it suggests that man is basically egoistic -- one utilitarian idea that Godwin rejects -- and, because, since it does not take account of the disappointment that is inevitable in human affairs it could lead towards misanthropy. There is therefore, an emphasis upon duty, because duty is conceived as a rational action, and a disinterested one. Thus any concession to the feelings which attenuates the rationally benevolent action, is generally harmful. Harley in The Man of Feeling, paused to consider his duty in this respect before giving a shilling to a plausible old fortune teller, but he allowed his irrational impulses rather than the demands of strict virtue to rule him:

> Harley had drawn a shilling from his pocket; but Virtue bade him consider on whom he was going to bestow it. Virtue held back his arm; but a milder form, a younger sister of Virtue's, not so severe as Virtue, nor so serious as Pity, smiled upon him; his fingers lost their compression, nor did virtue offer to catch the money as it fell.[1]

Perhaps Godwin was thinking of this passage when he wrote in Political Justice:

> Justice obliges (a man) to regard (his) property as a trust, and calls upon him maturely to consider in what manner it may be employed for the increase of liberty, knowledge and virtue. He has no right to dispose of a shilling of it at the suggestion of his caprice.[2]

---

[1] Henry MacKenzie, The Man of Feeling (New York, 1958), p. 14.

[2] Political Justice, "I, 134".

His attitude towards the intuitionist sentimentality can be correctly gauged by comparing St. Leon's pragmatic approach in Hungary, where he "laid it down as a law unto myself, to commit the least practible violence upon the genuine action of human society in pursuit of the means of subsistence". If Rousseau knew that "Je n'ai qu'a me consulter sur ce que je veux faire; tout ce que je sens etre bien est bien, tout que je sens etre mal est mal"[1], Godwin was just as certain that intuitionism was an 'absurd indulgence' which would probably lead to a "blind partiality, inflicting calamity without remorse upon many, perhaps, in order to promote the unorganised interest of a few".[2]

In an essay for the Publications of the Modern Languages Association of America,[3] B. Sprague Allan discusses Godwin's sentimentalism, and tried to demonstrate that it is basically assimilated from Rousseau, although he does make the above noted exception. It is difficult to comment on this essay at length because this would involve much tedious repetition. There are however, two points he makes which deserve consideration. Firstly, he links Godwin's environmentalism with Rousseau's theory that civilisation is vicious, and accuses them both of the 'ethical fallacy that shifts responsibility to society instead of the wrongdoer'. He quotes the bandits of Caleb Williams and Cloudesley, and the character of Falkland in support of this argument. However, he

---

[1] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Émile (Paris, 1904), "I, 257". Cited by Allan in "William Godwin as a Sentimentalist", P.M.L.A., xxxiii (1918), 4.

[2] Political Justice, "I, 323".

[3] B. Sprague Allan, op. cit., pp. 1-29.

fails to see that Godwin's tragic vision militates against this sort of sentimentality. When Godwin sympathises with Raymond, St. Elmo and Falkland, it is not "the reassuring, charitable 'He meant well' of the sentimentalist" that is heard, but the painful exclamation against wasted lives of the tragedian. Falkland, as we have seen, promised so much; he was to be Clare's successor as an apostle of universal benevolence and the perfectibility of man, and when a tragic flaw destroys these potentialities the human race loses a valuable friend. The same is true of St. Elmo in Cloudesley.

Allan's second point is that whilst Godwin "summarily rejects as fanciful Rousseau's theory of man's degeneration from a state of innocence, (he) idealises . . . the simple life, enriched indeed, by intellectual pleasures, but free from titles, luxury, ostentatious wealth, and artificial standards of decorum":

> Godwin does not, to be sure, glorify the apathy of ignorance, but, nevertheless, he is in sympathy with the Arcadian ideal, and in so far as he is so, he is in sympathy with the great body of sentimental literature that depicts the delights of a thatched cottage and a humble repast of curds and cream.[1]

It is very doubtful to what extent Godwin is really in 'sympathy with the Arcadian ideal'; much more so than Allan would have it believed. He is quite right to note that he does not 'glorify the apathy of ignorance'; Godwin's philosophy depends on an educated and liberal-minded group of disciples who are prepared to change the opinions of their fellows, in order to bring about a more auspicious climate in

---

[1] B. Sprague Allan, op. cit., p. 9.

which perfectibility might begin to work. It has already been noted that he regretted Clare's retirement from 'the great theatre of human affairs', and it is true of all Godwin's heroes, that they feel the necessity to go out and earn a place for themselves in the world. Arcadian simplicity is at best a very ambiguous ideal;

> Solitude is one of the highest enjoyments of which our nature is susceptible. Solitude is also, when too long continued, capable of being made the most severe, indescribable, unendurable source of anguish. But I was in no danger of ever having too much of it, or that the goddess would ever approach me, clad in her Gorgon terrors, and circled with the wild, formless, terrific, maddening images she is capable of conjuring up in the soul.[1]

Mandeville takes this equivocal attitude to his Arcadian existence in the family of the Hampshire farmer:

> What a life was this! Was it possible to pass the whole of the short term of human existence in this tranquil scene? Here no cares appeared to intrude; no vexations to break the midnight slumber; scarcely anything even to distinguish the events of one day from the events of the next. This seems of all things most exactly to answer to the idea of the poet, of a life spent in dulcet idleness, forgetting all, and by all forgotten, wrapt in happy, yet unenviable obscurity, full of enjoyment, yet leaving no marks behind.[2]

Allan's remarks are obviously based on his reading of St. Leon, and, indeed, in this novel Godwin seems to go out of his way to praise the pastoral simplicity of Switzerland. However, it should be remembered that the rusticity of the St. Leon family was forced upon them by St. Leon's vices. When Marguerite launches into her famous

---

[1] Deloraine, "I, 36".

[2] Mandeville, "II, 216".

praise of the pastoral life, it is designed to comfort her husband who at the moment was immersed in a guilt complex of romantic excess. She was only half persuaded of its excellence herself. Nevertheless, the following passage is definitely Rousseauistic:

> You were rash in the experiment you made upon the resources of your family. But have you done us mischief, or have you conferred a benefit? I more than half incline to the latter opinion. Let us at length dismiss artificial tastes, and idle and visionary pursuits, that do not flow in a direct line from any of the genuine principles of our nature! Here we are surrounded with sources of happiness. Here we may live in true patriarchal simplicity. What is chivalry, what are military prowess and glory? Believe me they are the passions of a mind depraved, that with ambitious refinements seeks to be wise beyond the dictates of sentiment or reason! There is no happiness so solid or so perfect, as that which disdains these refinements. You, like me are fond of the luxuriant and romantic scenes of nature. Here we are placed in the midst of them . . . Alas, Reginald! it is, I fear, too true that the splendour in which we lately lived has its basis in oppression; and that the superfluities of the rich are a boon extorted from the hunger and misery of the poor. Here we see a peasantry more peaceful and less oppressed than perhaps any other tract of the earth can exhibit. They are erect and independent, at once friendly and fearless. Is not this a refreshing spectacle? I now begin practically to perceive that the cultivators are my brethren and my sisters; and my heart bounds with joy as I feel my relationship to society multiply.[1]

Marguerite, however, is no primitivist, and she goes on to make some important qualifications to this idyllic picture:

> I love the peasants for their accessories, or by comparison. They are comparatively more secure than other large masses of men, and the scenes in the midst of

---

[1] St. Leon, p. 85.

> which they are placed are delightful to sense. But I would not sacrifice in prone oblivion the best characteristics of my nature. I put in my claim for refinements and luxuries; but they are the refinements and purifying of intellect, and the luxuries of uncostly, simple taste. I would improve my mind, I would enlarge my understanding, I would contribute to the instruction of all connected with me, and to the mass of human knowledge. The pleasures I would pursue and disseminate, though not dependant on a large property, are such as could not be understood by the rustic and the savage. - Our son, bred in these fields, indeed, will probably never become a preux chevalier, or figure in the roll of military heroes; but he may become something happier and better.[1]

Basil Willey remarks of her retraction, "It was in this manner that Godwin tried to combine 'Primitivism' with a belief in 'progress', 'Nature' with 'cultivation'; and he supposes himself, perhaps wrongly to differ from Rousseau on this point".[2] It should be remembered that his ideal is Mr. Clare, and although (in Allan's words) "When (the) theory, that character is moulded by external forces beyond the control of the individual, is held by anyone, who, like Godwin, is of the opinion that man is not by nature egoistic, it is akin to the Rousseauistic idea of innate goodness",[3] there are no noble savages in his novels. St. Leon's negro, Hector, is indeed good-natured, but he is also naive, and this naivété brings about his own destruction and nearly involves the destruction of his master's family.

---

[1] St. Leon, p. 86.

[2] Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background (London, 1962), p. 222.

[3] B. Sprague Allan, op. cit., p. 7.

This is a firm reminder that the thematic movement of the novel is from innocence and naive idealism, to experience and disappointment. St. Leon praises the virtues of poverty, until he experiences its effect; he praises wealth until he discovers that human nature interferes with his best laid plans of benevolence. Similarly, Marguerite soon finds that those 'accessories' for which she loved the peasants were illusionary when their home is destroyed by a thunderstorm. She discovers both what it means to be subject to the vicissitudes of nature, and how much has to be paid for 'luxuriant and romantic surroundings'.

> Under her direction the hills had been covered with vines, and the fields with corn. She had purchased cows to furnish us with milk, and sheep with their fleeces, and had formed her establishment upon the model of the Swiss peasantry in our neighbourhood. Reverting to the simplicity of nature, appeared to her like building upon an immovable basis, which the clash of nations could not destroy, and which was too humble to fear the treachery of courts, or the caprice or artificial refinements.
>
> It was all swept away in a moment. Our little property looked as if it had been particularly a mark for the vengeance of Heaven, and was more utterly destroyed than any of the surrounding scenes. There was not a tree left standing; there was not a hedge nor a limit that remained within or around it; chaos had here resumed his empire, and avenged himself of the extraordinary order and beauty it had lately displayed.[1]

The last paragraph gives away an essentially Augustan attitude towards nature.

Marguerite is even wrong about her son. The beauties of a simple life have no attraction for him and the fact that he eventually becomes a 'preux chevalier' instead like the Countess of Winchilsea's

---

[1] St. Leon, p. 90.

shepherd,[1] of finding that the world is too much for him, suggests that Godwin recognised that she was wrong. There is surely a trace of the Augustan feeling for order and place here as well. After all Charles was the son of a nobleman, and for him to revert to rusticity would have been a violation of Pope's ladder of creation as much as the principle of utility. Charles at least felt out of place, limited by his sense of family responsibility;

> His disposition had always led him to bold and adventurous conceptions; nothing less than an imperious sense of duty could have restrained him from quitting our cottage, and casting himself upon the world in search of honour and distinction. His generous heart had beat to burst away from the obscurity of his station; and it was with impatience and discontent that he looked forward to the life of a swain.[2]

Godwin's clear declaration of his 'engagement' has led his critics to a mistaken assumption that he is uncomplicated. Actually his ideology is discussed within a network of ironies that depends upon an interaction of words and deeds. His early work shows him to be quite a skilful ironist; in the Advice to a Young Statesman he adopts a Machiavellian mask for an amusing and cutting attack on the King's 'secret advisers', whilst the preface to Imogen, and to some extent, the novel itself, parodies the pretentions of MacPherson and Walpole. In his later work, however, the humour goes out of his irony as it becomes a technique of disillusionment rather than an expression of idealism, and this has led to a wrong assumption that it was abandoned

---

[1] vide The Shepherd and the Calm

[2] St. Leon, p. 181.

altogether.

Voisine, in a study of Rousseau's influence in England, says that Godwin was not so much a follower of Rousseau the philosopher, as the forerunner of the Romantic Rousseau of Byron and Shelley:

> Un personnage pathétique, vivant dans un autre monde, artisan de son propre malheure . . . surtout cette tragique épave, victime de ses propres passions, que Mary évoquait avec emotion dans ses Rights of Women.[1]

He bases this judgement on Fleetwood, where McNeil is presented as a personal friend of Rousseau, having known the Frenchman when he lived for some years on the banks of Lake Windermere. Rousseau had in fact only stayed in England for five months and then he had lived solely in Wooton, Staffordshire which is some one hundred and twenty-five miles from Windermere. McNeil described his friend in these terms:

> Rousseau was a man of exquisite sensibility, and that sensibility had been insulted and trifled with in innumerable instances, sometimes by the intolerance of priestcraft and power, sometimes by the wanton and ungenerous sports of men of letters. He lived, however, toward the close of his life in a world of his own, and saw nothing as it really was; nor were his mistakes less gross, than if he had asserted that his little cottage was menaced by a besieging army, and assailed with a battery of cannon. Whether from the displeasing events that had befallen him, or from any seeds of disease kneaded up in his original constitution, I was convinced, from a multitutde of indications, that Rousseau was not in his sober mind . . . yet I was often led to doubt whether Rousseau, spite of the disease under which he laboured, deserved, on the whole to be termed unfortunate. When he was induced to dwell for a time upon the universal combination which he believed to be formed against him, he then undoubtedly suffered. But he had such resources in his own mind!

---

[1] J. Voisine, Jean-Jacques Rousseau En Angleterre À L'Époque Romantique (Paris, 1956), p. 185.

> He could so wholly abstract himself from this painful contemplation; his vein of enthusiasm was so sublime; there was such a childlike simplicity often uppermost in his carriage; his gaiety upon certain occasions was so good-humoured, sportive and unbroken! It was difficult for me to persuade myself that person I saw at such times, was the same as at others, was beset by such horrible visions.[1]

"Voila Rousseau devenu personnage de roman" exclaims Voisine, but what he does not point out is that this Rousseau is deliberately used as a contrast to Fleetwood, who, with far less reason, has allowed the vices of mankind to make him sullen and misanthropic. With his madness and his obsession, this Rousseau becomes a white archetype of Mandeville, a person rather than a philosopher.

Godwin sees Rousseau, in fact, as a sort of Harley, a man who can pass through the vicissitudes of life without ending up by hating his fellows, and it was this sort of hero with which he was to concern himself in Fleetwood. Sub-titled The New Man of Feeling, the novel is to some extent a satire upon the man of 'exquisite sensibility', and through the dialectic of Fleetwood and McNeil, sets out to ask for a sense of proportion and a more realistic basis for philanthropy than acute feelings. He does in fact, although without Voltaire's ironic pose, what Candide did for eighteenth-century optimism. In Fleetwood sensibility is taken to the point of aberration; even Sir Walter Scott, promoter of McKenzie, felt constrained to object to his 'over-strained delicacies'.[2]

---

[1] Fleetwood, pp. 191-192.

[2] Cited by Weekes, op. cit., p. 177.

Perhaps this kind of hero was really destroyed by Werther, when Goethe took him and his exquisite feelings beyond the point of self-destruction, but Werther gave rise to a new kind of hero who was even less healthy, in René, Obermann, Lamartine's Raphael and Byron's self-dramatisations. By exaggerating this egotism in Fleetwood, Godwin rejects the fashionable weltschmerz of this type of hero, but as we have already seen, he does not manage to do this successfully until Mandeville. Nevertheless, his difficulty with this figure is not due to any romantic misrepresentations of his own problems, it is rather due to an attempt to resolve the dilemma which these problems, (notably his disillusionment with the idealism of Political Justice), present to his faith in the perfectibility of mankind.

Godwin's sentimentalism devolves much more from the tension between these critical and utopian views of man that are present in his own philosophy, than it does from the loose sentimentalism of the age in which he was writing. It has already been seen how important are his attempts to present or to resolve this tension in all his novels from Caleb Williams to Mandeville. It is also important in Cloudesley, although vitiated by the sentimentalism which encouraged Godwin to provide a happy ending. It might be remembered however, as a partial attenuation of his artistic crime, that even Holcroft made such a sacrifice to his circulation figures in Hugh Trevor, where a long-lost uncle and a wealthy inheritance, enable Hugh to marry his sweetheart, Olivia.

It is hardly fair to discuss Deloraine in this context. If Hazlitt felt that Godwin had exhausted himself by Cloudesley, a reading

of the first volume of his last novel would have convinced him that its author was senile. Here the picture of Deloraine's first marriage is both repetitive and maudlin to the point where it becomes physically embarrassing. The real interest of this novel lies in Godwin's use of the Gothic tradition, and he still displays the hand of a master in this field at least.

The social theme underlying Deloraine is very vague and fragmentary; it appears in the hero's revulsion from the cold process of the law as it moves to the public execution of an individual:

> The heart of the judge is dead within him, and so of the rest. The whole is determined in a way that more resembles the turning of a machine, than the decision of that complicated being called man, endowed with eyes to see and an understanding to discriminate, and a heart to feel, and a moral sense to judge according to the eternal law written in the skies.[1]

The main emphasis is laid on the more personal moral that passions should be controlled by reason, and Delorain says of his crime:

> I had shewn myself the slave of passion, incapable of moderation and restraint, hurried into the last excesses, which are usually only committed by creatures without education, without discipline, and accustomed to listen to no suggestion but those of unlicensed passion.[2]

After an idyllic first marriage, Deloraine remarries to Margaret, a woman whose real lover, William, had been shipwrecked whilst he was returning from Canada to claim her as his wife. He had gone to Canada because her father, desiring a connection with a nobler branch of his

---

[1] Deloraine, "II, 169-170".

[2] Ibid., p. 189.

family, had forbidden their marriage, and promoted, as a suitor to his daughter, the son of Lord Borradale. Margaret resolved to obey her father, but she pined away and made herself so ill that Lord Borradale discovered her unwillingness and prevented the nuptials that were then preparing. Her father realised that he had gone too far and sent for William to come back and claim his lover.

Margaret watched the boat sink as she awaited his arrival, and when there was no news of William after a long anxious wait, she allowed herself to give in to despair, she 'died inwardly'. This made her even more beautiful, and Deloraine falls in love with her and proposes marriage. This point is the crux of the whole novel. His love for Margaret is brought about primarily by those aspects of beauty which derive from Burke's Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.

> I should have resisted an imperious beauty, that claimed to draw me a captive at her chriot wheels. I should have refused to be the victim of the attractions of luxury and voluptuousness. I should have disdained to become the conquest of mere softness and frailty. But I found in Beauty modified by the impressions of grief, something that I could not hold out against. Beauty prepares the mind of man to submit; and pity binds him with an invincible chord.[1]

Burke says that:

> So far is perfection, considered as such, from being the cause of beauty; that this quality, where it is highest in the female sex, almost always carries with it an idea of weakness and imperfection. Women are very sensible of this; for which reason, they learn

---

[1] Deloraine, "I, 270".

> to lisp, to totter in their walk, to counterfeit weakness, and even sickness. In all this, they are guided by nature. Beauty in distress is much the most affecting beauty.[1]

This circumstance in Margaret, Deloraine goes on to say, "exercised a magic influence over my mind". He praises her with extravagance, but attaches an undertone of magic to her charm which links it to a concern with the distinction between appearance and reality which runs throughout the novel:

> She was like those creatures we read of in fairy tales, touched by the wand of a malignant enchanter, condemned never again to mix in the realities of life, but still retaining a portion, however incomplete, of vitality and sense, still mournful and sad, and destined never to rise again into interest, and hope.[2]

In an even more telling passage Godwin employs an image of Circe to clarify her intangible effect upon his hero:

> My present passion was not like what has been described as
>
> a home-felt delight,
> A sober certainty of waking bliss.
>
> Oh, no! It was "the song of Circe and the sirens; it took the prisoned soul and lapped it in Elysium; it lulled my sense in pleasing slumbers, and in sweet madness robbed me of myself.[3]

Deloraine has been trapped by his own sensuality, which is the sensuality of the Gothic novel as a whole; of Mrs. Radcliffe, of Matthew

---

[1] Edmund Burke, Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful (London, 1958), p. 110.

[2] Deloraine, "II, 115".

[3] Ibid., "I, 284".

Lewis and of Charles Maturin. Margaret is, in a way, an externalisation of this sensuality, just as Frankenstein's monster is an externalisation of his creator's own psychological potentialities.

In order to escape from this enchantment, which shows itself as sexual jealousy, Deloraine has to commit violence, and the most outrageous of violent acts, murder. William had felt that if Margaret could be false to him and her love for him, then the world would be plunged into chaos:

> The earth has no centre; and the broad and all inclosing firmament is built on a spider's web.[1]

and it is this chaos that overtakes her husband, who is plunged into a gothic chase, pursued all round Europe and finally led to the traditional decaying castle on the Rhine.

It is in this castle that he experiences that recognition of his own guilt that comes to all Godwin's heroes at one time or another. (Except, of course, Fleetwood and Mandeville.) He finds a paper which describes his crime in exaggerated terms, but in this exaggeration he perceives a germ of truth, which brings the whole enormity of his crime flooding back to him. This discovery is followed by a short period of ecstatic peace which marks the end of his enchantment.

> I viewed the parting splendours of the closing day, already more than half extinct, and which every moment yielded a further step to the ashy tint of the evening. A life-giving breeze played upon my cheek and forehead. Presently the evening-star came, to assert its prerogative as precursor of the host of heaven. At that moment all grief, all

---

[1] Deloraine, "II, 75".

> sorrow, all remorse and reproach of things past, seemed to pass away from me. I was like a new born child, conscious only of internal sensation, swallowed up in the calm abstraction of existence. This did not last more than a quarter of an hour. But it was like a solitary green island, firm and immovable under the foot of the stranger, in the midst of the never reposing waves of a tumultuous sea. I gave myself up to it, and it seemed an earnest of everlasting existence.[1]

The sense of katharsis which is so firmly felt here, and so beautifully evoked, signifies his escape at least from the blindness that marred Fleetwood. Deloraine is still subject to a sense of guilt, but it is no longer the self-reproach of an educated human being who feels that he has acted like an animal, it is the remorse of a man who has finally realised the enormity of his crime against the whole human race.

He wakes from this scene of bliss to overhear the castle's curator making arrangements to betray him, and he decides to return to England and to work out his fate in that civilisation which saw his crime committed, and whose regulations were pursuing him. He is finally released from this pursuit by his daughter who persuades his pursuer, Travers, that her father has suffered enough, and this time the truth does prevail.

Godwin's last novel "enacts' a plea for self-control through the hero's tragic failure to exercise this virtue. Yet it is also a Gothic novel which conforms to the highest standards of Gothicism. Godwin has used the implications of the tradition to make his own moral point. In St. Leon, Eino Railo accuses him of using the Gothic as a

---

[1] Deloraine, "III, 193-4".

decoy, whilst forwarding his philosophical aims, and she is essentially right.[1] Edgar Rosenberg has said of that novel that "In a novel whose chief lessons are the need for domestic solidarity and the vicious influence of unproductive wealth, the Wandering Jew serves an ideal function. Given his anterior status of magician, he brings the hero the two gifts best suited to drive home Godwin's moral: the curse of human isolation and the curse of illimitable riches".[2]

Leaving aside the over-simplications of 'his supposed moral', it should be noted that Godwin also gives this traditional motif an added twist, because the Jew, as Godwin conceives of him, is bound by family affections in a particularly important way; and when St. Leon takes refuge from the inquisition in the home of a Jew he does not fail to make this point; "family affections" says his rescuer, "are entwined with our existence, the fondest and best loved part of ourselves".[3]

Indeed, Godwin does not only use current literary conventions for his own ends, he also reshapes them for a new age. It has been seen that in Fleetwood, the man of feeling is transmuted into the egoistical hero. In St. Leon, Rosenberg says, the stories of the Wandering Jew and the Devil's compact are intertwined "in such a way that the fusion of the Wanderer and the black magician become accessible to later novelists".[4] The most significant of these later novelists is of

---

[1] Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle (New York, 1962), p. 203.

[2] Edmund Rosenberg, From Shylock to Svengali (Stanford, 1960), p. 224.

[3] St. Leon, p. 345.

[4] Op. cit., p. 230.

course Maturin, whose Melmoth was called 'one of the great images drawn by the greatest geniuses of Europe' by Honore dé Balzac in 1835. The other three that Balzac singles out are the Don Juan of Mozart, the Faust of Goethe and the Manfred of Byron. Byron, too was very impressed by St. Leon, and he is reported to have asked Godwin when he was very old "Why do you not write another novel?" . . . the philosopher replied that it would kill him. "What matter?", Byron returned, "We should have another St. Leon".[1] He was also fascinated by Falkland, and to a certain extent the Byronic hero is a development from Falkland and Bethlem Gabor in St. Leon, although Caleb Williams is the true promethean. Gabor's cynicism and misanthropy (which causes a reaction against St. Leon's benevolence similar to Nietzche's reaction against Pascal) produces an attitude of defiance cast in the heroic mould, whilst his final death by fire marks him as a typical figure of the Weltschmerz, but Caleb's curiosity is a much subtler and a much more modern form of prometheanism. The idea of hubris which both Byron and Shelley supercede with a Romantic defiance of limits, is involved very closely with Caleb's later remorse; it is a development from the libido scienda of Dr. Faustus, which it brings up to date by placing it in a social context.

Mary Shelley takes over this theme from her father in her Frankenstein, and it is interesting to note that Muriel Spark argues that Mary's novel can be read as a reaction to the rational humanism of her husband. Harold Bloom follows her idea:

---

[1]Quoted by F. K. Brown, The Life of William Godwin (London, 1926), p. 147. Cited by Weekes.

> Certainly Shelley was worried lest the novel be taken as a warning against the inevitable moral consequences of an unchecked experimental Prometheanism and scientific materialism. The preface insists that:
>
> "The opinions which naturally spring from the character and situation of the hero are by no means to be conceived as existing always in my own conviction, nor is any inference justly to be drawn from the following pages as prejudicing any philosophical doctrine whatsoever.[1]

The two concepts of Prometheus run side by side throughout the Romantic movement, but it is Godwin's that has become more important.

Actually Godwin is very impressive when he is seen simply as a Gothic novelist. The themes of terror that so many of the writers in this tradition use simply for clumsy effect, he translates into psychological terms which serve to enforce his main character study without any gratuitous effect. The theme of incest in Mandeville, for example forces the reader into a recognition of Mandeville's madness at the critical moment; just as he has persuaded his sister not to marry Clifford the reason for his irrational hatred becomes glaringly obvious:

> Henrietta who was the jewel of the earth to me, and to whom all the rest of the world was only the crust and setting, was mine . . . Henrietta was saved, saved from pollution, from blasphemy, from the most execrable of crimes, saved for her sex, for her country and for me.[2]

His obsession with Clifford is also given a close under-fabric of sexuality; he defines their relationship in terms of marriage:

---

[1]Harold Bloom, "Frankenstein or the New Prometheus", Partisan Review, xxxii (Fall, 1965), 614.

[2]Mandeville, "III, 333".

> "Marriages," it is said, "are made in heaven". The power that moulds us all according to his pleasure, divided the human species into male and female, and decreed that it was not good for man to remain without his mate. In his Providence he has fitted to every variety of the masculine character a female adapted to afford him satisfaction and felicity; and happy the man to whose encounter fortune shall present the fair, that by eternal decree was designated to become his partner. In the same manner as, in the world of human creatures, there exist certain mysterious sympathies and analogies, drawing and attracting each to each, and fitting them to be respectively sources of mutual happiness, so, I was firmly persuaded, there are antipathies, and properties interchangeably irreconciliable and destructive to each other, that fit one human being to be the source of another's misery. Beyond doubt I had found this true opposition in Clifford.

He goes on, giving this relationship a sado-masochistic twist:

> Mezentius, the famous tyrant of antiquity, tied a living body to a dead one, and caused the one to take in, and gradually to become a partner of, the putrescence of the other . . . Something similar to this, was the connection which an eternal decree had made between Clifford and me.[1]

Gradually the incest merges with the obsession and moves towards a consummation, which, significantly enough, takes place on the wedding night of Clifford and Henrietta. Unaware that the marriage has taken place, Mandeville ambushes the wedding party, intending to abduct his sister. In the ensuing melée he receives a flesh would from Clifford and the would seems to exalt his enemy to the part of the sexually triumphant male:

---

[1] Mandeville, "II, 102-104".

> Clifford had set his mark upon me, as a token that I was his for ever.[1]

This same sexuality accounts for some of the extraordinary power of the Falkland-Williams relationship, and at one point Falkland plays Lovelace to Caleb's Clarissa; he tells him that

> I have dug a pit for you; and whichever way you move, backward or forward, to the right or the left, it is ready to swallow you.[2]

However, it is hardly necessary to reassert that this Gothic undertone serves only to give power and a sort of abstract body to Godwin's creations, it does not undermine the social implications of his novels, this always remains primary.[3]

The Marquis de Sade recognised in the Gothic novel

> the inevitable fruits of the revolutionary shock felt by all Europe . . . For those who knew all the miseries with which scoundrels can oppress men, the novel became as difficult to write as it was monotonous to read . . . It was necessary to call Hell to the rescue . . . and to find in the world of nightmare (symbols adequate to express) the history of man in this iron Age.[4]

Godwin, preferred to draw his symbols from the human condition, from man as he was seen to be in the midst of a society in reaction to that 'revolutionary shock', and he was thus able to temper the excesses which

---

[1] Mandeville, "III, 367".

[2] Caleb Williams, p. 177.

[3] Whilst is generally true, it does not apply to Fleetwood, for reasons that have already discussed.

[4] Cited by W. F. Axton in his introduction to Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer (Lincoln, 1961), p. x.

Sade both poses and represents, with a balanced idealism based on his faith in the perfectibility of the human race. His Gothicism is neither gratuitous nor pornographic and, it conforms as much as his sentimentalism does to his claim that what he had produced "was written merely in obedience to that spirit, unshackled and independent, whatever were its other qualities, that commanded me to take up my pen".

CONCLUSION

There can be no doubt that William Godwin's novels are sometimes flawed and sometimes considerable works of art. Whatever the raw material, the 'shadow' that produced their original inspiration, his imagination forges from it symbols of an often terrible grandeur and an almost tragic pathos. It is perhaps tempting to follow Sir Leslie Stephen and see this art as something that develops in spite of Godwin's self-asserted 'engagement' to the cause of social reform. This is not only, however, too easy an assumption to be wholely true, it is based on a misconception of the nature of this 'engagement', and indeed, of how the novelist was trying to fulfil the rôle in which it involved him.

His major concern lies in the opposition between 'things as they are' and 'things as they could be' and in his determination to awaken an intelligent appreciation of this conflict in the minds of his readers. Before there can be a change for the better, there must be a clear recognition of what is wrong with life and society as it is; if this were not so then the novelist who advocated change would himself be exercising a kind of tyranny in expecting others to follow him without fully understanding their reasons for so doing. He sets out quite firmly to destroy the dangerously complacent illusions with which his readers ward off their responsibilities, placing the onus of change upon the individual.

The heroes of his novels represent men of worth who have been spoiled in some way by their social environment, and by a careful and sympathetic discussion of the way that they are spoiled, he creates a symbol of 'man as he is'. His perspective of change, the revolutionary element in his novels, being meliorationist, gives the task of representing a better society to a younger generation than that of his hero, so his determination to deal with Truth involves a sense of tragedy in that the flawed hero cannot be reclaimed. This tragedy becomes a telling condemnation of the social forces that have shaped the hero as these forces are carefully exposed within the novel. Yet the happy ending is properly precluded by the intensity with which Godwin develops his characters, an intensity that almost confers a kind of fatalism upon them. Thus in Fleetwood, the novelist is finally unable to integrate Fleetwood with the social structure which his egotism had previously rejected. The Philosophical intention and the artistic technique therefore go hand in hand.

Godwin's philosophy underlies his art; it is both its inspiration and the basis for the conception of character, education and truth which pervades his novels. Through his imagination this underlying philosophy, as I have said, is forged into symbols that both have a life of their own yet also develop the initial political and psychological theories of Political Justice etc. towards a deeper understanding of the complexity of human nature and of social institutions.

While the 'missionary intention' of which he spoke in Thoughts on Man is unmistakably present, his novels always seem too tangible to be called allegories. Perhaps this is not true of St. Leon where Godwin's control is a tour de force, working through an elaborate pattern of ironies and carefully selecting reactions to enforce his initial moral point. It is perhaps significant that even two years after the publication of St. Leon he was still quoting the preface as an important modification of Political Justice. Two years after the publication of the second edition of Caleb Williams, which contained the preface setting out his intention in that work, he was to remark upon the almost insuperable difficulties of an author who would be moral, an indication at least that the 'tendency' of that novel was different from his original intention. Yet even in St. Leon, he creates, in the alienated and miserable chevalier, a figure who became both a symbol and an inspiration to the poets of the High Romantic period, a type of Childe Harold, and a reminder that Prometheus was condemned to eternal suffering.

Both Fleetwood and Mandeville are firmly rooted in Godwin's paradoxical estimate of man but here the ambiguity enacted through individual characters projects a very real dilemma into the art of the novel. In Fleetwood, Godwin struggles unsuccessfully with this ambiguity, and his creature, like Frankenstein's monster, slips from his grasp and threatens the world. His threat is eventually contained in Mandeville, where obsessive egotism is taken to its logical conclusion in madness, and the meliorationist world of Clifford and Henrietta is reasserted.

After this success, the novels become fragmentary and they lose their power with their unity of purpose. Cloudesley is indeed based on the principles of Political Justice, but these are sold out to sentimentality. Deloraine does achieve something, but its achievement is vitiated by sentimentality and has, anyway, little to do with the achievement of his earlier and better novels. It does, however, serve as a reminder that Godwin was writing within the sentimental and Gothic traditions (inter alia). His use of Gothic symbols and motifs is purposefully contained within his social intentions. The development of Caleb Williams from an attack upon the ruling classes to a concern with the results of the French Revolution shows that he had the same sense of social upheaval as his contemporaries. However, he recognised the connections of this upheaval with the Gothic imagery more clearly than his English and Irish counterparts, and without the pretentiousness of the Marquis de Sade this use of Gothicism could be called a strictly utilitarian one.

The truth is that Godwin was always concerned to stress his social theories but he was also concerned to entertain his readers. But an appreciation of Godwin must recognise more than a simple desire to instruct and entertain. His philosophy is rediscovered in his novels, rethought in individual situations and discussed anew in terms of people rather than concepts. It is, to borrow a word from F. R. Leavis, 'enacted' through the complexity of his heroes, the rational 'shadow' is given a very definite 'substance'.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Works are listed in order of the date of first publication.

Godwin, William. Four Early Pamphlets, 1783-1784. Introduction by Burton R. Pollin. Gainesville: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1966.

--------. Italian Letters: or, the History of Count St. Julian. Edited and introduced by Burton R. Pollin. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965.

--------. Imogen: a Pastoral Romance. Introduced by J. W. Marken, with a critical discussion by M. W. England, B. R. Pollin and I. Primer. New York: New York Public Library, 1963.

--------. Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness. 3 vols. Edited with an introduction by F. E. L. Priestley. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946.

--------. The Adventures of Caleb Williams or Things as They Are. Introduction by George Sherburn. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960.

--------. Godwin and Mary. Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin. Edited with an introduction by Ralph M. Wardle. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1966.

--------. The Enquirer. Reflections on Education, Manners and Literature. Introduced by Augustus M. Kelley. New York: Reprints of Economic Classics, 1965.

--------. Memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft. Introduced by John Middleton Murry. London: Constable, 1928.

--------. Faulkner: A Tragedy. London: Richard Phillips, 1807.

--------. St. Leon: a Tale of the Sixteenth Century. London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831.

--------. Thoughts Occasioned by a Perusal of Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon, Preached at Christ Church, April 15, 1800. London: Taylor and Wilks, 1801.

--------. Fleetwood: or, The New Man of Feeling. London: Richard Bentley, 1833.

--------. Mandeville. A Tale of the Seventeenth Century. 3 vols. Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1817.

--------. Fables, Ancient and Modern. By Edward Baldwin Esq. (pseud.) Philadelphia: Benjamin Warner, 1818.

--------. Cloudesley: a Tale. 3 vols. London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830.

--------. Deloraine. 3 vols. London: Richard Bentley, 1833.

Secondary Sources

(a) Books

Baker, E. A. The History of the English Novel. Vol. 5. London: H. F. and G. Witherby, 1934.

Brailsford, H. N. Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle. London: Williams and Norgate, [1913].

Burke, Edmund. A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. Edited with an introduction by J. T. Boulton. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958.

Cordasco, Francesco. William Godwin: A Handlist of Critical Notices and Studies. Brooklyn: Long Island University Press, 1950.

Dowden, Sir E. The French Revolution and English Literature. London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trubner, 1897.

Fleisher, D. William Godwin. A Study in Liberalism. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1951.

Green, D. B. and Wilson, E. G. Keats, Shelley, Bryon, Hunt, and their Circles. A Bibliography: July 1, 1950-June 30, 1964. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964.

Hazlitt, William. Lecturers on the English Poets and The Spirit of The Age: or Contemporary Portraits. Introduced by Catherine Macdonald Maclean. Everyman edition. London: J. M. Dent, 1964.

--------. The Complete Works of William Hazlitt in Twenty-One Volumes. Vol. XVI. Edited by P. P. Howe. London: J. M. Dent, 1933.

Kettle, Arnold. An Introduction to the English Novel. Vol. I. London: Arrow Books, 1962.

Mackenzie, H. The Man of Feeling. Introduced by Kenneth C. Slagle. New York: W. W. Norton, 1958.

Maturin, C. R. Melmoth the Wanderer. Introduced by W. F. Axton. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961.

Paul, C. K. William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries. 2 vols. Boston: Roberts Bros., 1876.

Peacock, Thomas Love. Headlong Hall and Nightmare Abbey. Introduced by P. M. Yarker. Everyman edition. London: J. M. Dent, 1961.

Pollin, Burton Ralph. Education and Enlightenment in the Works of William Godwin. New York: Las Americas Publishing Co., 1962.

Preu, J. A. The Dean and the Anarchist. Talahasee; Florida State University Press, 1959.

Railo, Eino. The Haunted Castle. A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism. New York: Humanities Press, 1964.

Rodway, A. E. Godwin and the Age of Transition. London: George Harrap, 1952.

Rosenberg, E. From Shylock to Svengali. Jewish Stereotypes in English Fiction. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960.

Shklar, J. N. After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Shelley, Mary. Frankenstein. New York: Pyramid Books, 1957.

--------. Mary Shelley's Journal. Edited by F. L. Jones. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Vol. VI. Edited by Roger Ingpen and Walter Peck. London: Ernest Benn, 1929.

--------. "A Defence of Poetry" in Peacock's Four Ages of Poetry, Shelley's Defence of Poetry, Browning's Essay on Shelley. Edited by H. F. B. Brett-Smith. Oxford: Basil Blackwood, 1921.

Smith, E. E. and Smith, E. G. William Godwin. New York: Twayne, 1965.

Stephen, Sir Leslie. Hours in a Library. Vol. III. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921.

--------. Studies of a Biographer. Vol. III. London: Duckworth, 1902.

Voisine, J. Jean-Jacques Rousseau En Engleterre A L'Epoque Romantique. Paris: Didier, 1956.

Weekes, H. V. William Godwin as a Novelist. (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1961).

Willey, Basil. The Eighteenth Century Background. London: Penguin Books, 1962.

(b) Periodicals

Allan, B. Sprague. "William Godwin as a Sentimentalist", Publications of the Modern Languages Association of America, XXXIII (1918), 1-29.

Baker, D. W. "Themes of Terror in Nineteenth Century Fiction", Dissertation Abstracts, XVI (Jan. 1956).

Bassein, B. A. "Crime and Punishment in the Novels of Defoe, Fielding and Smollet", Dissertation Abstracts, XXII (Feb. 1962).

Bloom, Harold. "Frankenstein, or the New Prometheus", Partisan Review, XXXII (Fall, 1965), 611-618.

Cruttwell, Patrick. "On Caleb Williams", Hudson Review, XI (Spring, 1958), 87-95.

Dumas, D. G. "Things as They Were: The Original Ending of Caleb Williams", Studies in English Literature, VI (1966), 575-579.

Furbank, P. N. "Godwin's Novels", Essays in Criticism, V (1955) 214-228.

Goldberg, M. A. " Moral and Myth in Mrs. Shelley's Frankenstein", Keats-Shelley Journal, VIII (Winter, 1959), 27-38.

Grob, A. "Wordsworth and Godwin: A Reassessment", Studies in Romanticism, VI (Winter, 1967), 98-119.

Gross, Harvey. "The Pursuer and the Pursued: A Study of Caleb Williams", Texas Studies in Literature and Language, I (Autumn, 1959), 401-411.

Heppenstall, R. "Two Voices: England and the Rest", Times Literary Supplement, (August 7th, 1959).

Lauterbach, C. E. and Lauterbach, E. S. "The Nineteenth Century Three Volume Novel", Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, LI (Fourth Quarter, 1957), 263-302.

Palmer, D. J. and Dowse, R. E. "Frankenstein: A Moral Fable", The Listener, LXVII (August 23rd, 1962), 281 and 284.

Poulet, G. "Timelessness and Romanticism", Journal of the History of Ideas, XV (Jan. 1954), 3-22.

Sherburn, George. "Godwin's Later Novels", Studies in Romanticism, I (1961-1962), 65-82.