Homelessness and stranger-ness as critical potentialities in early British novels

Bonghee Oh

University at Albany, State University of New York, sbmbho@yahoo.com

The University at Albany community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/legacy-etd

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/legacy-etd/228

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the The Graduate School at Scholars Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Legacy Theses & Dissertations (2009 - 2024) by an authorized administrator of Scholars Archive.
Please see Terms of Use. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@albany.edu.
HOMELESSNESS AND STRANGER-NESS

AS CRITICAL POTENTIALITIES

IN EARLY BRITISH NOVELS

by

Bonghee Oh

A Dissertation

Submitted to the University at Albany, State University of New York

in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

College of Arts & Sciences

Department of English

2010
HOMELESSNESS AND STRANGER-NESS

AS CRITICAL POTENTIALITIES

IN EARLY BRITISH NOVELS

by

Bonghee Oh

COPYRIGHT 2010
ABSTRACT

In its early stages, the British novel generally validates individuals’ particularized views of the world, rather than collective ones, and it explores such views in the context of individual’s experiences of feeling homeless and of being strangers both within and without the place of home. Broadly conceived, the issues of homelessness and stranger-ness are intimately tied to questions of category, especially regarding the relation between the individual and community, particularity and generality, and the innovative and the traditional in the novel’s emergence as a distinct, modern species of writing. By examining the status of orphans and strangers—both in a literal and a metaphorical sense—in Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote*, Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Maria*, and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, this dissertation demonstrates how their experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness constitute critical, even subversive, potentialities for refusing the socially sanctioned ways in which individuals act and think. The underlying implication is that the experiences that orphans and strangers undergo as liminal figures provide discursive spaces in which the limits socially imposed on them are questioned and different ways of being, acting, and thinking can be explored.

During the course of the eighteenth century in Britain, the moral sentiment of sympathy becomes the principal mechanism for creating a sense of solidarity and community, by mediating affective exchanges among individuals. All three novels in this study thus investigate the possibility that sympathy can resolve the difficulties of homelessness and stranger-ness, thereby serving as the foundation for a countercommunity. By revealing, however, that beyond a certain point sympathy fails to work and the status of “stranger” is applied inequitably to community members, this dissertation argues that sympathy becomes both a solution and a problem for social relations. Nonetheless, these limitations can potentially be counteracted by the way that the novel makes room for socially othered people to narrate their lived experiences in their own voices—in a format that presents those voices as active, competing perspectives. Similarly, the novel makes room for readers to engage actively with the issues it dramatizes by staging agonistic encounters among such voices without providing their definitive resolution.

Keyword: *The Female Quixote*, *Maria*, *Frankenstein*, orphan, homelessness, stranger, stranger-ness, sympathy, community, narrative
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing a dissertation has been the most challenging and anxiety-provoking process that I have undergone as a doctoral student. I would not have completed this process without the help and support from many people. I would like to thank Professor Richard Barney for his intellectual guidance, meticulous readings and comments on every part of the chapters. Since my first semester at University at Albany, he has listened to me with attention and encouraged me both inside and outside class. I cannot thank him enough for everything he has done for me as my advisor. I am profoundly grateful to Professor Mike Hill, who first drew my attention to early British novels. It was in his graduate seminars I began to develop several of my ideas contained in my dissertation. The discussions with him have been stimulating and insightful. I deeply appreciate Professor Charles Shepherdson’s exceptional support and encouragement. I have felt that he has always been more than ready to help me. I have benefited a lot from his graduate seminars that I audited, and he has directed my attention to broader conceptual and philosophical issues. I feel so lucky to have had the best committee that a graduate student could hope for. I also feel grateful to Professor Bret Benjamin and the members of the reading group, from whom I learned a lot. It was one of the best parts in my life here in Albany.

I would like to thank Professor Jung-il Doh and the other professors in Kyung Hee University in Seoul, Korea, with whom I started my journey into the world of English literature. Professor Doh has played an especially formative role in my academic interests and intellectual development. I will never forget the generous care and concern, and valuable advice from my senior friends: Myung-ho Lee, Jung-wan Yu, Ki-jung Kwon, and Young-suk Chae. My special thanks go to my best friend, Mikyung Park, for her emotional and intellectual support, and to the members of the reading group I was in while I attended the graduate program in Kyung Hee University, for their unconditional confidence in me.

I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to my sisters and brothers for their boundless love and encouragement. Neither my father, Seung-won Oh, nor my mother, Yun-ja Kim, had an opportunity to receive a higher education, but their love and support has been limitless. To them I dedicate my dissertation.

I am thankful for the award from Initiatives for Women from University at Albany, which helped me to manage financial needs in the early stage of my dissertation project.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER 1
Introduction: Orphans and Strangers in Early British Novels  
1

## CHAPTER 2
Home as an Inverted Image of Homelessness in Charlotte Lennox’s  
*The Female Quixote*  
30

## CHAPTER 3
“Revolt Within” in Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Maria*  
91

## CHAPTER 4
Life, Hospitality, and “Bare Life” in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*  
155

## CHAPTER 5
Conclusion: Toward an Ethics and Politics of the Early Novel  
218

## WORKS CITED  
250
CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Orphans and Strangers in Early British Novels

This philosophical ethos may be characterized as a limit-attitude. […] We have to move beyond the outside-inside alternative, we have to be at the frontiers. […] The point, in brief, is to transform the critique conducted in the form of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression.

Foucault, “What Is Enlightenment?”

Since Ian Watt’s classic but controversial study of “the rise” of the British novel, several different histories of the emergence of the novel as a distinct species of writing have been written. Some of them locate the origins of the novel in the early or mid-eighteenth century; others locate them in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. Regardless of their disagreement as to the exact moment when the novel really emerged, however, there has been an agreement about the tendency of the novel to validate individual experiences of “particular people in particular circumstances” rather than collective experiences of a certain community, a feature that constitutes an important part of what is unprecedented about the novel (Watt 15). As John Richetti points out, the novel explores an individual’s “particularized and personalized view of the world” “as if it were somehow prior to a communal or social world” (5). What is important in the
context of this dissertation project is that, in many early novels, such a particularized view of the world is explored in an individual’s experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness, which is well exemplified in the motifs of orphanhood and bastardy.

The primacy of particularities implies that the novel, as it emerges as a new species of writing, engages in reorganizing the relation between the particular and the general, the individual and community. In this respect, it is no wonder that “the fantasy of homelessness so dominates the development of narrative patterns in the eighteenth-century novel,” especially considering that homelessness would suggest a break with traditions of a communal world (Flanders 117). But this does not mean that the relation between the particular and the general, the individual and community, is reorganized once and for all in the direction of the acknowledgment of the former and of the dismissal of the latter. Instead, the motifs of orphanhood and bastardy show that the relation itself remains an intractable issue. An orphan is free from restraint imposed by the family but is deprived of familial protection. Likewise, a bastard is liberated from oppression by a family but lacks legitimacy. In a word, being homeless simultaneously represents the need for communal protection and the desire for personal freedom, a scenario that epitomizes the ambivalent relationship between the individual and community.
The conflict between one’s need for communal protection and one’s desire for personal freedom accounts for the dominance of the fantasy—or rather the anxiety—of homelessness in the novel at its emerging stage. But the explanation turns out to be a partial one, when we consider that the novel tends not only to begin with a story about how one comes to leave home, whether voluntarily or not, but also to end with a story about how one comes to reunite with the original family or to find a new home usually by marriage. The only alternative ending is death or utter destruction, especially in the case of an orphan or bastard, which indicates that being homeless is a situation to be overcome, far from being a situation to be enjoyed. Therefore, the question to ask is not simply why the eighteenth-century novel is pervaded with the anxiety of homelessness. It should also be asked why the novel, whose narrative explores experiences of homelessness, concludes with a (re)establishment of home, whether successful or not. If leaving home can be read as an act of decategorization, then finding a new home would be translated as an act of recategorization. Thus, the dominance of the anxiety of homelessness in the novel should be examined in terms of the generic emergence of the British novel as well as in terms of the relation between the individual and community, both of which are concerned with the question of category—the key issue for this dissertation project.
Studies on the emergence of the novel as a modern species of writing, more often than not, have drawn attention to the question of the historical, sociocultural, and institutional contexts of the novel, in short, the whole set of relations between the novel and the society in which it emerged. For example, Watt finds analogies between “the general temper of philosophical realism” and “distinctive features of the novel form,” which culminates his view of the novel as “formal realism” (12, 32). But it is Michael McKeon who, more than any other critic, examines the origins of the novel in terms of the question of category, specifically the relation between particularity and generality. By connecting the novel to the modern division of knowledge, he argues that the genre of the novel is “an early modern cultural instrument designed to confront, on the level of narrative form and content, both intellectual and social crisis simultaneously” (22). According to him, on the level of form, the novel is concerned with “the instability of generic categories” registering “an epistemological crisis,” and, on the level of content, it is concerned with “the instability of social category” registering “a cultural crisis” (20). Although he brings to the fore the question of category, however, he focuses much less on the generic identity of the novel itself than on categorical relations among cultural discourses and the function of the novel to mediate those relations.

While considerable emphasis has been placed on the functions the novel has in
relation to society, this dissertation approaches the question of category primarily in terms of the generic identity of the novel, or rather, early novelists’ anxiety about the generic category into which their writings may be classified. By focusing on the issues of homelessness and stranger-ness, it examines how the question of category is deeply intertwined both with the generic emergence of the British novel and with the process of one’s becoming a subject. The implication is that the place of “home” presupposes an act of including some and excluding others, which is nothing less than an act of building boundaries. This dissertation also explores how experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness constitute critical potentialities that make orphans and strangers crucial figures in discourses of the British novel because the issues of homelessness and stranger-ness are most clearly foregrounded in their experiences. This does not necessarily mean that orphans and strangers themselves transform into the subject of critique and transgression. Rather, it suggests that the experiences they undergo as liminal figures provide a kind of discursive space in which the limits socially imposed on them are put into question and in which possibilities to go beyond those limits and make different ways of being can be explored. Accordingly, homelessness and stranger-ness will be considered socially produced and historically conditioned states, rather than universally given ontological ones.
This dissertation discusses such issues by examining Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote; or, the Adventures of Arabella* (1752), Mary Wollstonecraft’s *The Wrongs of Woman; or, Maria* (1798), and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818; 1831). It focuses primarily on women’s experiences of being orphans or strangers both in a literal and a metaphorical sense. Interestingly and significantly, heroines in many early novels are orphans, whether or not they finally reunite with their missing family members. Eve Tavor Bannet observes that “a very large proportion of young people in the eighteenth century lost one or both parents before they reached marriageable age” (74). In situating orphans in the context of the kinship shift from “the biologically given family” to “the chosen family constructed by marriage,” Ruth Perry claims that orphans’ stories indicate that daughters get deprived of the right of inheritance (2000: 111). Both critics implicitly attribute a female orphan’s difficulty in finding a place where they belong to changes in the material conditions at that time. But a more fundamental problem is that it is almost structurally impossible for female orphans to find any other place than somebody else’s home where they are likely to be “treated like a creature of another species,” as in the case with Jemima in *Maria* (81). They are allowed to live in somebody else’s home but only as strangers, even when they are welcomed, as in the case with Justine in *Frankenstein*. This structural impossibility
accounts for why the issue of homelessness should be considered in tandem with the issue of stranger-ness.

Being orphaned means more than just being without one’s biological parents. It implies a break with what was before, the absence of membership in a community, and therefore the experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness as well. In other words, what is at stake with orphanhood is, above all, the lack of connection to the past—a possible origin—and to a community, which would be essential parts of one’s identity. Similarly, as the very name of “the novel” suggests, it is the rupture with the past, with a possible parentage, that characterizes the novel as a distinct, modern species of writing. Furthermore, as Richetti points out, “British eighteenth-century novelists display no agreement about what a novel should be,” since there is no established generic category into which the novel fits (8). We can thus say that both orphans and the novel are different from whatever has its origin in the past, not in terms of degree but in terms of kind. They are free in a double sense: free from following any pre-given paradigm, and therefore free to invent themselves in their own ways. They have to originate themselves in their present moments, a condition that entails the anxiety of homelessness.

For the novel, the rupture with what was before was demonstrated by its “newness.” As J. Paul Hunter remarks, “in the late seventeenth century and early
eighteenth, ‘novel’ was often applied to narratives not substantially different from romances” (25). By the mid-eighteenth century, however, novelists “were writing consciously,” emphasizing the newness of their writings (27). Although it is unlikely that they always knew they were inventing a new species of writing, many of them at least argued that they were attempting “something that never yet had been done” (Barnett 76). Henry Fielding even portrayed himself as “the Founder of a new Province of Writing” (Hunter 21). Although in the preface to Joseph Andrews, he gestured toward linking his text to Homer’s epics, he affirmed his writing “to be hitherto unattempted in our language” (Barnett 47). Claims like these for the unprecedentedness of the novel entail novelists’ attempt to distinguish their writings especially from romance, a goal well demonstrated in Lennox’s The Female Quixote. What matters is that this kind of categorization involves expelling something recognized as belonging to other kinds of writing. Metaphorically speaking, it is an act of “finding a home” for the novel, making that kind of writing “feel at home” (Siskin 179). It is as if the novel were itself a homeless orphan or stranger.

The newness of the novel is bound up with the claims for what characterizes realism, such as historicity, verisimilitude, and everydayness. The novel is affirmed to be new because it functions as the form of writing in which contemporary realities, not
something remote or unnatural, are dealt with. This closeness to the present moment
implies not only “a decreasing of the perceptual distance between reader and text,” but
also a textual mediation between people and their world (Davis 67). In *The Rambler No. 4*, Samuel Johnson warns against a potential danger of fictional characters’ being
“levelled with the rest of the world” (Barnett 69). Conversely speaking, however, by
telling about their contemporary realities, novelists help readers decrease or partly
circumvent the feeling of stranger-ness that might be generated in their face-to-face
confrontations with those realities. This mediating function appears more important to
female readers for whom entering the world tends to end only in retreating from it,
because reading novels can make them “more a part of that world” (Davis 74). Moreover,
this mediation works doubly in the sense that while making realities less strange to
readers, the novel itself is made to “seem less strange” (Siskin 180). In this context, we
can say that the novel provides a mechanism to deal with anxieties of homelessness and
stranger-ness in a mutual way by telling stories about those anxieties, which renders self-
reflective or self-authorizing narratives in the novel more interesting and suggestive.

As “the newcomer that arrives upon a scene already articulated into conventional
generic categories,” the novel needs to be made familiar and comfortable to readers
(McKeon 11). It is what novelists at least partly intend when they try to establish the
novel as the new, but authentic, form of writing about their present moment. They
dramatize this effort as a kind of self-reflection on the very form of the novel and its
sociocultural functions, for example, by contrasting the novel as the bearer of “the most
solid Instructions” to romance as “empty Fictions” in *The Female Quixote* (377), or by
accommodating the novel to other forms of writings and their social and political
implications as in *Maria* and in *Frankenstein*. Likewise, those who are, literally or
metaphorically, orphans or strangers need places where they can feel at home.
Significantly, their stories of finding such places—their experiences of homelessness and
stranger-ness—are narrated as self-reflective autobiographical stories, which is well
illustrated in *Maria* and in *Frankenstein*. Even Arabella in *The Female Quixote*, who
believes her “History” will be written by somebody, tries “to control modes of narration”
by telling Lucy “how to relate her ‘History’” (“Introduction” xxvii). What is at stake both
in novelists’ self-reflective dramatization of their novels and in orphans’ autobiographical
stories about their experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness is the power to relate
one’s own stories, or at least to control ways in which they are narrated by others.

We can say that, in the process of reflecting on the narrative forms and contents
of their writings, novelists create certain spaces in which orphans and strangers are given
the power to narrate their own experiences in their own voices. What matters here is that
the power to narrate does not simply mean the ability to tell a story, but to have the authority to interpret it. In this sense, it should be considered an ethical and political aspect of the genre of the novel that, within its pages, orphans and strangers are allowed to narrate their stories from their own perspectives, even though they are most likely to belong to the powerless and voiceless masses in society. Furthermore, their stories tend to elicit sympathetic responses from listeners who are also, literally or metaphorically, orphans or strangers. This dynamic leads to sympathetic relationships based on sharing experiences through narratives, thereby producing a certain sense of community, a process that makes those stories at least potentially subversive. In short, orphans’ or strangers’ stories about their experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness, which address the categorical question about particularity and generality, the individual and community, entail some kind of critical examination of the societies in which they live. This dissertation endeavors to explore these critical, even subversive, effects of narratives, and to throw into high relief their political as well as ethical implications in the chapters that follow.

In *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, Nancy Armstrong connects a heroine’s “power to author her own history” to the power to conduct surveillance of the domestic sphere that characterizes “a new female ideal” (9, 46). She argues that writing, particularly
domestic novels, constituted this female ideal, antedating “the way of life it represented” (1987: 9). Her implication is that, by providing a form for specific subjectivity, novels functioned as a “homogenized discourse” (1987: 261n5). While agreeing with Armstrong’s argument for the constitutive power of the discourses in the novel, which should be considered in relation to the question of the safety of writing, this dissertation disagrees with her implication about the single-voicedness of those discourses. Novels are, as Margaret Doody remarks, “a vortex of energies” (1996: 278), and, as Susan Fraiman insists, “are less the telling of one life than a struggle between rival life stories” (10). Even when a dominant narrative seems to successfully suppress conflicts among different narratives, these resisting ones crisscross the dominant one in tangible ways. In this vein, this dissertation suggests that, by implicitly or explicitly staging various encounters of different, even contradictory, narratives, the novel engages in interrogating who is speaking in received narratives that organize and shape lived experiences and interpretations of them.

When she emphasizes the ability of the new female ideal “to suppress the very conflicts so evident in the bewildering field of dialects,” Armstrong challenges the view of the novel “as a form that—like carnival—resisted hegemony,” one example of which is M. M. Bakhtin’s dialogism (1987: 69, 261n5). Bakhtin defines the novel “as a
diversity of social speech types . . . and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized” (262). According to him, the novel serves as “a common plane” into which languages of social heteroglossia “are all able to enter,” becoming juxtaposed to one another, supplementing and contradicting one another (291, 292). But Armstrong disagrees with Bakhtin’s conceptualization of discourses in the novel as social dialogism, arguing that it tends to translate social heteroglossia into “the simple absence or inversion of normative structures” (1987: 23). We can conversely say, however, that focusing only on normative structures tends to lead us to ignore subversive aspects of discourses. Moreover, Bakhtin’s dialogism as “the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions” does presuppose its normative structures: “These ‘languages’ of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying ‘language’” (291). What is problematic about Bakhtin’s dialogic imagination is rather that dialogized heteroglossia is supposed to constitute “the higher unity,” although this unity “cannot be identified with any single one of the unities subordinated to it” (262). This feature is what makes Bakhtin’s conceptualization of novelistic discourse sound “something like the ‘authentic’ literary language” (McKeon 14).

While Armstrong focuses on the tendency of the novel to produce “a single voice and continuous discourse” forming a new female ideal (1987: 94), Bakhtin helps us see
social heteroglossia contained in the supposedly single voice. While Armstrong emphasizes the ideological power of the novel to repress alternatives, Bakhtin argues that both a centripetal force “that serves to unify and centralize the verbal-ideological world” of the novel and a centrifugal one that serves to disunify and decentralize it work in the discourses in the novel (270). But if Armstrong ignores the subversive effect of discourses in the novel, then Bakhtin seems to ignore power relations between centralizing and decentralizing forces. The “dialogization” of “social heteroglossia” draws attention less to power relations among contradictory forces than to their dialogic co-existence that conveys a utopian impulse (Bakhtin 263). By focusing on power relations among different narratives, this dissertation suggests that the novel dramatizes how some narratives are, as Fraiman notes, “more sanctioned than others,” not merely co-existing on a common plane (x). This approach involves an attempt to reflect critically on the ways in which some narratives become dominant ones. It also helps explore subversive potentialities in discourses in the novel, by foregrounding the encounters between narratives and counternarratives.

In the texts studied in this dissertation, narratives and counternarratives deeply engage with issues related to “home”—by extension, community or collectivity—whether home is dramatized as a solution, as it is in *The Female Quixote*, or as a problem,
as it is in *Maria* and *Frankenstein*. But why does “home” matter? We can attribute the importance of home to the co-emergence of the novel and of a new female ideal, to the so-called feminization of the novel, or to the division of private and public spheres. We can also ascribe it to certain sociocultural functions of home in the context of the rise of the middle classes. But this dissertation argues that home matters primarily because it epitomizes how a border dividing the inside from the outside is imposed, an imposition that is inseparably intertwined both with the novel’s emergence and with one’s becoming a subject. As alluded to earlier, it is in this context that orphans become problematic figures because they are situated between inside and outside the home, or rather, positioned at once inside and outside the home. Similarly, strangers are also in-between figures like orphans without parents. Whether welcomed like Safie or expelled like the monster in *Frankenstein*, orphans and strangers clearly show how social worlds mobilize their anxiety to (re)build boundaries when they are confronted with someone from somewhere else, someone who paradoxically often turns out to be not from outside but from inside. As Julia Kristeva implies in her studies on the issues of abjection and of “strangeness,” such in-between figures are needed for social worlds to keep their porous boundaries safe. The act of (re)building boundaries is none other than an act of making a certain narrative a dominant one.
In tracing the notion of “the stranger” in the history of Western thought in *Strangers to Ourselves*, Kristeva reflects on “our ability to accept new modalities of otherness” (2). Drawing on Sigmund Freud’s theory of the *unheimliche*, she argues that the stranger is nowhere else but “within us,” which hints that this stranger is nothing but the unconscious (1991: 191). According to this logic, we are all strangers both to others and to ourselves, therefore, there are no strangers. This gesture of universalizing “strangeness” leads to her suggestion of a political model for a cosmopolitanism. She founds this model on cosmopolitan ideas proposed by Enlightenment thinkers like Montesquieu and Kant, the core idea of which, according to her reading, is “a rejection of unified society for the sake of a coordinated diversity” (1991: 133). As Sara Ahmed points out, however, Kristeva seems to overlook “how strangerness is already unevenly distributed,” even though she distributes “strangerness to everyone” (2005: 96, original emphasis). Kristeva asks “foreigners to recognize and respect the strangeness of those who welcome them” as well as vice versa (1993, 31). It is at this point that Ahmed warns

---

1 The original title is *Étrangers à nous-mêmes*, and the French word, “étranger,” covers both “stranger” and “foreigner” in English. While “étrangers” in the original title is translated as “strangers,” the word “foreigner” appears much more often than “stranger,” in the body of the English translation. I understand the two words are used interchangeably in this text, although they are not the same.
us against Kristeva’s universalizing of “strangerness,” to use Amhed’s term, because “some others are recognized as stranger than others” (2005: 99). This unevenness of the distribution of “strangerness” will be examined in relation to the limitations of sympathy and of cosmopolitanism especially in the chapter on *Frankenstein*.

Curiously enough, Ahmed does not give any explanation of her use of the term “strangerness,” even when she comments on Kristeva’s notion of “strangeness.” One possible explanation might be found in her suggestion that “we must refuse to take for granted the stranger’s status as a figure” (2000: 3). According to her, “it is the processes of expelling or welcoming the one who is recognised as a stranger that produce the figure of the stranger in the first place” (2000: 4, original italics). But this point is already implied in Kristeva’s notion of “the stranger within us” and of “abjection.” Ahmed’s insight rather lies in her argument that taking for granted the stranger’s figurability functions to conceal “the social and material relations which overdetermine” strangers’ existence—the function that she terms “stranger fetishism,” based on the Marxist model of commodity fetishism (2000: 5). In this context, her use of the term “strangerness” can be read as her effort to question “stranger fetishism” and to highlight social and material relations whereby some are recognized as stranger than others.

Ahmed’s position appears to become problematic, however, when she dissents
from those who view strangers, in her words, as “internal rather than external to identity,” a remark hinting that she considers them external to it (2000: 6). The notion of “strangers within us” does not suggest that strangers are internal rather than external to identity, but that they are at once internal and external to it. As Ahmed notes, those who universalize strangeness as the very thing that “we” hold in common are prone to fall into stranger fetishism. To dismiss entirely their insights regarding one’s uncanny strangeness to oneself, however, would be to throw the baby out with the bathwater. If Ahmed’s position calls attention to social relationships concealed by stranger fetishism and to the political implications of the uneven distribution of “strangerness,” then the notion of “strangers within us” helps us to explore ethical ways to encounter strangers without reifying or marginalizing them as such. As an effort to combine insights from both perspectives, neither “strangeness” nor “strangerness” is preferred in this dissertation. Instead, the term “stranger-ness” is used throughout the chapters to refer to one’s being a stranger, or rather, one’s being recognized as a stranger. Moreover, the hyphen that links “stranger” to “ness” serves as a reminder that strangers cannot completely be incorporated or expelled, a condition that makes them remain in-between figures even after the act of inclusion or exclusion.

As borderline creatures living in liminal spaces, orphans and strangers are deeply
embedded in the uneven distribution of stranger-ness, that is, in social power relations within which they are recognized as those who should be expelled or domesticated. They are expected to align themselves “with some others” “against other others” in order to be given places to belong (Ahmed 2005: 104). This implies that, since they do not belong to any place, which in many early British novels is not a matter of choice but a socially determined condition, strangers or orphans constantly feel themselves out of place. Conversely speaking, however, their feeling out of place could constitute the conditions for them to become the bearers of critical potentialities for different ways of being, which would involve refusing normative ways of being that a given social world stipulates. Orphans and strangers can therefore serve as a kind of nodal point for discussing how certain ways of being are authorized, as well as how different ways of being are sought. In a sense, their experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness can produce “agonism” between power relations and freedom to refuse them—a scenario that Michel Foucault considers “a permanent provocation” rather than “a face-to-face confrontation which paralyzes both sides” (1983: 222).

In “The Subject and Power,” Foucault uses the term “agonism” to define the relationship between power and resistance, that is, “freedom’s refusal to submit” (1983: 221). By this neologism he means to describe “a relationship which is at the same time
reciprocal incitation and struggle” (1983: 222). Unlike dialectics, agonism between power and resistance does not evolve toward any kind of end point, even if only a conditional one. It has been argued that, according to Foucault, “all attempts at resistance are immediately accommodated by the system of power that determines discourse” (Haggerty 8). Foucault, indeed, argues that “resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power,” which suggests that it can play the role of “support or handle in power relations” (1990: 95). But this role is just one case of resistance. By emphasizing “a plurality of resistances,” he makes clear that resistances are not a mere passive reaction “doomed to perpetual defeat” in the end, but are “inscribed” in power relations “as an irreducible opposite” (1990: 96). Therefore, a permanent provocation inherent in the agonistic relationship between power and resistance should be read as the suggestion of a “possible reversal” between the two forces, rather than of a dialectical synthesis (1983: 225). More importantly, a reversal in agonistic relations is not conceived as a once-and-for-all resolution but as a perpetual process, during which different ways of being, acting, and thinking can be explored.

Foucault’s notion of agonism seems to overlap partly with the dialectical method that McKeon defends in the “Introduction to the Fifteenth Edition” of The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740. Rejecting the view of literature “as a regulatory system of
‘containment,’” McKeon insists that “dialectical method would treat containment and resistance more dialectically” (xxiii). From this perspective, literature essentially functions as “an investigative inquiry” into the “interpenetration” of regulation and deregulation, rather than the ascendancy of either (xxiii). This way of conceiving of literature calls our attention to the mutual constitution between containment and resistance whose double principle consists in dialectical, open-ended reversals. But while McKeon’s dialectical method produces “a contradictory amalgam of inconsistent elements,” the focus of this dissertation will be primarily on the status of being at the frontiers where agonism can be brought into high relief (21). For this reason, the terms “agonism” or “agonistic,” rather than the terms “dialectical” or “dialogic,” are preferred in this argument. The emphasis on an agonistic relationship over a dialectical one is intended to explore critical potentialities by looking into power relations among different forces in the novel.

Foucault’s notion of agonism underlies the reading of texts in all the chapters that follow, even when the term itself does not appear. It intimates that each of the texts to be studied does not create a homogenized, single-voiced discourse but a heteroglossic multiple-voiced one, by staging not simply the coexistence of different narratives but also their struggles. In this context, it can be said that the normalizing function of the
novel accompanies the subversive one as its effect, just as power relations accompany resistances “as an irreducible opposite” (Foucault 1990: 96). What matters for this dissertation project is not to decide whether novels function as a normalizing discourse or as a subversive one, but to mobilize the agonistic relationship between the two functions as well as between power relations and resisting potentialities. This is because an agonistic relationship draws attention to an encounter that should open up, in Foucault’s words, “a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized” (1983: 221). In this respect, we can say that the agonism between power relations and resisting potentialities, the normalizing effects of the novel and its subversive effects, constitutes part and parcel of the novel as a genre. It allows us to see the genre of the novel as a form of critique that reflects both on the limits socially imposed on subjects and on “the possibility of going beyond them” (Foucault 2007: 118). This is the critique that Foucault characterizes “as a limit-attitude,” which this dissertation endeavors to explore (2007: 113).

Chapter 2 demonstrates how, in Lennox’s *The Female Quixote*, the issues of homelessness and stranger-ness are deeply embedded both in a young woman’s becoming a proper female subject and in the emergence of the novel as a distinct, modern species of writing. By telling a story about a female quixote whose categorical
confusion of fiction with reality is attributed to her romance readings, this text presents romances as an outmoded and foreign species of writing that should be discarded in order for her to be a proper lady. In this process, the novel is recommended as the present English species of writing that she should embrace instead of romances. The simultaneous articulations of the novel as genre and the female subject draw attention to the fact that *The Female Quixote* was written in the early 1750s, when a “violent and overt attack on all the older fiction emerges” (Doody 290). In Lennox’s text, this kind of attack assumes the form of curing the female quixote of her confusion between fiction and reality. In other words, undoing the effect of romance readings constitutes the process of the heroine’s becoming a proper lady and of Lennox’s attempt to present her text as a proper novel.

Chapter 2 begins with the consideration of some of the previous critical approaches to *The Female Quixote*. This consideration shows that although the question of category—especially, the connection between genre and gender—has been the main focus of the criticism of Lennox’s text, it has hardly been examined in terms of the issues of homelessness and stranger-ness. Homelessness, the feeling Arabella has in her paternal home, leads her to indulge in romances, as a result of which she becomes a cultural stranger who sees things differently than those around her do. Her cultural
stranger-ness turns out to be not merely quixotic but potentially threatening. The reason is that it engenders a series of categorical confusions between fiction and reality, English and foreign female identity, and female propriety and impropriety, while it also puts into question the socially sanctioned ways of seeing things. Therefore, critical potentialities contained in her cultural stranger-ness, rather than her quixotic eccentricities themselves, should be cured. Problematically, however, the situations at home where women feel out of place remain unchanged, and the story of Arabella’s becoming a proper lady can be recast as the story of her loss of independence. Chapter 2 concludes with the suggestion that the agonistic tension between these two should be considered productive because it creates a discursive space in which alternative ways of being can be sought.

Chapter 3 examines the issues of homelessness and stranger-ness in Maria that underlie what Wollstonecraft calls “the wrongs of women,” and the limitations as well as the capacity of sympathy—or, fellow-feeling—to counteract such problems. If Lennox focuses on a gentry woman’s experiences in The Female Quixote, then Wollstonecraft attempts to show that women are equally wronged by gender-biased customs, regardless of class or status differences. Her novel itself, however, reveals that social class makes for real differences in women’s experiences. Maria, a middle-class woman, indulges in romantic reveries and most of time has someone to turn to for assistance. By contrast,
Jemima, a lower-class woman condemned to manual labor, has neither time for romantic fancies nor anyone to rely on. As a mutually sympathetic friendship becomes established between them, these class differences become invisible. The fact that Jemima is superior to her class, however, indicates that she is accepted into Maria’s circle as someone ready to be *like* a middle-class person. Moreover, Jemima always assumes the position of Maria’s keeper who is expected to occupy a marginal place in Maria’s circle. Sympathy cannot completely dissolve Jemima’s stranger-ness, and therefore class differences come to the fore again.

The first part of Chapter 3 discusses the problems of Maria’s tendency for romantic projection of a fictional image of a male ideal onto actual men she meets, and the problem of her subsequent credulity about men. Although Maria’s romantic credulity is encouraged by her reading, Wollstonecraft describes it as primarily due to bitter realities at home and to her lack of experiences in the world. This strategy constitutes part of Wollstonecraft’s effort to recast the novel as the narrative form that can enable women to voice their experiences from their own perspectives. In this context, it is telling that Maria’s and Jemima’s first-person narratives play a crucial role in establishing sympathetic relationships between them. Moreover, their narratives not only entail mutual affective investment but provide occasion for their rational-critical
reflections on social realities, both of which characterize the countercommunity formed in Maria’s prison-cell. But both this countercommunity and the affective community based on Maria and Jemima’s joint motherhood alluded to at the end of the text leave out the miserable realities of working-class people. This exclusion, embodied in Jemima’s stranger-ness, implies that a working-class woman’s particularities cannot be subsumed under the general name of “woman” dominated by middle-class female particularities; it also indicates that the wrongs of woman cannot be solved separately from those of working-class people—one of the key points in the second part of the chapter 3.

Chapter 4 first reads Shelly’s *Frankenstein* as a novel concerned with a modern concept of life as vitality—one that distinguishes, that is, the living from the nonliving. Frankenstein’s creation of the monster not only disturbs this distinction, but demonstrates the violence of imposing unity on disparate particularities. These complications are visualized in the hideous body of the monster, the corporeality of life that Frankenstein is not prepared for, although he himself plans its creation. Furthermore, the creation of the monster turns out to be an act of speciation, in which Frankenstein comes to conceive of the imagined propagation of the monster species as threatening to the very existence of humankind. This indicates that biological life both of an individual man and of the human species as a whole is politically at stake during the period when *Frankenstein* was
published. Drawing on Giorgio Agamben’s notion of “bare life,” this chapter considers how the phenomenon of politicizing biological life has divergent consequences:

Although both Frankenstein and the monster become banished into a zone of bare life between the human and the nonhuman, the former is described as being more than man, whereas the latter as being less than man.

Chapter 4 links the issues of biopolitics to those of homelessness and stranger-ness, especially with regard to the question of hospitality, based on Immanuel Kant’s and Jacques Derrida’s inquiries into that question. In this context, the animation of the monster is read as an unexpected advent of the stranger to whom Frankenstein fails to provide hospitality. His rejection of the monster is starkly contrasted with his welcome of Clerval, his friend who visits him the day after the monster comes to life. Similarly, the members of the De Lacey family violently reject the monster, while they welcome Safie, a Turkish stranger who comes to their cottage with the prospect of being one of them by marrying Felix. These two juxtapositions show that hospitality is juxtaposed as well as opposed to hostility, and that stranger-ness is distributed unevenly among the story’s characters, based on factors such as nationality, gender, or race. The uneven distribution of stranger-ness is also illustrated in Walton’s alignment with Frankenstein against the monster, which hints that Frankenstein escapes from the status of bare life and, if only
partially, reenters human community.

In providing an overview of the issues of homelessness and stranger-ness, the chapter 5, the conclusion, examines the three novels studied in this dissertation in tandem: *If The Female Quixote*, whose focus is on the condition of being a gentry woman, approaches those issues in terms of gender, then *Maria* extends them to include the perspective of class differences between a middle-class and a working-class woman, and *Frankenstein* complicates them further by adding racial issues and the concern for the human species as living beings. Examining these novels in tandem also makes clear that sympathy can be the bedrock of a countercommunity for othered people, but at the same time it has its limitations that put into question the viability of that countercommunity. Sympathy seems to work fundamentally based on likeness, and therefore seems not to be hospitable enough to embrace all differences: Jemima in *Maria* remains a stranger in Maria’s circle, and the monster in *Frankenstein* never enters any kind of sympathetic relationship with a human being.

The limitations of sympathy reveal the extent of a community’s openness when a stranger appears and asks for sympathy or hospitality. In this context, Chapter 5 examines Kant’s idea of cosmopolitanism and Kristeva’s effort to formulate a version of cosmopolitanism as “a paradoxical community” composed of strangers who
acknowledge themselves as strangers, an acknowledgment that enables them to live with others (1991: 195). A cosmopolitan society as a collective of strangers, however, is always exposed to the danger of falling apart precisely because of coexisting irreconcilable differences within it. This problem induces us to consider the capacity of narratives to mediate affective exchanges and to resolve conflicts, a capacity well demonstrated in Jemima’s transformation from Maria’s prison guard to her helper. Moreover, narratives create discursive spaces in which those who are othered in a community—or completely excluded from it—are allowed to tell their experiences in their own voices, a feature of the novel that stages agonistic confrontations among different voices. This chapter concludes that, without providing any definitive resolution of such agonistic relations, narratives make room for readers to engage actively with novels they read, or rather, the issues presented in them.
CHAPTER 2

Home as an Inverted Image of Homelessness in Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote*

If it is true that at the heart of power relations and as a permanent condition of their existence there is an insubordination and a certain essential obstinacy on the part of the principles of freedom, then there is no relationship of power without the means of escape or possible flight. Every power relationship implies, at least *in potentia*, a strategy of struggle, in which the two forces are not superimposed, do not lose their specific nature, or do not finally become confused. Each constitutes for the other a kind of permanent limit, a point of possible reversal.

Foucault, “The Subject and Power”

This chapter examines how the issues of homelessness and stranger-ness are profoundly intertwined both with one’s becoming a proper subject and with the generic emergence of the British novel, focusing on the question of category such as the relation of fiction to reality, of romance to the novel, and of the public to the private sphere in Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote; or the Adventures of Arabella* published in 1752. While partly turning to previous critical approaches to *The Female Quixote*, this chapter attempts to add a new perspective by foregrounding women’s experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness in a metaphorical sense as well as in a literal one. It is significant that, unlike her contemporary male writers who utilized the figure of Don Quixote, Lennox changed his sex and presented “The Female Quixote” to her
contemporary world. The reason is that “home” became “the world to which middle-
class women were increasingly confined,” as the novel developed as a modern species of
writing (Spencer 21). That is, *The Female Quixote* dramatizes the question of category,
particularly the inextricable connection between genre and gender, in terms of issues
related to “home,” which in the criticism of Lennox’s text have been only briefly and
partially touched upon.

In attempting to describe discontinuities in what he calls the episteme of Western
culture, Michel Foucault asserts that Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*, whose hero
believes what he reads in books to be true, is “the first modern work of literature” (1994:
48). One of three reasons he gives is that in that text “language breaks off its old kinship
with things” (1994: 49). Likewise, in tracing the historical origin of fiction, Hans
Robert Jauss sees the same text as “a founding text of the modern era” because that text
“attests to the complete separation of fiction and reality” (9). Whether these views on

---

2 The other two reasons Foucault gives are that in *Don Quixote* we see “the cruel
reason of identities and differences make endless sport of signs and similitudes, and that
“it marks the point where resemblance enters an age which is, from the point of view of
resemblance, one of madness and imagination” (49). See *The Order of Things*, 46-50.

3 The other reason Jauss pinpoints is that *Don Quixote* “shows the medieval
ontologizing solution to be a fiction—the delusion of a leftover hero” (9). See *Question*
Don Quixote are agreed or contested, what matters is that both of them draw attention to
the separation between fiction and reality, implying that the relationship between the two
became problematic around the beginning of the modern age to such a degree that one’s
inability to distinguish the one from the other came to be considered a particular kind of
madness.\textsuperscript{4} This kind of madness became more associated with women than with men, as
Don Quixote enjoyed a wide popularity in England “during the eighteenth century
especially” (Staves 193).\textsuperscript{5} It is this inability to tell fiction from reality and its association
with women, which constitute part and parcel of the question of category regarding the
emergence of the novel, that Lennox’s The Female Quixote primarily enacts.

Interestingly, not Don Quixote but the books he reads are blamed for his inability
to tell fiction from reality, and they are to be burned for it. The basic story line of this
episode is repeated in Lennox’s text, although this time the books Arabella, the heroine
of The Female Quixote, is so fond of are saved by Glanville to whom she will finally

\textsuperscript{4} Cervantes’s Don Quixote, Part I was published in 1605 and Part II came out in
1615. The first English translation appeared in the early seventeenth century.

\textsuperscript{5} For the literary quixote in England at that time, see Susan Staves’s “Don
Quixote in Eighteenth-Century England.” In the “Preface” to Don Quixote in England,
Ronald Paulson briefly summarizes early English translations of Don Quixote.
give herself after many embarrassing incidents. Problematically, in Lennox’s text, the charge of turning the heroine’s brain is made against only one particular kind of book called “romance,” which is disparaged in favor of another kind of book later generically categorized as “the novel.” What is more problematic is that the text presents this genre issue in relation to the question of gender, on which special emphasis is placed in Henry Fielding’s review of the text published in *The Covent Garden Journal* No. 24. In comparing Cervantes’s text with Lennox’s, Fielding, who himself created anglicized quixotic characters, favorably comments that the subversion of one’s head “by reading Romances” is “more easy to be granted in the Case of a young Lady than of an old Gentleman” (Williams 193). In this context, it can be said that *The Female Quixote* displays, as Margaret Doody points out, “a generic struggle” between romance and the novel, focused on the question of gender, and that the romance genre became inextricably linked to female madness (“Introduction” xxvii).

Since feminist theories began to draw new attention to early British novels by eighteenth-century women writers around the late 1970s, the question of genre and its link to the question of gender have achieved centrality in critical approaches to Lennox’s text. While some scholars argue that Lennox satirizes the romance genre, or rather satirizes and simultaneously rescues it, others suggest that it is not so much romance as
the novel that she criticizes. Most of them, however, bring into high relief the seemingly
naturalized relation between romance and femininity, whether they problematize the
naturalization itself or stress romance’s “profound appeal to women,” in other words, its
possibility to create a space in which an alternative can be imagined (Spacks 1988: 533).
This association of romance with femininity has aroused controversy about how to read
Arabella’s cure. If Arabella’s romances “are sites of female power” and if “female power
can exist only as a delusion,” then her cure should be read not only as her renunciation of
romance but her disavowal of female power (Pawl 151; Langbauer 46). According to this
reading, the subversive power Arabella enjoys while sticking to the law of romances
becomes defused, although a few scholars suggest that Arabella’s ostensibly submissive
transformation is “a masquerade to hide Lennox’s subversive desire” (Park 44).

Recently, however, critics have tended to shift the main emphasis of the analysis
from the question of genre and its connection to the question of gender, that is, the
relation between romance and femininity. Instead, they focus on the political or social
aspects in a way that tends to marginalize genre and gender questions. For example,
disagreeing with critics occupied with the question of genre, Ruth Mack argues that
Lennox’s concern is with “how literary texts participate in England’s definition of itself
as a modern society” (195). She finds Lennox’s question to be: “how can one claim to
understand—or even to see—the relationship between one’s own perspective and a perspective defined as different from one’s own?” (195) But this question precisely shows that Mack also reads *The Female Quixote* as primarily engaged in the question of category, in her words, “the problem of difference” (195). To put it another way, the problem to be asked would be not so much what particular form category assumes in Lennox’s text, for example, whether the text is about the question of genre or the problem of perspective, but why the question of category turns out to be so pivotal. It would help to understand the implications of the figure of a “female” “quixote” as a kind of embodiment of the question of category: What kind of difference can be made when Quixote assumes a female subject position?

Considering that what we can call “quixotic madness” is nothing other than the inability to discriminate fiction from reality, it is not surprising that critical approaches to *The Female Quixote* have been established around the question of category. What is at stake is that the question of category constitutes the main issue both regarding Arabella’s “adventures” from the Female Quixote to a so-called proper female subject and regarding the generic identity of *The Female Quixote* itself. But what functions do these genre and gender questions play in Lennox’s text? How are they enmeshed with each other in terms of “propriety”? How does the author deploy them in her attempt to establish her text as a
“proper” novel? Many scholars have already explored these questions from various perspectives, producing different, sometimes even directly opposite, readings especially on the concluding part of the text. But few have noticed that they are inextricably linked to the issues of homelessness and stranger-ness in that, in a sense, categorization is an act of making a home, which should entail experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness.

_The Female Quixote_ not only ends with an act of making a home, which is a typical ending of eighteenth-century British novels, but also begins precisely with that kind of act: the Marquis’s preparing “the Place of his Retreat” and marrying “a young lady, greatly inferior to himself in Quality, whose Beauty and good Sense promised him an agreeable Companion” (5, 6). Significantly, these home-making acts intended to quit contemporary historical reality epitomize the problematic relation between the fictional and the real, and, by extension, between the novel and history. The Marquis uses “the most laborious Endeavours of Art” to make his gardens “appear like the beautiful Product of wild, uncultivated Nature” (6). The Marchioness, confined in an “unnatural nature” with no companion except her husband, seeks consolation in romances. While

---

6 Finding a model of Arabella in “Richardson’s feminine heroines,” Paulson argues that “in Lennox’s terms, _The Female Quixote_ itself becomes a ‘novel’ in the proper Richardsonian-Johnsonian sense.” See _Don Quixote in England_, 174-76.
the Marquis attempts “to erase the contemporary, historical world by which he has been rejected” (Roulston 28), the Marchioness finds “very disagreeable” her forced seclusion away from that very contemporary life (7). Both of them, however, endeavor to bypass “a ‘real’ world that is uninhabitable” with the help of the fictional by which “the ‘real’ is uncannily contained” (Roulston 29). It is this inverted relation between the real and the fictional that preconditions Arabella to be a female quixote.

“The Marquis, following the Plan of Life he had laid down, divided his Time between the Company of his Lady, his Library, which was large and well furnished, and his Gardens” (6, emphasis mine). As this passage implies, not only his gardens but the Marchioness is also “planned” to play a role of an antidote to the Marquis’s undesired reality. But she herself needs an antidote, which is given in her romance readings. The Marquis replaces outside reality, specifically speaking, his being banished from the court, with his artificial world. Likewise, the Marchioness tries to supersede “her real world,” which is her husband’s home, with the fictional world of romances. In other words, the Marquis’s home, which is expected to be an alternative, turns out to be a world to which an antidote is needed. In this sense, the Marquis’s home is a place where the real and the fictional indistinguishably coexist from the very beginning, a condition that is clearly exemplified in the space of the Marquis’s library, one of his antidotes.
Interestingly, after the Marchioness’s death, the Marquis removes romances “from her Closet into his library, where Arabella found them” (7). This relocation of romances becomes more interesting when we consider that, without any mother figure, Arabella is permitted to receive her education only from her “grave and melancholy Father” (7). It is not just because, as the result of that “all institutions of higher learning were closed to women” in the eighteenth century, they were educated “at home usually with the help of a paternal library” (Todd 1989: 199). It is also because, as has been observed, romances are the only medium through which Arabella is connected with her dead mother, and moreover, because the authority to teach her is transferred from her father to her mother, who has a ghostly presence in her romance texts. By admitting romances into his library, the Marquis unwittingly confers on romances “a curious—though only partial—discursive legitimacy as part of the canon of texts officially sanctioned by male authority” (Barney 262). What matters is that this incorporation constitutes a kind of double self-subversion: Both his paternal authority and the authority of the library itself are at least partly subverted, which he realizes only too late and tries to repair by burning romance texts. Consequently, the library, an epitome of categorization, turns out to be a place in which categorization itself is put into question.

In order to shelter himself from “the Baseness and Ingratitude of Mankind,” the
Marquis constructs his home as a completely isolated space whose boundary should be impermeable (5). But ironically it is the very act of constructing a home “as a virtuous retreat from a corrupt world” that disturbs its boundary dividing inside from outside, in that both the Marchioness and Arabella give themselves up to romances because of their complete seclusion (Shoemaker 34). The Marquis’s home where he feels at home turns out to be a place where his lady and daughter feel out of place. In this home, the condition of feeling at home cannot be dissociated from that of feeling out of place, and into this contradictory place Arabella is born. In this regard, it is not romances but rather the Marquis’s home itself that primarily conditions Arabella for quixotism. She becomes prone to be quixotic because her unpleasant realities at home lead her to entertain herself with romances and her complete seclusion forecloses any opportunity for her to know the real world. It implies that “‘female’ and ‘quixote’ need not be understood synonymously” and that the romance genre is itself “not gender specific” (Motooka 1996: 251-52; Schofield 22). The association between the female and the quixotic that almost automatically connotes madness, and that between women and romance, are not pregiven but constructed by social conditions in which women feel out of place.

“Supposing Romances were real Pictures of Life,” Arabella becomes eager to be “engaged in such Adventures as were common to the Heroines in the Romances she
read” (7). Significantly, however, she is continually seized with the feeling of anxiety: “Her Mind being wholly filled with the most extravagant Expectations, she was alarmed by every trifling Incident; and kept in a continual Anxiety by a Vicissitude of Hopes, Fears, Wishes, and Disappointments” (8, emphasis mine). James J. Lynch argues that Arabella’s “longing for adventures manifests unexpressed fears about her own future,” that is, “a fear of marriage itself and the consequent loss of ‘Liberty’” (56, 57). Similarly, Doody remarks that Arabella fears “men rule her world and pay little attention to the female identity” (1977: 535). Arabella’s fear, however, should be considered not only about marriage and masculine authority but about the place itself called “home,” given that women are always confined within home as daughters, sisters, wives or mothers, the only legitimate sphere allowed to them but cut off from the public sphere. Her fear is in a sense claustrophobic, and what underlies her fear is the very anxiety about feeling out of place at home, in other words, homelessness tucked inside home. This anxiety is concerned not only with her future home supposed to be obtained by marriage, but with her present home, that is, her father’s home, in which she is already out of place.

Considering that her paternal home is a place where nothing adventurous would happen, it sounds natural that Arabella indulges in romances full of extraordinary adventures taking place far away from home, not in stories about somewhere like an
ideal home. If we consider her underlying anxiety about homelessness, however, her fascination with adventures turns out to be paradoxical because she can have them only when she is homeless. Moreover, like heroines in romances, Arabella is not supposed to leave her paternal home voluntarily but should be abducted against her will, which is “the most respectable way to leave home” (Pawl 149). Thus, the adventures in which Arabella is eager to be engaged would be nothing less than sufferings, as in the cases of romance heroines. This paradox implies that she is “anxious to” leave home but at the same time “anxious about” being homeless. This ambivalent anxiety vacillating between hopes and fears should be read in relation to a constitutional duality of home both as a paternal persecution and as a paternal protection. Conversely speaking, being homeless will free Arabella “from the sensible restraints of her father,” but simultaneously expose her to danger one example of which is Sir George’s attempt to win her (Flanders 136).

But why is Arabella’s ambivalent anxiety about homelessness portrayed, above all, in relation to the romance genre? This question should be considered along with the following one: Why is it the “female” “quixote”? To put it concretely, why does Arabella

---

7 In eighteenth-century novels, elopement was another way for a young woman to leave home. But, in this case, she was finally punished, although, or rather, because elopement was considered as a rebellious act.
need to be “quixotic?” And why does this quixotic protagonist need to be “female?” One possible answer is that “for women, there is no world elsewhere: no desert island, no place beyond society,” or rather, beyond home (Moglen 37).\(^8\) It is structurally impossible for Arabella to be engaged in any adventures worth being written about except in her unknowingly fictional reality, at least insofar as she remains an ideal heroine. Contrary to Amy Pawl’s comment, it is not that one problem a female quixote faces is “finding any adventures at all” (149). It is rather that Arabella should be a quixote in order to quench her thirst for whatever adventures altogether in the sense as she understands them. To become a romance heroine in eighteenth-century England means to be quixotic, that is, to be unable to tell the real from the fictional. It implies that the socially constructed link between women and romance should be considered a critique of women’s social position, not simply “the old stereotype of women’s intellectual inadequacy” (Barney 258).

Paradoxically enough, in Arabella’s case, the act of reading assumes “a form of obfuscation,” from which she needs to recover (Spacks 2006: 85). What is significant is

\(^8\) In this respect, Winkfield’s *The Female American*, whose heroine—a half-Native American and half-English woman—is shipwrecked on a deserted island and engaged in a series of adventures, is a provocative as well as somewhat exceptional text that puts into question women’s confinement in the so-called domestic sphere.
that undoing the effect of Arabella’s romance readings constitutes both the process of Arabella’s becoming a proper female subject and of Lennox’s attempt to establish the generic propriety of *The Female Quixote*, in other words, its “novel-ty.” Arabella’s relation to romances bears a close analogy with the relation of the novel to romance. Or rather, the former exemplifies the latter. Just as Arabella should unlearn what she gets from romances, the novel should be extricated from whatever can be attributed to romance. Just as Arabella has to leave behind her romances, so does the novel. In a word, Arabella’s relation to romances functions as some sort of “a means of displacement” of the novel’s relation to romance (Langbauer 64). It hints that Arabella’s position partly overlaps with the position of romance and partly with that of the novel. It does not go too far to say that, being a female quixote embodying the question of category between romance and the novel as well as the fictional and the real, Arabella assumes the role of a liminal space between them, which is enacted around her homelessness and stranger-ness.

The death of her widowed father leaves Arabella an orphan. In many eighteenth-century British novels, the female orphan motif is utilized as one way to dramatize “the disininheritance of daughters” in the patriarchal economic system (Perry 2000: 113). But Arabella seems to be made an exception to this motif, although she comes to be “the vehicle through which the estate [would] descend from her father to his chosen male heir,
her cousin” (Gallagher 195). Before everything else, Arabella has her own fortune, which protects her from misfortunes female orphans in early British novels typically suffer. Moreover, in contradiction to her lament over her father’s death, her orphanhood frees her from what she calls her father’s “Persecutions” and allows her “to pursue her quixotism freely” (Lennox 27; Flanders 136). On the other hand, it more visibly foregrounds her liminality in relation to home in both a literal and a metaphorical sense. A formerly unmarried daughter becomes an unmarried female orphan but with a home in which she is paradoxically homeless.

Arabella’s feeling out of place is conditioned by her isolation, but also partly by being a daughter, whose status, in the eighteenth century, became redefined as “a stranger in the house” (Perry 2004: 78). While her father’s “Arcadia” helps partly romanticize her surroundings, it also alludes to her feeling out of place by leading her into intoxication with romances (6). This alluded to homelessness is more visible when she becomes an orphan. Actually, there is no spatial change: Unlike that of most female

\footnote{In Novel Relations, Ruth Perry attributes a daughter’s being a stranger in her paternal house to the kinship shift from the consanguineous family system to the conjugal one in which daughters are “commodified as ‘chickens for other men’s tables’” (377). See especially Chapter 2 and Chapter 9.}
orphans in eighteenth-century British novels, it is not her fate to drift from street to street, or to move into somebody else’s home, by virtue of her wealth. Interestingly, however, it is precisely this “no change” that effectively visualizes her homelessness within the home because she remains in her deceased father’s home with Mr. Glanville, her husband-to-be. Technically speaking, she is under neither paternal nor marital protection. This scenario does not mean the lack of the masculine authority because she almost always stays with Glanville who at least indirectly wields authority over her. Although he cannot disillusion her about a lady’s power over her adorers, it is with his connivance that Arabella lives up to “the Laws of Romance,” if only fictionally (137). His presence allows a kind of liminal space to emerge in which she seeks for adventures without being confined to “a Mad-house” (157).

Just as in the case of her mother, Arabella becomes absorbed in romances because of her partial homelessness within her paternal home. In turn, her engrossment in romances strengthens her homelessness rather than counteracts it. What should be noted here is that, in reading romances, she becomes homeless both in a temporal and a spatial sense. This is because the romances that fascinate Arabella are ascribed “To the French Wits of the last Century,” and whose stories “happen’d about two thousand Years ago” (375). They narrate things that happened in the past in foreign lands, not in the present
age in England. In her attempt to live by romances Arabella looks as if she were living spatially on foreign soil and temporally in the past. She is almost like a foreigner speaking in a different language. In fact, her words convey very different meanings from those of the same words the other characters use. For example, Arabella uses “the Word Adventures” to refer to a lady’s conquest of her lovers, whereas for others the same word connotes “so free and licentious a Sound in the Apprehensions of People at this Period of Time” (327). In short, romance and its language carry with them Arabella’s spatial and temporal homelessness and stranger-ness.

As critics have pointed out, it is a historical outcome that romance came “to suggest something both trivial and feminine” because “it chronicled a cultural shift of interest from war to love” (Ross 1). Before this kind of feminization, the heroic romance as quest narrative was, above all, “a tale of power and control demonstrating male prowess and strength” in which a woman hardly played any significant role except the quarry of a man’s quest (Schofield 18). This male-oriented romance plot remains unchanged either in the romances Arabella reads or in the adventures she craves: the male pursuer and the female pursuee. Arabella wants not to be a knight but a lady who “stays home expecting the advent of lovers” (Spacks 1981: 130). It is the way to interpret romances that Arabella changes, which is well illustrated in her idealization of
Some male characters despise Cleopatra as “a Whore,” whereas Arabella admires her as a “fair and glorious Queen” (105). What her appropriation of romances demonstrates is: There may be only one story to tell, but “there is more than one way to tell it” (Haggerty 9). Or rather, a story can be transformed into another story according to how it is told, which leads us to consider the political implications of modes of narration.

In this context, Arabella’s interpretation of “The History of Miss Groves” looms large because it clearly shows what kind of difference can be made by Arabella’s way of reading romances (70). Being completely ignorant of what a scandal is, Arabella accepts Miss Groves’s history as an epitome of a romance heroine’s adventures, equal to “the unfortunate Cleopatra’s” (77). From her perspective, such things as a woman’s attempt to elope with her lover, her private marriage and consequent illegal childbirth, and her misfortune of being deserted, are what makes her life not scandalous but adventurous, not maliciously ridiculed but sympathetically lamented. As is connoted in her drawing a parallel between Miss Groves and Cleopatra, a woman’s misfortunes are primarily

10 In her work on quixotism in eighteenth-century England, Wendy Motooka points out that the characteristics of English quixotes lie in “their uncommon ways of interpreting” their empirical perceptions, which partly accounts for why the figure of Don Quixote was frequently utilized in eighteenth-century political discourses as an embodiment of “a political threat” (6, 41). See The Age of Reason.
caused by her lover’s inconstancy, rather than self-incurred by her frivolities. Thus, Miss Groves is recast “as an afflicted heroine rather than a sexually transgressive juvenile delinquent” (Marshall 106). The blame for her ruin should be placed on her lover, or rather, on the “reality that bruises her” (Ross 104). In this way, Arabella’s seemingly apparent delusions help her see through what others cannot see, which functions as an implicit critique of “the exploitation and frustration of her sex in the eighteenth century” (Schofield 24). It is this role of critique that Arabella’s homelessness and stranger-ness play. That is, fictional romances provide her with critical perspectives on gender relations in the real world by making her disturb the normally accepted way of seeing things.

As David Marshall points out, Miss Groves’s history is “the only extended narrative told by a woman,” except the history of the princess of Gaul theatrically fabricated by Sir George (111). Moreover, it is narrated while Arabella is staying without any male character around her, which critics have failed to notice. It is as though a woman’s history full of transgressive episodes could be told only during the absence of masculine authority. The important thing here is not merely that a woman’s adventures are narrated but that the narration itself is supposed to form the bedrock of female companionship, and by extension, the possibility of female community, based on nothing else than women’s experiences of suffering, even if not yet realized. Whenever
acquainted with other women, Arabella entreats them to recite their adventures, an entreaty that without fail surprises and even offends them so greatly that, for example, Miss Glanville “burst into Tears,” “not being able to revenge herself” (89). This repeated request for a recital of adventures has nothing to do with making a jest of them. Rather, it articulates her passionate wish for “an agreeable Companion of her own Sex and Rank” (67). For Arabella, that a woman confesses her adventures to a female companion indicates that she trusts in that person enough to relate her own history. The act of narrating women’s adventures as well as the act of reading romances constitutes a political act of allying women with each other.

Unlike Miss Granville, who thinks it impossible that “one Woman could praise another with any Sincerity,” Arabella by nature feels friendly toward other women (91). They could be an object of lament, like Miss Groves, or of admiration, like the Countess, but never an object of envy or emulation. What makes Arabella’s benevolent attitude to other women threatening is that it erases the distinction between women, for she believes all women are, at least potentially, harrowed heroines out of romances. In this respect, the Vaux-Hall scene in which Arabella gets involved with a prostitute is revealing: “Are you mad, Madam, said he in a Whisper, to make all this Rout about a Prostitute? Do you see how every body stares at you?” (336, emphasis mine). As Glanville’s consternation
clearly illustrates, Arabella’s voluntary offer to protect the prostitute temporarily blurs
the boundary between herself as an ideal woman and a prostitute as a personification of
sexual transgression. Significantly, her blurring the boundary between a proper woman
and her opponent is regarded as “mad,” which should be considered Granville’s attempt
to counteract the subversive power of Arabella’s quixotism. The important thing to note
is that her quixotism is made all the more subversive because of its visibility in a public
place. In other words, this scene dramatically visualizes the subversive power that the
narration of Miss Groves’s history only potentially has because, by contrast, it is told in
Arabella’s private closet while masculine authority is not a factor. Moreover, it
exemplifies the possibility of translating the subversive power of “a terrifying elision”
from fictional romance to social realities (Spacks 1990: 240). This possibility of
translation would be most threatening and subversive regarding Arabella’s attachment to
romances, including her reading them and narrating women’s adventures.

Not merely being sexually transgressive, Miss Groves and the prostitute in Vaux-
Hall also get involved with gender crossing. “Delighted in masculine Exercises,” Miss
Groves contracts “a masculine and robust Air not becoming her Sex, and tender Years”
(71). Likewise, the prostitute first appears “disguis’d in a Suit of Man’s or rather Boy’s
Cloaths, and a Hat and Feather” (334). It is this “gender transgression” that makes
Arabella’s involvements with them look more scandalous, even terrifying, to others because they destabilize the differentiation between the masculine and the feminine (Marshall 110). Regarding this gender transgression, Arabella’s admiration of Thalestris and Miss Glanville’s very opposite view are exemplary. For Arabella, this queen of the Amazons embodies “the most stout and courageous of her Sex” and, at the same time, “a perfect Beauty” (125). Quite by contrast, Miss Glanville views her only as “a terrible Woman” because she considers it preposterous that any ideal woman should have a masculine disposition (125). If she were to have any, she should be, in Sir Charles’ word, “shameful,” far from being admirable (205). Like the word “mad,” the word “shameful” functions as a byword for the subversive power with which Arabella is imbued in her romance readings. As Leland E. Warren points out, “a threatening female must be shown as insane,” and treating her as mad or shameful is nothing else but an attempt to defuse that potential threat posed by her (371). In this context, Arabella’s appropriation of romances turns out to be subversive because it causes a series of category confusions.

The issue of category confusion becomes more complicated, when we consider that the romances that captivate Arabella narrate stories about foreigners and that Lennox appropriates Don Quixote originally written in Spanish. Critics have paid attention to the gender question, centering on the “empowering” effect of romances for women
But they have relatively overlooked the fact that the romance heroines with whom Arabella identifies are foreigners, which contributes to Arabella’s homelessness and stranger-ness. Even Miss Groves becomes identified with “unwieldy *German* Ladies” because of her uncommonness (74, original emphasis). This pattern alludes to the cultural tendency to attribute what looks transgressive and threatening to strangers, including foreigners. Arabella’s sympathetic interpretations of Miss Groves’s and of romance heroines’ adventures contravene this cultural attitude because they blur the dividing line between proper and improper English women, and between English women and foreign ones.

Arabella’s way of interpreting romances does not simply cross the boundary dividing foreigners from English women. It even makes Arabella herself a foreign stranger, which is illustrated well at the very moment she first enters Bath society:

> Some of the wiser Sort took her for a Foreigner; others, of still more Sagacity, supposed her a *Scots* Lady, covered with her Plaid; and a third Sort, infinitely wiser than either, concluded she was a *Spanish* Nun, that had escaped from a Convent, and had not yet quitted her Veil. (263)

Arabella’s identification with foreign strangers intimated in her indulgence in romances becomes visualized in “the Singularity of her Dress” (263). As Felicity A. Nussbaum
hints, Arabella’s veil is the visual sign of her stranger-ness, including “exotic otherness,” that is, of her cultural homelessness, which infiltrates the supposedly clear line between inside and outside (122). Interestingly, her stranger-ness provokes “a delicious Feast of Raillery and Scandal” from the ladies in Bath society, whereas it has attraction for the men, although the veil hung over her face “gave them great Disturbance” (262, 263). In fact, throughout the text, Arabella is treated as a rival, or at best as an object of ridicule by female characters except the Countess, a situation strikingly contrasted by the point that she becomes an object of desire or admiration for male characters. Or rather, female characters should treat her that way in order to keep their own proper femininity against the threat embodied in the person of Arabella, that is, the nondiscrimination of the proper lady from the prostitute and of English women from foreign others. It implies that the patriarchal society sets “women as rivals against each other,” as the result of which they are “alienated from each other” (Nussbaum 25). What is problematic is that such mutual rivalries and alienations are very likely to foreclose the possibility of creating a certain form of female companionship and, by extension, a female community, based on

---

11 Nussbaum draw a parallel between Arabella’s blush and the veil, arguing that “the blush is associated with proper English modesty, while the veil evokes the Other woman” (122-23). See Torrid Zones.
sympathetic understanding. It is this possibility for female community that Arabella’s romance reading ultimately poses as some kind of alternative to the present society.

The Ladies in Bath society, “aw’d by the Sanction of Quality, dropt their Ridicule on her Dress,” and recast Arabella’s cultural stranger-ness as one of “Whims” made by upper-class ladies (263-64, 264). But this recategorization of her stranger-ness into eccentric conduct does not mean that “the difference that signals Arabella’s outsiderness becomes invisible” (Mack 200). Disagreeing with Nussbaum’s assertion that Arabella’s veil makes “the other visible,” Mack insists that, after visualized, her difference gets effectively erased “as the Bath residents claim her as their own” (200). But their inclusion of her, which is only temporarily effected, is not enough to cancel out her stranger-ness. Or it can be put this way: Her stranger-ness stands out too much to be incorporated into Bath society. It is partly accounted for in “the Jest circulated very freely at Arabella’s Expence,” after the episode in which Arabella misrecognizes Mr. Tinsel as one of her ravishers (322). Arabella’s social quality puts her in a liminal space between English and foreign women, rather than rendering her stranger-ness invisible. Accordingly, Arabella herself in a way becomes the visual embodiment of stranger-ness that cannot be completely incorporated, and therefore undermines the categorical distinction between English ladies and foreign women.
Just as her inherited wealth has let her stay at home where she is homeless without being exposed to the typical fate of female orphans, her social class helps her become partly incorporated into Bath society in which she is nevertheless culturally homeless. Bath society can neither completely expel her as a stranger because of her Englishness, nor completely accept her as one of them because of her cultural stranger-ness. In this context, Charlotte’s antipathy against foreigners is telling:

What signifies what Foreigners do? I shall never form my Conduct, upon the Example of Outlandish People; what is common enough in their Countries, would be very particular here; and you can never persuade me, that it is seemly for Ladies to pay Visits to Men in their Beds. (184)

Mary Patricia Martin reads this passage as betraying Charlotte’s “truly parochial sensibility” that serves as a foil for Arabella’s moral “superiority” of assuming “the best of others” (56, 57). But she fails to note that it also reveals Charlotte’s fear of being like her cousin, of being contaminated by outsiders’ cultural stranger-ness. From Charlotte’s perspective, Arabella is in a sense infected with a cultural plague and is even carrying it, a danger from which Charlotte has to protect herself. What concerns her most is to be a “seemly” lady according to British customs, to draw a clear line between herself and the foreign. It is, above all, the fear of their own propriety as Englishwomen to be corrupted...
that underlies the poignant sarcasms poured upon Arabella by the ladies in Bath society. As a liminal figure who crosses the boundaries of virtuous ladies and transgressive prostitutes, and of English and foreign women, Arabella causes them anxiety because her liminality clearly shows them how unstable those boundaries are.

As “a symptom that precisely turns ‘we’ into a problem,” “the foreigner comes in when the consciousness of my difference arises,” Julia Kristeva writes in Strangers to Ourselves (1). It is this kind of self-awareness of difference that Arabella arouses among those around her in her secluded country life and in Bath society. She is a stranger who does not belong in their circles. As a temporal stranger who follows precedents from “about two thousand Years ago,” she does not belong to their time (375). Likewise, as a spatial stranger who tries to live by examples of foreign people from somewhere other than England, she does not belong to their place. Her temporal and spatial stranger-ness makes others realize what kind of difference separates them from the one who is not one of them. As Charlotte’s strong repulsion in the above-cited passage well demonstrates, the difference embodied in Arabella leads them to “a feeling of discomfort” as to what they are, which might result in “a feeling of suspicion: am I really at home?” (Kristeva 1991: 19, 20). Their making a jest of Arabella can be regarded as the effort to defuse their anxiety about their being in their own “proper” place and time. Arabella’s cultural
stranger-ness is potentially threatening to them, rather than merely quixotic, because it can put into question what they are and what their society is.

In addition to revealing that the boundaries between social categories are very porous, Arabella’s liminality helps us see what kind of community Bath society is. Bath society observes Arabella, holding her up to mockery but at the same time being “aw’d to Respect by that irresistible Charm in the Person of Arabella” (272). Occupying the position of outsider within, however, Arabella herself becomes the observer of Bath society as a whole: She reflects and turns back the observing eye of Bath society upon its owner. Although the ladies repeatedly make her an object of jest, it is their intense but shallow sense of rivalry and jealousy toward Arabella that becomes a target of criticism. Likewise, although Mr. Selvin and Mr. Tinsel temporarily position themselves against Arabella, it is the former’s superficial knowledge of histories and the latter’s vain affectation that are criticized. But what becomes exposed to criticism is less any of them individually than Bath society as a whole, and its customs and manners such as superficiality, pedantry, and gossipiness, as opposed to Arabella’s interest in “something which may excite my Admiration, engage my Esteem, or influence my Practice” as well as to her indiscriminately friendly attitude toward any woman (274). If Arabella’s quixotism looks more like personal eccentricity in the secluded countryside, it acquires a
Arabella’s public role of critic turns out to be more significant, considering that women’s public role, if any, is nothing other than their “inconsiderable actions” in “trifling Amusements” (279). Those around Arabella think that her “absurd and ridiculous Notions” have been caused by “the Solitude she lived in,” and that therefore an “acquaintance with the World” would enlighten her as to the ways of real world (254, 323). But the world she has to learn about is the fashionable society in Bath or in London, which is full of diversions, far from the one in which she can experience remarkable adventures worthy to be recorded as a romance. Lennox suggests that there is another public place where insiders are engaged in something other than entertainments: coffee-houses, which, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Jürgen Habermas describes as “centers of criticism—literary at first, then also political” (32). Theorizing the demarcation between the public and the private sphere in the eighteenth century, Habermas argues that “the private people come together to form a public” in coffee-houses whose main role is to engage in “rational-critical public debate” (25, 28). But problematically, says Habermas, “only men were admitted to coffee-house society” (33).

---

12 When Sir George boasts of his ability to write, Glanville sarcastically retorts: “you are qualified for a Critic at the *Bedford* Coffee-house” (252).
Lennox seems to allude to this exclusion of women from the public sphere in describing that, after a gathering in Bath, Arabella and Charlotte retire to their rooms, whereas Mr. Selvin and Mr. Tinsel “went to a Coffee-house, in order to come to some Explanation” (291). As assemblies in Bath society illustrate, women are also allotted a certain kind of “public” space, but this one is “so deeply buried” in minute and insignificant details of life “that they can never touch anything major” (Warren 376). Arabella’s concern with extraordinary things and her ability to observe critically Bath society at least potentially disturb this gender-based division of the public and the private sphere.

Deceiving herself about the “Authority” of a romance heroine over her admirers, Arabella seemingly wields “the absolute Power” that she believes is given to her by her supposed adorers (320). She commands them, for example, “to recover” or “to live,” when she assumes they are in imminent danger of death because of their unrequited love for her (134). In turn, the male characters around her endeavor not to offend her, even though they frequently consider her absurd, ridiculous, and even insane. In fact, however, she can never take her place at the center of her surrounding circles, but is kept at best in “partial exile” (Barney 281). Moreover, it is the tacit acquiescence of Glanville as well as of Sir Charles that allows Arabella to enjoy her deceived authority over and independence from men around her. If Sir Charles brings “a Commission of Lunacy
against her,” which is not carried into effect only for the sake of his son, then Arabella

against her,” which is not carried into effect only for the sake of his son, then Arabella

against her,” which is not carried into effect only for the sake of his son, then Arabella
can immediately lose all her power and further might be put into a lunatic asylum (339).

This arrangement does not simply imply that, as many critics have noted, “female power
can exist only as a delusion” (Langbauer 87). It also suggests that Arabella’s marginality
opens up a certain kind of discursive space to look into women’s precarious position in
society, which may disturb the established order of the world based on the gender
division. It is what makes political Arabella’s cultural homelessness and stranger-ness.

Considering the critical potentialities of her liminality in the circles where she

lives, Arabella’s romance reading turns out to be more than quixotic. As Staves implies
regarding a “fundamental ambiguity” of quixotic figures, Arabella cannot be merely
regarded as “a buffoon” provoked into pursuing adventures by absurd romances, but also
as “an exemplary figure” who refuses to compromise with “the filthy reality” of the
world (194). There is no doubt that, for her to be a proper lady, romantic whims should
be erased from her mind, for which Glanville grows more and more desperate and with
which Lennox’s text is to end. But it is the critical potentialities contained in her cultural
homelessness and stranger-ness rather than her quixotic eccentricities themselves that
should be cured. For this to be effected, above all, the romance genre as a whole should
be discarded because Arabella’s homelessness and stranger-ness are attributed to her
romance readings. It is the very reason why the romance genre is characterized as both “outdated” and “foreign” (Rothstein 255). Moreover, it is at this point that the issue of Arabella’s proper female subjectivity precisely overlaps with that of the generic propriety of Lennox’s text as a novel. *The Female Quixote* itself as well as Arabella herself should make a clean break with the romance genre.

Arabella’s cultural homelessness and stranger-ness become recast as what can be called the generic struggle of the novel with romance. She occupies a liminal space between the foreign and the English, between the past and the present, and between the fictional and the real. In these dichotomous confrontations, the former terms are considered those characterizing romance and the latter those characterizing the novel. The cure for Arabella’s liminality is to make her reject the characteristics of romance and instead embrace those of the novel. Moreover, it is nothing other than defusing the critical potentialities of her homelessness and stranger-ness by leading her to find a home, that is, to get married to Glanville. She originally resolves an “obstinate resistance” when her father recommends Glanville as her husband: “What Lady in Romance ever married the Man that was chose for her?” (27) After being finally disillusioned by the Doctor, however, she gives herself to Glanville not just voluntarily but as a present: “To give you myself, said she with all my remaining Imperfections, is making you but a poor Present
in return for the Obligations your generous Affection has laid me under to you” (383).

She turns herself from an unattainable Lady out of romances into a modest partner who would comply with whatever obligations she owes to her husband, the transformation that concludes both her wandering and the narrative of *The Female Quixote*.

The problem is that the separation of the novel from romance cannot be neat because romance turns out to be constitutive of the novel. Lennox remarks on this point in the character of Sir George, who “was perfectly well acquainted with the chief Characters in the most of the *French* Romances; could tell every thing that was borrowed from them, in all the new Novels that came out” (129-30). As Sir George uses his “Knowledge of all the Extravagances and Peculiarities” in romances to fabricate his own version, so do early novelists use romance to create their own writings. But, unlike Sir George, novelists attempt to disconnect their writings from romance by deploying romance “to refer to whatever the novel (hopes it) is not” (Langbauer 3). As is well elaborated in the debate between Arabella and the Doctor, they define the novel, above all, as English and as contemporary, by categorizing romance “as foreign, particularly French,” and as antiquated (Siskin 180). But that Sir George fails both to forge his own history as romance and to stage “the History of the Princess of Gaul” as a successful lure for Arabella suggests that romance is uncontrollable (343). Moreover, *The Female*
*Quixote* itself exemplifies that “instead of being in control of romance, the novel is drawn into and repeats it” (Langbauer 67).

Focusing on the scapegoat mechanism operating in the definition of the novel as a new narrative form, Laurie Langbauer draws a parallel between romance and women: “Each is the name for qualities that status quo finds transgressive and threatening, and attempts to dispel by projecting into a separate genre or gender” (91). Although she rightly emphasizes the respective otherness of romance to the novel and of women to patriarchy, she ignores that, in Lennox’s text, a structural parallel can also be drawn between the novel and women. This oversight leads her to conclude that “a woman can’t take herself out of romance without disappearing altogether” (81). As is implied in Kate Levin’s insistence that it is “to survive” that Lennox “became a ‘woman writer’ according to her society’s specifications,” Arabella becomes a proper lady by adjusting herself to patriarchy (278). She turns into a patriarchal version of women rather than “stop[ping] being a woman” (Langbauer 81). But this reform does not completely cancel out the effects of her romance readings because they are what prepare her to be “one of the best Matches in *England*” (202). It is the same kind of ironic double bind that the novel as genre is caught in. Arabella should dissociate herself from romance, but her desirability as “a Partner for Life” results from her romance readings (383). Similarly,
the novel should be disconnected from romance, but romance constitutes an essential part of the novel.

The double-bind relationship of Arabella and of the novel to romance accounts for the displacement of the issue of fictionality by other issues such as foreignness, temporality or criminality. Arabella’s fundamental illusion is that she believes romances narrate facts that really happened. Accordingly, it is the fictionality of romances that Arabella should acknowledge so that she can give them up. As Catherine Gallagher argues, “the Quixote’s cure begins not with the renunciation but with the acknowledgement of fiction,” which is exactly what the Doctor tries (179). He condemns romances first for being “Fictions,” and then for being “absurd” and “Criminal” (374). But he attempts to prove romances to be fictions by pointing out that they are written by French writers and that they are about the past, rather than by directly tackling their fictionality. Seeing that Arabella is not persuaded, he advises her to “compare these Books with antient Histories” (378). Either way, he cannot persuade her of the fictionality of romances, though she allows him to “suppose” them fictions. It is his claim for what can be called the criminality of romance, rather than its fictionality, that leads her to abandon romances: “I tremble indeed to think how nearly I have approached the Brink of Murder, when I thought myself only consulting my own Glory; but whatever
I suffer, I will never more demand or instigate Vengeance, nor consider my Punctilios as important enough to be balanced against Life” (381).

It is in the mouth of the Countess that the issue of fictionality first becomes displaced by that of temporality: “‘Custom’, said the Countess smiling, ‘changes the very Nature of Things, and what was honourable a thousand Years ago, may probably be look’d upon as infamous now’” (328). “The world of romance” is here described not as fiction but as “simply the past,” which makes Arabella’s quixotism the confusion of the past with the present rather than of the fictional with the real (Warren 373). A similar displacement takes place when Arabella and the Doctor debate the fictionality of romances and their writers’ credibility. Firmly believing the factuality of romance, Arabella retorts upon the Doctor’s charge against it: “he that writes without Intention to be credited, must write to little Purpose; for what Pleasure or Advantage can arise from Facts that never happened?” (376) As this passage clearly shows, Arabella bases her argument for the factuality of romance on its writer’s credibility, which she thinks is in turn based on “a Love of Truth in the human Mind” (376). By contrast, the Doctor disconnects the fictionality of romance from the credibility of romance writers, and further, displaces it by instead bringing into focus the question of temporality:

“Yet though I cannot forgive these Authors for having destroyed so much
valuable Time, yet I cannot think them intentionally culpable, because I
cannot believe they expected to be credited. Truth is not always injured by
Fiction. An admirable Writer of our own Time, has found the Way to
convey the most solid Instructions, the noblest Sentiments, and the most
exalted Piety, in the pleasing Dress of a Novel . . .” (377)

If at first the Doctor tries to persuade Arabella to abandon her romances because of their
fictionality, then he slightly changes his focus and recommends the fictional narrative “of
our own Time” called the novel. Romance is problematic less because of its fictionality
than its irrelevance to the present moment. Moreover, fictionality itself turns out to be
what should “be taken for granted” instead of being hidden (Gallagher 178). As Martin
remarks, “Arabella is not being asked to give up fiction itself, but rather to exchange one
kind of fiction for another” (52)

Langbauer insists that the condemnation of romance “as a specious fiction”
serves to cover up “the fictiveness” of the novel (64). But the displacement of fictionality
by temporality or criminality demonstrates that early novelists evade the blame for the
fictionality of their writings not by covering it up but by overtly embracing it. In much
the same way, Arabella gets cured of her quixotic confusion between the fictional and the
real by learning “to presuppose and appreciate fictionality” (Gallagher 179). These
parallels remind us of the fact that fiction and reality did not become dissociated from each other until the modern age began, as both Foucault and Jauss argue. Equally important is that early novelists “often use the terms ‘romance,’ ‘history,’ and ‘novel’ with an evident interchangeability” (McKeon 25). This implies that the novel emerges as a distinctly modern species of writing as fiction gets separated from reality into a discrete category. Or rather, we would say, as Gallagher insists, that “the novel . . . purports to be inventing” “the very category of fiction” (180). It is this claim of originating the category of fiction that is dramatized in the displacement of the fictionality question by other related questions such as temporality, foreignness, or criminality.

From the beginning of The Female Quixote, romance seems to be taken for granted as a species of writing about foreign strangers in the remote past. The displacement of fictionality that occurs in Arabella’s cure, however, suggests that romance is presented as an outmoded and foreign species of writing in order for the novel to claim Englishness and presentness as its own. The senselessness and emptiness of romance should be understood to refer to its foreignness and pastness rather than to its fictionality. Consequently, Arabella’s embracing the novel as the present English species of fictional writing is expected to eliminate her cultural homelessness and stranger-ness by making her accept contemporaneous values conveyed in the narrative form of the
novel. The problem is that the historicization of romance entails anxiety about the possibility that the novel as well would be subject to historicization because the present is also a passing moment in time. Thus, historical contingency constitutes another important factor that should be excluded in the definition of the novel, which, if indirectly, brings up the issue of fictionality again.

The Doctor presents the novel as a species of writing to be discredited, whereas simultaneously he claims that “the only Excellence of Falsehood . . . is its resemblance to Truth” (378).  

Ironically, once the novel as fiction is dissociated from reality, it is

13 This claim invokes “verisimilitude,” the notion that any nonfactual text has the ability to represent the more abstract and universal truths about life rather than merely report actual events. Its primary source is the Aristotelian doctrine of “imitation” that poetry should be probable or verisimilar. This notion was revived in the Renaissance. According to McKeon, however, “throughout the critical period of the origins of the English novel, the claim to historicity is dominant. And when it is refuted, the terms are less likely to be those of Aristotelian verisimilitude than those of extreme skepticism” (53). He observes that “verisimilitude will prevail . . . only as the reformulated doctrine of “realism” (53) But Gallagher argues that “there is no realized prior category of fiction to which mimetic realism is added to produce the novel” (164). In any case, verisimilitude names one possible relation between fiction and reality. Instead of the term “verisimilitude, “likeness” and “resemblance” are used in this chapter because they remind us of their opposite, “the difference between fiction and reality,” which is

6 8
claimed to be as close as possible to reality. It is not expected to be credited, nor to represent any thing “in a Form different from that which Experience has shewn” (379). This closeness of the novel to reality serves as the ground on which the novel escapes from contingencies. “The Order of the World is so established, that all human Affairs proceed in a regular Method,” which makes the order of the novel equally established insofar as the novel resembles the real world (379). The Doctor surely embodies the Enlightenment idea of the world’s orderliness, dismissing Arabella’s argument for the vicissitudes of life as her lack of the knowledge of the world. Accordingly, the novel is suggested as the very narrative form of the Enlightenment, whereas romance gets dismissed as a species of writing that teaches the young “to expect strange Adventures and sudden Vicissitudes, and therefore encourages them often to trust to Chance” (379).

Arabella’s cure begins with the supposition of fictionality, and ends with its separation from foreignness, pastness, contingency, and criminality, all of which are deployed to displace the fictionality question. This suggests not only that Arabella becomes reformed regarding her quixotic confusion of fiction with reality, but also that the fictionality of the novel she comes to embrace is not the same as that of romance, but considered a form of critique here. See McKeon’s *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740*, 52-64, and Gallagher’s *Nobody’s Story*, 164.
one purged of all the negative aspects that are attributed to romance. In this purification, Arabella becomes normalized from being a liminal figure, whose homelessness and stranger-ness are threatening because they erase the line between a proper and an improper lady, into an exemplary woman whose domesticity the novel advocates. Thus the novel claims as its own the authority to represent an ideal femininity by reformulating the relation between fiction and reality, or rather inventing the category of fiction as such. It should be noted here again that the invention of fiction does not so much mean the clean distinction of fiction and reality as their coming “together in the category of the novel” (Martin 52). The relation between the two still remains problematic, even if they are not confused any more as they are by Arabella’s quixotism.

But why does fiction need to be approved, like the novel, or disapproved, like romance, according to the standard of the likeness to reality, once it gets separated as a discrete category from reality? An answer to this question is given in Arabella’s cure: to establish the novel as the very species of fiction appropriate for “English,” especially female, readers in the “present” age. But the fact that its Englishness and presentness depend on its supposed likeness to reality alludes to the society’s anxiety about fiction as well as the novel’s anxiety about its propriety. The definition of the novel as the proper kind of fiction relies on its difference from romance, which means that the Englishness
and presentness of the novel are not inherent but relational characterizations. The novel has to police the boundary dividing it from romance in order to prevent what are imputed to romance from returning—a very anxious process. It is this act of policing that is intended in the claim of the novel’s resemblance to reality. Conversely speaking, the difference between fiction and reality would allow opening up a certain discursive space in which something critical or subversive to reality can be explored—a possibility that constitutes the society’s anxiety about fiction.

Even while she entertains no doubt about the factuality of the romance world, Arabella certainly knows the difference between customs portrayed in her romances and those of her real world:

I am sure, replied Arabella, the World is not more virtuous now than it was in their Days, and there is good Reason to believe it is not much wiser; and I don’t see why the Manners of this Age are to be preferred to those of former ones, unless they are wiser and better. (45)

Not only recognizing the difference between the two worlds, she uses it to criticize the “present” world. When he asks his father to urge Arabella to go out into the world, Glanville expects that, after knowing the way of the world, she will be awakened from her quixotism. Contrary to his expectations, however, as she gets acquainted with the
world, she becomes more critical of its customs and manners. As the scenes at Bath illustrate, she sees through the difference between the romance world and the present world, and its implications for women: “what room, I pray you, does a Lady give for high and noble Adventures, who consumes her Days in Dressing, Dancing. . . .” (279)

Likewise, she retorts that “the Difference is not in Favour of the present World,” when the Doctor points out that “nothing is more different from a human Being, than Heroes or Heroines” (380). Significantly, the Doctor disregards this issue as unimportant, a position contrasted by his dismissal of romances as fictions because of their difference from reality. In this context, his insistence upon the likeness of the novel to reality can be considered his gesture to defuse the critical potentialities that can be produced from the difference between fiction and reality.

Paradoxically enough, Arabella’s confusion of fiction with reality makes their difference conspicuous by letting her take up the borderline area between them. Being a cultural stranger who does not read the world as others do, Arabella makes possible the encounter between the ways of being described in fiction and those in the real world. That encounter, on the one hand, renders her “the most ridiculous Creature in the World” (79). But, on the other hand, it lets her reveal and disrupt the modes of being that the real world stipulates, turning into a critical power her “Facility in reconciling every Incident
to her own fantastick Idea” (340). Those around Arabella look upon her as ridiculous and insane. Glanville even feels shame at her ways of speaking and acting. But these responses can be interpreted as their attempt to defend themselves against disruptions caused by her cultural stranger-ness, and to check subsequent impacts beforehand. In short, the difference between fiction and reality thrown into relief in Arabella’s liminality serves as a means of critique of the real world.

It might seem that the difference of fiction from reality and its critical potentialities become eliminated when Arabella finally yields to the order of the real world and thereby her cultural stranger-ness gets remedied. But a closer look at the debate between her and the Doctor makes clear that the difference remains unresolved even after her cure is accomplished, even if it becomes less visible. In his effort to reason with her about romances, the Doctor blames romance less for its fictionality than for its foreignness, pastness, and criminality. In effect, he has to replace the fictionality issue with the other issues because he cannot completely reject fiction as far as he recommends the novel as an alternative fiction to romance. Whether fiction looks like reality turns out to be a more important issue than fictionality itself because it is the likeness to reality that primarily distinguishes the novel from romance. But then again, the Doctor shifts his focus from the resemblance issue to the criminality of romance when Arabella mentions
the moral implications of romance based on its difference from reality. The fundamental issues of fictionality and of fiction’s relation to reality are never resolved but kept displaced by a series of other issues. They are redefined, or rather, purged, in order for the novel to be established as the proper sort of fiction close to but separated from reality. This suggests that there may always be certain differences between fiction and reality, which in turn hints that fiction, including the novel, could serve as a critique of reality.

In *The Female Quixote*, the difference between fiction and reality is, above all, constituted around the social status of women, which is well dramatized in Arabella’s cultural stranger-ness and others’ responses to it. This difference can be expressed as follows: “She can be someone in a nonexistent world, or she can become like the females she sees around her and be a nobody in the real world” (Warren 371). It is no wonder that this dilemma is solved by her becoming just like other women because it is the proper way of being for women. She would be an ideal domestic woman like the Countess whose life is summarized in only a few sentences. But it should be noted that the story of Arabella’s becoming a proper lady can be recast as the story of the loss of her liberty and independence. If the former constitutes the dominant narrative of *The Female Quixote*, the latter does its counternarrative. If the former is the socially sanctioned narrative, the latter is the one refusing or disrupting it. Interestingly and importantly, in Lennox’s text,
the relation between the dominant narrative and its counternarrative assumes the form of
difference between reality and fiction: The dominant narrative is sanctioned by the real
world, whereas the counternarrative is given by romances as one species of fiction.

One might argue that Arabella’s cure dismantles the counternarrative because she
finds her home in the real world by giving up her romances. Indeed, she seems to
abandon her desire to be somebody whose adventures would be written after her death.
But it remains ambiguous whether we could say that she really “rejects” romance as an
empty fiction. Romance cannot be simply dismissed as a fiction that blinds her to reality
because what she learned from romance has already become part of who she is. Arabella
should spit out whatever is inculcated in her by romance, which has already become part
of her in the process of becoming a proper lady in the socially sanctioned sense. That is,
her cure refers to nothing else than her expulsion of certain parts of herself, which
reminds us of the way of one’s becoming oneself formulated by Kristeva in *Powers of
Horror*. She writes: “I expel myself, I spit myself out, I abject myself within the same
motion through which ‘I’ claim to establish myself” (1982: 3, original emphasis). This
expelled “I” that she names the abject is “what disturbs identity, system, order. What
does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the
composite” (1982: 4). This kind of disturbance and in-betweenness is conveyed in
Arabella’s homelessness and stranger-ness, which is forcefully and abruptly expelled in her cure. But precisely because what should be jettisoned cannot be separated from what Arabella is, romance as a name for what partly shapes Arabella rather than for a fictional narrative cannot be completely dismissed. It hints that Arabella can “never [be] fully assimilated” to the real world, in other words, the counternarrative of the text can never fully dismantled by her cure (Mack 210).

Arabella “burst into Tears” when she is finally dissuaded from pursuing romantic ideals in the real world. But what kind of tears does she shed? Do they ensure that she is fully assimilated into the real world? Considering that she is compelled to submit to the Doctor because of the criminality of romance, these questions should be considered in relation to the following question: What kind of criminality does romance have? There are several aspects the Doctor points out regarding the romance’s criminality: instigation of “Passions,” “extravagance of Praise,” and erosion of “Sympathy” (380, 381). What is really criminal about romance, however, is the gender relation between a commanding heroine and her obeying adorers, that is, “women’s importance in it” and its implication of female companionship (Spencer 183). In this regard, Arabella’s tears cannot simply be read as those of relief that, in the Doctor’s words, “no Life was ever lost by your Incitement,” but also as those of mourning over what should be lost as the result of her
cure (381). Her explosion of tears looks similar to “the violence of sobs” in the middle of which “‘I’ give birth to myself,” sobs that help me become myself and at the same time mourn for what should be lost (Kristeva 1982: 3).

Arabella’s union with Glanville is portrayed as ideal: “Mr. Glanville and Arabella were united” both “in every Virtue and laudable Affection of the Mind” and in “Fortunes, Equipages, Titles and Expence” (383). As Eric Rothstein notes, this ending may repair “the disparity that had spoiled her parents’ marriage” (257). But her mother’s short life as well as the Countess’s life with nothing worth recording has a ghostly presence here because “home” becomes reestablished as the very proper place for women. There is one episode in which Arabella voluntarily leaves her deceased father’s castle in her imagined fear of being “carried away” by Edward whom she thinks is her “concealed Lover” (92). When Glanville asks her to return with him to the castle, “‘who can assure me’, answered she, ‘that I shall not, by returning home, enter voluntarily into my Prison?’” (106). It is this kind of question about home that resonates with the final reestablishment of an ideal home. Home is not the place in which women feel at home but an inverted image of homelessness. Besides, although there is what might be called the public sphere into which women are allowed, as is illustrated in the scenes at Bath, it turns out to be “a space in which to pursue fashion and public diversion” (Palo 222). As Sharon Smith Palo
points out, it is “a space of spectacle, a space in which to see and be seen,” not the kind of public sphere in the full Habermasian sense (222). In this context, we can say that women need “alternatives to their socially-defined state of meaningless and powerless activity” (Spacks 1990: 14). Or rather, Arabella’s acceptance of women’s social “nobodiness” paradoxically emphasizes women’s at least potential desire for a different way of being. They may find another form of fiction that can satisfy this desire, if romance is discarded as foreign and old. And the novel as a supposedly new species of fiction may turn out to be that form.

The persistence of the counternarrative leads us to give attention to the fact that The Female Quixote stages a struggle between different stories rather than tells one story. For example, it contains Miss Groves’s scandalous story, Miss Glanville’s marriage story that serves as a foil to Arabella’s, the Countess’s life story, as well as female adventures from romances. Although some of them reinforce the story of Arabella’s becoming a proper domestic woman, the others cut cross that dominant narrative of Lennox’s text, producing “room for alternative formations” of female subjectivity (Fraiman xi). Moreover, as we have seen earlier, the story of Arabella’s gaining propriety as an Englishwoman can be rewritten as the story of her losing the female power she enjoys while she sticks to the law of romances, just as Miss Groves’s scandalous story is
renarrated as a romantic adventure by Arabella. The dominant narrative of Arabella’s
cure cannot be separately narrated from the counternarrative of her loss. Rather, they are
the same story and it is how to tell it that distinguishes one from the other.

The simultaneity of the dominant narrative and the counternarrative renders *The
Female Quixote* difficult to read as a coherent text. It is controversial whether it is
romance or the novel that Lennox intends to criticize, and whether the text is itself
subversive or conservative. Because of these ambivalent aspects, one may observe that
Lennox “fails to resolve the energetic tension” between the different or opposing stories
contained within her text (Motooka 1998: 141).14 This kind of approach presupposes
that tensions staged within novels should be settled in the end, and it tends to see the
existence of tensions at the end of a text as a failure. But the persistence of unsolved
tensions needs not necessarily be read as a failure. Or, if a failure, it can be consider
productive, because tensions can lead readers to consider issues or differences among
which those tensions have arisen. In other words, a discursive space is opened up by the

14 In her reading of Lennox’s text whose focus is placed on the relation of
quixotism to sentimentalism, Motooka concludes that Lennox’s text “fails to resolve the
energetic tension that it so hilariously and successfully sets up between skeptical and
credulous reading practices” (141).
encounter between the dominant narrative of Arabella’s normalization as a domestic woman and the counternarrative of her homelessness and stranger-ness. It is the same kind of productivity as that which results from Arabella’s cultural homelessness and stranger-ness.

Arabella’s cure and subsequent marriage to Glanville might be read as a dialectical synthesis of conflicting stories in McKeon’s sense examined in the previous chapter. But, as has been explored before, her seemingly successful finding her own home is countered by the constitutional ambiguity of home as the only appropriate place for women and by their possible homelessness within that place. The ending of The Female Quixote does not so much present us any unifying synthesis of the dominant narrative and the counternarrative as show us how unresolvable their tensions are. One might conclude that, by accepting as her husband the man originally recommended by her father, Arabella fully assimilates into the existing social reality. But there remains a possibility that another Arabella may appear as far as does the social structure continue the same in which women are supposed to have nothing worth to be written about. It implies that the encounter between the dominant narrative and the counternarrative in Lennox’s text is less dialectical than “agonistic,” like the relationship between power and resistance to it in Foucault’s system of thought discussed in the previous chapter.
When applied to a reading of *The Female Quixote*, Foucault’s notion of agonism draws attention to the encounter itself between the dominant narrative of Arabella’s normalization and the counternarrative of the costs that it incurs for her. It also leads us to consider the counternarrative not only a productive but a constitutional element of Lennox’s text, rather than something to be dismissed in favor of the unity of the text. In effect, unlike Bakhtin’s dialogism or McKeon’s dialectical method, Foucauldian agonism, by definition, does not presuppose any kind of unity because its two terms, whether power and resistance or the dominant narrative and the counternarrative, are mutually irreducible. It brings to the fore differences between disparate narratives, or rather between disparate readings of the same narrative, instead of explaining away or resolving them. In turn, differences make more visible what kind of narrative is socially sanctioned and what kind of alternative could be explored, rendering difference a form of critique. It is this kind of agonism between the English and the foreign, between female propriety and impropriety, and most of all between fiction and reality, in which difference as critique can emerge, that Arabella’s cultural homelessness and stranger-ness make visible.

That the counternarrative persists, however, does not necessarily mean that it succeeds in emasculating or subverting the dominant narrative. Rather, as Fraiman points out, the dominant narrative “continues, simultaneously, to retain tremendous power and
appeal,” which is what makes it the dominant one (11). The thing is that the counternarrative is recounted despite the dominant one, but can hardly be recounted clearly and directly because of the dominance of the socially sanctioned one. In other words, the counternarrative can only be articulated “badly” because its language is so foreign to that of the dominant narrative. It is this kind of “badly-ness” that we find in Arabella’s way of speaking: She can speak for herself only in the language of romance, which is “so foreign” to the language of her real world in the novel (Langbauer 75). As a result, she becomes unintelligible to others except “the Countess who had not forgot the Language of Romance” (325).

It is lamented that, “unfortunately,” Arabella has read romances and, “what was still more unfortunate, not in the original French, but very bad Translations” (7). Based on this passage, some critics have argued that Arabella’s quixotic confusion of fiction with reality is considered “caused not necessarily by the romance form itself, but by bad ‘translations’” (Park 33). One value of this approach is that it “reinstates romance as a link” between mother and daughter, by criticizing “bad imitations” of romance rather than the romance form itself, one example of which is Sir George’s self-invented history (Park 31). But it overlooks that the “badly-ness” is not merely about translation but about reality that does not allow any room for women to be other than what would be socially
tolerated. Glanville is asking Arabella to do what is infeasible, when he impatiently entreats her to “speak in your own Language” (116). It is because there is no other language except that of romance in which she can express herself as what she imagines she is or should be. The language of badly translated romances, as Regina Barreca points out, “forms the bedrock of her language” (37). But it is not that her language is “a bad translation in itself […] from the contemporary English” (Barreca 37). Rather, it is that “plain English,” the only permitted language for women to speak in, is a kind of pejorative version of the romance language saturated with pedantry, superficiality, and gossipiness, and therefore distorts what Arabella intends (182).

Critics have observed that Arabella refuses to write her own history but instead expects it to be written by someone else (110). Marshall connects Arabella’s refusal to author her history with “Lennox’s apparent abdication of female authority and authorship” (117). Lidia De Michelis reads it as “her distrust of the deceptive potential inherent in the apparent transparency of first-person narratives” (201). John Skinner remarks that an autobiographical narration is rejected “in favor of a detached all-purpose extradiegetic third-person narrator” (195). But these readings fail to notice that the possibility of women authoring their own stories is actually foreclosed within the society of Lennox’s text because being women almost automatically establishes their having
“nothing to tell, that would make an History” (110). Conversely speaking, however, as George E. Haggerty succinctly points out, “any story, for a woman, will be the story of transgression” (11). This is what renders rebellious Arabella’s ability to appropriate romances as a narrative form of female adventures and her subsequent desire to hear other women’s adventures and to have her own. But this ability and desire should be dismissed as quixotic precisely because they are rebellious. The implication is that women’s stories, if permitted, should be narrated badly.

Considering it in terms of the “badly-ness” of the way women’s stories are told, Arabella’s choice of Lucy as the narrator of her history is also revealing because in a sense Arabella would ghostwrite Lucy’s narration. Being asked “to relate her Lady’s Story,” Lucy “begged her to tell her what she must say” (121). Her remark suggests that if Arabella’s history would be told or written it would be almost autobiographical. But another suggestion is that, if realized, Arabella’s history will be “very imperfect” because it should rely on Lucy’s memory and on her ability “to decipher” Arabella’s and her adorer’s thoughts (123). Moreover, Arabella’s history is already prescripted in the sense that she desires to be a romance heroine by following examples provided in romances. This does not mean that, as Marshall argues, she is “abdicating the authority of autobiography” and “surrendering her life story” (121). Rather, it connotes that society
allows women neither to author their lives nor to control the way in which their lives are to be told. Following romantic heroines’ examples is the only possible way to let their lives to be heard, which necessarily renders them only badly narrated because romance is the very narrative form that should be jettisoned.

“But Being a strict Observer of romantic Forms,” Arabella does not simply imitate them but turns them from a narrative form of male quest into that of female suffering, “Resistance, Constancy and Courage” (13, 27). Stressing the role of desire in reading romances, Ellen Gardiner insists that “reading romance produces the desire to write” in its readers (2). But, in Arabella’s case, it creates the desire to “be” a heroine, whose romantic adventures should be written about, rather than to write a romance story about somebody else. This desire renders her a cultural stranger who is “perceived foreign” because she “speaks another language,” that is, because she speaks in the language of romance in the world of the novel (Kristeva 2002: 240). But unlike Kristeva’s foreigner, who is “essentially a translator” aspiring “to assimilate” the language of her hosts, Arabella is a daring stranger who demands others around her to assimilate her romantic language (2002: 240, 241). Her demand seems to be at least partly fulfilled. For example, men around her “seek to accommodate her,” and Glanville eventually takes on “the role of the romance hero” in his duel with Sir George (Pawl 152; Gardiner 6). This makes
much more subversive her cultural stranger-ness because it exemplifies that her stranger-ness not only threatens to eliminate the boundary between what is foreign and is not, but also has a potential power to transform what is not foreign into what is.

Arabella can be regarded as a translator in the sense that she tries to concretize a fictional life of a romance heroine into her own in reality, although she does this unaware of the fictionality of romance. Like Kristeva’s foreigner-translator, however, she is “a nonideal translator,” whose difference “almost always” seeping through her jars people around her and even almost drives them mad (2002: 241). What makes her difference more jarring to others is that she uses the same words as they do, but intends different meanings. She tries not to translate the same meaning from one language into another, but to convey “foreign” meanings into the already established language of her society. The foreignness of those meanings turns her language, although it is originally the language of romance rather than her own, into “an ‘other language’” in which women’s lives can be told differently from the dominant language (Kristeva 2002: 254). Thus, her attempt to actualize a fictional romance into reality constitutes not only an act of translating but a kind of writing. She is in a sense a writer who translates women’s at

15 In impatient anger, Sir Charles as well as Glanville cries that Arabella’s romantic fantasy is “enough to make a Man mad” (199).
least potentially rebellious experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness that are not
allowed to be circulated in the dominant narrative. As a translator and writer in this sense,
she turns out to be “the most scandalous foreigner” (Kristeva 2002: 249).

The foreignness of meanings inscribed in Arabella’s language makes her singular
and unintelligible to others. Conversely speaking, her translation as writing of her
experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness fails to be communicated and ends at best
as a bad translation. But it is less important that it fails or ends badly than that her
experiences are articulated nonetheless. The reason is that, despite its failure, its being
articulated exemplifies the instability of the dominant narrative. Just as Arabella disturbs
others and their ways of being, so does her attempt to translate the fictional life of a
romance heroine into her own disturb the dominant order and what it sanctions. From the
perspective of the latter, the former can be described “ridiculous,” “quixotic,” “bad” and
even “mad.” But it is described that way precisely because it conveys different stories,
different ways of being, acting, and thinking. These terms indicate their difference from
the dominant narrative and their otherness within its system, an otherness that cannot be
fully assimilated.

Arabella’s adventures, if mostly imagined, end with her marriage to Glanville.
But this does not mean that disturbances caused by Arabella’s quixotism get healed as
she gets cured and married. In a sense, she comes back to the same place she left, the place called home. Although her status changes from daughter to wife, there is nothing indicating that what characterizes the place might have changed. Arabella herself, not the place, should change for her to return home as a proper domestic woman. This connotes that the problematic about home, its condition in which women feels out of place, remains unsolved from beginning to end. Accordingly, it is hard to read Arabella’s normalization into a domestic woman as any concluding solution to what her quixotism has brought up especially concerning becoming women in the patriarchal society. Rather, that her normalization can be recast as her loss of female authority leads us to note the problem-posing aspects of *The Female Quixote*.

The Doctor tries to prove that romances “at once vitiate the Mind and pervert the Understanding” so that they should be banished from Arabella’s closet. But Arabella herself serves as a counter-example to his devaluation of romance, in that her moral and intellectual “superiority is not in *spite* of the heroine’s romance reading, but *because* of it” (Palo 205, original emphasis). He also tries to displace romance as a foreign and outmoded fictional form by the novel as an English and contemporary one. But *The Female Quixote* itself exemplifies that it is not easy to dismiss romance as such. Likewise, while the Doctor argues that fiction should imitate reality to the extent that
“any Narrative is more liable to be confuted by its Inconsistency with known Facts,”

Lennox’s text puts into question the relation itself between fiction and reality by staging
an agonistic engagement between the two (378). The romance’s fictional world where
women wield authority over men is juxtaposed with the novel’s real world where women
dwindle into nobodies. This juxtaposition poses, rather than solves, problems about
women’s experiences, which can be read as an attempt to articulate what is its actuality,
what kind of subjectivity it stipulates, and consequently, what kind of alternative could
be sought. It is these questions that the agonism between the dominant narrative and the
counternarrative leads us to ask, in spite of the seemingly problem-solving ending.

_The Female Quixote_ cannot be read only as a subversive text or as a conservative
one. It has a normalizing function, which is illustrated in Arabella’s cure, but at the same
time it produces subversive effects, which is illustrated in her homelessness. Of course,
there are power relations between the two functions in which the normalizing aspect is
presented as the dominant narrative whereas the subversive one as the counternarrative.
But the presence of the counternarrative, which constitutes “a kind of permanent limit”
for the dominant narrative, hints that the dominancy of the latter is not secured once and
for all (Foucault 1983: 225). There is always some possibility of reversal by which the
dominant narrative can be dismantled. It is this possibility of reversal that the agonism
between the two narratives produces. In other words, Lennox’s text opens up a certain kind of liminal space where an agonistic encounter between the two narratives can produce “a field of possibilities” in which alternatives can be explored (Foucault 1983: 221). In this context, just as romance as a kind of fiction plays the role of the counternarrative to the reality of the novel, Lennox’s text as fiction plays the same role to eighteenth-century British society. The Female Quixote itself enters an agonistic engagement with its actuality, and this engagement constitutes critical potentialities of the text as the novel.
CHAPTER 3

“Revolt Within” in Mary Wollstonecraft’s *The Wrongs of Woman; or, Maria*

Nevertheless, if there is still time, we should wager on the future of revolt. As Albert Camus said, “I revolt, therefore we are.” Or rather: I revolt, therefore we are *to come*. A luminous and painstaking experience.

Kristeva, *Intimate Revolt*

Near the end of the eighteenth century in England, wrote Virginia Woolf, “the middle-class woman began to write” (65). It was this very historical event on which Woolf wanted to place “greater importance than the Crusades or the Wars of the Roses” (65). Using Woolf’s remark as the first epigraph to *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, Nancy Armstrong also draws special attention to this phenomenon and assesses it “as a central event in the history of the novel” (7). But paradoxically enough, in her account of the history of the novel, she does not assign any significant place to women’s novels of the 1790s. Although she treats many conduct books, her examination of novels jumps from Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* to Jane Austen’s *Emma*. It gives the impression that novels in the period between the two simply played out “the Richardsonian thematics,” contributing to the production of “a single ideal of the household,” and that the history of the novel was a seamless one without any break or rupture (1987: 66, 138). Clifford...
Siskin’s work on writing as “a new technology” in the eighteenth century, however, helps us to see the other side of the story that has to be suppressed for a “rise” narrative, in Armstrong’s account, for the rise of domestic fiction.

Although he disagrees with other scholars on the exact moment when the novel rose up as a modern species of writing, Siskin does not deny the “rise” narrative of the novel itself.¹⁶ Rather he presents another rise narrative, that is, the rise narrative of “novelism” by which he means “the habitual subordination of writing to the novel” (22). But shifting the focus from the novel “as an object fated to ‘rise’” to novelism “as the discourse of and about novels,” he incorporates rise narratives as constituent parts of the history of novelism (173, 174). This incorporation brings to the fore how the new technology of writing became naturalized and narrowed down into Literature as something made comfortable and safe, and how the novel played a role in these processes. What matters here is that making writing comfortable and safe entails a cost, which Siskin locates in what he calls “The Great Forgetting”—a term for the various ways in which the disciplinary narrowing of Literature was also an act of gendering.

¹⁶ Observing that the last two decades of the eighteenth century were “the moment the novel actually did rise—rise literally in quantitative terms,” he uses the phrase “the Romantic rise of the novel.” See The Work of Writing, especially Chapter 6.
largely leaving out writing by women” (23, original emphasis). This insight leads us to suspect that novels by women in the 1790s have been neglected because they contained things that made them uncomfortable, not because, as some people may still think, they were an undeveloped version that only anticipated “mature” ones by later women writers.

What, then, were those things that rendered women writers’ novels of the 1790s uncomfortable and unsafe in their own time? Were they the same features that characterized those novels as opposed to what women’s novels were supposed to be—“exquisitely controlled, serenely apolitical, and archly unassuming”—and therefore made them fail as novels by women to such an extent that they have been assigned, at best, only insignificant places in rise narratives of the novel? (Johnson 1995: 18) These questions are the starting point of this chapter, which examines Mary Wollstonecraft’s attempt to recast the novel as the form of writing that does not obfuscate but enlightens female readers and in which women can voice their own experiences and views, in The Wrongs of Women; or, Maria posthumously published in 1798.17 Her attempt includes

17 The full title is The Wrongs of Woman; or, Maria. A Fragment. Anna Wilson argues that the third part of the title, “A Fragment,” “marks both text and title as editorial rather than authorial creations” (33). See Wilson’s Persuasive Fictions. Hereafter, Wollstonecraft’s text will be referred to as Maria.
mobilizing the constitutive power of writing and acting out an exemplary reception of narratives. This chapter also explores the political implications and limitations of “fellow-feeling”—sympathy—between the two main female characters established through narratives, and the political potentialities of women’s negative “affects” such as contempt, hatred, and anger, which have been hardly touched upon in the criticism of Maria. Sympathy is examined not only as a solution but as a problem that entails the issues of stranger-ness and of the relation between the particular and the general.

In his account of “The Great Forgetting,” Siskin argues that what made writing uncomfortable were features of sentimental fiction, “which was most closely identified with the problem of the constitutive power of writing” (206-7). This argument can be applied to the explanation of the discomfort with women’s novels of the 1790s, although Siskin does not specifically mention any of them, because sentimentalism has been regarded as one of the most prominent features that characterized those novels. That is,

18 The term affect is here preferred to other similar terms like emotion or feeling, because it refers to both the active power to affect the world around us and the passive power to be affected by it. It should also be noted that, as Michael Hardt succinctly puts it, affect “straddles” the relationship “between the mind’s power to think and the body’s power to act,” “between the power to act and the power to be affected,” and between action/reason and passion/emotion. See Hardt’s “Forward” to The Affective Turn.
we can say that the discomfort with women’s novels of the 1790s, above all, consisted in
the constitutive power inherent in the act of writing itself, the very feature that needed
taming. Given that taming is an act of exclusion, we can also say that the implicit triple
connection of sentiments, the constitutive power of writing, and women, partly accounts
for the neglect of those novels in rise narratives of the novel. Significantly, however,
“sentimental novelists claim not to be writing sentimental novels,” which should be read
as the expression of the anxiety they feel about their own writings (Todd 1986: 144). It
suggests that sentimental novelists themselves try to present their writings as something
comfortable and safe to their contemporary society. Therefore, the question of the safety
of writing should be examined in relation to the anxiety that novelists have about the
generic category into which their writings may fall.

Wollstonecraft begins the preface to Maria precisely with the above-mentioned
anxiety about her writing: “There are a few who will . . . grant that my sketches are not
the abortion of a distempered fancy, or the strong delineations of a wounded heart” (59,
emphasis mine). Given that such phrases as “a distempered fancy” and “a wounded
heart” are typically identified with sentimentalism, it can be assumed that she decries
sentimental novels. Right after that, however, she clearly refers to her text as a “novel”
and declares it is “sentiments” that “I have embodied” in this novel (59). What, then,
does she try to negate and what does she want to acknowledge in the name of a few readers? Is it that she introduces her text as comfortable and safe, or is it that she claims to undo that kind of domestication? At least, one thing is clear at this point: Defying the conventional image of impeccable Minerva-like heroines, she intends to create what can be called “a new genus of heroine,” the heroine who learns from experience. This is a brave, even subversive, attempt in eighteenth-century British society whose dominant cultural assumption is that, for women, “experience equals ruin” (Langbauer 113). More subversively, Wollstonecraft requests that the heroine’s experiences “ought rather to be considered, as of woman, than of an individual”—an implicit call for collectivity of women based on the commonality of experiences (59).

But what kind of experience was supposed to be peculiar and common to women in general? Or rather, since experience is socially conditioned, produced, and validated, we should ask what kind of experience could be possible for women in a society where women’s confinement at home, whether it is their own home or somebody else’s, is an

19 It is now well-known that Wollstonecraft kind of reinvents herself as “the first of a new genus,” the categorical phrase she uses to describe herself in a letter to one of her sisters. It has been accepted that this new genus refers to the professional female writer who makes a living by writing, as Miriam Brody notes, particularly “writing political argument” (106). See “The Vindication of Writs of Women.”
inescapable condition of their lives. The answer to these questions Wollstonecraft suggests in the preface is “the Wrongs of Woman,” specifically speaking, “the misery and oppression . . . that arise out of the partial laws and customs of society” (59). What makes things complicated is that, as Anne K. Mellor points out, “the wrongs of woman” should be regarded as including not only those “done to women” but those “done by women” against themselves (1996: 415, original emphasis). Whether done to women or by women, as the actions of the novel unfold, it is revealed that the wrongs of woman have much to do with women’s status at home as the only legitimate place for them.

Featuring several female characters from different classes, Maria repeatedly shows what women’s confinement to home would be like, and what their lives outside home would be like: the misery and oppression perpetrated against women within and without the home. As implied in such words as “misery” and “oppression,” the place of home described in Maria is far from a place where women feel comfortable and safe, and where they gain the authority over affective relationships within families. Rather, it constantly turns out to be a place where they are victimized by what Wollstonecraft terms “matrimonial despotism of heart and conduct” in her letter to Mr. Dyson (59).20 Under

20 William Godwin, who edited Wollstonecraft’s posthumous works including Maria, extracted some passages from this letter and included them in the second part of
this despotism, women are very likely to lack any protection from domestic abuse inflicted primarily by male family members but frequently encouraged by other women like a step-mother or father’s mistress. Little protection, in turn, leads them to eagerly want protection that “is systematically withheld” from them (Nyquist 69). Worse still, what at first appears to be protection turns out to be its opposite, another form of abuse, which is clearly demonstrated in the experiences of the eponymous heroine, Maria.

It is telling that Maria’s family, or rather, her father’s family, is much like a war vessel in which he as its captain “was to be instantaneously obeyed, especially by my mother,” and his eldest son “became in due form the deputy-tyrant of the house” (95). It implies that his family is built on hierarchical relationships not only between parents and children but between husband and wife, and between the eldest son and his siblings. Being neglected by her mother and tormented by her eldest brother as well as her father, Maria finds some relief, though only temporarily, in the surrounding nature and in books brought by her uncle. Paradoxically enough, however, these resources of relief make her susceptible to “the wrongs of women” in the double sense. While they serve as an aid in “soften[ing] domestic tyranny,” they nurture “visions of a romantic mind” in Maria (97, 112). The books her uncle brought her, in particular, “conspired with his conversation, to

the “Author’s Preface” to Maria.
make me form an ideal picture of life” (97). What is problematic here is that this disposition repeatedly prevents her from seeing through things as they are and leads her to be deceived, particularly in her relationships with men including not only George and Darnford but Mr S— to whom George practically tries to sell her.

It is “fancy” or “imagination” that functions as the very driving force in Maria’s relationship both with George and with Darnford. It connotes that she (mis)reads things in accordance with what her fancy or imagination has portrayed in her mind:

Pygmalion formed an ivory maid, and longed for an informing soul. She, on the contrary, combined all the qualities of a hero’s mind, and fate presented a statue in which she might enshrine them. (78)

In short, I fancied myself in love – in love with the disinterestedness, fortitude, generosity, dignity, and humanity, with which I had invested the hero I dubbed. (99)

---

21 As “sentiment” becomes crucial in eighteenth-century social discourses, the term “fancy”—often pejoratively associated with “caprice,” “whim,” or “delusion”—becomes distinguished from the term “imagination”—considered the mental faculty indispensable for the proper function of moral sentiments. But until well past the mid-eighteenth century, these terms are often interchangeable, and, in this text, Wollstonecraft uses them interchangeably.
“A statue” in the first quotation refers to Darnford, and “the hero” in the second one refers to George. In both cases, a fictional image of what a hero should be antedates a male individual who supposedly already exists as such, and thereby plays the role of masking out what he really is, which makes Maria credulous. Implicitly or explicitly, critics—Mary Poovey, Anne K. Mellor and Barbara Taylor, just to name a few—have assigned Maria’s credulity to her romantic sentiments, in her relationship with Darnford in particular, fostered by Rousseau’s sentimental novels. Poovey even uses the word “pander” when blaming sentimentality for Maria’s entrapment in a romantic love: “The pander in each case is sentimentality or, more precisely, a sentimental story” (1984: 98).

It should not be overlooked, however, that her sentimentality is an effect of her circumstances before it becomes a cause of her credulity. “Had my home been more comfortable, or my previous acquaintance more numerous, I should not probably have been so eager to open my heart to new affections” (98). As this passage shows, it is her feeling out of place that has first disposed her to be easily deceived. Accordingly, it is the harsh realities at home rather than her sentimentality itself that should be regarded as the primary cause of her credulity.

Of course, Maria’s sentimental credulity can be considered an exemplary case, which demonstrates what kind of cost should be paid by women when they apply what
they read in novels to themselves. On the one hand, the sentimental novel may provide female readers with “an escape from the everyday realities” and thereby procure them the moments of consolation amidst their sufferings (Kaplan 1986: 122). On the other hand, however, it may bring them misery and oppression on them by lulling them into delusive imaginings, one example of which is Maria’s partly self-incurred misery and oppression she suffers from in her relationship with Darnford as well as with George. “A needed respite” provided by the sentimental novel is likely only to end in “a false escapism” (Schulman 52). But is this kind of negative escapism all that the sentimental novel provides? To ask it another way, is it enough to consider the effect of the sentimental novel on women only in relation to their credulity? To answer these questions, we need to examine another important implication of the antecedence of a fictional image to a real individual exemplified in the two above-quoted passages about a fictional image of heroism, namely, the issue of the constitutive power of writing.

As a kind of “inverted” Pygmalion metaphor effectively shows, Maria’s heart is already occupied by an ideal image of a hero such as her fancy nurtured by readings portrays, a male ideal who only later becomes materialized as a real lover. She falls in love with this fictional hero first, which leads her to rush into love immediately when, or even before, she meets a real man in person, without knowing his character: “Literary
emotions herald active ones” (Todd 1986: 4). From the beginning, Maria conceives of George as “superior to the rest of mankind” and projects meanings onto his “unmeaning passion” and behavior (98). Especially, Darnford comes to Maria as “the personification of Saint Preux, or of an ideal lover far superior,” as if he has just jumped out of Rousseau’s text (71). This manner in which Maria falls in love shows how deeply and directly literature—in this case, sentimental novels in particular—can be linked to one’s life, “not through the notion of a mimetic depiction of reality but through the belief that the literary experience can intimately affect the living one” (Todd 1986: 4). If we slightly modify Armstrong’s argument about the precedence in time of “written representations” of the modern self to its becoming a “psychological reality,” we can say that a written representation of a male ideal allows the fictional hero to become a psychological reality for Maria (1987: 8).22

The Pygmalion-like effect of fiction on Maria shows that the sentimental novel tends to cultivate and encourage sentimental credulity especially among female readers, while at the same time it can enact the constitutive power of writing by making “things

22 In her rise narrative of domestic fiction, Armstrong argues that “written representations of the self allowed the modern individual to become an economic and psychological reality” (8). See “Introduction” to Desire and Domestic Fiction.
happen in life” (Spacks 1990: 3). These two features seem to overlap each other, precisely at the point where the male ideal, which has become a psychological reality for Maria, repeatedly turns out to be only the projection of what she imagines a lover to be. Although both George and Darnford at first appear to be the personification of a male ideal, neither of them lives up to the ideal, from which “the bitter experience was yet to come” (102). It shows that, on the one hand, the sentimental novel provides Maria with a model of an ideal lover, the union with whom is expected to give her freedom from domestic tyranny as well as happiness, while, on the other hand, it demonstrates that such a model is inadequate by making her suffer from her relationships with men. Working on Maria’s desire to free herself from oppressive realities, the constitutive power of writing seems to degenerate somewhat into what causes Maria to be credulous by feeding her “treacherous fancy” (68).

It would be missing the point, however, simply to reduce the former to the latter. As the narrator remarks,

The youths who are satisfied with the ordinary pleasures of life, and do not sigh after ideal phantoms of love and friendship, will never arrive at great maturity of understanding; but if these reveries are cherished, as is too frequently the case with women, when experience ought to have
taught them in what human happiness consists, they become as useless as they are wretched. (77, emphasis mine)

As the above passage implies, what matters is not the pursuit of an ideal itself, which is suggested to be essential for the improvement of understanding, but the degree to which one, particularly a woman, becomes attached to it. Likewise, what is problematic is not the constitutive power of the sentimental novel itself but the lack of experience from which women ought to learn where human happiness lies. This connection between the constitutive power of writing and experience brings our attention back to Wollstonecraft’s precautionary justification of her text as a novel embodying genuine sentiments, rather than aborted fancifulness, and the related questions regarding her double gesture of negating and acknowledging the sentimental novel. If excessive indulgence in “phantoms of love and friendship” is associated with an aborted novel, then the proper degree of pursuing an ideal invented by dint of the constitutive power of writing is associated with the best novels, which delineate “finer sensations” (60). Wollstonecraft is rejecting the former kind of novels and is acknowledging the latter ones to which she believes a few readers will do justice. Or rather, instead of completely disregarding the genre of the novel as an aborted kind of writing, she designs to rewrite it as informed by the constitutive power of writing and as directly engaged in women’s
experiences that she expects would steer them through “the vast ocean of life” (65).

As critics have brought into sharp relief, Wollstonecraft harshly blames novels for teaching women “to look for happiness in love, refine on sensual feelings . . . which lead them shamefully to neglect the duties of life” (1995: 281). But she never rejects the novel as a whole: “Yet, when I exclaim against novels, I mean when contrasted with those works which exercise the understanding and regulate the imagination” (1995: 282). In fact, she laments the absence of novels that show the balanced combination of understanding and imagination, and Maria would be an exemplary novel intended to fill the void. While she shares with her contemporary society the anxiety that novels “tend to corrupt the taste, and draw the heart aside from its daily duties” (1995: 281), the alternative form of writing she suggests would entail another kind of anxiety because it would feature a heroine “who errs and learns from error like a man,” as opposed to the dominant type of heroine who is to be born flawless (Myers 1990: 124). In some way, she is undoing what Siskin calls “the taming of writing, through the subsuming of the sentimental within newly comfortable forms” (207).

If the sentimental novel tends to compel female readers to take their attention away from their everyday realities and duties, Wollstonecraft wants to reverse the effect, to foster political awareness of the wrongs of women, and furthermore to urge women
not to endure such wrongs as have been inflicted upon them, which is implied in the
following passage from her letter to Mr. Dyson: “I should despise or rather call her an
ordinary woman, who could endure such a husband as I have sketched” (59). Significantly, it is a narrative, rather than a polemic, that she utilizes to achieve these
purposes in Maria: a narrative not merely as “a form of representation” but as “a way of
seeing and writing of events, of the wrongs of women” (Todd 1988: 115). By inserting
into her text the act of reading and of writing, she attempts to examine the potential of
the novel as a new species of writing to “intervene in ‘things as they are’” (Kelly 209).23
This strategy gives Maria some meta-narrative aspects about the novelization itself of
one’s experience and its circulation in the form of narrative.

Just as reading partly serves as a source of relief from disagreeable realities, so
does writing serve for Maria confined in prison as an alternative resource for escaping
from her present sorrow caused by the loss of her baby daughter. It also diverts her
attention from the thought of “contriving to escape,” which Maria herself soon realizes
and about which she feels angry (68). Tilottama Rajan argues that, in Maria, writing is

23 Throughout this chapter, “writing” is often used as an inclusive term for
narrating as well as writing itself, and likewise “reading” for the main characters’ sharing
each other’s first-person narrative as well as Maria’s readings.
“thematized not only as a substitute for action, but also as an entrapment, a confining repetition of the past” (229). But it is a repetition with a difference, rather than a mere repetition of the past: While retrospectively relating her past events “with the sentiments that experience, and more mature reason, would naturally suggest” (66), Maria “learns to criticize her own fanciful propensities” (Maurer 37).24 She never designs her memoirs as a romantic reverie that might stir up delusory sentiments in her daughter, its intended reader. On the contrary, she designs it as a cautionary story to “instruct her daughter, and shield her from the misery, the tyranny, her mother knew not how to avoid” (66, emphasis mine). It is revealing that Maria herself does not know how to ward off the wrongs done to women, and therefore, her daughter should work out any measure against them to protect herself, for which an active engagement is required.

Thrown into prison, Maria comes to realize the cost entailed by her romantic sentiments through the act of writing, but interestingly, at the same time, she “reenacts a dangerous romanticism through the act of reading” (Maurer 37). She first meets

24 If Rajan underestimates the act of writing as a mere repetition of the past, Mauer seems to undervalue the act of reading as a reenactment of romanticism. But both writing and reading should be considered double-edged. They can be beneficial or harmful to readers, which Wollstonecraft understands well.
Darnford through his books, or rather, “some marginal notes” that she peruses again and again (68). Her experiences with George seem to fail to alert her to the danger of projecting a fictional image of a male ideal onto a real man. While reading books from Darnford and his notes in them, she gradually constructs him as a protector and savior. Considering the similarities between Maria and Darnford, however, her error cannot be blamed entirely on her romantic readings or on her failure to take a lesson from her previous mistakes. They both are suffering from “a similar fate,” and Darnford’s notes, including “observations on the present state of society,” are “perfectly in unison with Maria’s mode of thinking” (68). The question that should be asked here is not why Maria remains credulous but why Maria still clings to a vain hope of getting a heroic lover to deliver and protect her from wretched realities despite the sufferings that she has experienced with George.

Maria’s relapse into romantic reverie about an ideal lover nourished by reading is partly accounted for by her idleness caused by imprisonment: “How difficult it was for women to avoid growing romantic, who have no active duties or pursuits” (69). But seeing that, unlike George, Darnford is in the same situation as Maria, her reliance on Darnford should be regarded as having a more structural implication of gender relations at that time: man the protector and woman the protégée. It is not an accident that, in his
very first note to Maria, Darnford not only mentions the word “protection,” but refers to it as “the privilege of man” (72). If Maria cherishes the hope that Darnford might be her deliverer, Darnford conceives of her as his protégée from the very beginning. And this feeling grows stronger as they become intimate: “To protect her from insult and sorrow – to make her happy, seemed not only the first wish of his heart, but the most noble duty of his life” (78). But he will turn out to be unreliable, as is presaged in the following passage: “Could he ever change, could he be a villain?” (78).

Those on whom Maria relies for her deliverance from her wretched realities are all men: her uncle, George, and Darnford. In one way or another, however, they all—even her uncle—lead her into misery. She depends on her uncle first, who provides her with books in which she finds a refuge from domestic tyranny. But he is the very person who “originally” animates Maria’s romantic imaginings by his own “sentimental history” as well as his conversation with Maria (Poovey 1982: 114). Furthermore, he plays the decisive role in Maria’s marriage to George by promising him five thousand pounds. It

25 Although Maria appeals to Jemima to find her missing daughter, she does not think of her as any sort of savior until Jemima leads her out of the prison castle. It is only when interrupted by “a being” on their way out that Maria, “throwing her arms round Jemima, cried, ‘Save me!’” (139).
does not go too far to say that Maria is “bartered and bought” (Hoeveler 397). And quite contrary to his intention to extricate Maria from her uncomfortable situation, this marriage ironically “bastilled me for life” (115). Far from a hero the union with whom would obtain Maria her freedom, George turns out to be “a heartless, unprincipled wretch” (104). Likewise, every alternative ending hints that Darnford, who at first promises Maria “the protection women in the present state of society want,” ends up as a villain (144). In a word, a hero turns into a villain, “rescue into recapture, and relief into trepidation,” as opposed to the usual pattern in romance conventions (Fraiman 36).

Maria’s repeated falling back into what can be called “female difficulties” clearly shows that a man’s moral character makes little difference to Maria’s life in terms of results. As a substitute for her tyrannical father, her uncle can be considered a kind of nurturing or tender father, “a new invention in fiction at mid-century” (Perry 2004: 78). Similarly, Darnford appears, or rather invents himself in his narrative, as a politically progressive man. Both her uncle and Darnford are characterized as “the man of feeling” with a heart to feel “for the suffering of others” and to help “poor or unfortunate neighbors and friends” (Bannet 52).26 Significantly, however, equivalence is established

26 The figure of “the man of feeling” loomed large in the context of the intellectual debates on sentiment, sympathy, and the novel, in the second half of the
between these two men of feeling and George: “Both the patriarchal and the sentimental versions of masculinity oppress women” (Ellis 2000: 73). This equivalence insinuates that female difficulties are fundamentally rooted in structural conditions of patriarchal gender relations, rather than in men’s individual personalities, women’s romantic credulity, or their personal relationships to men.

While Maria’s relapse into sentimental romanticism, or rather, her clinging to the hope of finding a male savior, is inextricably related to the ideal image of home as “the only haven” from a heartless world and its wretched realities, the above-mentioned equivalence between men is closely related to the actual reality of home in which patriarchal gender relations are most clearly epitomized (Armstrong 1987: 8). Indeed, it is the desire to find a home in which she feels comfortable that underlies Maria’s reliance upon men. And marriage is considered the only legitimate way to satisfy her desire to escape from the oppressive domestic life at her father’s home into an alternative one. Not only for herself but for her sisters, Maria expects, would her marriage to George provide

---
eighteenth century. This figure, who is characterized by passivity, physical as well as emotional delicacy, and sympathetic sensibility, put into question the contemporaneous gender norms. *The Man of Feeling* is also the title of Henry Mackenzie’s first and most famous novel published in 1771.
a home: “I had purposed taking one of my sisters with me; for a strong motive for marrying, was the desire of having a home at which I could receive them, now their own grew so uncomfortable, as not to deserve the cheering appellation” (107). After leaving her husband’s home, she still looks for “a home in which I could rest” (125). It is also her desire for a home as a refuge from her abject conditions that stimulates her interest in Darnford, which appears as a wish to give her daughter “a father whom her mother could respect and love” (71). It seems that as she undergoes more misery and oppression in the domestic sphere, her desire for an ideal home grows stronger, rather than weaker.

Contrary to her expectations, however, a supposedly alternative home turns out to be the same as, even worse than, the previous one in which Maria “suffers confinement, oppression and persecution” (Berglund 104). By marriage, she becomes liberated from the disagreeable home terrorized first by her male family members and later by her father’s mistress, only to arrive at the similarly oppressive home terrorized by her own husband, who is “termed her natural protector” (117). Darnford’s alluded to unfaithfulness hints that what at first seems a prosperous union between them will end in disastrous results to such a degree that Maria attempts to commit suicide “to fly from the anguish she endured” (147). It is fair to say that their home, if established, would never be the one Maria dreams of, in which she could finally find comfort and safety. These
“series of confinements, each one leading in some way to the next,” show that a home is less the place in which women as wives wield “the power of domestic surveillance” than that in which women are kept only as powerless inmates (Battigelli 66; Armstrong 1987: 19). Similarly, pace Armstrong, it is less that “the female relinquishes political control to the male in order to acquire exclusive authority over domestic life” than that she has neither political power nor domestic authority (1987: 41). These aspects of home explain partly why women writers’ novels of the 1790s have no place in the rise narrative of domestic fiction.

The status of the home both as an oppressive place for women and as a refuge from wrongs done to them constitutes its “never-resolved duality,” which explains the vicious circle of Maria’s desire for a home and its lack of fulfillment (Flanders 116). What is most problematic with this duality is that, when the home is the place where women are oppressed, “there is virtually nowhere to turn for help, no refuge left” (Berglund 104). It connotes that the hidden face of the desire for a home worthy of the name is nothing else than the anxiety about homelessness. It has been argued by some commentators that “the narrator does not underscore the similarity of Maria’s two falls” (Poovey 1984: 99). Some critics even argue that Maria’s failure to see the similarity between her relationship to George and to Darnford implies that women “actually enjoy
their imprisonment” (Shea 61). But Maria cannot give up the hope of finding an ideal home \textit{in spite of} her miserable experiences in her father’s home and her husband’s, an insistence that is more than merely failing to learn from her errors. For in the society that has “no place … for a woman outside her father’s home or her husband’s home,” it is almost structurally impossible for her to enjoy comfort and happiness, when her father or husband turns out to be not a protector but a persecutor (Perry 1980: 40). Maria’s profession that she knew not how to avoid such patriarchal tyranny hints that she bitterly realizes this structural impossibility.

It is in the character of Jemima, “who belonged to nobody” from the moment of her birth, that the anxiety about homelessness is starkly epitomized in its extreme form (82). Taking into consideration that women feel out of place in their homes, we can generalize that “all women are homeless” at least in a metaphorical sense (Greenfield: 93). But the metaphor is actualized in Jemima’s case: While women are supposed to have the status of a daughter, a wife, or a mother, even if only in name, Jemima is never properly acknowledged as any of them. Although she “has” a father, she is only hated and despised by him even before her birth. When her stepsister is born, she is brought to her stepfamily’s house. But it is not “a home,” she recalls, “for a home I never knew” (81). She is no better than an orphan who is staying in somebody else’s home or a
stranger in her father’s home, which implies that she is exposed to any number of possible domestic abuses. In fact, her life consists of a series of wretched experiences: verbal and physical abuse in the domestic sphere, sexual abuse from men including prostitution, and, above all, “the rigour of perpetual labor” (82). What is worse, she does not have any resource of relief to soften these harsh realities. She has neither human kindness from any single fellow-creature nor distractions like reading books or enjoying open air in a heath.

In spite of all the abuses she suffers in somebody else’s home, the most terrifying thing to Jemima is “literally being cast out to the streets” from that place (Sapiro 1992: 129). This is because, for women, streets never mean being free from abuses, but falling into the most abject state of misery and degradation. As Jemima asks herself, the question of “whither I should go?” represents this specific horror of being on the street, the extreme case of homelessness (84). In this respect, being a stranger within somebody else’s home is a kind of second worst choice for Jemima to make in order to survive, if “choice” is the right word at all here. It makes her situation much more miserable because she is only treated “as a creature of another species” there (83). Indeed, she is even animalized as “fawning,” “an obstinate mule,” “the filching cat, the ravenous dog,” etc. (82). In being almost like a strange thing from another species rather than a human
stranger, Jemima in turn “detested mankind, and abhorred myself” (84). It seems as if “full humanity is given only through the family; to be outside it is to be less than human” (Todd 1976: 22). Also, the animalization of a stranger within the home seems to translate antagonism within humankind into the one between humankind and those species that are less than human. But what matters most here is that Jemima self-destructively introverts into herself her hate and anger against others who treat her as less than human, negative affects that can serve as positive forces for social and political changes, if constructively redirected.

While Jemima’s life story illustrates what kind of life women without recourse would have when they are deprived of a home in which they can seek protection, no matter how dubious, Maria’s life story shows how precarious women’s status would be even within the home. In fact, Maria’s status at home approximates that of a stranger in somebody else’s home in the sense that she feels out of place as a daughter in her father’s home and later as a wife in her husband’s home. Despite her marginality, however, “her emotional availability” to her family members props up “the stability of the whole unit” (Perry 2004: 78). Although Maria herself fails to gain her parents’ affection, she assumes the role of mother to her sisters. It is also she, not her elder brother their parents have excessively indulged, who attends her mother when she is on her deathbed and helps her
father when he has fallen into difficulties. Likewise, dissembling her own feelings about her husband and being “still anxious to befriend him,” she keeps “laboring to reform her embroiled mate,” even when she discovers what kind of man he really is (114, 115). In short, Maria plays a main role in sustaining a home in which she feels out of place by providing what can be called “affective labor.”

It has been accepted that, during the eighteenth century, “women lost power as sisters and daughters and gained it as wives and mothers” (Perry 2004: 34). Armstrong’s rise narrative of domestic fiction tells a similar story that, being wives, women gain the power to dominate the domestic sphere and to exercise “authority over a specific domain of knowledge—that of the emotions” (1987: 43). But Maria’s marital life reveals the other side of the story: Female dominion over the home easily turns into a mere responsibility for domestic drudgery and the authority over emotions into the affective labor of sustaining the home that “falls entirely to wives” (Komisaruk 41). The indissolubility of marriage makes things more miserable because a wife sinks into the

27 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri use this term to refer to “labor that produces or manipulates affects such as a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion.” They include domestic labor in this category because it “involves producing affects, relationships, and forms of communication and cooperation among children, in the family, and in the community.” See Multitude, 103-115.
abject condition of a mere housekeeper, or rather, of a housekeeper-cum-mistress, when neglected by her husband. It is what happens to Maria, as the result of which her status as a wife becomes similar to Jemima’s as a housekeeper-cum-mistress to a gentleman, or even worse such that her husband dares to “insult me, by selling me to prostitution” (120). She has no existence in her husband’s home except as a stranger at best and his “property” at worst that he can literally “barter” for money (118, 120).

Maria’s and Jemima’s life stories show that, whether inside or outside the place of the home, women are equally oppressed in terms of the wrongs committed against them by men. But they also reveal that women’s life experiences should be “necessarily various” depending on the social classes from which they come (60). Born to a working-class mother in domestic service who is seduced and then abandoned by her father, Jemima has no childhood. Unlike Maria, she “looked like a little old woman, or a hag shriveling into nothing,” as if she knew she would grow into nobody, or rather, less than nobody (80). While Maria as a middle-class girl indulges in romantic fancies of youth, Jemima, “condemned to labour, like a machine,” has no time or thought for any romantic reverie (89). The former is never tied down to hard manual labor, whereas the latter cherishes no fellow-feeling for others, even for the pregnant servant girl who is in the same situation as she was once in. Most of the time, Maria has someone to turn to—her
uncle, Darnford, and Jemima—whereas these kind of resources are exactly what Jemima always lacks. Problematically, however, these differences, which are in effect class differences, are subsumed under the commonality of experience of patriarchal oppression.

Maria is not a typical heroine of sentimental novels, “the chaste suffering women, happily rewarded in marriage or elevated into redemptive death” (Todd 1986: 4). Her marriage has nothing to do with reward or redemption, but instead entails loss and degeneration. Jemima is not a “fortunate orphan,” like Henry Fielding’s Tom Jones, “who, though born without social sanction, manages to become integrated into the community by some chance or good fortune” (Ty 39). She has no such good fortune and remains a social outcast throughout the text. Both this wronged heroine and this outcast orphan end up in the same prison-madhouse, the former as an inmate and the latter as a keeper. Significantly, their relationship turns from a keeper-kept relationship into one of fellow-feeling based on their common experience of oppression, and the prison-madhouse, the very epitome of the dominant patriarchal power, turns into a place where its victims “form, or attempt to form, sympathetic bonds by recounting their own experiences to each other” (McCann 167). Significantly, it is through narratives that they gain their own voices to communicate their experiences and foster sympathetic understanding of each other, upon which some kind of solidarity can be established.
Maria begins *in medias res*, the result of which is that the overarching narrative of an “ongoing present” is interrupted at intervals by “vertical acts of retrospection” (McKeon 98).\(^{28}\) While the former is presented by an unidentified third-person narrator, the latter consists of three first-person narratives—Darnford’s, Jemima’s, and Maria’s—in all of which the interplay between the linear present of the character and the self-reflective retrospection of the narrator suggests “critical interpretations” of “the world-as-it-is” (Cooper 769). It should be noted that each of the first-person narratives assumes a different form according to the class and gender of its character-cum-narrator. Darnford presents his life story as a kind of bildungsroman whose hero becomes wise and virtuous through a series of adventures. But it is as much a travelogue that conveys critical observations on Americans—especially American women—and on their society as an autobiographical account of personal experiences. Unlike Darnford, Jemima narrates her life story in deeply affect-laden voice and words. She focuses on more affective aspects of her experiences than on somewhat detached observations of society, which are

\(^{28}\) Michael McKeon points out that both spiritual and criminal (auto)biographies are characterized by a narrative balance or tension between “present action and retrospective narration” (95). He examines this formal aspect in relation to the issue of historicity. See Chapter 3, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740*. 
provided by her two audiences’ supplementary comments on her narrative. If Jemima’s narrative resembles a slave narrative, Maria’s “is cast in terms of the sentimental novels she is fond of reading” (Rajan 228). Accordingly, the latter is permeated with “intensely focused analyses of subjective states,” which is absent in the former (Nyquist 84).

Similarly, what is at stake in their respective narratives differs based on their gender and class. Although Darnford also “never knew the sweets of domestic affection,” he has no desire, unlike Jemima and Maria, to have his own home (74). “Home” and the “protection” it may offer are never an issue for him, which is well accounted for by gender difference. Rather, having no home refers to personal liberty both in the sense of being free from restraint or control and of being free to do as he pleases. The boundary of home, society, or country is never an obstruction to his mobility. His status is strikingly contrasted with the female characters’ confinement to home, street, workplace, or at best English society, outside of which they are not allowed to go with impunity. For Darnford, the world is the place to explore and exploit, which should be considered in relation to colonization, whereas, for Maria and Jemima, it is more like “an unknown sea” where, without a landmark, they both go adrift (61). It is as if women are “growing down” in the world in which men are “growing up” (Pratt 14). Or rather, we could say that there is no growth for them because Jemima is born virtually as an adult and Maria remains a child
according to the contemporary social standard whereby women are viewed “as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood” (Wollstonecraft 1995: 76).\textsuperscript{29}

Another problematic issue foregrounded in the three first-person narratives is that “independence in a woman was almost always viewed as a sad necessity, the result of the failure of the man to provide for her, or of the woman to procure a husband” (Todd 1989: 205). At first, Maria seems to succeed in establishing herself as a proper lady by marriage, “the only way women can rise in the world” (Wollstonecraft 1995: 77). But it turns out that Maria herself has to support the house, to make things worse, not by her own means but “by loans from my uncle” (111). Her sisters, being unmarried women without any recourse, are in no better conditions, because they “were unable to endure home” but have no other place to go. The only option for them is to seek the position of governess, “the only one in which even a well-educated woman, with more than ordinary talents, can struggle for a subsistence” (110). Although the governess still “belonged to the cast of respectable women,” her status as a stranger in somebody else’s home is little

\textsuperscript{29} Philippe Ariès’s study of the concept of “childhood” shows that the concept was not invented until the early modern period. In former times, children were simply regarded as “a little man,” “a man on a smaller scale” (33). In effect, the idea of childhood cannot be separated from the emergence of a middle-class family. See \textit{Centuries of Childhood}. 

better than that of domestic servants like Jemima, who embodies the worst case of female independence (Armstrong 1987:78). In sum, female independence refers to forlornness, homelessness, and stranger-ness, rather than freedom.

By contrast, Darnford never struggles for subsistence in the same sense as female characters have to. His narrative is neither “of survival in the world of work,” like Jemima’s, nor “of struggle in the home,” like Maria’s (Lorch 93). Although he is orphaned, he has guardians to take care of him and a considerable patrimony of his own. Even after squandering his patrimony, he has no difficulty finding a job to support himself. These differences based on gender show that women’s difficulty in gaining independence lies in “the disinheritance of daughters” and in the lack of respectable professions for women (Perry 2000: 113). It hints that the possibility of female independence is blocked by social conditions in which a woman is expected to be a man’s dependent as a daughter, a wife, or a mother, in other words, to stay within a man’s home. Wollstonecraft defines women’s independence in its true sense as the ability “to earn their own subsistence,” and Maria insinuates that, in order for that to be achieved, the society itself should be drastically changed (1995: 165). For the contemporary patriarchal society renders female independence at best a sad necessity and at worst a fatal calamity.
After telling the untimely death of the youngest sister who could not endure her father’s home but had neither an alternative one to live in nor a profession to support herself, Maria gives the following advice to her absent daughter:

... my child, whom I fondly hope to see (yes; I will indulge the hope for a moment) possessed of that energy of character which gives dignity to any station[read as “class”]; and with that clear, firm spirit that will enable you to choose a situation for yourself, or submit to be classed in the lowest, if it be the only one in which you can be the mistress of your own actions. (111)

Her advice is, in short, to take any position if it enables “you” to earn your own subsistence sufficient to be independent, however degrading it may be. It is bold, even disruptive, advice because she is actually asking her daughter, born a middle-class girl, to breach the gender and the class norms of the time: to transgress the boundary not only between a proper and an improper lady, but also between the middle class and the lower class by growing into an independent woman who works to support herself. But it is not at all an exaltation of labor for one to earn one’s subsistence. Maria herself violates the code of female propriety, for instance, when she voluntarily leaves her husband and when she “openly” lives with her lover, Darnford. But she never crosses the boundary between her class and the lower class by submitting herself to any labor for money.
Rather, she seems to reconfirm the class line by regarding as an object of charity a woman from the lower class, like Peggy, her nurse’s sister, who has to work to support her family. In this respect, we can say that Maria is asking her daughter to do what she is never forced, still less chooses, to do, which makes her advice much bolder.

Maria’s advice to be a laboring woman sounds like a last-resort choice rather than a preferred one: If you have neither a man to marry nor any other recourse to turn to, then submit yourself to be classed with those who have to work to make their living. It is partly because just as women’s independence is not exalted, so neither is their labor for money glorified. But her charitable attitude toward a laboring woman reveals that it is also partly due to her specifically middle-class understanding of the lower classes. She regards lower-class people as objects of charity at best and at worst as subhuman creatures that are “ape[s]” (124). Furthermore, she conflates “sexual and class defilement” (Nyquist 81). She displaces gender relations onto class relations by linking Venables’s libertinism to “his intimacy with profligate women” from the lower classes.

—–

Wollstonecraft does not think that charities can be the proper remedies for social injustice. In Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, she even professes that “I have always been an enemy to what is termed charity” (Letter XXII, 182). The main reason is that she firmly believes it is not charity but justice that is needed to remedy things as they are.
which contributes to reinforce her own status as a respectable woman.\footnote{At first Maria calls George Venables by his first name. But as her feeling to him drastically changes, her appellation of him changes from “George” through “my husband” to “Venables.”} Venables’s personal characteristics—definitely negative ones, for example, libertinism, vulgarity, and heartlessness—are assigned to the lower class as a whole. Accordingly, just as Maria “perceived that I could not become the friend or confident of my husband,” she cannot become a friend to lower-class people (108). She feels “mortified at being compelled to consider them as my-fellow-creatures, as if an ape had claimed kindred with me” (124).\footnote{Exalting friendship as the best relationship between wife and husband, Wollstonecraft recommends women to “become the friend, and not the humble dependent of her husband” (99). See Chapter 2 of \textit{A Vindication of the Rights of Woman}, which hereafter will be referred to as \textit{A Vindication}.}

That is, she cannot bear the contact with them—an allusion to the author’s own anxiety about the lower class.

The impossible friendship both between Maria and her husband, and between her and people in lower classes seems to be compensated for respectively by her relationship to Darnford, her lover who “solemnly pledged himself as her protector—and eternal friend,” and by her relationship to Jemima, her keeper who becomes her \textit{savior} in a very
literal sense (138). Interestingly and significantly, if her feelings toward Venables cannot be considered separate from her feelings toward lower-class people, then the affective exchanges between her and Darnford play a decisive role in the development of the relationship between her and Jemima. As the narrator tells us,

So animated, indeed, were their accents of tenderness, in discussing what, in other circumstances, would have been common-place subjects, that Jemima felt, with surprise, a tear of pleasure trickling down her rugged cheeks. […] Jemima owned that it was the first tear that social enjoyment had ever drawn from her. She seemed indeed to breathe more freely; the cloud of suspicion cleared away from her brow; she felt herself, for once in her life, treated like a fellow-creature. (79, emphases mine)

This passage clearly shows that Jemima’s opening her heart is stimulated by the relationship between Maria and Darnford. It is a problematic turn because Jemima’s numbed humanity seems to be “rekindled by her vicarious participation in the romantic relationship between Maria and Darnford” (Nyquist 83). But the consideration that it is fellow-feeling, in other words, the feeling of being treated like a fellow-creature, that Jemima most wants—desires but lacks—all through her life till that point helps us to see it is rather fellow-feeling one feels for her fellow-creature in social enjoyment than the
feeling of heterosexual romantic love that reawakens Jemima’s heart and enables it to act again. Besides, Maria’s love for Darnford is built partly on her fellow-feeling for him as someone she first receives as “her fellow-sufferer” “oppressed by a similar fate” (68, 73).

It is significant that their fellow-feeling—sympathy—for each other is founded not only on affective exchanges but also on the self-reflective understandings of their lived experiences, both of which are rendered possible through the mediation of narrative. To be specific, sharing each other’s autobiographical narrative plays an important role in consolidating the intimacy between Maria and Darnford, which begins with Maria’s reading Darnford’s notes written in the margins of the books borrowed from him. Likewise, Jemima’s account of her own experiences becomes instrumental in forming some kind of solidarity between her and Maria. It should be noted here that each of their first-person narratives is not a mere reiteration of their pasts but an attempt “to explicate their own characters” and to grasp the ways in which things work in the world as they reflect on their lived experiences (Myers 1980: 111). They are, to some extent, engaging in what can be called an act of self-creation by putting into their first-person narratives their own views and interpretations of themselves as well as what happened to them.

As Noëlle McAfee points out in her essay on Julia Kristeva’s engagement with Hannah Arendt, “the narrated story is not an exact replica of lived experience, but neither
does it operate independently of experience” (119). This kind of difference between lived experience and its narrated version, in other words, between reality and its more or less fictionalized version, implies that to narrate is to (re)act productively to realities. It is a significant implication for Maria as a woman, a still more significant one for Jemima not only as a woman but as a lower-class person, since neither women nor lower-class people are given any voice of their own in middle-class patriarchal society. It is through the mediation of narrative that Maria has moments of recognizing the wrongs of women caused by gender-biased laws and customs of patriarchal society, and Jemima the realities of class exploitation as well as of gender oppression. More significantly, those recognitions enable them to critique things as they are and their critiques are delivered in affect-laden words. Each of their narratives brings forth a “social critique” based on first-hand authentic experiences, unlike a critique in name and without content by hypocritical writers Jemima happens to know as a gentleman’s mistress (Kelly 213).

Jemima is never given the role of the first reader either of Darnford’s or of Maria’s narratives. Darnford’s account of himself is directed to Maria, who in turn sends her memoirs originally written for her daughter, after being informed of her daughter’s death. Jemima rather overhears Darnford’s narrative and is given the chance to peruse Maria’s memoirs only after Darnford finishes reading them. Significantly, however, it is
Jemima’s narrative that gives them occasion to “form a [kind of] public” and reflect “critically and in public” on their social realities (Habermas 51). In a sense, Jemima’s narrative enables them to act out within the text what Jürgen Habermas terms “the literary public sphere” in which women and others “factually and legally excluded from the political public sphere” can participate in critical debates through the mediation of narrative (51, 56). As a mistress to a gentleman-writer, Jemima once had the chance to observe a similar kind of literary public sphere in which she is only a listener or spectator: “I had the advantage of hearing discussions, from which, in the common course of life, women are excluded” (86). But this time she not only participates in these discussions but provides the motivation for them.

The main difference is that, if Habermasian public sphere, whether political or literary, presupposes a detached “rational-critical debate,” the above-mentioned literary public sphere is built on the highly affective relationships among the participants and their discussions within it are conducted in affective, rather than detached, tones of voice (51). Accordingly, their sharing Jemima’s first-person narrative results in what can be called an act of “bearing witness” rather than in the formation of public opinion in the Habermasian sense, which should be considered disinterested (McAfee 113). It is of course not an eyewitness account of others’ experiences but a witness by “organiz[ing]
memory” of oppression via narrative (McAfee 119): Jemima is bearing witness to her own experiences by voicing them from her own perspective, and her two audience members by completing them in the sense that Jemima’s narrative owes its existence to them as some kind of spectators. This kind of bearing witness can also be expected in Jemima’s perusal of Maria’s memoirs, although the scene itself does not appear within Maria. What is important is that their mutual engagement in bearing witness, which accompanies their critical engagement with realities, plays an important role in restoring both her humanity and some hope for the future to Jemima, who, like victims in political crimes, has been “brutalized” and “banished from fellowship” (McAfee 121): As Jemima tells Maria, “on you it depends to reconcile me with the human race” (138).

Self-reflection and affective exchanges via the first-person narratives in Maria bring forth sympathy—the effect of “changing places in fancy with the sufferer”—and a form of witnessing whose process is identified with “address-ability and response-ability” (Smith 2002: 12; Oliver 7). Or rather, in the sense that sympathy requires the ability to respond to the sufferer’s sensations and that responses in bearing witness to the sufferings of others should be sympathetic, sympathy and witnessing can be considered two different faces of the same process: “a turn toward others” (Oliver 220).33 Jemima’s

33 In her theorization of witnessing, Kelly Oliver argues that “self-reflection is
hope for reconciliation with humankind stated in the above-quoted passage can be regarded as one exemplary effect of this process. The turn toward others here, however, appears different both from a sentimental identification devoid of rational critique considered typical of female readers and from a supposedly disinterested engagement in the public opinion formation assigned only to male individuals who are also “the owners of private property” in the Habermasian model (56). It calls for some kind of affective investment from participants as well as for the mobilization of their rational-critical thinking, as is illustrated in the reception of Jemima’s narrative.

In sum, the reception of Jemima’s narrative shows that affective response and rational thinking can be compatible and complementary even in female readers, which is epitomized in the mutual edification experienced by Jemima and Maria. Jemima’s heart is reawakened by Maria’s affective responses, as is effectively demonstrated in Jemima’s submission to Maria’s touches “with that irresistible warmth which defies repulse” (92). In turn, Jemima’s narrative has “a sobering effect” on Maria, leading her to reflect on women’s miserable realities (McCann 171). Their relationship also shows that a turn toward others does not merely refer to a bond between individuals but alludes to an

not a turn inward but a turn toward otherness,” which she relates to love (219). See the concluding chapter of *Witnessing Beyond Recognition.*
affirmative relationship of individual to society, even to humankind as a whole in Jemima’s case, a development that promises the possibility of working through stranger-ness. Maria is expected to serve as the in-between in Jemima’s reconciliation with humankind, and Jemima to play the same role in Maria’s relationship to the lower classes, although both of these possibilities remain unrealized within Maria. These aspects lead us to regard the reception of Jemima’s narrative as “that which Wollstonecraft wishes to engender for Wrongs itself” (Wilson 2001: 36). That is, it constitutes an alternative to imitative novel-readings devoid of critical engagements with texts by outlining an approach in which understanding and imagination, or reason and affections, operate “in a productive symbiosis” (Kaplan 1986: 124).

It is subversive to present female readers with the ability to “read critically, read not to imitate but to engage productively with argument and with narrative,” the ability exclusively attributed to male readers, to “the educated middle class male” in particular (Kaplan 1986: 124). Citing Wollstonecraft’s denunciation of female sentimentality in A Vindication, Kaplan blames her for taking women to be “the ultimately receptive reader easily moved into amoral activity by the fictional representation of sexual intrigue” (1985: 159). But, in Maria, Wollstonecraft sets up an exemplary model for how to read in which female readers are “actively to consider, rather than passively to absorb,”
narratives (Maurer 50). What is more subversive is that it is within the confines of a prison-madhouse, a core institution of the dominant power, that women come together to read narratives critically and to engage actively with realities. In this context, Maria’s prison cell functions as a site of countercommunity conditioned by sharing experiences via narratives and in which an othered person becomes capable “of addressing oneself to others” and “of responding to the address from others” (Oliver 223).

Critics have noted that, for Maria, “prison turns out to be a site of liberation” in which she feels spiritually emancipated, although physically incarcerated (Kelly 212). Indeed, Maria’s prison cell as a space for a countercommunity at least poses the potential for resistance of marginalized others against the dominant power, if not their liberation from it. But genuine liberation is not about “a paradoxical freedom” Maria enjoys only in her mind (Myers 1980: 112). It is about translating enlightened reflection into action in real life—the enlightened reflection fostered by narratives, or rather, by sharing narratives as an active engagement. Both Maria and Jemima are led to act in reality under the influence of narratives, which hints that they undergo “a revolution in the self” (Kelly 208). Especially in her case, Jemima’s change from a prison keeper into a helper demonstrates the possibility of “women’s affinities with each other regardless of class,” even “without the mediation of males” (Greenfield 93; Gunther-Canada 147). It is a quite
subversive turn, considering that patriarchy tries to foreclose any possibility of female bond and to force women to betray each other in order to survive. Wollstonecraft seems to suggest, first, that the ability to act independently and to find solidarity with other women is what women should learn in order to avoid patriarchal tyranny and to pursue their own happiness, and, second, that narratives are instrumental in encouraging these abilities and in disseminating related ideas, which is a part of the constitutive power of writing.

The constitutive power of narratives draws attention to Wollstonecraft’s return to the novel after “her attempts to direct political intervention,” “after the disappointment of her political hopes in 1796” (Johnson 2002: 190). As some critics have noted, it is partly accounted for by the novel’s wider accessibility to female authors and readers. But Wollstonecraft’s trust in the judgment of a few readers on Maria mentioned in the Author’s Preface suggests that she is consciously “experiment[ing] with the novel form” for the cause of oppressed women, whether within or without the home (Myers 1980: 107). This experiment with presenting philosophical ideas in novelistic form can be understood as a search for a form of writing balanced between rational thinking and affective feeling—a combination of a philosophical polemic as a rational argument and
the novel as an imaginative narrative. In other words, cold rational arguments should be informed with affections and an ardent affective imagination should be regulated by reason. It appears as an effort to invent a new genus of heroine and to present a new model of female reader, both of which combine critical reason with humanizing affections and above all are expected to be disillusioned with the notion of man as their savior, protector, and friend. In the search for the form of writing through which she can effectively disseminate her philosophical ideas, Wollstonecraft recasts the novel as the narrative form that would enable women to tell their own experiences in their own voices.

Darnford’s betrayal alluded to in the novel’s final paragraphs suggests that women should be disenchanted with the republican as well as the traditional masculinity. It shows that Wollstonecraft herself is disillusioned with “the emancipatory potential of republican masculinity” in the wake of the French Revolution (Johnson 1995: 59). Similarly, the courtroom scene as well as Maria’s experience as a married woman hints that she has grown pessimistic about “the enlightenment-inspired belief that rights are

---

34 The term, “philosophical,” should be here understood in relation to Enlightenment “philosophes,” who were “the men of the world: journalists, propagandists, activists, seeking not just to understand the world but to change it.” See Roy Porter’s The Enlightenment, 3.
unproblematical” and “that women have the same ones as men,” because Maria’s sufferings arise precisely from the lack of women’s rights (Todd 1988: 111). That the Enlightenment idea of universal and unproblematic human rights is a mere fiction for women is obviously exposed in the different fate of Darnford and Maria: While Darnford is after all “invited back” into the patriarchal society, “Maria and her theory of the rights of woman cannot be reconciled with the patriarchy” (Gunther-Canada 153). Maria also problematizes home “as a space of republican virtue” by dramatizing women’s abject realities within that place (McCann 159). Home is rather identified “as an extension of the state and the husband as not just the patriarch in the little commonwealth but as its police as well,” instanced in Venables’s hunt for Maria (Sapiro 1992: 40).

These post-revolutionary aspects bring attention back to the countercommunity temporarily formed in the prison-madhouse because it assumes a form of home built on the friendship between Maria and Darnford, the friendship between man and wife that Wollstonecraft holds out as the ideal image of home in A Vindication. At first, it seems to satisfy the description of the ideal and appears comprehensive enough to embrace a stranger, Jemima, into it. As the result, all three of them can finally get the opportunity to enjoy domestic affections that none of them ever knew before. In this context, the home-like countercommunity seems to be proposed as a solution to the wrongs of woman,
which are traced back to “the failure of [the] family—an affective failure” in Jemima’s case and an affective malpractice in Maria’s case (Komisaruk 55). But the fragmented set of final paragraphs intimates that it turns out to be infeasible precisely when Darnford turns out to be unreliable. By extension, we can say that republican ideology in general as well as its masculinity defined by the man of feeling, which “was supposed to lead the entire world out of its prison of darkness,” fail to serve women’s revolt against the patriarchal tyranny (Johnson 2002: 203).

If, in *A Vindication*, the ideal image of home, whose domestic affections are necessary for republican ideology, “incessantly struggles to superimpose itself on the actual—things as they ought to be displace things as they are,” the ideal is repeatedly problematized in *Maria*, as is demonstrated in the failure of Maria’s every attempt to seek male protection (Conger 149). *Maria* dramatizes that the possibility of the ideal based on domestic affection is virtually erased by the reality that the world is itself “a vast prison, and women born slaves” (64). It seems as if, watching the French Revolution, Wollstonecraft comes to realize that a *philosophical* polemic on the rights of women—an abstract and general discourse of what ought to be—is less appropriate to deal with concrete and particular realities of the wrong of woman than the novel—a narrative form of what is—which can partly account for her return to the novel form. As the titular “or”
succinctly exhibits, however, her interest remains in the general, or rather, in philosophizing the particular into the general, Maria’s and Jemima’s personal experiences into those of woman in general.

Anna Wilson points out that both Maria and Jemima get “remotivated by personal considerations before either can act, Maria in persuading Jemima, Jemima in searching for the lost child” (2001: 37). She reads it as the shift “back from political to personal,” “from social to individual,” and “from public to private,” in a word, from general to particular (2001: 37). Considering the philosophizing tendency of the text, however, it should be read as an example indicating the inseparable relationship between general and particular rather than the reduction of the former into the latter. What matters is rather that the particular becomes invisible in the process of philosophizing it into the general. Along with its home-like aspect tied to republican masculinity, it is another intractable problem with the countercommunity constituted via narratives in Maria’s cell, the very issue caused by sympathetic relationships. That is, while leading each of the three main characters to open the heart to the others, sympathy makes invisible class as well as gender differences, and therewith the possibility that conflicts might occur among them.

Unlike sympathy as a moral sentiment between spectator and sufferer described in Adam Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, sympathy in *Maria* appears to be
based on commonality of experiences between fellow-sufferers: being confined for unknown reasons in Maria and Darnford’s relationship and being wronged by the patriarchal tyranny in Maria and Jemima’s relationship. They play the role of spectator not as a disinterested third party but as a fellow-sufferer, which seems to intensify “the healing consolation of sympathy” (Smith 2002: 19). And they are not witnessing the others’ sufferings while on the scene but bearing witness through narratives after the event, which implies that they can bear witness to “something vital but invisible (not just what happened but how it is important)” (McAfee 121). A kind of side-effect of this sympathy as bearing witness is to render invisible their gender or class differences pervading the first-person narratives by subsuming their particularities under the general name of fellow-sufferer or fellow-creature. But the particular is only repressed, not obliterated, and therefore does not cease, at least potentially, to problematize the general. Or rather, sympathy—the mechanism to produce a kind of solidarity based on the sense that we are fellow-creatures—is built on particular differences made invisible and therefore safe.

This does not mean that the potentialities of the countercommunity conditioned by the first-person narratives—self-reflective thinking, affective exchanges, sympathy, bearing witness, and a turn toward others—should be dismissed. They are still valid and
effective in constituting a social, political critique. The countercommunity opens up a kind of discursive space in which society’s constitution and “what it is to be female” in it are examined, and in which to some extent something subversive can be explored (Haggerty 115). Although it momentarily brings much consolation to both Maria and Jemima, however, it is not resourceful enough to counter “the wrongs of different classes of women, equally oppressive, though, from the difference of education, necessarily various” (60). Rather, it focuses attention on the question of particular-general relationship, the conflict between “equally oppressive” and “necessarily various,” the question which is inherent in Wollstonecraft’s self-proclaimed purpose of Maria and is starkly foregrounded by Jemima’s stranger-ness even in the countercommunity (60).

Jemima ends her narrative with an exclamation filled with the intense feelings of despair, hatred, anger, and even blame on humankind as a whole: “Still what should induce me to be the champion for suffering humanity? – Who ever risked any thing for me? – Who ever acknowledged me to be a fellow-creature?” (91) But these politically charged affects are soon alleviated by Maria’s sympathetic responses—a psychic touch—accompanying a physical touch. If Maria is touched by Jemima’s narrative, then Jemima is also by Maria’s affective response, that is, sympathy for her Jemima observes in a fellow-creature for the first time. It seems that, by coming together under the abstract and
empty name of Woman, they forget their class differences between a working-class woman and a middle-class woman whose status “protects [Maria] to a certain degree, which is not the case of Jemima” (Augustin 187). Relying upon the contemporary view of sympathy as a bond of society, the sympathetic relation between Maria and Jemima can be read as an exemplary case to cut across class distinctions. Indeed, “the growing friendship between Maria and Jemima across occupational and class divides is the most positive value of this unfinished novel” (Lorch 95). But a closer look into the development of their relationship reveals that it is an incorporation of Jemima into the middle class rather than a traverse across the class line.

Significantly, Maria’s first judgment of Jemima is distinctly class-biased in favor of the middle class: “The woman was no fool, that is, she was superior to her class; nor had misery quite petrified the life’s-blood of humanity” (63). This judgment is confirmed by Jemima herself while she recounts her past life: “My sentiments and language were superior to my station,” she remarks, as the result of reading and hearing various discussions while she was a mistress to a libertine but intellectual gentleman (86). It reminds us of the relation between reading and knowledge, or between labor and ignorance. As Maria says, “the book of knowledge is closely clasped, against those who must fulfil their daily task of severe manual labour or die,” and therefore, in Darnford’s
words, “all the avenues to improvement” is structurally blocked to the working class (88).

Only when she is relieved from severe manual labor does Jemima have the opportunity to improve herself. What is significant is that, as she improves, she “began to have the ambition of returning to the respectable part of society” (86). In a sense, reading prepares her to be lifted into the middle class by refining both her sentiment and humanity.

Jemima’s elevation into the middle class is starkly contrasted by Venables’s virtual degradation into the lower class. If Jemima’s contact with “a literary man” helps her to acquire “a taste for literature” that would later turn out to be pivotal in the development of her relationship to Maria, then Venables’s contact with women from the lower classes only proves that he is an “unfeeling, inhuman” creature whose heart is “dead to natural affection” (87, 111). This contrast brings to the fore the fact that the feeling heart and humanizing affections are described as exclusively belonging to the middle class. A working-class person cannot be an agent of feeling heart and humanizing affections, although she can be their object. This scenario implies that only when she has been proven to be able to feel can a person be elevated into the middle class, and, vice versa, she will be identified with the lower class when she loses that ability. In this context, Jemima is embraced into the middle class not as a working-class woman but as someone superior to her class and therefore ready to be like a middle-class person. To put
it differently, Maria and Jemima’s sympathetic relationship is based precisely on class
differences dividing the working class and the middle class, differences that reveals the
countercommunity, into which Jemima is included, as exclusive.

But as the word like implies, Jemima’s incorporation remains unfinished, which
becomes visible when Maria intends to make a home with Darnford, if it deserves the
name, and when Jemima insists she should be “considered as her house-keeper, and to
receive the customary stipend” (140). It is interesting to note that, in her relationship to
Maria, Jemima always assumes the position of keeper. In the prison-house, she serves as
Maria’s keeper in its double sense of “warden,” who watches Maria, and “protector,”
who guards her relationship with Darnford from being detected. In Maria’s newly
established home, she would be an employee to keep that place, for which she would be
paid. Accordingly, in both places, she is expected to occupy a place at the border that
divide inside from outside. Or rather, she is embraced into Maria’s circle as a kind of
stranger within who keeps it by providing labor. What is more important is that Jemima’s
stranger-ness in Maria’s circle brings again to the light those class differences made
invisible when sympathy overwhelms them. It demonstrates that particularity specific to
individual contexts cannot be explained away or dismissed by any generality like Woman.

Jemima’s stranger-ness, which is expected to be dissolved by sympathy, is
precisely what remains after the event of sympathizing. It draws attention back to her politically charged affects of despair, hatred, anger, and blame, which she conveys in the concluding remarks of her first-person narrative, affects that result from the excess suffering she has endured “in her intercourse with mankind” but that seemingly become miraculously dismantled by Maria’s sympathy for her (63). Maria also goes through similar affects in her relationship to Venables, although she never feels hatred against humankind as a whole. An interesting thing is that while these affects help Jemima learn “to distrust men and the institutions of the patriarchal culture,” they lose their power over Maria whenever she gives way to her sympathy for a man (Ellis 2000: 73). As George E. Haggerty points out, “Maria has to learn that her feelings toward Venables are political feelings” in that they teach her “to resist” him and “to imagine a world beyond him,” which is instanced in her escape from her husband’s house (110, 111, original emphasis). While Maria’s sympathy with a man results in victimizing her, the one with Jemima protects her to the very end.35 What turns out to be problematic is that the sympathetic

35 Todd argues that Maria’s life is marked by two movements, “one circular and repetitive, the other linear and developmental.” “The circular binds her to male relationships,” whereas “the linear tends toward freedom and maturity.” She connects the circular movement to Maria’s love relationship with Darnford, the linear one to her friendship with Jemima. See Chapter 4 of Women’s Friendship in Literature.
relationship between Maria and Jemima benefits both of them, but only by also
marginalizing Jemima as Maria’s aid, a condition that constitutes the double-edged
dynamic of sympathy.

Sympathy contributes to creating an affective collectivity or solidarity among
women from different classes, but it inevitably elides the working-class woman’s
particularities by subsuming them under the general name of Woman, which is in effect
dominated by the middle-class particularities. In order to complement this weak point of
sympathy, the negative affect Jemima feels towards humankind needs to be reactivated as
positive political forces, rather than suppressed, because they are primarily aroused by
social realities in local contexts. It should be noted here that Jemima’s negative affect
leads her only to gain a “selfish independence,” and that only after giving way to
sympathy, she becomes able to turn towards others (66). If sympathy as a mechanism to
produce a generality needs to be complemented by negative affect, the latter embedded
in concrete realities needs to be moderated by sympathy. The point is neither generality
nor particularity alone, but the relation or conflict between the two.

The political force of negative affect such as hatred, contempt, and anger is
actualized both in Maria’s revolt against Venables and in her intrepid defense of her
relationship with Darnford. As she realizes her “fatal error” in judging Venables’s real
character, her feeling toward him turns from love through compassion into contempt (107). But her desire to be useful to him leads her to endure his “tyranny and infidelities” till the very end, and she does not rise in revolt against him until he dares “to barter the honour of the mother of your child” (120). In other words, only negative affect moves her to stand up to the tyrant at home, in order, interestingly, to defend her honor as a mother rather than as a wife. Likewise, it is “a strong sense of injustice,” which is very likely to elicit the feeling of resentment or indignation, that leads her to plead her own feelings boldly, defying the marital law of society (142). But her revolt both against domestic tyranny and against the patriarchal system of society ends in failure. Her actions “reveal rather than destroy [female] powerlessness” in the patriarchal system of society, bringing “into clearer focus the power of the institutions ranged against her” (Wilson 1989: 100). Furthermore, her actions also reveal doubt about the very possibility of finding in patriarchal society any home in which women are not strangers within.

Once escaping from her husband’s house, Maria seeks the protection of her uncle, who not only “approved of my conduct” but “promised to adopt my child” (131). Her uncle is no longer a substitute father but becomes a substitute husband: Maria’s new home would consist of her as wife, her uncle as husband, and her baby yet to be born as their child. It remains an unfulfilled dream because of her uncle’s death, which leaves her
now in a “widowed state” (132). As examined before, her relationship with Darnford also fails to provide her with an alternative home and instead only drives her into the “hell of disappointment” (147). These are failures due to “the systemic and enveloping nature of the structure of gender relations” in the patriarchal society (Sapiro 1996: 40). In this respect, Maria’s revolt is destined to fail from the beginning, insofar as she turns to a man. This is because no individual man can offer any fundamental solution to the wrongs systematically perpetrated against women.

Wollstonecraft’s *philosophical* polemics show that, like many other Enlightenment theorists, she places “the family at the heart of political reform” (Tomaselli 241). For example, in *A Vindication*, she suggests the home built on the friendship between husband and wife as an alternative to the traditional one where the wife is considered a mere dependent of her husband, and asks women to reform themselves to become friends to their husbands. But it seems that Wollstonecraft comes to realize the limitations of her suggestions but cannot find any other alternative, which may partly account for the fact that she “recommenced and revised the manuscript several different times” (57). Some critics read Maria’s decision to live for her restored child as “a pledge of dedication to the formation . . . of a female community not focused on men,” “the formation of a new family unit based on choice rather than on law or
blood,” which can constitute an alternative home to the one based on the friendship between wife and husband (Myers 1980: 113; Mellor 1996: 420). As mentioned before, however, the friendship between Maria and Jemima is itself problematic because of its class-based hierarchy. Besides, although their friendship effects “a REVOLUTION in [their] female manners,” it is not resourceful enough to serve as an alternative to the patriarchal system of society that remains unshaken, still less changed (Wollstonecraft 1996: 292).

Unlike in many eighteenth-century British novels whose narratives end with happy marriages, marriage and the place of home in Maria are depicted as horrifying and tormenting. As it is suggested by the post-revolutionary words Wollstonecraft uses to dramatize women’s realities at home—*despot, tyranny*, and *liberty*, etc.—“horror lies not outside, but at the center of the domestic circle” (Ward 416). But the real horror would be the fact that any effective solution to the wrongs of woman has not been found yet. This does not mean that Maria’s revolt, or, by extension, Wollstonecraft’s attempt to explore a way out of domestic tyranny, turns out to be futile. Rather, it can be read as a rejection of “concoct[ing] a happy fictional ending” in favor of envisioning an alternative denied to women in their real lives and therefore possible “only through fantasy” (Figes 59). As Virginia Sapiro notes, it is not only that the wrongs of woman remain unresolved because
the author could not finish her text, but also that “the book was never finished partly because the problems were not resolved” (1996: 40).

While Wollstonecraft’s *philosophical* treatises are intended obviously as problem-solving texts, *Maria* as a novel is never a problem-solving but rather a problem-posing text. This problem-posing aspect of the text is what makes it subversive, because “the text’s revolutionary possibility lies not simply in what has been written, its substance and conclusions, but in how it openly engages” philosophical issues and asks its readers to engage them by not offering any discursive resolutions (Cooper 778). As is implied in Maria’s own confession that she does not know the way out, it is not the author herself but readers themselves who should figure out a feasible solution to the problems posed in the text, and by that means save *Maria* from being aborted. In this context, the miraculous and unexpected (re)appearance of Maria’s daughter is revealing because it can be read as visualizing active engagements from readers, or even their interventions in the text. Significantly, it accompanies Jemima’s reappearance in *Maria*’s narrative, who pretty abruptly disappears from it right after the flight from the prison-madhouse. Along with this, her first-person narrative starts to resonate again, drawing attention back to the abjectness of being a working-class person.

Maria’s daughter exists as a ghostly presence throughout the text, as “something
still to love” left to Maria in prison, the intended reader of her memoirs, the key figure linking together Maria and Jemima, and even as the anguish Maria suffers about her alleged death (65). But it is the projective identification between her and Jemima as an orphan with “no bosom to nestle in, no kindred warmth to foster [her]” that stimulates both Maria and Jemima to act proactively (80). And their joint motherhood might save the child from falling into the same state as Jemima was once in, which would stabilize female “solidarity and affective community” based on the mother-daughter union (Johnson 2002: 205). But what has Jemima endured, wandering “the desert of human society” like “a ghost among the living” (86, 87)? Not only the wrongs of women but wretched realities of the lower class, that is, the burden of labor laid upon the shoulders of the working class. By leaving out what the working-class people should endure to subsist themselves, the affective community ironically foregrounds what can be termed the wrongs of the working class. Jemima’s return with Maria’s daughter suggests that the wrongs of women cannot be solved separately from the wrongs of the laboring people. Maria’s—and, by extension, women’s—revolt against the patriarchal system should be complemented by Jemima’s—and, by extension, working-class people’s—revolt against the capitalist system, whose possibility is implicit in Jemima’s negative affect regarding humankind. Any possible way to achieve this may “only come from the system not yet
created” and readers may never know ahead of time what it would be (Sapiro 1996: 39).

Jemima addresses Maria: “Would you leave [your daughter] alone in the world, to endure what I have endured?” (147) Her affect conveyed in this passage, markedly contrasted with Maria’s affect in the wake of Darnford’s alluded betrayal, is potentially political because it can be read as an implicit manifesto that things as they are revolt me, so I will revolt against them—“the non-acceptance,” “the refusal,” of being “governed thusly, like that, by these people, at this price” (Foucault 2007: 75). Moreover, she implies that women should work together—a sense of collectivity—and should not rely upon men but themselves—a sense of female independence. Of course, the possibility of female revolt remains only potential, and neither Jemima’s somewhat angry final words nor Maria’s final exclamation that “I will live for my child!” sounds very optimistic, because they can not move beyond patriarchal society. In a word, there is simply no outside, which is effectively demonstrated in Maria’s failure to quit her country so that she can “leav[e] behind” “my cares” (134). But this does not mean that therefore Maria shows the possibility of revolt is itself foreclosed. Rather, it makes more subversive Maria’s revolt against her husband and Jemima’s revolt against the prison-madhouse.36

36 Jemima’s change from Maria’s prison keeper to her savior can be read as a revolt in the sense that she, who is supposed to work for the prison-madhouse, or rather,
It also renders more subversive Maria’s room in Mr. Venables’s house and her cell in the prison-madhouse. It is precisely because all of these reveal a possible way out from the wrongs of women: Implosion, which can be called *revolt within*.

Pointing out “the impossibility of moving beyond . . . the [patriarchal] law,” Haggerty argues that every hint regarding the unwritten part of *Maria* suggests “that the woman has no story” in patriarchal society (1998: 118). This argument is only partly persuasive because “pregnancy-miscarriage-suicide” is the very story of women in that system and female failure effectively illustrates its brutality (148). As Haggerty himself states, even if there is only one story to tell, “there is more than one way to tell it” (9).

The problem is how to translate failure into its opposite and how to translate negative affect such as hopelessness, hatred, contempt, anger, etc., into positive political forces to effect changes in real lives. It seems that Wollstonecraft counts on *a few* readers, “who will dare to advance before the improvement of the age,” to figure out answers to these how-questions by mobilizing their affective investment and rational-critical thinking (59). This reliance on *a few* is itself a version of the intractable issue of the relation between particularity and generality also posed in the title of this text. Then, the question to ask for the dominant power behind that institution, not only helps Maria but actively leads her out of the prison-madhouse.
should be: How can we make a positive political force serve on behalf of the general
without sacrificing the particular? As Kristeva states in the epigraph to this chapter, “I”
should be connected to “we,” and “I revolt” should not only be inseparable from “we
are” but work toward “we are to come” (2002: 224, original emphasis). This we that is
yet to come should be considered “irreducible to any already constituted public” because
“the ‘we’ always comes after” (Rajchman 13, 14). This is the point alluded to in
Jemima’s unresolved stranger-ness, which renders Maria as the general history of
women possible only through individual stories, and as less a problem-solving than a
problem-posing text.
CHAPTER 4

Life, Hospitality, and “Bare Life” in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*

Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic among others. Insofar as it has to do with the *ethos*, that is, the residence, one’s home, the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners, *ethics is hospitality*; ethics is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality.

Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*

*The Modern Prometheus* is the subtitle Mary Shelley gave to her novel developed from “the hideous phantasm of a man [who is] stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show[s] signs of life” (9). It leads us to ask the question of what is modern about “the Modern Prometheus,” and Shelley’s modernization of the Greek Prometheus myth has been one of the main topics in the discussions of

---

37 Anne K. Mellor argues that “the three versions of *Frankenstein*—manuscript, 1818 edition, and 1831 edition—constitutes a text-in-process.” But the 1831 edition only will be referred to as the primary text here. The differences between the three versions are beyond this study’s scope. For Mellor’s view, see *Mary Shelley*, 39. For the differences between 1818 edition and 1831 edition, also see the chapter 4 of Mary Poovey’s *The Proper Lady and the Women Writer*. 
*Frankenstein.* Some critics have examined it particularly in relation to the Romantic ramifications of myth, such as the Promethean vision of the artist, of revolutionary ideology, or of human perfectibility. Other critics have examined it in the context of Shelley’s personal experiences, or have connected it to a more general issue of responsible authorship, whether literary or not. Regardless of their frameworks, however, these readings have tended to divert our attention—perhaps inadvertently—from another less visible but no less important issue alluded to in the subtitle, that is, the issue of life (Prometheus) as an animating force and its relation to modern *temporality*.

How, then, did Shelley come to write a novel when she did (in the moment of modernity), a novel whose hero is obsessed with penetrating the *secrets of life* (Prometheus)? One might dismiss this question as insignificant, pointing out that, in the introduction to the 1831 edition, Shelley explains how the novel was first imagined. But her account renders the question all the more worthy of reconsideration because it shows that her phantasm of the animation of a nonliving thing into a living being is not entirely a mere personal reverie but is originally embedded in the context of contemporaneous discourses of life. Her hideous phantasm did not come across her mind until she listened to the conversations between Lord Byron and Percy Shelley regarding philosophical doctrines about the nature of life and Dr. Darwin’s alleged experiments with a piece of
fruits and vermicelli. What they discussed turned out to constitute “chaos,” in other words, “dark, shapeless substances,” out of which *Frankenstein* was written (8). Thus, this novel can be read as a kind of literary parallel or response to contemporaneous discourses of life in the form of a narrative about a failed Promethean project and its disastrous aftermath.

This chapter approaches *Frankenstein* as a novel that reflects upon life as the vital force that distinguishes living from nonliving beings and upon humankind as living beings, not merely upon the personal rise and fall of a Promethean figure. Based on the modern distinction of life and death Michel Foucault describes in *The Order of Things*, the ensuing discussion first explores Frankenstein’s creation of the monster and its ugly turn, which entails the consideration of similarities between Frankenstein’s relation to the monster and the domestic relations in his family. Then, reading the animation of the monster as a version of the unexpected advent of the stranger, it examines the issue of hospitality and its opposition and apposition to hostility. Immanuel Kant’s notion of hospitality and Jacques Derrida’s critical appropriation of it constitute the basic framework of this examination, which focuses both on the monster’s and on Safie’s stranger-ness. If the monster’s stranger-ness throws into relief the paradoxical relation between conditional and unconditional hospitality, then Safie’s stranger-ness leads us to examine the issue of hospitality in terms of gender and race. The last part of the chapter
deals with both Frankenstein’s and the monster’s relation to human community, relying upon Giorgio Agamben’s notion of “bare life,” which refers to the inclusion of natural biological life in politics and to the coincidence of biological existence with political existence. The emphasis is as much on the differences between Frankenstein’s final status and the monster’s as on their similarities. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion both of the implications of Walton’s return to England as the final narrator of all embedded narratives and of Mrs. Saville’s ghostly presence.

_Frankenstein_ was written at the historical moment we usually call the end of the Enlightenment ranging from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century. This period coincides with the one when according to Foucault the historical models of “the ‘quasi-transcendentals’ of Life, Labor, and Language” emerged, replacing the mechanical models of representation in Classical thought (1994: 250). This transition has no relation to a progressive development toward a certain goal. Rather, it marks a radical rupture in the history of Western thought, one of whose signs Foucault says is the emergence of literature as such. The discontinuity of this change above all lies in the fact that “history” has been introduced into these new empirical elements of life, labor, and language, as “the fundamental mode of being,” and has become “the unavoidable element in our thought” (Foucault 1994: 219). This notion of history as the
fundamental organizing term in modern thought does not constitute a singular unity across the new empirical domains, but becomes diversified into multiple modes of time, one of which is not better than another. Accordingly, each of the new empirical domains has its own historicity proper to itself.

In the domain of life, as historicity has entered into its realm and constituted a kind of fundamental mode of being, the living being becomes understood no longer as a mere combination of parts, but “provides the outline of an organic structure, which maintains uninterrupted relations with exterior elements that it utilizes . . . in order to maintain or develop its own structure” (Foucault 1994: 273). The historicity proper to life turns out to be “that of its maintenance in its conditions of existence,” not a modality of chronological succession as conceived of in the order of representation in the Classical period (1994: 275). In this new historical formation of life, the division between the organic and the inorganic becomes radicalized, and the opposition between them coincides with the opposition between living and nonliving. The organic is the living, “that which produces, grows, and reproduces; the inorganic is the nonliving, that which neither develops nor reproduces” (Foucault 1994: 232). Along with the radicalization of these antitheses, the opposition between life and death also becomes fundamental. These oppositions imply that now life constitutes not only the vital force of the living being, but
also a certain system in which a living being fails to live and encounters its finitude that is death. It prefigures the emergence of biology in terms of which the human being is conceived of as a biological animal existing on the frontiers of life and death.

It is the above-mentioned oppositions, especially the one between life and death, that Frankenstein wants to break through: “Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world” (54). It is the desire to penetrate the unknown secrets of nature, at the center of which the principle of life must lie. Interestingly, as the words “light” and “dark” connote, this thirst for knowledge is justified by a Promethean ambition to become a benefactor of human beings as a species. Likewise, Walton is caught up in the same kind of aspiration to ascertain the unknown mysteries of the world and thereby to benefit all human beings. They may differ from each other in that while the latter yearns to explore “a land never before imprinted by the foot of man,” the former wants to “pioneer a new way” in natural philosophy, the realm of biology in Foucault’s description of the system of modern thought (16, 48). But, whether geographical or philosophical, the thirst for knowledge overlaps with the desire to feel at home in the world by making its unknown secrets known and its undiscovered parts discovered. Voyages of discovery are in a sense an act of rendering the world a home for human beings as a species rather than an individual.
Paradoxically enough, however, Frankenstein’s first-person narrative dramatizes how the gratification of the thirst for knowledge leads to disaster, instead of bringing any benefit to human beings, as the result of which the world is turned into a gothic place in which one can never feel at home. Contrary to expectations, Frankenstein’s discovery of the astonishing secret of the principle of life marks nothing but the beginning of subsequent miseries. He becomes the very cause of his own undoing and of a series of deaths, by succeeding in “bestowing animation upon lifeless matter” (52). The irony that he fails in the end precisely because he succeeds is revealing because it can be read as a necessary corollary of the radical opposition between life and death, and of the transgression of the boundary between the two realms. What is at stake is now less the discovery of a secret itself—the gratification of the thirst for knowledge—than what happens in the process of creation, at the very moment when Frankenstein successfully “infuse[s] a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet” (57).

Having found out whence the principle of life originates, Frankenstein intends to

38 Contrasting Frankenstein with Walton, Edward Mendelson points out that “Walton succeeds through failure; Frankenstein fails through success.” He finds the cause of Frankenstein’s failure in the fact that “he gave his creature life but denied him a childhood.” See The Things That Matter, 46.
create a human being like himself. In order to avoid the hindrance to his speed caused by
“the minuteness of parts,” however, he soon modifies his original intention and resolves
to make his creature gigantic (53). The problem is that gigantism as a practical solution
entails its cost: The end product would lack intricate and elaborate details necessary for it
to be “as complex and wonderful as man,” which leads to an act of speciation (53).³⁹

Frankenstein now envisions that he is engaging in the creation not of a human being but
of “a new species” (54). This new species would be different from the human species,
but at the same time would resemble human beings in its form, which would put into
question the category of humankind. Crossing the boundary between life and death,
Frankenstein “inadvertently confronting another threshold, the boundary between species,”
the result of which is fatal to Frankenstein and his family (McLane 87).

Although Frankenstein himself plans to vivify an inanimate thing, he does not
realize what kind of project he is really working on. Although he expects the lifeless
thing to be a different species from humankind when it comes to life, he fails to consider

³⁹ In Christopher Rovee’s reading of Frankenstein, it is the creature’s surface that
is “void of details, which enables the hideous ‘work of muscles and arteries beneath’ the
skin to obtrude upon the sight.” Rovee argues that “in Swift, details are disgusting; in
Shelley, the inadequacy of details allows more disgusting ones to emerge.” See
“Monsters, Marbles, and Miniatures,” 156.
what might be caused by possible differences between the two species. Of course, he
suffers from the feeling of horror and loathing for his secret labors. But these feelings
give way to his eager enthusiasm—“a resistless, and almost frantic, impulse”—that urges
him forward (54). As the work progresses toward its end, his anxiety grows much
stronger. But his steady purpose—in Walton’s words, “a point on which the soul may fix
its intellectual eye”—continues to sustain him, and he does not envision the possibility
that all his arduous labors might end in frustration (16). These aspects make him an
epitome of the Enlightenment belief in teleological progress. This belief becomes
irrevocably shattered the very moment that the transgression of the boundary between
life and death and the act of speciation are finally visualized in the monster’s body whose
yellow eyes and black lips have been read by critics as “the marker . . . of his liminal
status between the living and the dead,” or as an “evidence of the borrowed nature of all
of his most necessary features” (Mellor 2003: 22; Halberstam 38).40

Frankenstein describes the scenario this way:

I had worked hard . . . for the sole purpose of infusing life into an

40 Frankenstein designates his animated being as “creature,” “wretch,”
“monster,” “thing,” and “devil,” etc. Hereafter, among these designations, “the monster”
will be most used to refer to the animated being.
inanimate body. [...] I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room . . . . (57)

As the above passage clearly shows, it is only after the event of the infusion of life into a lifeless thing that Frankenstein realizes what it means to break through the boundary between life and death. His eager anticipation that he would be blessed for the created being’s many excellent qualities suddenly turns into bitter disappointment. Although his single purpose is in a sense successfully achieved, the end result turns out to be such a catastrophe that he cannot even endure the sight of it. This unexpected catastrophe is partly explained by Frankenstein’s decision to disregard, in his view, seemingly unimportant details. The neglect of minutiae, in turn, implies that, as Harriet Hustis argues, Frankenstein “is interested in the principle of ‘life’ only as an abstraction” (848). Because his interest in the principle of life is theoretical, he is able to stick to his work of “filthy creation” (55). For that same reason, however, he becomes horrified and disgusted to an extreme when he sees the monster brought to life. What he sees is no longer a mere object of theoretical experiment, but a corporeal being that is alive. And it is the corporeality of life that Frankenstein is not ready to accept, the very thing that embodies
what the actual transgression of the boundary between life and death means.

Frankenstein’s failure lies less in the creation of a living being than in Frankenstein himself in the sense that while he actually crosses the border of life and death, he cannot deal with the consequences of that crossing. His subjective failure suggests that the opposition of life and death is so fundamental that a human being only becomes horrified when the opposition is disturbed. But the violation of the border of life and death, or rather Frankenstein’s sudden realization of that violation, does not completely explain his horror at the sight of the monster as an animated body. Nor does it fully account for the hideous appearance of the monster. The disregard of specifics—an aesthetic failure—provides one explanation for these effects, but only a partial one. “His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful,” says Frankenstein (57). Why, then, does the finished construction of beautiful parts turn out to be hideous? This is a question about the relation between parts and their collective body, between individuals and their community.

Some critics explain the monster’s hideous appearance from the viewpoint of the Romantic notion of the organic. For example, based on the “Romantic contrasts between lifeless parts and living wholes,” Chris Baldick comments that Frankenstein errs in “confus[ing] the beauty of the dead limbs . . . with the beauty of a whole organism” (35).
The latter “can arise only from a pure vital principle within”—life as the vital force in Foucault’s map of modern thought—and the parts of a living being “can only be as beautiful as the animating principle” (Baldick 35). In this reading, the monster is ugly because the spark of life infused into it comes from Frankenstein’s “tormented isolation and guilty secrecy,” which Baldick says is morally ugly (35). Others who read the monster as the embodiment of the masses attribute the monster’s ugliness to “its being artificial” (Montag 387), or to “the process of animation itself” (Givner 277). Although these readings bring into relief the relation of parts to their whole, they pay little attention to the connection of the monster’s ugliness to the violence committed in Frankenstein’s creation project, which should be examined in relation to the mechanism of inclusion and exclusion that are constitutive of a collective, whether home, nation, or humankind.

At the beginning of his inquiry into the origin of life, Frankenstein says: “To examine the causes of life, we must first have recourse to death” (51). This passage, which hints at the oppositional but inseparable relation between life and death, reminds us of Foucault’s description of life as a system in which a living being should confront its

---

41 Similarly, Michael Manson and Robert Scott Stewart base their reading of the monster’s ugliness on the Romantic notion of unity that the whole is more than its constitutive parts. See their article, “Heroes and Hideousness.”
death. According to Foucault, living beings as “a manifestation of life” are threatened “from within” by death, “for only the organism can die” (1994: 277). Life is experienced not only as the vitality of creation and self-maintenance, but as the energy of destruction. The ambivalent force of life, however, takes an ugly turn when its flow is disrupted by Frankenstein’s violent intervention. It is violent in that he breaks off the natural cycle of life and death, and in that he actually uses violence to create a living being. He scavenges graves and “tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay” (54). The body parts collected this way lack internal connections among them, and therefore violence should be employed again to combine them into one single body. They should be literally patched together, and life should be inspired into the patchwork by force from without. This life does not come from Frankenstein’s isolation, as Baldick argues, but from instruments that lie entirely outside of the natural system of life. In this context, we can say that the creation of the monster consists of a series of violence, which turns the finished combination of beautiful parts into a hideous monster.

Regarding making a human frame, Frankenstein’s violence basically consists in the mechanism of inclusion and exclusion in which only beautiful things are selected, and culminates in his attempt to impose unity on multiple, disparate particularities. Although the mechanism of inclusion and exclusion ostensibly works well, his ultimate
violent attempt to produce oneness remains unsatisfied, which is starkly visualized as the monster’s “skin [that] scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath” (57). Quite contrary to Frankenstein’s intention, the monster’s too thinly-stretched skin opens up to view the inner landscape of his body composed of heterogeneous materials, rather than keeping it out of sight. His outer features, whose prominent colors—yellow, black, and white—certainly have racial connotations, also only produce an impression of horrible contrast. Lacking unity that integrates incoherent parts from different bodies into a well-structured whole, the monster is a hybrid of promiscuous materials crossing gender, class, race, and even species lines, which is unbearably horrifying. Equally horrifying as the monster’s hybridity is its implication that the monster “is always in danger of breaking down into his constitutive parts” (Halberstam 37).

Emphasizing the monster’s too-tight skin, Frances Ferguson remarks that the “imagery of stretching as a strained effort to create unity out of a multiplicity of elements is recapitulated in the Frankenstein family’s generous efforts to include an ever-growing number of individuals” (9). Or rather, it is vice versa. The Frankenstein family is based on the effort to impose unity on multiplicity, and Frankenstein makes the same kind of effort in creating a living being out of dissimilar pieces. The mechanism of inclusion and exclusion is also employed in the establishment of the Frankenstein family: It has
extended itself as a family by incorporating only those who are beautiful. It seems that
Frankenstein, if only unwittingly, learns the ways in which his family has been formed,
and applies them to his work of creation. Consequently, the monster can be regarded as a
version of the Frankenstein family, but a failed one. If he is a filthy type of Frankenstein
in terms of form, then he is a filthy type of the Frankenstein family in terms of structure.
It is “from very resemblance” both to Frankenstein and to his family that the monster
turns out to be “more horrid” (130). What Frankenstein sees in the monster’s hideous
body includes the construction of his family and its potential danger of falling apart.

Another similarity is found between Frankenstein’s relation to the monster and
the domestic relations within his family. They differ in that the latter are characterized by
close affective ties, whereas the former lacks any affective attachment. But both of them
are based on a kind of “debt economy” (Smith 1996: 44).\footnote{42} As Johanna M. Smith notes,
the domestic affections in the Frankenstein family are permeated by the “bookkeeping
mentality of gratitude and obligation” (1996: 44). The marriage of Frankenstein’s parents

\footnote{42}{Drawing attention to Frankenstein’s violation of the norm that “parental care is
owed to an offspring,” Smith argues that “this violation displays the contradictions of the
domestic ideology, between its affective relations and its debt economy.” See Mary
Shelley, 45-46.}
at least partly looks like a reward that a poor but young girl pays to her old but rich protector. The parental care for Frankenstein is described as the duty of his parents toward him, and his filial love in turn as an expression of his gratitude—implicitly, his obligation—to them. Elizabeth and Justine repay the benefits from Caroline by devoting themselves to the Frankenstein family. Likewise, Frankenstein at first imagines his relationship to the monster in terms of gratitude he could claim. Although it finally changes into one of antagonism, their relationship remains within the bounds of debt economy in that they seek to pay each other back for what they have done to each other.

What underlies the debt economy in the Frankenstein family is an affectionate but possessive paternalism, which is inclusive but only to a certain point and in which gender and class hierarchies are reestablished. The Frankenstein family begins with an act of restoring class lines, Alphonse’s saving Caroline from falling into the lower class. The same drama is reenacted in Elizabeth’s adoption into the family. It is significant that this time it is Caroline who plays the role of “guardian angel” because it makes Elizabeth’s rescue an act of self-extension not simply of the family as a whole but of Caroline herself. Actually, Elizabeth’s life is in some way a replication of Caroline’s: a noble birth, a fall into the lower class, and a restoration into the original class. Elizabeth even becomes Caroline’s substitute by taking on her feminine roles for the family. Moreover, both of
them are accepted as a kind of property by their male partners. Caroline is considered like “a fair exotic” and Elizabeth is literally taken as “a pretty present” (33, 35). It turns out that affectionate acts serve to consolidate class and gender hierarchies, both of which are inseparable from the idea of possession. This affectionate but possessive paternalism, along with debt economy, will determine Frankenstein’s relationship with the monster, although it will take an ugly turn.43

It is Justine who puts into question the affectionate but very much class-biased inclusivity of the Frankenstein family. Having been abused by her own mother, she is received in the family, but as a servant. It is neither a restoration into her original class nor an elevation into the upper class. Rather, it is apparently a fall into the order of servants, although Elizabeth defends that change by claiming that a servant’s condition in Geneva “does not include . . . a sacrifice of the dignity of a human being” (65). It demonstrates that the affectionate but possessive Frankenstein family is not inclusive enough to accept fully someone from the lower class. As a means of repaying Caroline’s benevolence, Justine “endeavoured to imitate her phraseology and manners,” so that she

43 Sharon Harrow argues that “Frankenstein models his scientific family on a dialectic of affectionate obligation.” See Adventures in Domesticity, 211.
continually reminds Elizabeth of her dead benefactress (65). Unlike Elizabeth, however, she can in no way take Caroline’s place because of the class line between them, and she thus serves only as a reminder of her. She remains a stranger even after her inclusion in the Frankenstein family, which exemplifies how the family’s affectionate inclusivity is paradoxically exclusive.

Justine’s stranger-ness draws attention back to the salvation of Caroline and of Elizabeth because she comes from a lower-class milieu from which they were also rescued. What is especially interesting is the use of physiognomy as the class mark distinguishing the upper from the lower classes. Elizabeth’s fair physiognomy immediately attracts Caroline’s attention by marking her as “a distinct species,” a phrase with racial as well as class overtones (34). She is “fairer than a garden rose among dark-leaved brambles,” which hints both of her fairness and of her stranger-ness (35). Being foreign to the rude home of her foster family, she needs to be transferred into a cultivated abode like the Frankenstein family’s home. Interestingly, her image as an exotic seems to

44 Regarding Justine’s status in the Frankenstein family, Smith argues that “although Justine is brought less fully into the family, she is perhaps the most Frankensteinized” (321). But Smith seems to fail to note that Justine is the character who can disturb what she considers “the Frankenstein family’s incestuous pattern of reproducing itself by excluding difference.” See “‘Cooped Up’ with ‘Sad Trash’.”
be an inversion of Caroline’s because the latter is referred to as such after her rescue. As Anca Vlasopolos observes, it suggests “her relation with her husband, ‘the gardener’ who holds the means of her life and death in his care” (126). But it can also be read as a hint of her racial stranger-ness, especially considering her dark eyes as well as no mention of her mother. Caroline’s and Elizabeth’s rescue, although primarily concerned with class distinctions, resonates with racial implications.

Considering their parentage, we can say that Caroline, Elizabeth, and Justine are all respectively related to a disturbance of certain category distinctions. Caroline crosses a racial line and Elizabeth, with a Milanese father and a German mother, a national line. Justine also raises an issue of class category by not being fully accepted in the Frankenstein family. Accordingly, regardless of the extent to which each of them is incorporated into the Frankenstein family, all of them can be considered strangers within the home. But their presence in the family renders it a kind of cosmopolitan community, rather than posing a threat to it. This scenario can be explained by the affectionate but possessive paternalism of the family. To be concrete, they are all women that have been

\[45\] Elizabeth’s foster siblings have dark eyes, which stands in contrast to Elizabeth’s blue eyes. Safie is also described as having dark eyes. That is, the color of eyes is used to refer to racial as well as class differences in this novel.
accepted as objects to be possessed. If Caroline and Elizabeth are in the possession of their male partners, Justine as a servant is in the possession of the family as a whole. Furthermore, they are all beautiful objects, even though Justine, who is described as “extremely pretty” by Elizabeth, is not pretty enough to surpass the class line (66). It seems as if the Frankenstein family defuses their stranger-ness by incorporating them as some kind of aesthetic objects.

The Frankenstein family is receptive to strangers when they come in the form of beautiful objects. Conversely speaking, however, the family can be terrorized when strangers appear in other forms that are not beautiful or that exceed the boundary of objects to be appropriated. It is this possibility of being horrified at the appearance of strangers that becomes realized when Frankenstein “saw the dull eye of the creature open” (57). The monster is no longer a mere combination of lifeless materials to meddle with, but a living being that comes as a stranger whose arrival is unexpected. Frankenstein plans the creation of a living being, collects its body parts, and anticipates its coming to life. But the abrupt change of the assembled beautiful parts into an ugly body turns the monster’s arrival into an unexpected one, in the face of which Frankenstein becomes terrorized. The familiar materials suddenly turn into an unfamiliar living being and its expected arrival occurs as an unexpected event. Frankenstein fails as
a host to receive this uncanny stranger, just as he fails as a creator to accept the monster as his progeny.

It is telling that the arrival of Clerval immediately follows the animation of the monster because it effectively dramatizes the paradox that there is no hospitality without hostility: “Hospitality, hostility, *hospitality*” (Derrida 2000: 45, original emphasis). Formulating hospitality as one way to move toward a perpetual peace, Kant defines it as “the right of a stranger not to be treated with hostility when he arrives on someone else’s territory” (1991: 105). But he soon adds that it is not the right to be welcomed as a guest but simply to appear before somebody else’s society. As Derrida comments, it does not include a “right of residence,” but is only restricted to a “right of visitation” (2001: 21). The underlying premise is that both a stranger and a host should behave in a peaceable way toward each other. But the subtle suggestion is that hosts have the privilege to decide to accept or reject strangers on their arrival. This kind of filtering—an act of violence—is exercised in Frankenstein’s rejecting the monster and welcoming Clerval. It should be noted here that Frankenstein checks his room to see whether the monster—a “hideous guest”—is still there before he lets Clerval in, which illustrates that hostility accompanies hospitality (61). As Peter Melville notes, hospitality and hostility “are as much opposed as they are opposed to one another” (2007: 87).
In Kant’s sketch of a perpetual peace, hospitality is intended to help human beings to “enter into peaceful mutual relations” and thereby to constitute a cosmopolitan community gradually (1991: 106). But the apposition between hospitality and hostility reveals that it is not all-encompassing but functions based on the mechanism of inclusion and exclusion. Not all arrivals are welcomed: Some are entertained as guests and others are rejected as enemies. In this context, it is no wonder that Frankenstein quite abruptly starts to call the monster “my enemy” when he checks his apartment before the reception of Clerval, his uninvited but much welcomed guest (61). Significantly, this moment comes right after the monster is brought to life and therefore precedes the havoc he will wreak later. This antecedence of Frankenstein’s designation of the monster as his enemy means that he has already read the monster’s stranger-ness itself as threatening or hostile, and that this reading is carried out upon the monster’s arrival. In short, an act of reading a stranger, which should be fraught with political overtones, is simultaneous with his arrival because he must first be read in order for hospitality to be offered or withheld.46

[46 In the chapter on Kant’s notion of hospitality of his book, Romantic Hospitality and the Resistance to Accommodation, Melville says that “there are two moments, as it were, of the arrival which occur simultaneously.” The first moment is “a moment of ethics” and the second is “the political moment” (93).]
Reading a stranger is nothing else than reading the stranger-ness of a stranger. In this respect, Clerval is not a stranger as such whose stranger-ness should first be read because he is already embraced into Frankenstein’s society as a friend. Therefore, his arrival does not entail any kind of reading, but instead reminds his friend of “all those scenes of home so dear to my recollection” (60). The problem is that Frankenstein is so traumatized by the arrival of the monster as a stranger that neither the recollected scenes of home nor Clerval’s devoted care can restore him to what he was. To put it another way, a stranger read as an enemy cannot completely be expelled once he has arrived. Even if he is turned away, his stranger-ness lingers forever: “The form of the monster on whom I had bestowed existence was for ever before my eyes” (62). Now Frankenstein cannot feel at home in his own place. Nor can he feel at home with himself, but haunted by the feeling “of being perpetually out-of-place” (Melville 2008: 181). Although he begins to long for the home and family he ignored while engaging in his creation project, there is no home in which he can feel at home. The home is already forever lost to him, which he bitterly realizes on hearing the news of William’s death. The Modern Prometheus now turns into a wandering stranger whose time moves toward no direction.

As is hinted in the term “right,” Kant’s notion of hospitality as the right of a stranger is founded on rational speculations with little consideration of affective factors.
Frankenstein’s loss of the ability to feel at home with himself, however, indicates that
hospitality is concerned with the encounter between stranger and host that involves
affective as well as rational commitment. It also suggests that his failure as host consists
in his inability to handle the affective commitment to the monster as the stranger. What
should be emphasized here is that this affective failure is not limited to his relationship
with the monster. He comes to lose what can be called “affective response-ability,” the
ability to respond to affective feelings from others. The loss of this “response-ability”
can be attributed to his creation project itself, considering that the project leads him to
wish “to procrastinate all that related to my feelings of affection” and actually to neglect
his family by not writing home (55). What is more, never entirely recovering from the
traumatic encounter with the monster, he shuns the society of others including his family
and seeks solitude, “my only consolation—deep, dark, deathlike solitude” (90). His
intersubjective ability is irrevocably damaged and can no longer function properly, as a
result of which he goes into partly voluntary exile.

One interesting detail is that the first two moments of their encounter that leave a
deply traumatic impression upon Frankenstein “make no lasting impression upon the
monster at all” (Eilenberg 183). The monster’s gestures in these two moments—opening
his eyes upon Frankenstein, muttering some sounds with a grin, and stretching out one
hand—certainly constitute a demand for particularly affective responses similar to an infant’s demand for parental affections. They signify that the monster is already leaving the status of object and entering into intersubjectivity. This demand for recognition is one Frankenstein cannot respond to. When he hallucinates that the monster comes into his room, he cries to Clerval for help: “he can tell.—Oh, save me! save me!” (61, original emphasis). As Frankenstein himself realizes, the monster is already in the dimension of speaking subject, although his sounds are inarticulate. This fact Frankenstein cannot deal with. The first moments of his being, when all these things happen, hold no place in the monster’s memory. But the same kind of demand and failure to respond to it will be reenacted in his encounter with the De Laceys, and this time the effect will be devastating to both sides. He has little idea that his uncanny stranger-ness visualized in his hideous body is insurmountable for human beings until that fatal moment.

By contrasting the Frankensteins with the De Laceys, Mellor argues that the latter is portrayed as an “alternative social organization” to the former based on “hierarchical gender divisions” (1988: 221). Although she disagrees with Mellor’s assertion that Shelly committed herself to the bourgeois family, Kate Ferguson Ellis also contrasts the two families in order to stress the deficiencies of the Frankensteins.⁴⁷ But these families

⁴⁷ See the chapter X of Ellis’s The Contested Castle.
differ only in degree, not in kind. Like the Frankenstein family, the De Lacey family has as its underlying structure an affectionate but possessive paternalism vested in gender and class hierarchies. Mellor insists that the family is “egalitarian,” and its seemingly idyllic life contributes to such an impression (1988: 230). But the children’s submissive relationship to De Lacey and Safie’s to Felix—she is originally intended to be given to him as a reward—reveal its affectionate but possessive hierarchy. Its hierarchical aspects are also seen in the fact that the family employs servants when it can afford to do so thanks to the money Safie brings with her. In addition, considering its having been exiled to live such an isolated life, which means that it is not a chosen but a forced life, the family can hardly be regarded as an alternative to the bourgeois model of family.

Especially in terms of ways in which they respond to strangers, the De Laceys look like a variation of the Frankenstein, far from being their alternative. The pattern of man as savior and woman as saved seen in Alphonse’s rescue of Caroline is repeated in Felix’s relationship with Safie: Man comes to woman “like a protecting spirit” when she or her family is thrown into a desperate situation (32). In both cases, a woman appears to be an object whose ownership is transferred from father to husband: Caroline has the status of a ward, and Safie is considered “a treasure which would fully reward [Felix’s] toil and hazard” (123). The Frankenstein family becomes cosmopolitan to some extent
by incorporating female strangers. Likewise, the acceptance of Safie, whose presence might be threatening because she is a racial stranger, gives the De Lacey family “the cosmopolitan character” (Armstrong 2005: 70). But it is soon revealed that this family is not all-inclusive, like the Frankenstein family.

The limit of the De Lacey family’s cosmopolitan inclusivity is exposed when the monster finally reveals himself to the family. The De Laceys embrace Safie, “their lovely guest,” but violently spurn the ugly monster (117). Just as the Frankenstein family receives as its members only those who are beautiful, so does the De Lacey family. In Elizabeth A. Bohls’s words, “beauty is violence,” as is manifested in the De Lacey family’s response to the monster (29). Despite the monster’s suppliant gesture, “Agatha fainted; and Safie, unable to attend to her friend, rushed out of the cottage. Felix darted forward, and with supernatural force tore me from his father, to whose knees I clung: in a transport of fury, he dashed me to the ground, and struck me violently with a stick” (135).

Reading *Frankenstein* along with Kant’s “Perpetual Peace,” Nancy Armstrong says that “the cosmopolitan character of the Frankenstein and De Lacey families suggests a Europe on its way to becoming an all-encompassing state. . . .” Then, she asks what Shelley did to the possibility of a transnational community “when she introduced a monster to a community on its way to enjoying universal hospitality” (70). See *How Novels Think*, 68-78.
The gentle and amiable way of their family life, which is so attractive to the monster, cannot be separated from the violence the family does to those whom it excludes. The De Lacey family is not cosmopolitan enough to provide hospitality for the monster, whose daily “help is welcomed only so long as his material form is absent” (Jones 278).

The De Lacey family’s welcoming Safie and rejecting the monster lead us to ponder on what evokes such opposite responses. It is partly explained by the differences in their features: While Safie has “a countenance of angelic beauty and expression,” the monster’s image is too horrible even for himself, so that he starts back from his own reflection (116). The family’s instant vehement responses to him, however, indicate that it is actually his stranger-ness that it cannot handle and therefore should expel from its territory. If Safie’s stranger-ness is not menacing, then there is something in excess in the monster’s stranger-ness that is so threatening that the family cannot align itself with him. Although the monster comes as “a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster” in him (134). His supplication for hospitality only arouses hostility in the family that has already accepted a racial stranger as one of them. It shows that, as Sara Ahmed notes, “strangerness is already unevenly distributed,” and people “become aligned with some others and against other others” (2005: 96, 104, original emphasis).49

49 Challenging Kristeva’s notion of “strangeness,” Ahmed brings into high relief
What, then, is characteristic of Safie’s stranger-ness and what is peculiar to the monster’s? These questions direct our attention to the education of Safie and the monster as a stealthy eavesdropping student, through which they “are newly and simultaneously recreated in the acquisition of language” (Dickerson 89). What is problematic is that they gain the very opposite effects from the same education: As they grow acquainted with De Lacey family’s language and acquire more knowledge, Safie whose stranger-ness gets dissolved, though not completely, becomes one of the De Laceys, whereas the monster only becomes more keenly aware of his own stranger-ness. Fascinated with the “godlike science” of language as the means of communicating experience and feelings, the monster clings to the hope that his mastery of that science may enable him to overcome his physical deformity (112). But the knowledge he gains hints that language cannot compensate for the deformity of his body. Rather it leads him to keep asking a series of the “uneven distribution” of “strangerness” in order to deconstruct the host/stranger opposition. She insists that “some others are recognized as stranger than others” and “the idea that we are all strangers forgets the politics of this differentiation” (99). See “The Skin of the Community.”

50 Examining the relation between language and monstrosity from the perspective of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Peter Brooks proposes that language is “a cultural compensation for a deficient nature,” but soon emphasizes that in Shelley’s text,
questions about his own existence, as he increasingly realizes that there is “none like me” (120). The language system he has learned, as John Bugg remarks, only “names him monstrous” because he does not fit into the system (661). In a way, he is recreated as the monster in the process of his acquisition of language and knowledge.

The most excruciating knowledge revealed to the monster in Frankenstein’s journal of “his accursed origin” is that he is an experiment and an outcast abandoned by his own creator (130). He does not have any natural context because he is an artificial creation. Nor does he have any social context because the only being with whom he can claim a connection has deserted him. It is this double lack that he desperately wants to compensate for by “becom[ing] an actor” in the De Lacey family’s social life (127). Actually, he is already an actor in that realm in the sense that he experiences, in Jonathan Jones’s words, “emotional communion” with the family, as well as in the sense that he provides manual labor on a daily base (2005: 275). He even develops a considerable sense of what can be called “affective community”: The members of De Lacey family are already his friends as well as his protectors. But, it is a kind of “imagined” community, to appropriate Benedict Anderson’s terminology, though the context is “the godlike science of language has proved deceptive.” See “Godlike Science/Unhallowed Arts,” or “What is a Monster?”
different (7). It is because it happens only from his perspective and he does not even exist from the perspective of the De Lacey family.

Critics have repeatedly pointed out that the monster’s subjectivity is “the result of his readings and his experience of the world as programmed by them” (Acosta 177). This argument of artifactuality can also be applied to his sense of affective attachment to the De Laceys because it is partly formed in his hidden participation in the family’s act of reading, one example of which is his weeping “with Safie” over the fate of Native Americans described in Volney’s text (119). Reading together does not simply mean sharing knowledge but also entering into some kind of affective relationship. But reading the “science of letters”—by implication, the humanities—is not the only method of establishing affective ties (119). Much of the monster’s attachment to the De Laceys is built while he observes their bodily expressions of feelings to one another and while he listens to “the divine sounds” of music (109). In other words, his affective attachment to them is created both by sympathizing with particular individuals and by being affected by their responses to one another. As Jones emphasizes, he is responding to “communication of fellow feeling between human beings” seen in the De Laceys (277, original emphasis). What matters here is less any particular affect than the capacity to feel and to respond, to be affected and to affect. And the monster has this capacity, which
may be read as a sign of humanity in him.

What is at stake is that, although the monster has the capacity to feel and to respond, there is no one to whom he can communicate his experiences and feelings. It is this lack of mutuality that makes problematic his affective attachment to the De Laceys and his sense of affective community. As a guest, he is living with his host family, and his mode of life is uniformly shaped by their daily schedule. But this “with-ness,” this simultaneity, is basically empty, although it is substantial to him, because he is a clandestine guest. Insofar as the family remains unaware of him, they connect only by the fact that they live according to the same timetable. To utilize Anderson’s insight into modern temporality, we can say that their simultaneity is in “homogeneous, empty time” “measured by clock and calendar” (24). To fill this emptiness and to achieve affective mutuality, the monster’s presence should first be known to the De Lacey family, which is his very agonizing wish: “my heart yearned to be known and loved by these amiable creatures: to see their sweet looks directed towards me with affection, was the utmost limit of my ambition” (132).

Derrida’s distinction between parasitism and hospitality helps us to understand how the monster’s peculiar stranger-ness is distinct from Safie’s. “Not all new arrivals are received as guests if they don’t have the benefit of the right of hospitality,” Derrida
writes (2000: 60-61). In this context, it is no wonder that the De Lacey family embraces one stranger but spurns another. From their perspective, Safie comes not simply as a stranger who asks for hospitality and protection, but also “both as a spiritual and a financial rescuer” (Dickerson 88). She brings some jewels and money that greatly help to resolve the poverty of the De Lacey family, and her presence in the family “diffused happiness among its inhabitants” (131). By contrast, the monster arrives stealthily and brings no immediate benefit to the De Lacey family. Furthermore, his sojourn in their territory remains unperceived, which, metaphorically speaking, makes them the kind of host in which another living being lives. In turn, he only appears to them “as a parasite, a guest who is wrong, illegitimate, clandestine, liable to expulsion or arrest” (Derrida 2000: 61). De Lacey’s question of “who are you?” is about his parasitism, his stealthy presence in the family’s sphere, as much as it is an ontological question (135).

Like the apposition of hostility to hospitality, the distinction of hospitality from parasitism shows that hospitality is neither unconditional nor limitless. Rather, it

---

51 He does later brings them benefits by his labors, for example, collecting “fuel for the cottage,” “clearing their path from snow,” and performing “those offices that I had seen done by Felix” (114). But they never know it is the monster, not “good spirit,” that helps them with their daily chores, which means that, from their perspective, the monster’s presence is not beneficial to them (115).
functions depending on whether the arrival of a stranger is beneficial to the host or not, like the debt economy epitomized in the domestic relations of the Frankenstein family. Regardless of intention either on the part of the host or of the stranger, hospitality looks like an act of paying a debt out of duty. Then, an ethical problem arises: How can a stranger, who asks for hospitality but brings no benefit to the host, be welcomed? How can a stranger be genuinely welcomed without entailing any form of debt? Is hospitality as such simply impossible? These are the questions raised by the monster’s stranger-ness because he cannot be entirely dismissed as a parasitic guest, which is alluded to in his dialogue with De Lacey. Encouraging the monster not to despair, De Lacey says: “the hearts of men, when unprejudiced by any obvious self-interest, are full of brotherly love and charity” (134). But his family fails to open its heart in sympathy to the monster. Their affective “response-ability” that works so powerfully well among themselves cannot function at all in relation to the monster. Moreover, the monster cannot answer to De Lacey’s question of who he is because he is technically “nobody,” whose pieced-together body implies “a monstrous Everybody” (Eilenberg 182). In sum, there is something visualized on the monster’s body that makes him so other and accordingly makes hospitality in the ordinary sense impossible.

Both Frankenstein’s and the De Lacey family’s failure to welcome the monster
show that hospitality as “right” exemplified by Kantian hospitality does not apply to a stranger like the monster who has neither name nor relation. Derrida categorizes this kind of stranger as “an absolute other,” and emphasizes that “absolute or unconditional hospitality” intended for this stranger should break with conditional one, that is, “hospitality as right or duty” (2000: 25). If the latter begins by asking the stranger who he/she is, like De Lacey does, then the former requires that the host should open his/her home to an absolute other as well as to a stranger without asking any benefit or even his/her name. If the latter goes by way of language, the former “consist[s] in suspending language” (Derrida 2000: 135). But this does not mean that one should be preferred to the other. Rather, according to Derrida, in order to be effective, the law of unconditional hospitality requires the laws of conditional hospitality, and vice versa. Being “both contradictory, antinomic, and inseparable,” they should remain irreducible to each other (Derrida 2000: 81, original emphasis). The key, Derrida suggests, is that we have to “negotiate constantly” between them (2000: 135). The juxtaposition between the monster’s animation scene and Clerval’s unannounced visit, Safie’s arrival and the monster’s failed trial, can be read as the dramatization of this kind of negotiation, which should be considered not a problem-solving but a problem-posing one.

It is Safie rather than the monster that makes the issue of hospitality and stranger-
ness more complicated in relation to gender and racial issues. In terms of hospitality, Safie can be seen as an inverted image of the monster. She is a beneficial as well as lovely guest who is cordially welcomed and successfully accepted into the host family, while the monster is the opposite of all these features. But she is a problematic figure as much as the monster is, precisely because of her biological and cultural hybridity: She is a Turkish Mahometan on her paternal side and an Arabian Christian on the maternal one. Significantly, she embraces her maternal heritage but repudiates her paternal one. She grows to be a kind of stranger in her native society where she feels out of place, and yearns for a Christian life. And she defies her father’s mandate about Felix because “a residence in Turkey was abhorrent to her” (126). In this respect, we can say that a Christian society is her home—culturally and religiously. Accordingly, her arrival at the cottage of the De Lacey family looks very much like a homecoming. Indeed, it is her homecoming: She comes with the “enchanting” prospect of “marrying a Christian,” which is soon realized by her marriage to Felix (124). As David Ketterer remarks, her attraction to Felix is grounded “on the element of likeness,” which implicates that she comes as someone who already resembles the host rather than the stranger as such (55).

But it is problematic that Safie’s subversive act with regard to her father ends in her submissive adaptation to her husband’s family. “What she has done”—disobeying her
father’s mandate and undertaking a journey to find her lover—is “unthinkable to Elizabeth” (Ellis 1989: 184). As William Veeder points out, however, what Safie finally acquires is “what Elizabeth already has,” “where Elizabeth already is, not only geographically but also culturally and emotionally” (189). She escapes from a patriarchal society where women should live an immured life deep in a harem to another society where she thinks “women were allowed to take a rank in society” (124). But this society is also a patriarchal one built on gender hierarchies, which means that the difference between the two is not in kind but in degree. It is not difficult to imagine that she would lead a similar life to Elizabeth’s, confined to the domestic sphere and deprived of social intercourse with the outside world. In this context, her rebellion against a repressive patriarchal culture is only a half-success, far from making her “an emblem of an egalitarian . . . possibility” (Ellis 1989: 204).

Safie’s half-successful, half-failed, rebellion can be attributed to her mother’s lessons inculcating women’s intellectual and spiritual independence while at the same time they are permeated with racial bias. Her eager desire for female independence is inextricably tangled with her prejudice in favor of European Christians. As a result, what is subversive in terms of gender relations loses its subversive charge when seen in the context of racial relations between Turkish Mahometans and European Christians. On the
one hand, Safie's escape from her father to her lover constitutes an act of self-assertion and independence. On the other hand, however, it can be viewed as an act of self-denial, the denial of her own racial lineage. This self-denial culminates in what can be called her Europeanization through education by Felix, especially in her acquisition of the De Lacey family’s language. It seems as if their hospitable reception of Safie presupposes her being stripped of her racial stranger-ness.

Safie’s cultural hybridity becomes less and less obtrusive as “a language of her own” gives way to that of the De Lacey family. But her racial stranger-ness remains unassimilated and reveals itself precisely in her newly acquired language. Both her voice, “unlike” that of the De Lacey family, and her very “broken” accents continue to mark her racial stranger-ness, along with her physiognomic features (116, 119). These racial marks remind us of her father, the Mahometan Turk who is described as treacherous and ungrateful to his deliverer. Otherwise only a minor character, he looms large in the context of the issue of hospitality and stranger-ness because he is a victim of racial

52 Joseph W. Lew observes this point: “[Safie] will be thoroughly domesticated and Westernized; soon only a ‘quaint’ or ‘exotic’ accent will ‘mark’ her as Other.” But his focus on Safie’s mother as “the deceptive other” leads him to pay less attention to Safie’s otherness than to the similarity of her family to the European bourgeois family. See “The Deceptive Other,” 282.
intolerance. For some unknown reason, he is sent for trial and condemned to death. But it is revealed that the real cause was nothing but his racial stranger-ness, as is mentioned in the following passage: “It was judged that his religion and wealth, rather than the crime alleged against him, had been the cause of his condemnation” (122).

Felix’s indignation over the Turk’s condemnation and his decision to deliver the Turk should be regarded as ethical. It looks as if he attempts to compensate for the government’s inhospitality with his own personal hospitality. But the subsequent development of the situation transforms his originally ethical act that should be offered without any expectation of return into the kind of act that is expected to be rewarded. His hospitality now loses its unconditionality and becomes something like a debt to be paid. Accordingly, the Turk’s refusal to give Felix the promised reward, Safie, turns him from a victim of inhospitable treatment into an inhospitable stranger. The thing is that he refuses to reward Felix because “he loathed the idea that his daughter should be united to a Christian” (124-25). He conducts himself in relation to Felix based on the exactly same

53 Melville considers Safie’s father to be a diasporic refugee. This reading, which invests his inhabitation in Paris with a political significance, seems debatable, since his living in Paris can be explained by his being a merchant. Moreover, there is no obstacle for him to return to his country. See “Monstrous Ingratitude.”
ground as the French government conducted itself in relation to the Turk himself: the aversion to strangers. He once suffered because of his own stranger-ness, but now he in turn rejects another stranger because of this stranger’s stranger-ness. It makes him both a victim and a perpetrator of racial intolerance. This episode as a whole suggests that the issue of who is the guest-stranger and who is the host matters less than race relations do because it is the category of race itself that causes hospitality to malfunction.

There seems to be a structural similarity between the Turk’s relation to the De Lacey family and the monster’s relation to Frankenstein, in terms of the reversal of position: victim-turned-into-perpetrator and perpetrator-turned-into-victim. Just as the Turk turns from a victim into a perpetrator of racial bias, the monster transforms from an outcast seeking friends who would sympathize with him into a destroyer filled with hatred and vengeance against the members of humankind who one by one reject him. Both the De Lacey family as part of the Christian world and Frankenstein change from perpetrators into victims, when they are confronted by unexpected turns of events: the Turk’s treacherous ingratitude in the former case and the monster’s horrible revenge in the latter case. It is important to note that, in each case, the underlying structure and mechanism remain the same before and after the reversal of position takes place.

The fatal knowledge the monster finally gains is that the barrier between him and
humankind is insurmountable, even if he masters human language. The De Lacey family, “the only link that held me to the world,” turns out to be neither virtuous nor benevolent enough to welcome him into their home. What he desires most—Agatha’s “gentle words,” Safie’s “animated smiles,” De Lacey’s “mild exhortations,” and Felix’s “lively conversation”—will not be for him (121). Human sympathies may be able to cross class and race lines, but they presuppose a human community and “will not cross the species barrier” (McLane 2000: 101). Being overwhelmed by his wretched feelings of loneliness and homelessness, the monster now defines humankind as “my enemies” and declares “everlasting war against the [human] species, and, more than all, against him who had formed me” (136). But before completely turning to the last resort of sheer violence, he attempts to persuade and at the same time threaten Frankenstein to redress his situation, significantly, by creating a female companion of the same species for him.

The monster’s request for a female companion is permeated with words that reflect the organizing principles of human society from which he is excluded, especially its mechanism of inclusion and exclusion based on likeness, hierarchical gender and race relations, and debt economy. Realizing that his unique unlikeness to men will not be tolerated in human society, he comes to think that a living being like him would accept him: “I am alone, and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed
and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me. My companion must be the same species, and have the same defects” (144). As this passage clearly shows, he imagines a society whose members will be attached to one another exactly because of their likeness to one another—that is, their unlikeness to humankind. But their likeness would consist of inferior, not simply different, characteristics to those of human beings. The monster even voluntarily chooses to exile himself from the neighborhood of humankind into “the most savage of places” (147). Humankind will be a superior species that will occupy central areas of the earth, and his species an inferior one that will inhabit its marginal places. It proves that he conceives of the relationship between his species and humankind in strictly hierarchical terms that will not allow crossing the border between them.

If the species hierarchy defines the relationship of the monster’s society to human community, gender hierarchy defines its inner relationship between the monster and his mate. From the very beginning, the female monster is conceived of as a subordinate without her own independent existence. Both her physiognomic features and her life are determined by her mate. More problematically, it is not she herself but her sympathy that is necessary for the monster to “feel the affections of a sensitive being” and to “become linked to the chain of existence and events,” which means that her existence is at best instrumental rather than fundamental (147). In this context, we can say that she would be
a filthy type of the monster who is already a filthy type of his creator—“a figure of a
deformed figure [of man], the disfiguration of a disfiguration [of man]” (Vine 256). What
makes her would-be existence most precarious is that she is the result of a compact
between two males. She must be the first victim when the compact is broken, which
turns out to be the actual case. She is similar to Safie in that both of them serve as a form
of recompense between two males, and she is similar to Elizabeth in that both of them
fall victim to a struggle between two males.

As is suggested by the similarity between Safie and the female monster, the
relationship between the monster and Frankenstein is caught up in a debt economy. It
may at first seem striking that the monster does “demand” the creation of his mate by
Frankenstein “as a right which you must not refuse to concede” (144). It is no wonder,
however, that he approaches his relationship to his creator in terms of right and duty,
justice and injustice, considering that he has already learned from his experiences that he
cannot inspire affection in human beings. If, in his interview with De Lacey, the monster
appeals to his affectionate heart with affective words and gestures, then this time he
appeals to his creator’s intellectual conscience by reasoning with him. Frankenstein in
turn begins to consider his relationship to the monster in terms of a creator’s duties
toward his creature. The monster’s eloquent words make Frankenstein admit that the
monster is “a creature of fine sensations,” and they even make Frankenstein feel compassion for him (146). But his compassion for the monster, as Hustis observes, is composed only by “intellectual responses” that “cannot withstand the physical reality of the monster” (848). His decision to comply with the monster’s request is the logical conclusion of his intellectual reflection on the monster’s arguments and on “the justice due both to him and my fellow-creatures” (148).

The irony is that the monster who was artificially made but has his own will and desire fails to consider the probability that his mate would have her own will and desire. Nor does Frankenstein take that into account until one evening when he happens to consider the effects of his creating a female monster. He ponders several possible turns of events, all of which lead him to shudder with fear: the possibility of the female monster’s malignancy, of her refusal to obey the compact between her creator and her mate, of the mutual hatred between her and the monster, of her turn with disgust from the monster to man, and of the propagation of the monster species and its subsequent threat to the human species. Feminist critics have tended to read Frankenstein’s reflections on these possibilities as an expression of his fear of female independence and sexuality. But they also express his anxieties about negative affects themselves such as malice, hatred and anger, and about the unpredictable future—anxieties that are so unbearable that he cannot
but tear “to pieces the thing on which I was engaged” (166).

The monster’s demand for his mate can be put in the following way: If you, Frankenstein, my creator, cannot accept me into your own home and family or offer me another one, you should help me make my own. Thus, Frankenstein’s anxiety about negative affect is concerned with those within the domestic sphere of home, which reminds us of his father’s injunction regarding William’s murder:

Come, Victor; not brooding thoughts of vengeance against the assassin,
but with feelings of peace and gentleness, that will heal, instead of festering, the wounds of our minds. Enter the house of mourning, my friend, but with kindness and affection for those who love you, and not with hatred for your enemies. (73)

This passage clearly shows that the Frankenstein family does not allow its members to entertain or express negative affect in order to maintain domestic peace and comfort. They repress their negative feelings, and only passively respond to misfortune. When Justine is charged with the murder of William, Alphonse merely relies on laws, Elizabeth’s appeal only exasperates public indignation, and Frankenstein remains in silence. Likewise, Frankenstein attempts to forget the existence of the monster by “purg[ing] from his memory and environment everything associated with his creation of
the monster” (Perkins 1992: 37). By contrast, the monster does not strive to control negative affect, but instead allows himself to be borne away by them. In a way, he can be considered a projection of the repressed negative affect felt by the Frankenstein family. In this context, Frankenstein’s inability to handle the monster can partly be attributed to, in Ellis’s words, “the way in which the monster embodies ‘the repressed,’ that which has no place in bourgeois family life” (1993: 224).

The monster’s negative affect turns into destructive power as he becomes aware of his friendlessness and homelessness and repeatedly experiences rejection and alienation. Finding no place for himself in human society, the monster attempts to make himself heard by recourse to violence. But his acts of violence prove destructive not only to his human enemies but also to the monster himself because, as Margo V. Perkins remarks, they “deepen his sense of alienation from the society he wishes to belong to,” to such a degree that they produce his self-abhorrence (30). As the monster presses Frankenstein to acknowledge him more and more by committing violence, he becomes more and more alienated from and hated by him. What makes things worse is that Frankenstein himself comes to turn to violence as he gradually loses his loved ones. He finally allows himself to be borne away by negative affect such as despair and revenge when he loses everything, but only to be destructive. Both Frankenstein and the monster
get caught up in a vicious circle of violence, in which the desire to destroy the other is the only driving force of their lives. Separated from the rest of the world, they now become the double of each other: wandering friendless and homeless exiles.

Frankenstein’s reflection on imagined negative affect between the monster and his mate is followed by his speculation on the possibility of their sympathetic union. In both cases, Frankenstein’s anxieties are basically the same because he only sees negative affect, especially malice, in them, and therefore their union would be an embodiment of negative affect rather than domestic affections. What should be noted here is that these anxieties about negative affect are saturated with those about the unpredictable future itself. It is particularly striking that he speculates about the future in terms of racial or species conflict: “a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth, who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror” (165: emphases mine). As is shown in this passage, the existence itself of the monster species, whether peaceful or not, is considered threatening to humankind as a whole. In Kant’s idea of hospitality, all men “must necessarily tolerate one another’s company” because they all have a “right to communal possession of the earth’s surface,” which is not an infinite area (1991: 106). This universal right is not applied to the monster species because it presupposes a human community. Accordingly, Frankenstein’s duties toward
his own species have precedence over those toward the monster species, a precedence that constitutes his justification for destroying the half-made body of the female monster.

The fact that the categorical terms “race” and “species” are interchangeably used, however, puts into question the species categorization itself. As mentioned earlier, Frankenstein’s original project of creating a human being changes into that of creating a new species to avoid hindrances caused by minute details. It results in the creation of a living being that “is not decisively human,” but at the same time is not “decisively not human”—a paradoxical characterization strengthened by his acquisition of language (McLane 2000: 88). It is this kind of categorical instability that is revealed in Frankenstein’s anxious reflection on the unpredictable future in terms of species conflicts. As Armstrong comments, “if Frankenstein cannot imagine the monster joining humanity . . . then neither can he quite grant that monster the status of another ‘species’” distinct from humankind (2005: 73). In this context, the real threat to humankind is less the existence of the monster than the categorical problem embodied by him. And Frankenstein himself comes to occupy this neither-quite-inside-nor-quite-outside zone, a zone of what Agamben terms “bare life.”

As we examined earlier, *Frankenstein* is concerned with the distinction between living beings and nonliving beings that, according to Foucault, is essential to the modern
concept of life. This distinction is above all a biological one and the monster as an outcome of scientific experiments comes to life as a biological living being. But his unsatisfied desire for sympathetic relations, which is not different from a desire to belong to a community, demonstrates that the fact of living does not simply consist of biological experiences but social and political ones as well. And Frankenstein’s speculation on the imagined antagonism between the human species and the monster species shows that life itself—both of an individual living being and of the species as a whole—is now at stake and that power relations are concerned with living beings as such. In sum, it dramatizes that, in Foucault’s words, “modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question,” a scenario that leads to the birth of biopolitics (1990: 143).

Foucault’s definition of modern man implies that the inclusion of biological life in the political realm is a decisively modern phenomenon. Utilizing the Greek distinction between zoē and bios, however, Agamben argues that the politicization of bare life is an ancient phenomenon coterminal with the first constitution of Western politics whose fundamental categorical pair is “that of bare life/political existence, zoē/bios, exclusion/inclusion” (8). According to him, what characterizes modern politics is less the entry

54 According to Agamben, zoē referred to “the simple fact of living common to all living beings,” whereas bios expressed “the form or way of living proper to an
of bare life into politics than the gradual coincidence of the realm of bare life with that of political existence. What is essential in his scheme is that, whether on the basis of partial inclusion or gradual coincidence, bare life “remains included in politics in the form of exception” (11). And he finds the prototype of bare life in the ancient figure of *homo sacer*, the sacred man, “who may be killed but not sacrificed” (83). The enigma of this figure lies in the fact that he belongs to the divine sphere “in the form of unsacrificeability” and to the human community “in the form of being able to be killed,” but is simultaneously excluded from both of them (82).

In the context of *Frankenstein*, it is significant that *homo sacer* is placed in a zone between the human and the nonhuman, one example of which is the werewolf. As a hybrid of man and wolf, the werewolf occupies the borderline between man and animal, the city and the forest. It is also important that Agamben reads the werewolf as “the figure of man who has been banned from the city” (105). This connotes that the life of the werewolf is not a mere biological life without any relation to the human community, but is already included in it by being banned from it. These combined characteristics of the werewolf provide a frame through which the status of the monster as bare life can be accounted for. Like the werewolf, the monster as a hybrid of man and animal is an individual or a group” (1). See the “Introduction” to *Homo Sacer*.
borderline figure belonging to neither category, while also belonging to both. If the figure of the werewolf is banned from the city, then the monster is abandoned by his creator who takes the position of sovereignty in their relationship. Given that abandonment is the very form of ban, the monster has the same status as that of the werewolf as bare life: He is related to his creator by being abandoned by him. Like the werewolf, the monster lives bare life at “a threshold of indistinction and of passage between animal and man,” nature and culture (Agamben 105).

From the perspective of Agamben’s notion of bare life, the monster is already included in the human community by being excluded—abandoned and banned—from it. This “inclusive exclusion,” in Agamben’s phrase, is the only form of relation that is allowed the monster, an abandoned living being (8). But it is an empty form of relation, a zone between relation and nonrelation. Moreover, it is not established once and for all but continually renewed and reestablished, a pattern manifested in the monster’s repeated experiences of being rejected by human beings. It seems as if he is bare life for every human being he encounters, who in turn recognizes his own bare life in the monster, but only to reject it. Frankenstein intends to create a living being, but this living being turns out neither natural biological life nor social cultural life, but rather bare life captured in a zone between the two realms. He is neither simply set outside of the human community,
nor accepted in it. This in-between status adds a peculiar feature to the monster’s stranger-ness.

Reading Frankenstein’s laboratory “as a private space within the home,” Melville emphasizes that the monster as a stranger “comes not from without but from within the home” (2008: 181). He also comes from within the home in that he is an outcome of Frankenstein’s desire as well as his scientific knowledge. The monster’s coming from within assumes a form of exile the very moment Frankenstein spurns him. He now appears to be the stranger exiled from within the home, whose life is bare life. A similar pattern repeats itself in the fatal interview between the monster and the De Lacey family. As we have seen, the monster is already inside the society of the De Lacey family: He stays at a hovel joined to their cottage, takes part in their daily lives as “an invisible hand,” and cherishes a strong, though unrequited, affection for them (106). Thus, when they violently turn him away, it amounts to something like an exile from within. This image of the monster as the stranger exiled—abandoned and banned—from within suggests that the stranger has already arrived, if not yet observed, and his banishment epitomizes the presence of bare life simultaneously internal and external to the human community.

Like the monster, Frankenstein goes into exile as well, a banishment that is partly
voluntary in that he isolates himself from social contacts in order to forget that “I have been the miserable origin and author” and a banishment partly forced in that the monster drives him into exile as the means of revenge (101). In this context, Frankenstein’s literally ripping the unfinished body of the female monster into pieces marks a pivotal point because it entails a reversal in the relationship between Frankenstein and the monster, as the result of which both of them are irrevocably placed in a zone of bare life. The monster completely loses the hope of living in the interchange of sympathies by which he would be related to the chain of existence. Similarly, Frankenstein gradually loses all connections to human community and becomes banished into a zone of bare life. If the creation of the monster indicates his birth as bare life, then the destruction of the half-made female monster marks Frankenstein’s becoming bare life.

It is revealing that Frankenstein’s reflection on the unpredictable future ends in anxiety about his own relationship to the human species as a whole. While in his first creation project he gives no consideration to its possible effects on humankind as a whole, now he shudders to think that “future ages might curse me as their pest, whose selfishness had not hesitated to buy its own peace at the price, perhaps, of the existence of the whole human race” (166).55 Significantly, this passage is filled with anxiety and

55 In the first creation project, he speculates on how the “new species would bless
dread about excommunication, not with what Ferguson regards as “philanthropy toward the unborn” (9). At first, he consents to the monster’s request for a mate because he thinks it is his duty both to the monster and to his fellow creatures. But now being highly species-conscious, as Maureen N. McLane comments, as a human being himself he “imagines his ‘species’ under threat” (107). If his compact with the monster makes him feel “as if I were placed under a ban,” then his breach of the compact may be considered “his re-entry into the human social body” (McLane 107). But his sense of belongingness to the human species is already irreversibly damaged. The monster is referred to as something like “a spectre” right after his animation, whereas this time it is Frankenstein himself that looks like “a restless spectre” (61, 169). Although he occasionally feels “as if I belonged to a race of human beings,” he is already excommunicated (169).

It is his status of exile, whose life is bare life, that the monster attempts to escape from and that he wants Frankenstein to read in his tale about how he has become what he has done to him as its creator” (54). That is, he speculates in terms of the relationship between a creator and his progeny, not in terms of the relationship between two different species. In a way, he is not yet conscious of his relationship to humankind as a whole.

56 In her last interview with Elizabeth, Justine says that she confessed a lie under her confessor’s threat of “excommunication,” which exemplifies the importance of one’s belonging to a community (87).
is. And when Frankenstein breaks their compact and thereby their relationship is reversed, the monster forces Frankenstein into the same status of exile as his own by depriving him of those closest to him. He does this because exile is the most unbearable condition of his existence and “the most brutal punishment of which he can conceive,” which culminates in his murder of Elizabeth (Bugg 665). But the monster is not the master in their reversed relationship; instead his affect of indignation makes him “the slave, not the master, of an impulse, which I detested, yet could not disobey”—the very affect that forces both the monster and Frankenstein to endure the bare life of homeless and friendless exile (220).

Although both of them now occupy the liminal zone of bare life, however, the status of the monster borders on that of the werewolf, whereas Frankenstein’s status approximates that of the sacred man. That is, if the monster is in a zone between man and less than man, then Frankenstein occupies a zone between man and more than man, which makes a big difference in their final states.

The difference between Frankenstein’s being more than man and the monster’s being less is well manifested in Walton’s contrasting responses to them. Walton first reports that the monster was “a being which had the shape of a man, but apparently of gigantic stature,” a description that hints that he does not regard the being as a man. By contrast, he instantly views Frankenstein not only as “a human being” but “an European”
Moreover, as his affection for him grows daily, he comes to admire him as “noble and godlike” (210). As opposed to this, in his direct encounter with the monster, Walton does not even refer to him as a being but simply as “a form which I cannot find words to describe” (218). He designates Frankenstein as “divine wanderer,” comparing him to “a celestial spirit,” and the monster as “destroyer” and “dæmon,” as if he were Frankenstein himself (29, 219). These opposite responses indicate his alignment with Frankenstein against the monster, which can be read as an example of uneven distribution of stranger-ness. It draws our attention back to the issue of hospitality and leads us to reexamine it in relation to bare life.

_Frankenstein_ begins with Walton’s encounter with Frankenstein and ends with his encounter with the monster, which constitutes the outermost narrative of the embedded narratives and makes it a story dealing with the question of hospitality. Both of the encounters are equally unexpected, but the first one comes to condition the second. Frankenstein comes on board Walton’s ship as a total stranger. While Walton attends to him and becomes acquainted with his history, the “remoteness” of a stranger gives way to the “geniality” of a guest, which is in turn displaced by the “intimacy” of a friend (Melville 2008: 179). For Walton, this friend is the one whom he has eagerly sought and “who would sympathize with and love me” (211). Sympathy from a friend is the very
thing that is cherished as essential to one’s being in all the embedded narratives. It is
Frankenstein who tells us why: “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” (28). He himself becomes such a friend to
Walton, the friend who is supposed to make him complete by giving “keeping”—the
term borrowed from painting and interpreted as “the maintenance of harmony”—to his
pursuit of dreams and by helping him “to regulate my mind” (19, original emphasis).

Considering the catastrophic results of his creation of the monster, we can say
that Frankenstein lacked such a friend who could have given keeping to his thirst for
knowledge. But since he knows that Walton pursues “the same course, exposing yourself
to the same dangers which have rendered me what I am,” Frankenstein wants to give
keeping to his pursuit as well (30). Significantly, Frankenstein plays this role by telling
the story of his own disasters, from which he wants Walton to draw a moral “that may
direct you succeed in your undertaking, and console you in case of failure” (30). In other
words, a narrative plays the key role in building their sympathetic friendship. In fact,

57 Vanessa D. Dickerson also attributes this function to Mrs. Saville, Walton’s
sister and silent recipient of his letters, and argues that she is not only “the silent
guardian of Robert’s dreams and aspirations” but the keeper of Shelley’s text itself” (83).
throughout the text, narratives are described as an essential part of hospitality, whether failed or successful. Safie’s arrival at the cottage of the De Lacey family entails the conversation between son and father. De Lacey asks the monster to “confide to me the particulars of your tale,” though it remains unrealized (134). The monster’s entreaty to Frankenstein to listen to his tale can be read as an implicit entreaty for hospitality. And Frankenstein’s tale constitutes the core of the hospitable encounter between him and Walton. Furthermore, serving as a means of keeping, it contributes to Walton’s decision to return to England, which means that he would not cross the boundary between inside and outside the human community. More significantly, it also helps Frankenstein to escape from the status of bare life and to reenter the human community, though only partially.

“I called on him to stay” (219). To the monster, who has never been asked to stay, Walton’s calling on him to stay may seem to be a gesture of hospitality, or at least an invitation. It is an invitation, in a sense, especially considering that it gives the monster a chance to tell his own part of the story in his own voice. But, as Perkins remarks, Walton “is already biased against the monster before he can evaluate the monster’s story for himself” by the strong affective bond with his last friend, Frankenstein (40). Although his feeling of duty to obey Frankenstein’s request to destroy the monster is partly
“suspended by a mixture of curiosity and compassion,” his responses to the monster are filled with reproach and indignation in favor of his friend (219). He dismisses the monster’s laments as “hypocritical,” and their touching effect on him as due to “his powers of eloquence and persuasion” (220). Frankenstein comes on board Walton’s ship as a stranger, but ends as the very friend to “perfectionate” Walton’s nature. His autobiographical narrative restores him at least partly to the human community. By contrast, the monster is received by Walton as the enemy of his friend and remains as such. His last narration in which his status of bare life is effectively summarized hardly produces positive affective responses in Walton. Unlike Frankenstein, the monster remains the figure of bare life to the end—a wandering stranger and exile with neither home nor friend, which makes the issue of hospitality in relation to bare life an ongoing question.

Since Walton returns home without fulfilling his purpose, with his crew “unsupported by ideas of glory and honour,” he laments: “I come back ignorant and disappointed” (215). But his decision to maintain keeping between his responsibility as “the leader of an imperiled community” and his personal desire to see unknown mysteries is an effect of Frankenstein’s tale (Armstrong 2005: 69). Moreover, he comes back with the stories of things that appear unbelievable in “tamer scenes of nature” but
“possible in these wild and mysterious regions” (30). The stories are his discoveries, and his ship “surrounded by mountains of ice, which admit of no escape,” well serves as a proper place in which that kind of stories can be told. In a way, the ship epitomizes them in terms of time and space. Frankenstein once had a belief in teleological progress. Even the monster once felt optimistic about his future: “the past was blotted from my memory, the present was tranquil, and the future gilded by bright rays of hope, and anticipations of joy” (115). But their hopes get blasted, and their times out of joint. Thereafter, what remains for them is the bare life of exile with neither place to go nor future to live for. Likewise, stuck in ice, the ship has lost its mobility toward its destination, and its time has come to a stop. It occupies a boundary the crossing that could lead the community on the ship to enter a zone of bare life. This is the real peril they are facing in the middle of islands of ice.

Walton returns to England and to his sister, the designated recipient of his letters, not as a hero who has accomplished his expedition but as the sender and narrator of “strange and terrific story” about the Modern Prometheus (209). Owing to his return and survival, Franco Moretti argues, “his narrative ‘contains,’ and thus subordinates, Frankenstein’s narrative (which in turn ‘contains’ that of the monster)” (89). Frankenstein’s correction and augmentation of Walton’s record of his tale are his attempt
to contain the monster within his own narrative. The reappearance of the monster and his direct confrontation with Walton, however, show that the double containment is not impenetrable. The monster does not remain contained by Frankenstein’s narrative, but springs into Walton’s narrative. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak points out, he can even “step ‘beyond the text’ and be ‘lost in darkness’,” which makes the structure of embedded narratives internally fractured (254). Walton’s return alludes to his reincorporation into the family and the ordinary social life. But the fact that, as Fred Botting observes, “his gaze still attempts to penetrate the darkness into which the monster disappears” foreshadows that his reincorporation would be incomplete (446).

The monster as well as Frankenstein accompanies Walton to England as a textual transfiguration into the body of his narrative. Although the monster himself disappears forever from human sight, the memory of his existence will be circulated among human beings. Thereby, the monster, who is “an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on,” becomes included in human society (222). This final inclusion of the monster in the human community but only in the form of textual transfiguration reconfirms his paradoxical state of inclusive exclusion. Conversely speaking, it is the form of narrative that makes room for those who are socially and politically excluded from a community. It also connects Mrs. Saville, an insider who is not allowed to leave
the home with impunity, to the monster, an outsider who is not allowed to enter the home. This connection is, at least potentially, subversive because it puts into question the boundary dividing inside and outside. In this context, it is quite a political and even ethical gesture that Mrs. Saville does not write back to his brother, despite his request to “write to me by every opportunity” (22). The reason is that her reply would enclose *Frankenstein* as a whole within a frame, not leaving it an open question.

Brooks argues that “Mrs. Saville has no more existence than a postal address, or even a dead-letter office” (1995: 96). This claim seems persuasive, considering the initial epistolary format disappears in the middle of the novel as if each of the embedded narratives were delivered in its narrator’s voice without Walton’s mediation, and the epistolary form reappears only at the end. But Mrs. Saville does not serve merely as the recipient of Walton’s letters, but as the anchoring point both in a literal and a metaphorical sense. She is the one to whom Walton finally returns, and the one who would “remember me with affection, should you never hear from me again” (22). Although he laments that writing is “a poor medium for the communication of feeling,” it is to her that he communicates all his feelings and thoughts, even when he says they are ineffable (19). Moreover, all the embedded narratives are passed on to her, which turns her position into that of readers whose critical readings become possible. It is not
that, as Dickerson argues, “her ghostly appropriation of the text subverts patriarcal authority” (84). It is rather that she lets different, even agonistic, voices coexist and struggle against one another. Mary Shelley makes her “a framing woman,” but makes her frame “simultaneously not a frame,” as Spivak observes (253, 254). Consequently, the monster’s final voice of protest, mingled with self-abhorrence, against injustice done to him by human beings from whom he only seeks sympathy resounds back through, even beyond, *Frankenstein*. It may lead readers to reconsider the text from his viewpoint. The monster fails to escape from the status of “the filthy mass that moved and talked,” but the story of his existence, of the bare life of that filthy mass, could keep haunting the human community forever, which could in turn cause turbulence within it and continue to put into question human hospitality (147).

---

58 In her study of the “female *Bildungsroman*,” Susan Fraiman writes that each of her four chosen novels “is less the telling of one life than a struggle between rival life stories” (10). This formulation of a novel as a kind of arena in which different stories struggle against one another partly underlies my reading of Mrs. Saville’s function in this text. See Chapter 1 of *Unbecoming Woman*. 
CHAPTER 5

Conclusion: Toward an Ethics and Politics of the Early Novel

Situated as other, counter-discourses have the capacity to *situate*: to relativize the authority and stability of a dominant system of utterances which cannot even countenance their existence. They read that which cannot read them at all.

Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse*

When we write down side by side the full titles of the three novels examined in the previous chapters, what immediately catches our eyes is the fact that the full title of each novel consists of two parts connected by the conjunction “or.” The part that contains the name of the main character refers to a particular individual, and the other part contains a general name—a category—by which the title character is called. Given that the conjunction “or” is used to indicate a synonymous or equivalent expression, we can say that the title character of each text is intended to exemplify what characterizes the category—“female Quixote,” “woman,” or “modern Prometheus”—into which she or he falls. In addition, each categorical name itself refers to some kind of categorical problem, whether or not it is directly related to the relation between the particular and the general. “Quixote” implies the categorical confusion between fiction and reality, and
“Prometheus” connotes the transgression of the boundary between life and death. And the category of “Woman” presupposes the subsumption of women’s particularities under their generality. In a word, each title effectively embodies how the novel as a literary genre attempts to represent the general by narrating stories about the particular, or at least takes as its main issue the question of category of any sort.

In *The Female Quixote*, the question of category above all appears in the form of the categorical confusion between fiction and reality, which is intricately interwoven both with the question of gender and the question of genre. The first of these two questions is concerned with Arabella’s becoming a proper female subject, and the second is concerned with the emergence of the novel as the proper species of writing for contemporaneous English society. These two issues take place simultaneously, or rather, they are two sides of the same process—the process of Arabella’s cure for her quixotic confusion between fiction and reality. What is at stake here is her cultural homelessness and stranger-ness, nourished by her romance readings in which she has been led to indulge by her feeling out of place in her father’s home. Believing what she reads to be true, Arabella attempts to live by romances, whose stories are about outlandish people in the remote past. Thus, she looks like a stranger not only from a foreign land but from the past, whose cultural stranger-ness becomes an object of ridicule and jest. This cultural
stranger-ness should be eliminated in order for her to be a proper English lady.

Since Arabella’s cultural stranger-ness is attributed to her romance readings, the elimination of it—the cure for her quixotism—is attempted by making her reject romances as not merely senseless but also criminal fictions, so that she will instead embrace the novel as the proper English species of writing in her present age. What proves problematic is that critical potentialities contained in her homelessness and stranger-ness become defused as she becomes cured of her quixotism. As is well demonstrated by her experiences in Bath society, her stranger-ness leads her to take the position of critical observer whose perceptive eyes see through the superficiality, pedantry, and gossipmongering of Bath society as a whole. It also turns her into a liminal figure who undermines the distinction between proper ladies and transgressive prostitutes, English women and foreign ones. Moreover, what underlies her liminality between female propriety and impropriety is her strong desire for female companionship based on sympathetic understandings of women’s experiences of suffering. This desire problematizes the fact that patriarchal society conceives of relationships between women only in terms of rivalry and jealousy. It is these critical, even subversive, aspects of Arabella’s stranger-ness that should be eliminated in her cure.

It is also problematic that Arabella herself, not the place of home, should change
in order for her to be accepted into that place as a proper domestic woman. What characterizes the place in which women tend to feel out of place remains unchanged. In this respect, it is telling that she finally gets married to Glanville, whom was originally recommended to be her husband by her father, because this means that she returns to her starting point. She returns to the same man she rejected on the grounds that no lady in romance married the man chosen for her. Likewise, in a way, she returns to the same place she voluntarily left in order to be engaged in such extraordinary adventures that someone would write about them after her death. Her quest for adventures turns out to be a circular one that takes her first out of the place of home and back to it. This pattern implies that her becoming a proper female subject, which is the normalizing goal of the dominant narrative, can be retold as her story of the loss of freedom and independence, which originally was the counternarrative that produced subversive effects. As a novel, *The Female Quixote* thus does not propose any dialectical or dialogic reconciliation between the two narratives, but stages their agonistic encounter. This agonism creates a discursive space in which socially sanctioned ways of being, acting, and thinking can be put into question, and alternatives to them can be sought—dynamics that constitute the critical potentialities of Lennox’s text.

Wollstonecraft’s *Maria* looks like an extension of Lennox’s *The Female Quixote*
in that it delves further into some issues dealt with or alluded to in the latter text: the double face of home, the disruption of the distinction between female propriety and impropriety, female companionship, and an alternative community. Especially regarding the duality of home, *Maria* could even be read as a sequel to Lennox’s novel, though an unhappy one. The reason is that while *The Female Quixote* tells a story about a heroine’s becoming a proper lady and finding a new home by marriage, *Maria* focuses on what could happen to her after marriage to a seemingly ideal man. In both texts, home is primarily depicted as a place where women feel out of place. But in the former novel, home is dramatized as a solution, while in the latter it remains a problem. Similarly, a heroine’s lover turns out to be an ideal man to marry in the former text, while he is a despotic or an unfaithful husband in the latter. This does not mean that Lennox’s text conveys conservative views of gender relations. Rather it indicates the structural dilemma for women in patriarchal society, where there is no alternative place for them except the place of home. *Maria* throws into high relief this structural dilemma by repeatedly problematizing the place of home, at the same time that it attempts to explore the prospects of an alternative home—a goal that renders it an experimental as well as a subversive novel.

Regarding the other issues mentioned in the previous paragraph, *Maria* also turns
out to be subversive and experimental. By interpreting what she sees and experiences based on the law of romances, Arabella sees other women as objects of lament or of admiration. Although this benevolence is threatening because it erases the distinction between proper ladies and improper women, Arabella herself does not really cross the boundary dividing them. But Maria actually crosses the boundary between propriety and impropriety in that her relationship with Darnford is regarded as adultery from the legal perspective. She also publicly protests against the law of marriage that regards women as the property of their husbands, and she declares Darnford to be her husband before her divorce from Venables. Similarly, the possibility of female companionship contained in Arabella’s benevolent attitude toward other women remains only potential. But, in Maria, female companionship becomes actualized when Jemima opens her heart to Maria, and after Darnford’s apparent unfaithfulness, their companionship is supposed to serve as the bedrock of an affective community that they could build with Maria’s daughter.

The companionship between Maria and Jemima, however, turns out to be double-edged. It poses the possibility of an affective community of women, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, it makes invisible the working-class woman’s particularities by subsuming them under the general name of woman dominated by the middle-class woman’s particularities. It is Jemima’s stranger-ness in Maria’s circle that brings again to
the fore the working-class woman’s particularities, a development that poses the question of the relation between particularity and generality. Without the benefit of domestic affection, Maria and Jemima suffer from the anxiety of homelessness. Both the countercommunity formed in Maria’s prison cell and her would-be home with Darnford appear to be places where they can free themselves from that anxiety and finally enjoy something like domestic affection. In both places founded on the friendship between Maria as a wife and Darnford as a husband, however, Jemima occupies the marginal place of keeper who amounts to the stranger within. Jemima’s stranger-ness suggests that domestic affection cannot be a resourceful solution to wrongs of woman, and that particularities specific to local contexts cannot be explained away by any generality. It also implies that female difficulties are connected both to gender and to class relations.

One significant detail is that Jemima’s experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness leads her to turn against humankind as a whole. When she is “cast aside as the filth of society” and even animalized by others, she conceives of her relationship to humankind as almost like the one between humankind and another species (89). It is as if she foreshadows the monster in *Frankenstein*, who turns hostile to the human species after repeatedly receiving violent treatment from them despite his benevolence toward
them.\textsuperscript{59} It cannot be easily dismissed as a mere coincidence that both \textit{Maria} and \textit{Frankenstein} have a character who is treated as less than human and whose relationship to others is described in terms of species, considering that the former was written at the end of the eighteenth century and the latter at the beginning of the nineteenth. This parallel appears not only because it belongs to the question of category especially about the relation between the individual and community, but because it can be considered a hint that the existence of the human species as living beings begins to become politicized during this historical period.

Although \textit{Maria} only alludes to the issue of the politicization of the human species as living beings, \textit{Frankenstein} explicitly deals with it in terms of the question of human community. Frankenstein’s discovery of the secret of the principle of life leads him to create a living being that is originally intended to be a man but comes out as a new species. Therefore, his creation of a living being turns out to be a confusion of categories in which he crosses the boundary between life and death, while also

\textsuperscript{59} In her study on the similarities between \textit{Maria} and \textit{Frankenstein}, Janet Todd concludes that “the monster’s predicament is the fallen or outcast woman’s, and the cause of this predicament is exclusion from society and, above all, the family” (26). See “Frankenstein’s Daughter.”
performing an act of categorization that ends up as a form of speciation. But
Frankenstein cannot handle the outcome of what he himself planned and believed would
happen. He can neither accept the monster as a human being nor allow him to “go forth
and prosper” as a distinct species from humankind, even when the monster chooses
voluntary exile from human community (10). Rather, Frankenstein gets anxious lest the
existence of the human species as a whole should be under threat by the monster species
that could propagate. For him, the monster as an in-between figure makes precarious
both the category of humankind and its very existence as a species.

Frankenstein’s creation project takes an unexpected ugly turn at the very moment
that the monster comes to life. As a result, the animation of the monster appears to be the
unexpected arrival of a stranger who comes from within, not from without. Similarly,
there are several female characters who take the position of strangers within the home:
Caroline, Elizabeth, Justine, and Safie. It is no wonder that they are all female and
beautiful besides, considering that beauty underlies the mechanism of inclusion and
exclusion both in the Frankenstein and in the De Lacey families, and that women have no
independent existence of their own apart from men. They are accepted into either of the
two families as something like an object to be possessed by a man or by a family as a
whole. In other words, both the Frankensteins and the De Laceys extend themselves and
even gain some kind of cosmopolitan character by incorporating these female strangers. But this kind of cosmopolitan hospitality fails to work when the monster shows himself.

If the incorporation of female strangers indicates that hospitality or sympathy can cross class or racial boundaries, then both Frankenstein’s and the De Lacey family’s rejection of the monster show that it works only conditionally. Some strangers are welcomed and thereby able to enter into sympathetic relations, whereas others are spurned and even demonized, as in the case with the monster. An important implication is that stranger-ness is unevenly distributed. Actually, the uneven distribution of stranger-ness is also detected even among the female strangers who are assimilated into the Frankenstein family unit. While Elizabeth, a nobleman’s daughter who is reared by a lower-class family, is accepted as Frankenstein’s “more than sister,” Justine, who comes from the lower class, is received into the family as a servant (35). Another important implication is that hospitality and hostility are not only opposed but apposed to each other, a duality manifested clearly in Frankenstein’s opposite responses to the monster and to Clerval as well as in the De Lacey family’s reactions to Safie and to the monster.

In terms of the issues of homelessness and stranger-ness, the three novels studied in the previous chapters can be read in tandem since they are all concerned with one’s experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness, but the main focus of each novel varies,
which makes them look complementary to one another. *The Female Quixote* focuses on the social condition of being a gentry woman and having her experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness. Although Arabella’s stranger-ness is threatening to the patriarchal order of gender relations, her experiences do not exceed the boundary of the gentry. For its part, by featuring both a middle-class and a lower-class woman, *Maria* presents their different experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness to show that they are equally oppressive regardless of class differences. By generalizing their particularities, however, it raises the issue of the relation between particularity and generality, which draws attention back to class differences. *Frankenstein* extends its scope to include racial strangers and relates the issue of stranger-ness to the question of the human species as a whole. Juxtaposing the female strangers with the monster, it foregrounds the uneven distribution of stranger-ness and the limitation of hospitality. If *The Female Quixote* dramatizes one’s experiences of homelessness and stranger-ness in terms of gender, then *Maria* approaches them from the perspective of class as well as of gender, and *Frankenstein* complicates them further by adding race-related and species-related aspects.

Although the focus and the scope of each are different, all three novels at least partly dramatize the possibility that sympathy, or fellow-feeling, could be a feasible
solution to the issues of homelessness and stranger-ness, and that it could serve as the foundation of a certain kind of countercommunity. While perceiving other women she meets as afflicted heroines out of romances and eagerly wishing for female companionship, Arabella is more than ready to sympathize with them. The appearance of the Countess in Bath society seems to fulfill Arabella’s desire for a companion with whom she can sympathize. Their mutually benevolent relationship is starkly contrasted by the socially accepted tendency to set women against one another as rivals and thereby alienate them from each other. Although the prospect of affective relations abruptly ends when the Countess suddenly has to leave to attend to her sick mother, it poses the possibility of female companionship and, by extension, a female community that is a genuine alternative to Bath society, where women are only supposed to pursue fashion and diversion. Thus, we can say that Lennox’s text suggests the potential capacity of sympathy to counter women’s status in patriarchal society.

*Maria* also explores the problem-solving capacity of sympathy, but at the same time it presents the limitation of sympathy as a solution to female difficulties. It is in the character of Jemima that both the capacity and the limitation of sympathy as a solution are well illustrated. Without ever having been treated as a fellow-creature, Jemima opposes herself to humankind as a whole and hardens her heart to other people’s miseries.
But her hostility becomes first softened at the sight of the fellow-feeling between Maria and Darnford, and her benumbed humanity is next rekindled by Maria’s sympathetic responses to her such that she can cherish the hope of reconciliation with humankind. Moreover, these sympathetic relationships constitute parts of the countercommunity temporarily formed in Maria’s prison cell, where Jemima as well as Maria is given her own voice to communicate her own experiences. But this countercommunity is built like a home and is in fact expected to turn into Maria and Darnford’s home, where Jemima would stay as a housekeeper. This scenario hints that sympathy may be a solution for a middle-class woman, but is not resourceful enough to be a solution for one from the working-class, insofar as the alternative community it promises models itself on the middle-class home.

Another problem revealed in the sympathetic relation between Maria and Jemima is that it appears as the incorporation of Jemima into the middle class rather than as a mutual traversal across class lines. As a mistress to a gentleman, Jemima has time to read and opportunities to hear various intellectual arguments, which in turn refines her sentiment and humanity. In a sense, when she meets Maria, she is ready to be assimilated into the middle class as someone superior to her class rather than as a working-class woman as such. A similar pattern is seen in Safie’s assimilation into the De Lacey family
in *Frankenstein*, which also introduces the question of hospitality. Under her mother’s influence, Safie grows to abhor a Mahometan life and instead to yearn for a Christian life. In other words, her mother’s instruction prepares her to be assimilated into a European Christian family, and she is enchanted by the prospect of remaining in Europe by marrying Felix. If Jemima is already like a middle-class person in terms of refined sentiments, then Safie already looks like a European Christian. This connotes that sympathy works primarily based on likeness, rather than across differences like stranger-ness. Or rather, in order to work effectively, sympathy seems to require the removal of differences at least to some degree.

It is the monster in *Frankenstein* that most dramatically puts into question the problem-solving capacity of sympathy. When he realizes that there is no one like him, his desire for sympathetic relationships grows stronger. Even when he finally comes to understand his “accursed origin” and his being deserted by his own creator, he does not give up the hope of gaining sympathy from the De Laceys and thereby becoming one of them (130). That is, he expects their love and sympathy will be a solution to his miseries. But sympathy is not hospitable enough to embrace all differences, and the monster lies beyond of the limit of sympathy, a fact he does not grasp until the De Laceys desert the cottage right after their traumatic encounter. Later, his request for a female companion of
“the same species” and of “the same defects” indicates his realization that sympathy works, above all, by the recognition of likeness and embraces certain kinds of differences only to a certain degree (144). This also implies that sympathy tends to result in an act of integrating someone as a person who becomes like “us,” rather than an act of welcoming someone as she/he is, a gesture that would entail the extension of an existing community.

Although Lennox’s novel concludes with Arabella’s cure for her quixotism and her subsequent assimilation into the established order of patriarchal society by marriage, it also alludes to the possibility of an alternative community at least for women, a female community based on women’s sympathetic relationships to each other. Maria introduces a countercommunity modeled on the structure of the middle-class home, but it simultaneously puts into questions the feasibility of that project. Similarly, the text presents the possibility of an alternative community for women based on mother-daughter relationships, but it remains an open question how to connect the wrongs of woman to the wrongs of working-class people. One may argue that Frankenstein also provides a version of an alternative community pointing out the cosmopolitan character of the Franksteins and of the De Laceys. As indicated above, however, sympathy and the cosmopolitan hospitality turn out not to be all-encompassing, and the acceptance of a female stranger results in a kind of self-extension of the family. It seems that
*Frankenstein* leaves open the question of community by featuring a monster who problematizes the feasibility and viability of an alternative—for example, sympathy, hospitality, or cosmopolitan community.

Considering that, as the eighteenth century goes on, sympathy becomes discussed as the core of moral sentiments that serve as the main mechanism of sociality, it can be said that all three novels engage in those discussions in various ways. Rather than simply functioning as a tool for encouraging and inculcating moral sentiments, which has often been regarded as the main role of the novel as a genre, they implicitly or explicitly render sympathy itself an object of examination and explore its political and ethical implications especially in relation to the question of community. And reading these works in tandem shows that both sympathy and a potential alternative community based on sympathetic relations—whether it assumes the form of a home or of a cosmopolitan community—are presented not only as a solution but also a problem. Sympathy contributes to producing some sense of “we,” which would result in forming a collectivity, by mediating affective communications across class and racial lines. But there are certain points beyond which sympathy—by implication, hospitality as well—fails to work, and it is those who are recognized as strangers that mark such points as its barriers.

What is at stake is the inclusivity or openness of a community, which is put to the
test when it encounters a stranger who arrives on its territory and asks for sympathy, or at least hospitality. This situation induces us to examine the idea of cosmopolitanism, the ideal type of community that is all-encompassing in principle, as proposed by Enlightenment thinkers like Kant and reconsidered later by thinkers like Kristeva. According to Kant, man has “innate capacities” whose development is brought about by means of “antagonism within society,” which means “the unsocial sociability of men” (44). To be concrete, men have the tendency to gather in society and at the same time the tendency to resist being together and therefore to be antagonistic to others. It is the tendency of resistance that brings about the gradual development of all man’s natural capacities. But this tendency among individuals, and by extension, among human societies and states, should be regulated by “a law of equilibrium,” which Kant says is reinforced by introducing “a system of united power, hence a cosmopolitan system of general political security” (49). Thus, Kant proposes as man’s ultimate purpose “a universal cosmopolitan existence” within which all his capacities may fully develop (51, original emphases).

It is important that, according to Kant, nature has designed that man’s natural capacities “could be fully developed only in the species but not in the individual” (42).^{60}

^{60} Kant assumes that humankind does not have “any rational purpose of its own
Therefore, his idea of cosmopolitanism is concerned with the totality of the human species, in other words, the inclusion of all human beings of the world in one universal community in which all hostilities, all states of war, among human societies should end. In order to avoid the state of war, Kant advocates the idea of “pacific federation,” which “does not aim to acquire any power like that of a state, but merely preserve and secure the freedom of each state in itself, along with that of the other confederated states” (104, original emphases). And each state of this federation is expected to have a republican constitution, rather than a democratic one, since Kant considers the former “the only constitution which can lead to a perpetual peace” (100). In this context, hospitality towards strangers is suggested as a necessary condition for the peoples of the world to have mutually peaceful relations with each other and to enter gradually into a universal cosmopolitan community.

Stressing its underlying notion of “separation combined with union,” Kristeva reads Kant’s formulation of cosmopolitanism as “the acknowledgment of difference,” (1991: 171, 172, original emphases). It poses a kind of universal republic in which all in its collective actions,” but that the history of humankind as a whole can be formulated “in terms of a definite plan of nature” (42). That is, there is a certain purpose behind the seemingly senseless course of human histories.
human beings come together to form a union, but their differences are allowed and
respected. What is especially notable is that Kristeva recasts this universal republic as the
community of humankind “without foreigners,” an interpretation that foreshadows her
own version of cosmopolitanism that she proposes at the end of Strangers to Ourselves
(171). By “without foreigners,” she does not mean that there is no actual foreigner.
Rather, she universalizes foreignness as belonging to everybody, based on Freud’s notion
of the uncanny. Noting that Freud makes no mention of foreigners in his study on the
uncanny, she explains it is because “the foreigner is within us,” in the form of our
unconscious, our “uncanny strangeness” (1991: 191). The logic goes that “the foreigner
is within me, hence we are all foreigners. If I am a foreigner, there are no foreigners”
(1991: 192). This kind of universalization of foreignness is what Kristeva means by
“without foreigners.”

By universalizing foreignness as what we share, Kristeva asks us to acknowledge
that we are all strangers to ourselves. She suggests that only when we know that we are
strangers to ourselves can we live with others: “How could one tolerate a foreigner if one
did not know one was a stranger to oneself?” (1991: 182). This question poses an ethical
suggestion that would involve the establishment of a community in which strangers
should not be integrated and still less hunted down, but rather welcomed as they are in
creating what she terms “a cosmopolitanism of a new sort” (1991: 192). This community would appear to be the combination of the cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment culminated in Kant’s version with Freud’s insight into the uncanny. Accordingly, by basing its ultimate foundation on one’s acknowledgment of one’s being stranger to oneself, it would move toward the maximal inclusion of human beings without integrating differences into a totalizing unity.

One possible critique of Kristeva’s position would be that when she is faced with the issue of strangers, she resorts to “the rational optimism of the Enlightenment” (Moruzzi 136). She does admit that the “reasoned hymn to cosmopolitanism, which runs through Kant’s thought,” looks like “an idealistic utopia” (1991: 173). But she soon adds that it appears “an inescapable necessity in our contemporary universe, which

61 In his analysis, Norma Claire Moruzzi mentions Kristeva’s reliance on Montesquieu, not on Kant, as seen in her “Open Letter to Harlem Désir.” Moruzzi thereby focuses on Kristeva’s discussion of the presence of the stranger in the nation-state rather than on her interests in cosmopolitanism. In Strangers to Ourselves, however, Kristeva considers both Montesquieu’s and Kant’s cosmopolitanism. If she regards Montesquieu as the first Enlightenment thinker who “affirmed the notion of human sociability,” a position that results in his cosmopolitanism, then she views Kant as the philosopher who formulated the cosmopolitan spirit of the Enlightenment “in political, legal, and philosophical terms” (128, 170).
unifies production and trade among nations at the same time as it perpetuates among
them a state of war” (173). Moreover, her psychoanalytic approach introduces important
differences between Kant’s cosmopolitanism and her own. While Kant presents universal
hospitality as the condition of our being with strangers, Kristeva underscores our
uncanny strangeness as that condition. For Kant, the cosmopolitan community is the
purpose toward which humankind advances collectively, but for Kristeva, it would result
from individualism. This hints that Kant stresses more the collective and public level,
whereas Kristeva does the personal and private one. In terms of “separation and union,”
we can say that Kant’s emphasis is on “union” whereby generality can be achieved,
while Kristeva’s emphasis is on “separation” whereby particularities can be preserved.
Thus, Kristeva’s claim for cosmopolitanism should be viewed as her effort to formulate
an alternative model of human community, not as “nostalgia for the secure perspectives
of the Enlightenment” (Moruzzi 147).

Paradoxically enough, however, it is precisely in the structure of “separation and
union” of cosmopolitanism that a potentially self-destructive threat to topple it lies. In
other words, the cosmopolitan community as a collective made up of strangers who are
foreign to one another is always in danger of breaking down into its constitutive
particularities, just as the monster in *Frankenstein* as a hybrid of disparate materials
could break down into his constitutive parts at any moment. This is the inherent problem
with the cosmopolitan community Kristeva advocates, the problem linked to the very
question of the relation between the particular and the general, the individual and
community. It can be put this way: How can the cosmopolitan community achieve its
unity without sacrificing particular differences within it? Or to put it another way, how
can it achieve and preserve enough solidarity among its members that it can remain a
collective? Kant’s answer can be found in his formulation of pacific federation based on
the formal institutionalization of the state of peace, as in the installment of hospitality as
the universal right of strangers. By contrast, Kristeva’s answer is that the solidarity of
humankind “is founded on the consciousness of its unconscious”—that is, our “uncanny
strangeness” to ourselves (1991: 192).

When we consider that a collective tends to subsume the particular within the
general in order to create unity, Kant’s and Kristeva’s suggestions for cosmopolitanism
are ethical in the sense that they ask us not to totalize but to respect particularities. They
are also ethical in the sense that the cosmopolitan community is open to all people
without discrimination at least in principle. Problematically, however, neither Kant nor
Kristeva considers the negative affective factors accompanying encounters between
strangers that may disrupt the solidarity of the community and thereby threaten its very
existence. Nor do they consider the uneven distribution of stranger-ness that may cause conflicts and even hostilities among strangers that make up the community. These oversights lead us to ask whether the described foundations of solidarity are resourceful enough to counter disruptions and conflicts caused by affective factors or by unevenly distributed stranger-ness. Although this question remains yet to be explored in philosophical or theoretical terms, the three novels studied in this dissertation indicate that even alternative communities cannot withstand such pressure. They illustrate that affect is the very thing that will put into the question a community based on rational speculation and that the uneven distribution of stranger-ness makes problematic the recognition of what Kristeva terms “strangeness” as the universal foundation of solidarity.

Possible disruptions related to affect and uneven distribution call attention to the role of narrative in building sympathetic understandings and relationships between strangers. This is because narrative can serve as a primary mechanism of affective exchange by organizing and communicating experiences, a process that can contribute to resolving conflicts, if only temporarily, or to creating a solidarity that produces a sense of collectivity. Although her behavior is read as a quixotic madness by those around her, Arabella in *The Female Quixote* cherishes a strong sense of female companionship towards potentially every woman who she thinks has experienced extraordinary
adventures. It is from romance narratives, in which heroines are continuously exposed to persecution, that she has gained that sense. It is also through narratives that she attempts to build and consolidate relationships with other women, as is demonstrated by her entreaty to them to recite their adventures. It should be noted here that what underlies her desire to hear other women’s adventures is not “an indiscreet Curiosity” but “a Hope of hearing something which may at once improve and delight me” (274). In short, for Arabella, narratives are what bind women together as well as edify them.

It is in Maria that the capacity of narratives to mediate affective exchange and resolve possible conflicts is clearly demonstrated. For example, because she seems forever condemned to severe manual labor to earn her subsistence, Jemima “began to consider the rich and poor as natural enemies”—an indication of class antagonism (90). She also comes to lose the capacity to feel for and with others, even those who are oppressed by fates similar to her own. But her antagonism and apathy towards others dissipate, when she narrates her experiences as well as when she observes the affective exchange between Maria and Darnford initiated through their notes on what they read, which are, by implication, narratives. Furthermore, her first-person narrative “gives rise to the most painful reflections on the present state of society,” reflections that in turn entail both affective exchange and critiques of social realities. As a result, Jemima is
induced to take risks: to go search for Maria’s missing daughter and later to escape from the prison-madhouse with Maria. Her first-person narrative helps her to work out her antipathy against others and to confront actively Maria’s difficulties as well as her own. Thus, narrative can contribute to resolving conflicts and even to creating some degree of solidarity.

*Frankenstein* also dramatizes what roles narratives can play in establishing and sustaining affective relationships and strong bonds between strangers. In fact, it is not too much to say that *Frankenstein* as a whole constitutes a part of the affective relationship between Walton and Mrs. Saville, his sister. Since he is far away from his sister and homeland, the only way for Walton to stay connected to her is by writing letters in which he pours out all his feelings and whose epistolary form gets lost in the middle, as the result of which the middle stories appear as if they were his own first-person narratives. The embedded narratives can also be considered parts of the relationships between narrator and narratee. In some ways, Frankenstein’s narrative constitutes the core of his relationship with Walton in that he becomes the very friend who gives *keeping* to Walton’s ardent curiosity to see the unknown parts of the world by narrating what he has suffered because of his own thirst for knowledge. And it is only when the monster narrates his experiences that his relationship to Frankenstein approaches being at least
non-antagonistic, if not friendly. This implies that their hostility to each other is temporarily overcome under the influence of the first-person narrative: “his words had a strong effect upon me. I compassioned him, and sometimes felt a wish to console him” (147). Although Frankenstein attributes this power to the monster’s eloquence, it is also produced by the capacity of narratives to resolve conflicts.

Most importantly, all three novels simultaneously present different narratives and, still more, suggest different ways to tell and interpret the same story, a scenario that makes room for othered people to narrate their lived experiences in their own voices. This is well exemplified by Arabella’s uncommon way of interpreting romance narratives, which results in constructing totally different meanings out of the same story. In Arabella’s interpretation, therefore, Miss Groves, whose reputation has been destroyed by scandal, is recast as an unfortunate heroine and her scandalous history as an adventurous story of a romance heroine. Even Arabella’s own history of becoming a proper lady, which constitutes the dominant narrative about female growth and development in patriarchal society, can be retold as an exemplary story of the loss of female independence, which had originally served as the basis for the novel’s counternarrative. In a sense, then, Arabella’s quixotism serves as the mechanism by which the counternarrative can enter into an agonistic relationship with the dominant
narrative.

In *Maria*, the agonistic encounter between the socially sanctioned narrative and the counternarrative can be found in the divergent stories that Venables and Maria each tell about their married life. In the former, Maria is portrayed as an adulterous wife and Venables as a victimized husband, although this is not the case at all. Maria does not merely refute his story, but claims “a divorce, and the liberty of enjoying, free from molestation, the fortune left to me by a relation” (144). Although the judge takes her plea based on her personal sense of justice as a mere excuse for adultery, Wollstonecraft’s novel itself dramatizes Maria’s first-person narrative as a representative story of female difficulties in patriarchal society. By the same token, it also features a working-class woman who is doubly oppressed as a woman and as a working-class person, and who is given a voice to address her own experiences. More subversively, a sense of collectivity is fostered between these two othered women, Maria and Jemima, who come from different classes but whose first-person narratives promote a sense of belonging. It should be emphasized that their sense of collectivity proves to be viable, as is manifested in Jemima’s somewhat miraculous rescue of Maria’s daughter.

In *Frankenstein*, it is the monster that is the most othered stranger in terms of the extent to which outsiders can be excluded from community. He is not even given the
opportunity to build a relationship with another living being, let alone with any community. Actually, such a possibility is foreclosed by his deformity, which is too monstrous to be tolerated by human beings. As we have seen before, he is included in the human community only by being excluded, a paradoxical condition that constitutes an empty form of relation. But the fact that his first-person narrative accompanies Walton on his way back to England indicates that he will be remembered along with Frankenstein. Just as the monster stands against Frankenstein, so does his autobiographical narrative counteract Frankenstein’s, thereby allowing us to hear two different, even opposing, sides of the same story. To put it another way, narrative allows room for those who are excluded from a community as well as for those who are othered within it by enabling them to tell stories precisely about their exclusions. This inclusiveness should thus be considered a crucial ethical aspect of narrative form.

The three novels studied in this dissertation show that if the capacity of narratives to resolve possible conflicts caused by affective factors can help create and sustain a sense of collectivity in the cosmopolitan community, then the simultaneous co-existence of different voices and narratives—especially the presence of voices of othered people—within the same story can, at least to some degree, prove effective in countering the uneven distribution of stranger-ness. It seems, however, that, taken together, the three
novels—and by extension, the novel as a genre—resemble the cosmopolitan community.

The novel appears to be hospitable in that othered people are welcomed and given voices of their own to communicate their lived experiences, and it seems to be cosmopolitan in that different voices and narratives are simultaneously present, contradicting and supplementing one another. This does not mean, however, that the novel moves towards a certain unity as a whole by totalizing different voices into one voice, or by generalizing different narratives into one narrative, at a higher level of abstraction. Rather, it opens up discursive spaces in which different voices and narratives encounter and enter into agonistic power relations with one another—a dynamic that accounts for the novel’s lack of coherence and frequent internal contradictions.

It is revealing that while they demonstrate that narratives have the capacity to deal with conflicts and disruptions in communities, the three novels also dramatize the limitations of narratives’ problem-solving capacity as well. None of them provides any definitive way to tackle social, cultural, or political problems within communities. Instead, they allude to possible ways to solve those problems while at the same time revealing their limitations, as is exemplified in the dramatization of sympathy both as a solution and as a problem. It seems that as a genre, the novel explores ways that it can effectively engage with actual realities, but at the same time, it does not hesitate to put
the feasibility and viability of such strategies into question. What makes these double
gestures significant is that they make room for readers to engage actively with issues and
possible solutions as dramatized in the novel. That is, the novel suggests that it is readers,
rather than the author, who should figure out feasible solutions to the issues it poses, and
it does so by providing no definite solutions and instead leaving them as open questions
that should continue to be explored.

We can ask, then, whether there is any effective way for readers to engage with
novels they read and with issues posed in those novels—a question that reminds us of the
acts of reading described in the three novels examined in the previous chapters. In *The
Female Quixote*, reading takes place as a solitary practice in a private place. Accordingly,
there are no scenes in which Arabella’s act of reading entails any kind of discussion with
others. She simply accepts what she has read in romance texts as realities, with a
credulity that turns her into a quixotic figure and thereby prevents her from entering into
mutually sympathetic relationships with other women. As a result, critical and subversive
potentialities contained in her quixotism remain yet to be actualized. Similarly,
*Frankenstein* presents reading as a private and solitary act, but also as a part of family
life, as we see in the De Lacey family. The educational value of reading is especially
emphasized, which is illustrated both in the monster’s self-education and in Felix’s
instruction of Safie. Reading also plays an important role in strengthening the monster’s affective attachment to the De Lacey family. But it turns into a major problem when it is revealed that their relationship is not a mutual one. This suggests that reading is conducive for an affective relationship, but this relationship will also probably end up as an imagined, empty one, if it does not involve actual experiences and reciprocal response.

It is Maria that explores what kind of real change can be brought about through the act of reading, and it does so by juxtaposing reading as a solitary practice with reading as a social act. Maria’s reading of sentimental novels as a solitary act reminds us of Arabella’s reading romances in that Maria also conceives of men according to what she reads in sentimental novels. Although she does not suffer from the quixotic confusion of fiction with reality, Maria projects a fictional image of an ideal onto a real man. Significantly, however, Maria’s credulity is attributed to her lack of experience as well as her bitter realities at home, rather than to her act of reading itself. This implies that when it is performed in relation to actual experiences, reading can effect radical changes in how one deals with real life situations, a benefit manifested, for instance, in the reception of Jemima’s narrative. Although Jemima tells her story directly to Maria and Darnford, their reception of her narrative can be considered an exemplary case of reading as a social act, which entails not only affective investment but also rational-critical thinking.
Most significantly, this kind of receptivity induces both Maria and Jemima to act proactively, and it turns them from passive sufferers into active agents, a transformation that demonstrates the subversive power of reading.

To sum up, the figure of the stranger, whose homelessness and stranger-ness can be partially resolved by the help of sympathy or hospitality from others, puts into question the extent of a community’s inclusiveness. This figure, moreover, induces us to consider the possibility of cosmopolitanism as an alternative model of human community whose ultimate goal is the inclusion of all human beings. Despite its ethical and political potential, however, the cosmopolitan community as a collective of strangers is inherently exposed to the danger of falling apart into constitutive particularities. In this context, narratives prove crucial because of their capacity to resolve conflicts and disparities within the community by promoting affective exchanges. Narratives can also contribute to countering the uneven distribution of stranger-ness by simultaneously presenting different voices and stories. The most important point here is that, by staging agonistic encounters between different voices without offering any definite final resolution of such agonism, narratives open up discursive spaces where readers can actively engage with their social realities, rather than passively absorb what they read. This effect is what constitutes the core of critical and subversive potentialities of the novel as a genre.
WORKS CITED


Battigelli, Anna. “‘The Inelegant Complain’: The Problem of Motherhood in Mary Wollstonecraft’s Maria: Or, the Wrongs of Woman.” *Biography and Source*


Kant, Immanuel. “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose.” Kant:


Mack, Ruth. “Quixotic Ethnography: Charlotte Lennox and the Dilemma of Cultural


Montag, Warren. “The ‘Workshop of Filthy Creation’: A Marxist Reading of *Frankenstein.*” *Frankenstein: Complete, Authoritative Text with Biographical,


Perkins, Margo V. “The Nature of Otherness: Class and Difference in Mary Shelley’s


Terdiman, Richard. *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic
---. Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Ed. &
