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Unfashioned creatures, but half made up: Beginning with Mary Shelley's Spectre

Abstract: This paper uses Derrida's work *Politics of Friendship* to interrogate the concept of the "friend" in the educational and fictional writings of Mary Shelley, William Godwin and Mary Wiollstonecraft. It concludes with a reading of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which argues that a certain wager on the possibility friendship rhetorically structures Wollstonecraft's text. The argument about friendship and education mounted in this paper leads on to my account of what elsewhere I have called otogogy.

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Keywords: Derrida. Deconstruction. Educational Theory. Mary Shelley. *Frankenstein.* William Godwin. Mary Wollstonecraft. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman.* Romantic Studies. Literary criticism. Literary theory.

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Beginning with Mary Shelley's spectre. 'Respect for the spectre, as Mary Shelley would say.'[1] 'All phenomena of friendship, all things and all beings to be loved, belong to spectrality. "It is necessary to love" means: the spectres, they are to be loved; the spectre must be respected (we know that Mary Shelley brought our attention to the anagram that makes the spectre in respect become visible again).' (PF. 288) *Would she*? *Did she*? The reference, obviously, is to *Frankenstein*. Mary Shelley's fate, as a writer, has always been to be a one-novel author. Hard fate in itself, when she wrote so much. But her fate has also been to have that unique achievement, of being 'the Author of *Frankenstein'* ascribed to the presence, the too brief presence, the animating presence of canonical male poets, Byron, and above all Shelley, the man whose name she took. 'Nothing but the magnetizing of her brain by Shelley's can account for her having risen so far above her usual self as in *Frankenstein*.' So wrote Richard Garnett in his introduction to her short-stories in 1891.[2] *Frankenstein* has always been a novel treated as a special case of magnetism and of animation: the elevation above her usual (natural?)

sphere of a woman by a masculine genius, her 'guide, philosopher, and friend.' That's what one contemporary review calls P. B. Shelley (her 'guide, philosopher, and friend'), before proceeding to suggest that P. B. Shelley actually may have written *Frankenstein* himself.[3]

'[W]e know that Mary Shelley brought our attention to the anagram that makes the spectre in respect become visible again.' Is Derrida referring to the Preface to the 1818 edition of the novel? 'The event on which the interest of the story depends is exempt from the disadvantages of a mere tale of specters and enchantment.'[4] If this is the reference Derrida is referring to then he is perhaps unaware that he is actually quoting P. B. Shelley. Mary Shelley, we can be reasonably sure, wrote the following passage, however[5]:

> I then reflected, and the thought made me shiver, that the creature whom I had left in my apartment might still be there, alive, and walking about. I dreaded to behold this monster …. I threw the door forcibly open, as children are accustomed to do when they expect a spectre to stand in waiting for them on the other side; but nothing appeared. (F. 88)

We know what Derrida is writing (originally talking) about, even if the sudden presence (on two different occasions) of Mary Shelley and her novel appears somewhat eccentric. The spectre, and the anagrammatical relation of the spectre to respect, and the monster and its etymological relation to *demonstration*, to *the exhibition of the host or of sacred relics, divine portents* and *warnings*. The spectre, like the monster, is something we see but which questions presence. It is also, we should add, this monster, something *malformed, misshapen at birth, untimely*. The monster is, then, associated with abortions, with that which is abortive and abhorred: 'God in pity made man beautiful and alluring, after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of your's, more horrid from its very resemblance.' (F.155) But the creature is very rarely a spectre. It (he) is on one page of Chapter 6 Volume 1 an 'object,' a 'wretch,' a 'filthy daemon,' 'the murderer of my brother,' a 'figure,' a 'devil,' a 'depraved wretch.' Elsewhere he (it) is associated with, or described in relation to, a vampire, a mummy, a 'vile insect.' One could compile quite a list; filth, being filthy, a filthy abortion, always figuring high in that list.[6] But more often than not, he, along with his creator, comes back to the term 'fiend.' The creature is a

'fiend.' So that it is possible to state, quite clearly and categorically, that the real lexical relation in this novel occurs between the alliterative *fiend* and *friend*. The word *friend* (including its negation) is employed over 120 times in the 1818 version; the word *fiend* approximately 40 times.[7] Friend/enemy; friend/fiend; *freund*/*feind*: *Frankenstein* is a novel which employs the very antithesis which structures Derrida's book. Did Derrida have a sense of quite how appropriate his reaching over to this most famous of British Romantic novels actually was?

Frankenstein, as many of its commentators have noticed over the years, is a novel about fraternity. Eve Kosofky Sedgwick's suggestion that the novel displays the violence generated by what she calls male homosocial desire seems particularly telling in the light of *Politics of Friendship*.[8] It's a novel about politics, about the political sphere. Master/slave, friend/fiend, *freund*/*feind*, play out a fictional account of the political sphere in which male desire (for the friend, the friend always male) results in 'absolute hostility.' In the frame it also plays itself out between Walton and Frankenstein, this search for the friend, and for the friend to be the friend. Walton writing to his sister, who does not appear, who is merely addressed (apostrophized, in the epistolary mode): 'You may deem me romantic, my dear sister, but I bitterly feel the want of a friend.' (F. 53) '[A]nd I greatly need a friend who would have sense enough not to despise me as romantic, and affection enough for me to endeavour to regulate my mind.' (ibid) 'One day I mentioned to him [Walton to Victor] the desire I had always felt of finding a friend who might sympathize with me, and direct me by his counsel.' And Victor replies: 'I agree with you … in believing that friendship is not only desirable, but a possible acquisition. I once had a friend, the most noble of human creatures, and am entitled, therefore, to judge respecting friendship.' (F. 61) Frankenstein is indeed entitled. He is the sovereign, the Victor, the monarch. 'No hospitality, in the classic sense,' writes Derrida in *Of Hospitality*:

> without sovereignty of oneself over one's home, but since there is also no hospitality without finitude, sovereignty can only be exercised by filtering, choosing, and thus by excluding and doing violence. Injustice, a certain injustice, and even a certain perjury, begins right away, from the very threshold of the right of hospitality.[9]

And so he, Victor, knows what friendship (between men) is: he once had Henry Clerval, who now is dead, murdered by his, Victor's, own creation. *Frankenstein* is about politics, politics and friendship, fraternity, and absolute hostility. It is about hospitality and the exclusion of a European spectre, a European monster.[10] The creature is a European, in the sense that he is made out of dead European humans and animals. He is a European and he is not: just as he is a man and is not. Derrida writes of being in part European and in part not and he associates his question with the question of hospitality: hospitality is a question, a political question:

> If, to conclude, I declared that I feel European *among other things*, would this be, in this very declaration, to be more or less European? Both, no doubt. Let the consequences be drawn from this. It is up to the others in any case, and up to me *among them*, to decide.[11]

It is never up to the monster *qua* monster to decide, however. Or rather, it is only possible for him to decide in the negative. That's the politics of the novel *Frankenstein*, as we well know. 'I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous' (F.126), or as P. B. Shelley put it in his review of the novel: '—Treat a person ill and he will become wicked.'[12] Virtue and happiness are predicated at that moment on the creation of a woman, a female. And yet, as we know, if we read the novel carefully enough, the female creature will not provide virtue and happiness for the male creature:

> What I ask of you is reasonable and moderate; I demand a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself: the gratification is small, but it is all I can receive, and it shall content me. It is true, we shall be monsters, cut off from all the world; but on that account we shall be more attached to each other. Our lives will not be happy, but they will be harmless, and free from the misery I now feel. Oh! my creator, make me happy; let me feel gratitude towards you for one benefit! Let me see that I excite the sympathy of some existing thing; do not deny me my request! (F. 170)

We will not be happy: O, creator, make *me* happy. *Make me happy by doing that thing which will not make me happy.* The greatest and most prolonged misreading of the novel comes into play here (i.e. that the creature's desires will be fulfilled—resolved,

answered—in the creation of a mate). The recognition of this misreading keeps us close to Derrida and friendship. The female creature is all the male creature can realistically hope for. The female creature will not make him (and her)—them ('we')—happy because she is not capable of being the friend. Only Victor is capable of that. *Make me happy*, says his creature, *by for once being my friend (instead of my enemy) and making me a creature with which/whom I will not be able to find friendship and thus happiness*. 'The figure of the absolute enemy … starts to resemble that of the absolute friend: the deadliest tragedy of fratricide.' (PF. 151) The friend appears to be a doppelganger, as here in Montaigne's description: 'In the friendship which I am talking about, souls are mingled and confounded in so universal a blending that they efface the seam which joins them together so that it cannot be found.' And again, talking of the death of La Boëtie: 'I was already so used and accustomed to being, in everything, one of two, that I now feel I am no more than a half.'[13] True friendship as brotherhood. No friend in the feminine. Unless. Unless, Derrida wonders, pondering on Schmitt, 'what if she were the absolute enemy of this theory of the absolute enemy, the spectre of hostility to be conjured up for the sake of the sworn brothers, or the other of the absolute enemy who has become the absolute enemy that would not even be recognized in a regular war?' (PF.157) Too terrible to contemplate, at least for those who seek for friends and war against enemies. And for those who eventually find their friends in their sworn enemies and their enemies in their sworn friends. A masculine scene. Fraternity and fratricide. *Frankenstein* is, frankly, a novel about fraternal warfare. A war which appears to rage over filthy materiality, without (and yet, since we're reading a novel, in that sense with) frankness. Frankenstein's fault is that he is not frank enough. He is, to be brutal, *frankless*, since to be frankless is to become brutal.

And yet all along this speed-camera shot of the novel and the attempt, in relation to Derrida's book, to begin with Mary Shelley, we cannot help notice that friendship is not merely the medium of this politics and this warfare. Friendship is also the name for a form of legitimate animation. A spiritual animation which the Germans tend to call *bildung*, and the English of the novel: instruction, pedagogy, informing, education, teaching, and so on. The androcentric friendship which is sought for throughout the book concerns education. This is clear from any serious reading. It is re-emphasized by Mary

Shelley in the 1831 version of the text when she adds a little more to the answering statement of Victor I have already cited: 'we are unfashioned creatures, but half made up, if one wiser, better, dearer than ourselves—such a friend ought to be—do not lend his aid to perfectionate our weak and faulty natures. [I once had a friend ….]' (F. 319)

Beginning with Mary Shelley introduces a topic into the philosophical enquiry on friendship which is not directly discussed by Derrida. The friend is male and is a teacher. Or rather, the friend, as we know from Enlightenment philosophy, and in particular from Rousseau, is someone who teaches without taking up the power-position of the teacher. The friend is the teacher in the enlightened disappearance of all teachers. And this teacher, who is not a teacher but a friend, completes you, makes you One, informs or fashions you into Being.

This at least is what Godwin, Mary Shelley's father, tried to argue throughout his philosophical and literary career. It is an idea that is discernible, in one way or another, in all the philosophical texts on friendship Derrida reads in his book: the *Lysis*, the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Cicero, Montaigne, Nietzsche, on to Ferenczi's stunning letter to Freud and beyond. I will call it an Enlightenment idea, however. The androcentric ideal of enlightenment through friendship. Animation, informing, without hierarchy and thus without power. Although, from the beginning, this thought (of the friend) is full of problems and contradictions, since how can friends, true friends, friends in equality, let us say—brothers, let us say—fulfill, one for the other, or both for each other, the role of teacher, which from Aristotle on we would associate with the filial, with 'friendships of superiority' or, if this is a teaching outside of the home, with friendships of utility, or maybe even pleasure, as opposed to friendships of character or 'primary' friendship?[14] How can teaching and friendship be brought together without the discordance of need, which Kant finds so 'dangerous' and disruptive of friendship?[15] How can teaching occur in the context of primary friendship, the one-soul-within-two bodies kind of friendship described by Cicero, Montaigne, and indeed by P. B. Shelley in his 'On Love'?[16] How could a division in that 'one soul in bodies twain' (a need, a lack, a desire for completion) speak for anything but the collapse of that ideal of true friendship? The issue is, as we know, already discussed in the *Lysis* just after it had seemed as if the attraction of 'like for like' was to provide the much sought-after definition of friendship.[17]

The topic is fascinating in Godwin since Godwin is one of the Enlightenment philosophers who makes an authentic attempt to think a teaching with equality. He attacks Rousseau for merely pretending to be on a level of equality with his pupil: '[H]is whole system,' he writes, 'is a series of tricks, a puppet-show exhibition, of which the master holds the wires, and the scholar is never to suspect in what manner they are moved.'[18] The question is crucial for Godwin, since we cannot hope ever to have democracy if we inform our children, our pupils, our citizens through compromised and insincere modes of trickery. Any one who has read *Political Justice* will know that sincerity (frankness) as the direct rendering of reason is hugely important to Godwin's political philosophy. It is, for him, perhaps the emblem of a liberated, rational polity. Godwin writes:

> Where the parent is not prepared to grant a real and *bona fide* equality, it is of the utmost importance that he should avoid the semblance of it. Do not open a treaty as between independent states, when you are both able and willing to treat the neighbour-state as a conquered province. (E. 122)

But parents should be prepared to grant a real equality between themselves and their children, or those they are entrusted to teach. Parents and teachers should be frank, completely frank. Everyone should be in a position of equality, this is the end-point towards which any rational political action tends. Godwin expresses his vision of education as a kind of friendly perambulation, a leading and following which we cannot help but read as a benevolent version of that dialectical master-slave fight to the death that those frankless characters, creator and creature, enter into in the last volume of his daughter's novel:

> According to the received modes of education, the master goes first, and the pupil follows. According to the method here recommended, it is probable that the pupil should go first, and the master follow. If I learn nothing but what I desire to learn, what should hinder me from being my own preceptor? (E. 115)[19]

Disappearance of the teacher in the oneness of equality, frankness, friendship. But is equality ever equal to oneness? And can teaching ever escape from superiority, from hierarchy? Well, *for now*? no. In the text I am briefly discussing here there is frequent use of the figure of the *for now*, what Godwin elsewhere famously calls 'things as they are.' *For now* there can be no friend, *for now* there can be only teachers, and power-relations, and what I have elsewhere (reading Godwin, amongst others) styled in-forming:[20]

> All education is despotism. It is perhaps impossible for the young to be conducted without introducing in many cases the tyranny of implicit obedience. Go there; do that; read; write; lie down; will perhaps for ever be the language addressed to youth by age. (E. 107)

For now, and perhaps for always. Perhaps. Perhaps not.

There are other reasons why Godwin's educational friend will not arrive, may not arrive. He, for Godwin, is a he. One has to do, quite literally, with the manner of his arrival. The problem is one that readers of Derrida are quite familiar with. The problem has to do with institution. Godwin writes:

> There is no 'divinity that hedges' the man of genius. There is no guardian spirit that accompanies him through life. If you tell me that you are one of those who are qualified to instruct and guide mankind, it may be that I admit it; but I may reasonably ask, When did you become so, and how long has this been your character? (E. 94)

If all education is 'despotism' how does any one ever come out of that experience without being in-formed, malformed, misshapen? How can that man who would arrive and be our friend (and thus complete us, make us whole and One) be a friend when he did not himself have such a friend to guide and inform, rather than in-form, him? The classic problem of revolution, of democracy, of justice, of enlightenment.

But there's another related problem, expressed most dramatically in *Political Justice*. The problem concerns Godwin's assertion that every human being has reason. That the rational faculty lies there, to be rendered, in every human individual's private judgement. This is the foundation of all Godwin's philosophy (politically, pedagogically)

in every area he touches upon (and he touches upon most). It is this area of Godwin's philosophical writings which appears to bring us closest to his daughter's famous novel. Godwin writes:

> If there be any man who is incapable of making inferences for himself, or of understanding, when stated in the most explicit terms, the inferences of another, him we consider as an abortive production, and not in strictness belonging to the human species. It is absurd therefore to say that sound reasoning and truth cannot be communicated by one man to another.[21]

How do abortive men ever come into existence? We are, I need to tell you, working backwards here, reading the substantial additions Godwin made to the opening chapters of his philosophical and political masterpiece in 1796 and 1798. The chapter we're reading (very quickly) is retitled in these editions 'The Characters of Men Originate in Their External Circumstances.' Godwin is an Enlightenment philosopher and his belief in reason steams from following in the footsteps of Locke and the array of Enlightenment philosophers who succeeded him. 'What is born into the world,' he writes, 'is an unfinished sketch, without character or decisive feature impressed upon it …. There is for the most part no essential difference between the child of the lord and of the porter.' (P 4. 21) *For the most part*. Is it external circumstances, then, that make abortive men? Well Godwin recognizes that if we accept the theory of environmentalism we also have to accept a certain incalculability, an incalculability born, as we'll see, from the recognition that birth is not the beginning:

> Education can never be equal. The inequality of external circumstances in two beings whose situations most nearly resemble is so great as to baffle all power of calculation. In the present state of mankind this is eminently the case. (P 4. 22)

For now, in the present state of things. But this need not continue: we can imagine another state of mankind:

> The essential differences that are to be found between individual and individual originate in the opinions they form, and the circumstances by which they are controlled. It is

> impossible to believe that the same moral train would not make nearly the same man. (ibid)

And yet Godwin is enough of a philosopher to recognize that if we take environmentalist arguments seriously we have to start, unlike Locke and others, with the first environment: 'at the moment of birth,' he states, 'man has really a certain character, and each man a character different from his fellows. The accidents which pass during the months of percipiency in the womb of the mother produce a real effect.' (P 4. 23) Godwin does not like his logical inference; he wishes, as we will see, to obliterate it; he wishes to believe that experience after birth obliterates it. But we have been reading backwards, and it is not too difficult to see that it is in the womb that abortive men are created. Godwin writes:

> If the early impressions of our childhood may by a skilful observer be as it were obliterated almost as soon as made, how much less can the confused and unpronounced impressions of the womb be expected to resist the multiplicity of ideas that successively contribute to wear out their traces? (ibid)

The womb is confusing, causes confusion, and it speaks a language we must, necessarily, consider as alien: that's how I interpret 'unpronounced.' It produces 'impressions' which must be obliterated if the friend is to arrive, if equality and the calculable ends of reason are ever to be achieved. Godwin adds the following:

> How long has the genius of education been disheartened and unnerved by the pretence that man is born all that it is possible for him to become? How long has the jargon imposed upon the world which would persuade us that in instructing a man you do not add to, but unfold his stores? The miscarriages of education do not proceed from the boundedness of its powers, but from the mistakes with which it is accomplished. (P 4. 23-4)

The creature, in Mary Shelley's novel, you will be remembering here, was not born of woman. What is the difference between a womb and *a workshop of filthy creation*? Must the friend who can teach without being the teacher provide an improved womb to

obliterate the original womb? Godwin writes in *The Enquirer*: 'When a child is born, one of the earliest purposes of his institutor ought to be, to awaken his mind, to breathe a soul into the, as yet, unformed mass.' (E. 84) The friend who will come, the friend who will complete us and make us whole and One, is, it would appear, a brother, and a life-giver, an animator. He sounds like a God to me. 'There is no friendship, at least *in this primary sense*, with animals or with gods. There is no friendship, either, between animals and gods.' (PF. 198) A god-like man with a supplemental, artificial or at least masculine womb. Or should we say an anti-womb? Is that what Enlightenment education is? an anti-womb? An anti-womb which obliterates the traces of the maternal, the natural, originary womb? A womb (rational and pronounced: frank, communicative, undeniable) hostile to *the* womb?

> Sisters, if there are any, are a species of the genus brother. (PF.156)
>
> … what is a friend in the feminine, and who, in the feminine, is her friend? (PF. 56)

So where are we? We friends? We educators? In the senses I have been suggesting regarding the friend today, what are, for us, *the politics of friendship*? We cannot answer those questions from the outside. We know this. But this means, we cannot simply dismiss the idea of the friend Godwin presents to us and which Mary Shelley's fictional characters live in the absence of.

Philosophies of education in the modern period, at least since Locke, and no doubt before him, mix their political categories, so that a benevolent monarchy (which we today might call pedagogy) finally gives way to a democratic (or proto-democratic) equality in reason, adulthood, maturity, enlightenment. 'From the nursery to the academy,' to adapt an early sentence in the *Lysis*. The movement is often, but not always, one from the filial to the social, from the private to the public: maturation; the idea of adulthood and citizenship and thus, the possibility of friendship. The opening sections of Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* are probably still the classic expression of this movement (I say mixing) from monarchy to democracy.[22] The problem is, of course, where do you draw the line? Once you have let sovereign power into education where and when do you then get rid of it, transcend it, move beyond it? How can you have two political models working side-by-side to reflect, analogically represent, isomorphicly

structure a process—education—which ultimately must support, reflect, exemplify, be a part of the (the one) political structure? This impossible situation becomes suddenly very visible around Rousseau. The brilliance of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is that it gives us a fully animated, adult child and thus makes the two discourses on education come crashing into each other at the creature's birth. That creature—monster/abortion/ fiend/slave/spectre—who has so often been read (at least analogically) as feminine. Without, perhaps, recognizing that the greatest example of the uncanny it offers to the reader is that it might become itself a teacher:

> At this time a slight sleep relieved me from the pain of reflection, which was disturbed by the approach of a beautiful child, who came running into the recess I had chosen, with all the sportiveness of infancy. Suddenly, as I gazed on him, an idea seized me that this little creature was unprejudiced, and had lived too short a time to have imbibed a horror of deformity. If, therefore, I could seize him and educate him as my companion and friend, I should not be so desolate in this peopled earth. (F. 137-8)

This is little William, whom the creature will murder. Just as Frankenstein will murder the unfinished, half made up, female creature who, being an abortion, the male creature may not be able to teach: 'she, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation.' (F. 190)

Frankenstein is (represents, makes monstrous) the scene of instruction. For Mary Shelley, for Godwin, for us. Us teachers, as we speak, to our pupils, are all, *for now*, brothers. Teaching is an androcentric scene. Friendship in teaching, however, enters teaching when there are sisters, and/or when there is a feminine side to speech and action. The creature is not feminine, neither is he (it) simply masculine: he (it) is simply someone who needs a friend that will not come and who cannot be a friend to others. For us, for now, the scene of instruction is this scene. 'O my friends, there is no friend.' In the vocative and the dative, the canonical and the recoil version, this phrase is the phrase which best sums up *Frankenstein* as I have been reading it; as the scene of instruction—for you and me, my friends. There can be no friend without sisters. No liberty, equality, *fraternity*, without sisters. No democracy without sisters.

> Woman was not man, a man free and capable of friendship, and not only of love. Well now, neither is man a man. Not yet. And why not? Because he is not yet generous enough, because he does not know how to give to the other. To attain to this infinite gift, failing which there is no friendship, one must know how to give to the enemy. And of this, neither woman nor man (up until now) is capable …. Neither one (nor yet, until now) is one of these true brothers, these friends or enemies, these friends *qua* possible enemies, those whom Zarathustra nevertheless already, starting now, addresses and appeals to (teleiopoetically). (PF. 283)

And what of the mother? If the friend arrived, if friendship were possible, would the mother be a sister or a father? Could there ever be friendship with a/the Mother? Does the Mother ever speak? Can we ever speak for and of her?

There are no mothers in Derrida's *The Politics of Friendship*. But then, there are no women authors either. Save for a few references, two of which have made us (me) begin with Mary Shelley. What there is, in Derrida's book, is the idea of woman, of women. The idea of sisters, friends to other women, friends to other men. Spectres all. But in the scenario I've been presenting to you today there is a mother, although for Mary Shelley she was always, from the beginning, spectral: there, whilst being absent, in books, in paintings, in one other child (fashioned from another father), and in graveyards not more than a short walk from here. And this mother spoke, rationally, philosophically, about the possibility of arriving, the possibility of being here, as a woman, and as a friend. Teleiopoetically: in the language of *perhaps*. And a reading of Derrida's *The Politics of Friendship* can give us this: a reading of the mother's most famous text in terms of teleiopoesis, in terms of specters and of the *perhaps*.

Running throughout *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is a rhetoric of the wager, the gamble, a throw of the dice. A speculation, if you will. A gamble or wager, along, of course, with a call for friendship. The *Vindication* is primarily, principally, beyond any thing else, a call for friendship. '[T]he woman who strengthens her body and exercises her mind will, by managing her family and practicising various virtues, become the friend, and not the humble dependent of her husband.'[23] 'The most holy bond of society is friendship. It has been well said, by a shrew artist, "that rare as true love is, true

friendship is still rarer."' (V. 139) 'Friendship is a serious affection; the most sublime of all affections, because it is founded on principle, and cemented by time. The very reverse may be said of love. In a great degree, love and friendship cannot subsist in the same bosom….' (V. 192) We need to let Wollstonecraft's voice into our dialogue on friendship. On the politics of friendship. The voice of a woman calling for friendship, a politics of friendship. So, some more: 'When women are sufficiently enlightened to discover their real interest, on a grand scale, they will, I am persuaded, be very ready to resign all the prerogatives of love, that are not mutual, speaking of them as lasting prerogatives, for the calm satisfaction of friendship ….' (V. 229-30) 'Were women more rationally educated, could they take a more comprehensive view of things, they would be contented to love but once in their lives; and after marriage calmly let passion subside into friendship ….' (V. 249) And some more: 'But, I presuppose, that such a degree of equality should be established between the sexes as would shut out gallantry and coquetry, yet allow friendship and love to temper the heart for the discharge of the higher duties. These would be schools of morality ….' (V. 312), 'the main pillars of friendship, are respect and confidence—esteem is never founded on it cannot tell what' (V. 308), 'for children will never be properly educated till friendship subsists between parents. Virtue flies from a house divided against itself—and a whole legion of devils take up their residence there.' (V. 341)

The *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is a call for friendship *if friendship between the sexes is possible*. It is a call for equality between the sexes *if equality between the sexes is possible*. Frequently, instead of asking the question about equality Wollstonecraft opens the question itself to view[24]:

> when morality shall be settled on a more solid basis, then, without being gifted with a prophetic spirit, I will venture to predict that woman will be either the friend or slave of man.

It apparently, states Wollstonecraft, could go either way:

> We shall not, as at present, doubt whether she is a moral agent, or the link which unites man with brutes. But, should it then appear, that like the brutes they [women] were

> principally created for the use of man, he will let them patiently bite the bridle, and not mock them with empty praise; or, should their rationality be proved, he will not impede their improvement merely to gratify his sensual desires. (V. 146)[25]

It is yet to be proved (whether women are rational creatures or not), although the very text we are reading is proving it as we read it. Proof of women's rationality is in the distance, in the future, and thus so is equality, although that future-time is being directly addressed by the text. Again:

> It is time to effect a revolution in female manners—time to restore to them their lost dignity—and make them, as part of the human species, labour by reforming themselves to reform the world. It is time to separate unchangeable morals from local manners.—If men be demi-gods—why let us serve them! And if the dignity of the female soul be as disputable as that of animals—if their reason does not afford sufficient light to direct their conduct whilst unerring instinct is denied—they are surely of all creatures the most miserable! and, bent beneath the iron hand of destiny, must submit to be a *fair defect* in creation. (p.158)[26]

It would make no logical sense that women were inferior in reason and had no divine soul: and yet, if they are defective in reason and have no divine soul, then so be it. The issue is that they might have both, *perhaps*. Again:

> I come round to my old argument: if woman be allowed to have an immortal soul, she must have, as the employment of life, an understanding to match. And when, to render the present state more complete, though every thing proves it to be but a fraction of a mighty sum, she is incited by present gratifications to forget her grand destination, nature is counteracted, or she was born only to procreate and rot. (V. 180)

Derrida's work on the politics of friendship allows us to look at these moments again. What we might notice about them, apart from the *if this…then that* satirical use of an inherited logic, is that they are, with regard to women, with regard to the idea of friendship between men and women (so crucial to the arguments in the text) future-oriented. *Perhaps* there will be rational women. *Perhaps* there will be intellectual equality between the sexes. *Perhaps* there will be friendship between men and women,

and even between women and women.[27] *Perhaps* there will be a democracy which lives up to its name. Wollstonecraft writes: 'Rousseau exerts himself to prove that all *was* right: a crowd of authors that all *is* now right: and I, that all will *be* right.' (V. 121) There is a teleiopoetic dimension to the *Vindication* which, once we are attuned to it, speaks to us as friends, friends who might hear the call, friends who might arrive. 'The friends of the *perhaps* are the friends of truth,' Derrida writes. 'But the friends of truth are not, by definition, *in* the truth …. The truth—that of the thinkers to come—it is impossible to *be it*, to *be there*, to *have it*; one must only be its friend.' (PF. 43)

Teleiopoesis is inevitable in a writer like Wollstonecraft (and what does 'like' mean here?) because she is a writer who knows that equality and friendship will only come if they are wagered. She writes, near the end of her text (but the gesture is repeated throughout): 'the only method of leading women to fulfil their peculiar duties, is to free them from all restraint by allowing them to participate [in] the inherent rights of mankind.' (V. 320) 'Inherent' here is highly ironic, of course. It speaks to the fact of male rights, of primogeniture and all the baroque paraphernalia of aristocratic and propertied male right, but it also speaks to the fact that it [rights, human rights, the 'rights of mankind' including woman] does not yet exist. What will make the 'inherent' rights of man exist is if men allow women to participate in them. 'Make them free,' Wollstonecraft adds, 'and they will quickly become wise and virtuous, as men become more so.'[28] Make women free and there might be freedom, even for men. Make women equal and there might be equality. Make women friends and there might be friendship. Wollstonecraft adds, a little later: 'The conclusion which I wish to draw, is obvious: make women rational creatures, and free citizens, and they will quickly become good wives, and mothers; that is—if men do not neglect the duties of husbands and fathers.' (V. 323) It might be, *perhaps*, that women are rational creatures equal in intellect to men: make them equal and there might then be equality and they (and 'we') might then be equal. Equality and freedom, in the *Vindication*, are a wager, teleiopoetically addressed to the reader. Friendship (between and within men and women) is a part of, and yet also the foundation of, this wager, this speculation, this address in respect of the spectre, the friend who can be seen and who might arrive. Equality, freedom, friendship are teleiopoetically grounded, in the *Vindication*, on their possibility, to come. Despite Wollstonecraft's

complex play with arguments founded on nature and on divinity, it is the future, and in particular, the future friend to which her argument is addressed and on which it is founded.

The chapter I have been discussing in part (a few sentences from its conclusion) is entitled: 'On National Education.' We have not, despite appearances, left education behind. 'Who could ever answer for a discourse on friendship without *taking a stand*?' (PF. 228) There were for Mary Shelley, along with her father and mother, more than enough enemies to take a stand against: there are also enough for us. More than enough. 'If there were a single thesis to this essay, it would posit that there could be no choice: the decision would once again consist in deciding without excluding, in the invention of other names and other concepts, in moving out *beyond this* politics without ceasing to intervene therein to transform it.' (PF.158-9) Godwin, the father, and Wollstonecraft, the mother, know that the text (whether it is a novel or a philosophical or political treatise) speaks to what might come. The text in that sense is a friend, speaking to someone who might be able to read it and sign for it, and thus be the friend. *The* friend, the one who might teach without teaching, who might animate without completing or even originating, who might inform without in-forming: *the* friend is always the one who will come, *perhaps*. The next chapter in the *Vindication* is entitled: 'Some Instances of the Folly Which the Ignorance of Women Generates; With Concluding Reflections on the Moral Improvement That A Revolution in Female Manners Might Naturally Be Expected to Produce.' *Might Naturally*. Naturally *perhaps*. The title, this sentence, like the title of the text as a whole, like the text as a whole, is itself a friend, a teleiopoetic call for those who might arrive. For those who might respond. For those who might realize the call for friendship. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. '(it begins at the end, it is initiated with the signature of the other).' (PF. 32) Teleiopoesis: the ear of the other signing: *otogogy*.[29]

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1 Jacques Derrida. *The Politics of Friendship*. trans. George Collins. London and New York: Verso, 1997. 73. Hereafter PF.

2 Quoted in Emily W. Sunstein. *Mary Shelley: Romance and Reality*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1989. 396.

3 ‘The Anniversary’ first published in *Knight’s Quarterly Magazine*, III (August 1824), which reviews *The Posthumous Poems of P. B. Shelley* (1824) and Mary Shelley’s second major novel, *Valperga* (823). See Donald Reiman. ed. *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers*. Part C., *Shelley, Keats, and London Radical Writers*. 2 Vols. New York and London: Garland Pubs. 1972. Vol. 1. 73-80 (498).

4 Mary Shelley. *Frankenstein, the original 1818 text*. eds. D. L. MacDonald and Kathleen Scherf. 2nd Ed. Ontario: Broadview Press. 1999. 47.

5 Reasonably sure since we do not have the Faircopy Notebooks which would inform of us of precisely who made the slight changes in this passage from the one in Mary Shelley’s hand in the Draft Notebooks. See *The Frankenstein Notebooks. A Facsimile Edition of Mary Shelley’s Manuscript Novel, 1816-17 (With Alterations in the Hand of Percy Bysshe Shelley) as it Survives in Draft and Fair Copy Deposited by Lord Abinger in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Dep. c. 477/1 and Dep. c. 534/1-2),* 2 Volumes, ed. Charles E. Robinson, *Manuscripts of the Younger Romantics*, Vol. IX. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1996.110-111.

6 For a useful discussion of names and naming in *Frankenstein* see Bernard Duyfhuizen. ‘Periphrastic Naming in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*’. *Studies in the Novel* 27. 1995. 477-92.

7 For her sweet and yet persistent encouragement to bring *fiend* into my exploration of *friend* and *friendship* in the novel, I thank my ‘guide, philosopher and friend’ Nora Crook.

8 Eve Kosofky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia University Press. 1985.

9 Jacques Derrida. *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*. trans. Rachel Bowlby. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 2000. 55.

10 The creature has often, of course, been mistaken for a non-European. On first describing Victor, Walton writes: ‘He was not, as the other traveler seemed to be, a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island, but an European.’ (F. 57) The creature’s promise to quite Europe for ‘the most savage of places’ (F. 171) in exchange for Victor’s creation of the female companion is a promise to relinquish his European identity.

11 Jacques Derrida. *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe*. trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael B. Naas. Intro. Michael B. Nass. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992. 83.

12 *Shelley's Prose, or The Trumpet of a Prophecy*. ed. David Lee Clark. London: Fourth Estate. 1988. 307.

13 Michel de Montaigne. 'On affectionate relationships'. *The Complete Essays*. trans. M. A. Screech. Harmondsworth: Penguin. 1991. 211-2 (217).

14 See Aristotle. *The Nichomachean Ethics*. 2nd Ed. trans. Terence Irwin. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Pubs. 1999. 132, 137ff.

15 Immanuel Kant. 'The Metaphysics of Morals,' 'Doctrine of the Elements of Ethics. Part II. Duties of Virtue to Others.' *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. gen. eds. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. *Practical Philosophy*. ed. Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1996. 586.

16 *Shelley's Prose*. 169-171. Shelley writes: 'Thou demandest, What is Love? It is that powerful attraction towards all that we conceive, or fear, or hope beyond ourselves, when we find within our own thoughts the chasm of an insufficient void and seek to awaken in all things that are a community with what we experience within ourselves. If we reason, we would be understood; if we imagine, we would that the airy children of our brain were born anew within another's; if we feel, we would that another's nerves should vibrate to our own, that the beams of their eyes should kindle at once and mix and melt into our own, that lips of motionless ice should not reply to lips quivering and burning with the heart's best blood.' (170) Shelley cannot remain with this social definition of love, however, and he goes on to produce what is perhaps a new level of poetic solipsism in the atopical and aporetic tradition of primary friendship. Love, in this essay, so connected to his early masterpiece *Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude* (1816), is clearly functioning in the manner in which *amitié* does in the French. The essay is currently dated around 1814-1815. There is good reason to believe that P. B. Shelley's extensive reading of Cicero from 1814 onwards would have included *Laelius de Amicitia* (*On Friendship*). As Derrida states: 'a friend, having more than one place ["twin bodies"], would never have a place of his own. He could never count on the sleep or nourishment of the economic intimacy of some "home".' (PF. 177, 178) Shelley goes on: 'We dimly see within our

intellectual nature a miniature as it were of every thing excellent or lovely that we are capable of conceiving as belonging to the nature of man. Not only the portrait of our external being but an assemblage of the minutest particles of which our nature is composed; a mirror whose surface reflects only the forms of purity and brightness; a soul within our soul that describes a circle around its proper paradise which pain, and sorrow, and evil dare not overleap. To this we eagerly refer all sensations, thirsting that they should resemble or correspond with it. The discovery of its anti-type; the meeting with an understanding capable of clearly estimating our own; an imagination which should enter into and seize upon the subtle and delicate peculiarities which we have delighted to cherish and unfold in secret; with a frame whose nerves, like the chords of two exquisite lyres, strung to the accompaniment of one delightful voice, vibrate with the vibrations of our own; and of a combination of all these in such proportion as the type within demands; this is the invisible and unattainable point to which Love tends; and to attain which, it urges forth the powers of man to arrest the faintest shadow of that without the possession of which there is no rest nor respite to the heart over which it rules. (170) The Shelleys read Montaigne's *Essais* in the latter part of 1816 and the earlier part of 1818. Mary also read them in 1819 and 1822, eventually publishing a life of Montaigne as the first essay in her *Lives of the Most Eminent Literary and Scientific Men of France*. Vol. 1 (1838). *Mary Shelley's Literary Lives and Other Writings*. 4 Vols. ed. Nora Crook. Vol. 2. *Spanish and Portuguese Lives*. ed. Lisa Vargo. *French Lives (Montaigne to Rochefoucauld*). ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr. 301-18. The curious example of Montaigne's education, which she relates to the later philosophy of Rousseau, supplies the focus of much of the earlier parts of Mary Shelley's life. However, the last section is devoted to Maria de Gournay, the young woman who read Montaigne's *Essais*, became his disciple and ultimately his adopted daughter, and after his death became his editor and staunch defender. Mary Shelley makes sure to cite the passage at the end of the essay 'Of Presumption' on Maria de Gournay which many scholars have suspected was actually authored and inserted by de Gournay herself. What is crucial about this passage is de Gournay's capacity for friendship. Montaigne (or perhaps de Gournay) writes: 'I have no longer regard to anything in this world but her. And if a man may presage from her youth, her soul will one day be capable of very great things; and amongst others, of the

perfection of that sacred friendship [‘la perfection de cette tressainte amitié’], to which we do not read that any of her sex could ever yet arrive ….’ (317) Whether this means that Montaigne and Marie de Gournay were themselves not yet perfect or primary friends is clearly a critical question, as is whether this is de Gournay expressing a subtle irony at the expense of her great master or Montaigne himself endeavouring to push beyond his life-long masculinst ideas. In that context it is important to register the similarity between his friendship with La Boëtie (seeking each other before they meet) and the history of de Gournay’s esteem for Montaigne through her reading of his *Essays*: that ‘she loved me, and desired my acquaintance’, Montaigne concludes, ‘solely from the esteem she had thence of me, before she ever saw my face, is an incident very worthy of consideration.’ (317) That Mary Shelley goes on to praise Marie de Gournay’s editing of the *Essays* after Montaigne’s death and her defending him from attacks, suggests how personally de Gournay’s history might have spoken to her own sense of self and destiny in her thwarted efforts to present P. B. Shelley’s poetry and prose to the world.

17 Socrates states: ‘Is like friend to like insofar as he is like, and as such as he is useful to his counterpart? I can put it better this way: When something, anything at all, is like something else, how can it benefit or harm its like in a way that it could not benefit or harm itself? Or what could be done to it by its like that could not be done to it by itself? Can such things be prized by each other when they cannot give each other assistance?’ *Plato: Complete Works*. ed. John M. Cooper. associate ed. D. S. Hutchinson. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Pubs. 1997. 698-99. The disappearance of the teacher is presented here; but in the context of the disappearance of the friend.

18 William Godwin. *The Enquirer* (1797). *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*. 7 Vols. gen. ed. Mark Philp. Vol. 5. *Educational and Literary Writings*. ed. Pamela Clemit. London: William Pickering. 1993. 126. Hereafter E.

19 One cannot quote this passage, however, without also quoting the note Godwin attaches to it: ‘To some persons this expression may be ambiguous. The sort of “going first” and “following” here censured, may be compared to one person’s treading over a portion of ground, and another’s coming immediately after, treading in his footsteps. The adult must undoubtedly be supposed to have acquired their information before the young; and they may at proper intervals incite and conduct their diligence, but not so as to

supercede in them the exercise of their own discretion.' (E. 115) The image of education as a journey, or as a kind of circuit, which is doubled (by teacher and pupil) is at the heart of the educational theories of another early nineteenth-century theorist of the disappearing teacher, Joseph Jacotot. His startling story is told in Jacques Rancière's *The Igonorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intelectual Emancipation*. trans. Kristin Ross. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1991. For an account of Rancière's text, which explores this figure of the doubled path (teacher travelling before pupil, teacher travelling simultaneously with pupil), see Forbes Morlock. 'The Story of the Ignorant Schoolmaster/The Adventures of Telemachus, For Example.' *OLR, Knowledge, Learning and Migration*. ed. Caroline Rooney. 19:1-2. 1997. 105-132.

20 Graham Allen. 'On Information and the Chance of Teaching.' *Formless: Ways in and out of Form*. eds. Patrick Crowley and Paul Hegarty. *European Connections*. gen. ed. Peter Collier. 11. Bern: Peter Lang. 2005. 27-37.

21 *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*. 7 Vols. gen. ed. Mark Philp. Vol. 4. *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice: Variants*. ed. Mark Philp. London: William Pickering, 1993. 42. Hereafter P 4.

22 John Locke. *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. eds. John W. and Jean S. Yolton. *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke*. gen. ed. John W. Yolton. Oxford: Carendon Press. 1989. Locke writes: 'If you would have him ['your child,' though clearly a son] stand in awe of you, imprint it *in his infancy*; and, as he approaches more to a Man, admit him nearer to your Familiarity: So shall you have him your obedient Subject (as is fit) whilst he is a Child, and your affectionate Friend when he is a Man.' (109) And again: 'I imagine everyone will judge it reasonable, that their Children, *when little*, should look upon their Parents as their Lords, their Absolute Governors; and, as such, stand in awe of them: And that, when they come to riper Years, they should look on them as their best, as their only sure Friends; and as such, love and reverence them ….' (ibid)

23 Mary Wollstonecraft. *The Vindications: The Rights of Men, The Rights of Woman*. eds. D. L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf. Ontario: Broadview Press. 1997. 139. Hereafter V.

24 In his reading of *The Politics of Friendship*, Geoff Bennington discusses the manner in which there is a certain 'outflanking' of the question in Derrida's text. See 'Forever Friends.' *Interrupting Derrida*. London and New York: Routledge. 2000. 110-27 (122).

25 Constantly, then, throughout the *Vindication* there is this idea (this masculine idea) of women as brutes, animals, without reason or soul. In terms of Godwin's abortive men and the traces of the womb it is important to note Wollstonecraft's take on abortions. Again, here, she employs inherited logic—the logic of male friends (Rousseau in particular)—to deal with the idea and womens' symbolic implication within it. She writes: 'It is, however, sufficient for my present purpose to assert, that, whatever effect circumstances have on the abilities, every being may become virtuous by the exercise of its own reason; for if but one being was created with vicious inclinations, that is positively bad, what can save us from atheism? or if we worship a God, is not that God a devil? (V. 129) On Wollstonecraft's male friends (who are also, of course, in the text, frequently enemies), we would do well to heed Barbara Taylor's retort to those who would paint Wollstonecraft's attitude towards Rousseau as 'militantly adversarial.' Taylor writes that it is 'indisputable' that 'Wollstonecraft was a Rousseauist …. "I have always been half in love with him," she confided to her sister Everina in 1794.' Barbara Taylor. *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2003. 73.

26 The '*fair defect*' is a challengingly pitched version of the 'abortion' and the 'miscarriage' we noted in Godwin's texts. Part of what we are doing here is to let the hostility, the anger and rhetorical violence (it is a violence of the word) of a woman's call for friendship sound in our ears. Or, perhaps, we should talk about a strange, rarely heard mixture of anger and patience, a calm detestation of and hostility towards injustice.

27 I will do no more than note here the often noted problem Wollstonecraft has with intimate friendships between women (see V. 259-64), a topic which in many respects brings her close to Kant and his insistence on the need for a distancing 'respect': Wollstonecraft's word is 'reserve.'

28 The rest of the paragraph is worth adding here: 'for the improvement must be mutual, or the injustice which one half of the human race are obliged to submit to, retorting on

their oppressors, the virtue of man will be worm-eaten by the insect whom he keeps under his feet.' (V. 320)

29 *Otogogy* is a neologism which indicates the fact that teaching occurs *in the ears of the Other*, is, as Derrida might put it, *signed by the ear of the Other*. See Jacques Derrida. *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*. ed. Christie McDonald. trans. Peggy Kamuf and Avital Ronell. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press. 1988