Karl Marx as Frankenstein:  
Toward a Genealogy of Communism  

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... for supremely frightful would be the  
effect of any human endeavor to mock the  
stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the  
world.  

—Mary Shelley

Side by side with Goethe's Faust, Melville's Moby Dick, Dostoevsky's novels, and Nietzsche's Zarathustra, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is one of the most important myths that the nineteenth century bequeathed to ours. This is the myth of modern man aspiring to usurp the power of the Creator with the help of science but succeeding only to mock the creation and to imperil his own existence. Whether one contemplates the past endeavors to breed a master race, the ever present destruction of the biosphere, or the ever increasing prospect of a nuclear holocaust, one is bound to take a dim view of that technological and scientific trend which began making its first big strides in the West during Mary Shelley's lifetime. One realizes then that the monster of Frankenstein has not been reduced to ashes, as the novel's wishful finale suggests, but has long ago escaped from the pages of the novel. Not only is he still at large but he is on his rampage throughout the world, and the toll of his victims is rising.

To our greater chagrin we are now beginning to realize that the actual power of the monster is still more massive for his hypostases are hidden behind various masks. Here is an attempt to strike through one such mask and to reveal one particular hypostasis of the Frankensteinian creator/creature complex which afflicts today's world most fatally. The name of the creator is Karl Marx, that of his creature—Communism.

I hasten to assure the reader that by drawing this parallel I have no intention to indulge in vindictiveness or name-calling. I have seen the real face of Communism at a close range and I must submit I find it monstrously ugly—but don't many Marxists and Communists themselves despair at finding a Communism with a human face? Even less do I feel obliged to indulge in any abuse of Marx. In fact, I often find myself feeling some sympathy for him. For, had he now lived in the country of his folly, he would have most certainly been among the applicants for an
exit visa to Israel—provided he has survived the purges. This is due not only to his Jewish origin but mostly to the quintessential individualism of his character, ill-suited to an existence in the society created in his name. This individualism was epitomized in Marx's motto from Dante: "Segui il tuo corso, e lascia dir le genti." Since my own rebelliousness and eventual escape from the USSR were greatly inspired by the same motto, one might even say that my feelings toward Marx approach those of empathy. So, if I associate Marx and Communism with Frankenstein and his monster, I do so not in order to pour more oil onto the fire of political passions, but to shed light on the complex relationship between Marxism and Communism. I also hope to clarify the reality of the twosome within the context of Western civilization.

The Zeitgeist: Theomachic Prometheanism

It may be only a quirk of history that Karl Marx was born in 1818, the same year as Frankenstein first saw the light. But that they grew out of the same Zeitgeist of Western civilization is no accident. The novel's full title—Frankenstein: or The Modern Prometheus—contains a clue to that state of mind: the romantic rebellion of modern man against all established gods. The Prometheus of the ancient myth is revived here as a banner of the theomachic, god-fighting, drive of this rebellion which long ago has spilled over the confines of the West and presently engulfs the whole world.

This theomachic rebellion won its first important battle when the men of the Enlightenment succeeded in making themselves the sole spokesmen for the progress of the world. Through the concept of deism they sought to reduce God to the role of watchmaker who had merely wound up the universe and then abdicated from his throne. The practical consequences of this "enlightened" theory were eviscered in the fierce anti-Christian campaign of the French Revolution. In spite of the defeat of the Revolution by Napoleon and his subsequent defeat by the Christian monarchs of Europe the theomachic tide was never effectively stemmed. During the post-Napoleonic era it continued to grow albeit in different forms. In poetry it found an outlet in a romantic flirtation with the demonic powers and all sorts of fallen angels. In prose it anticipated the supermen—brave, ambitious, talented, but also godless, ruthless, and predatory—such as Julien Sorel of The Red and The Black by Stendhal. In philosophy it ranged from Hegel's vindication of the great historical heroes to Max Stirner's exultation of egocentric individuals. In life, it turned into a plethora of Napoleonic epigones, not so much in the field of statecraft and war-making, but mostly in love-, crime-, and money-making.

Mary Shelley was not quite nineteen when she conceived of Frankenstein in 1816. But she had already gained a most intimate familiarity with the modern theomachy, especially in its romantic trappings. Not only was she a daughter to the atheistic utopians William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, but she was also a wife to Percy Shelley, the future author of Prometheus Unbound, as well as a close friend to Byron, the future author of Manfred and Cain. Her novel was an expression of her anxieties and apprehensions about the state of mind of her more glamorous companions who were about to inaugurate poetically the theomachic stage of Western Civilization. She saw further than them and perceived the ultimate consequences of the modern theomachy.

The Industrial Revolution in which Mary's England led the West suggested to her yet another arena for the modern theomachy: the natural sciences. Whereas the deistic god-fighters of the eighteenth century stopped short of challenging God's "past" role as the Creator, the romantic theomachs encroached upon Him as the Creator.

The title hero of the novel represents a curious fusion of the romantic quest for the ultimate with an enlightened interest
in natural sciences. Inspired by the medieval alchemists Albertus Magnus, Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus, he seeks to combine their quest for “the elixir of life” and similar “chimeras of boundless grandeur” with a practical application of the latest discoveries in the field of electricity and galvanism for one particular purpose—to animate a human corpse:

Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs.8

The passage betrays that the chief motivating force behind Frankenstein’s project is a Promethean rivalry with God. Although he wants to “pour a torrent of light into our dark world,” Frankenstein is not a descendant of that Prometheus which was immortalized by Aeschylus as the torch-bearer for a mankind threatened by the wrath of gods. His rivalry with God goes farther. He implicitly accuses God of creating “our dark world” and aspires to surpass the Creator by manufacturing “a new species” of “happy and excellent” humans. Frankenstein represents therefore not a modern progeny of Prometheus Pyrphoros but of Prometheus Plasticator, “the creator,” according to another version of the myth, unknown to Aeschylus.

As we know Victor Frankenstein “succeeded” in his project of animating a corpse only to run away from his “victory” and to devote the rest of his life to the task of undoing it—unsuccessfully. Why did he fail in his “success”? Because the creature of his making was not a living man but an animated monster. After all, Frankenstein confesses on his deathbed: “. . . like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence, I am chained in an eternal hell.”9 The novel thus illustrates one instance of the theomachy in one particular arena: the natural sciences. Through it Mary Shelley issued an early warning against the hubris of secularized science.

On a more abstract level, this is a warning against all theomachic aspirations of modern man, be it in the field of science, exploration, statecraft, or social utopia. That is why Frankenstein, a Swiss scientist, makes his confession to no other than Robert Walton, a frustrated British romantic poet. The poet wants to compensate for his failures by undertaking a voyage to the North Pole. There he hopes to discover both the utopia of an earthly paradise and the secret of the universe. The navigator, Walton, finally heeds Frankenstein’s warning against an excessive ambition and turns his sails homeward, toward the green pastures of England and, possibly, of poetry again.

At the time of the novel’s first success in Europe there lived there another frustrated romantic poet who, not unlike Walton, decided to give vent to his poetic frustrations by embarking upon the field of practical action. That poet was Karl Marx, born the same year Mary Shelley had Frankenstein issue his warning. However, unlike Mr. Walton, Karl Marx failed to heed the warning, and three years prior to Mary Shelley’s death, entered the political arena of theomachy. In 1848 he issued The Communist Manifesto designed to serve both as a navigation chart out of “our dark world” and as a blueprint for the creation, with the help of the fire of revolution, of an earthly paradise. Thus began the project—certainly no less ambitious or fantastic than that of Frankenstein—in which presently the whole of mankind finds itself inextricably involved. But the roots of this project should be sought in the young poet’s personality as it was formed in the cultural climate of the post-Napoleonic Europe.

Karl Marx the Romantic Poet

It has become quite fashionable lately, especially among Marx’s apologists, to emphasize his early, allegedly humanistic,
writings beginning from his doctoral dissertation of 1841. But we can hardly afford to ignore Marx’s writings prior to 1841, namely, his Abitur essays written when he graduated from the gymnasium in 1835, and his poetry of the university years.

His Abitur essays reveal a remarkable degree of enthusiasm for the religion of Christ to which his family had converted. In one of them, the seventeen years-old Karl seeks to demonstrate “the reason, essence, necessity, and effect of the union of believers with Christ” according to St. John, 15:1-14. Arguing that an Epicurean will seek his happiness in vain because a true happiness “only one bound unconditionally and childlike to Christ, and through Him to God, can know . . . ,” he leads to the conclusion that “the history of mankind teaches us the necessity of union with Christ.”

In the essay on the choice of a career his thoughts are again turned toward Christ as the ideal of self-sacrificial service to humanity. Stating that “Religion itself teaches that the ideal for which we are all striving sacrificed itself for humanity,” he asks rhetorically: “and who would dare destroy such a statement?”

Before long he himself would. As witnessed by his contemporaries, by 1841 Marx and his radical associates were not only “making atheism their slogan,” but “For Marx, at any rate, the Christian religion is one of the most immoral there is.”

Marx’s apostacy from God and Christ did not begin, however, from his study of either Hegel’s dialectics, or Saint-Simon’s socialism. It began long before with his infatuation with the romantic poetry. Upon his enrollment at the university of Bonn in 1835, he devotes more time not to the study of law as his father enjoined him, but to writing poetry. He seriously considered a career as a poet. Even after his transfer to the university of Berlin his interest in poetry continued unabated. Among his favorites were Byron and Shelley, and his own production was imitative of them.

The myth of Prometheus was among the most persistent inspirations of his poetry as well as of his later political writing. The rebellious titan was a hero with whom he keenly identified. In fact, his followers like to portray Marx as a modern Prometheus who had sacrificed his prosperous bourgeois background and lived in poverty and wretchedness, constantly assailed by the birds of prey—his creditors—in order to bestow upon a suffering mankind the fire of his revolutionary teaching. In other words, they like to believe that the true inspiration of the author of The Communist Manifesto was that of the altruistic Prometheus Pyrrhoros.

Marx’s own poetry suggests, however, a rather different inspiration. Here is a poem written in 1837 at the peak of his poetic ambition:

> With disdain I will throw my gauntlet Full in the face of the world, And see the collapse of this pigmy giant Whose fall will not stifle my ardour.

> Then I will wander godlike and victorious Through the ruins of the world And, giving my words an active force, I will feel equal to the creator.

Although there is no reference to Prometheus, the poem is clearly inspired by the god-hating and ambitious Prometheus Plasticator, the same that inspired Frankenstein in his fateful attempt to animate a human corpse. At first the poem might appear Schilleresque in its use of the gauntlet as a symbol of a heroic challenge against a corrupt society but actually it is animated by the pathos of theomachy rather than of a social justice. The “pigmy giant” is the challenged god. The challenger is the lyrical “I” hero. He is harsh, strident, merciless. As the last line betrays, the real motivation behind his challenge is his desire to “feel equal to the creator,” even if to achieve that he would have to go through “the ruins of the world.” Only ten years later, driven by the same
inspiration, Karl Marx would indeed appear in the role of a political Frankenstein and try not just to equal but to supersede the Creator by proposing a universal system to be built on the ruins of the world, and animated by the "active force" of The Communist Manifesto.

Another example of the young Marx’s theomachic Prometheanism may be seen in his unfinished romantic drama Oulanem also written in 1837. The title hero's strange name makes sense only if read as an anagram of Manuelo, that is Emmanuel, or God. In his only monologue in the drama, Oulanem reveals himself as a new god bent on destruction of the world:

The world which bulks between me and the Abyss
I will smash to pieces with my enduring curses.
I’ll throw my arms around its harsh reality:
Embracing me, the world will dumby pass away,
And then sink down to utter nothingness,
Perished, with no existence—that would be really living! 19

As the "I" hero of the poem, Oulanem is merciless, harsh, god-hating god. Although his reasons for the hatred of the existing world remain undisclosed, there is no hint in the drama that a love of men or social compassion are among them. We are left to assume therefore that his ontological hatred of God encompasses God's creation. Unlike Marx the scientist who holds an extremely poor record of prognosis, Marx's Oulanem stands a good chance to prove himself the best prophet of doom ever: "Embracing me, the world will dumby pass away . . . "

Since the drama is unfinished, we can only speculate whether Marx would have developed Oulanem to the full potential of a Prometheus Plasticator creating the new world on the blank sheet of nothingness. This would have anticipated in poetry Marx's political theory. But that the god-father of Communism identified with Oulanem's destructive hubris one can hardly doubt. Commenting on Oulanem, Robert Payne justly observes: "In The Communist Manifesto we hear the same strident voice calling for a war to the death between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, a merciless battle with no quarter given by either side." Payne draws the conclusion that "Marx's philosophy of the destruction of classes has its roots in romantic drama." 10

The conclusion might be further expanded: the whole of Marx's Communism is not an offspring of his alleged love of the proletariat, nor a consequence of his alleged learnedness in the laws of history, but a romantic chimera of self-aggrandizement riding high on the tidal wave of the theomachic \&\&nbs vitale of Western civilization.

Marx's obsessive fling into romantic poetry occurred between 1835 and 1837. These years proved crucial in the formation of his personality. A great change took place in his view of himself in relation to the world: he abandoned his Christ-inspired ideal of unselfish service to humanity that he had so eloquently professed in his Abitur essays. As David McLellan aptly points out, "No longer was he inspired by the thought of the service of humanity and concerned to fit himself into a place where he might best be able to sacrifice himself for this noble ideal: his poems of 1837, on the contrary, reveal a cult of the isolated genius and an introverted concern for the building of his own personality apart from the rest of humanity." 11

Since writing of poetry did not bring the young Marx the success he had hoped for, he applied himself the more assiduously to the study of philosophy. In 1841 that study resulted in his doctoral dissertation, "The Difference between the Democritean and the Epicurean Philosophies of Nature." There the theomachic Prometheanism of his poetry transforms itself into a conscious philosophic attitude. Marx now attempts to justify philosophically his apostacy from Christ. Whereas in his Abitur essay he

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found the philosophy of Epicurus infinitely inferior to the religion of Christ, he now indulges in the praise of the former for no uncertain reason:

The proclamation of Prometheus: “In one word—I hate all gods” is her own profession, her own slogan against all gods of heaven and earth who do not recognize man’s self-consciousness as the highest divinity. There shall be none other beside it.12

As previously in his poetry, Marx is attracted to the god-hating aspect of the titan. As if in a fit of jealousy to his hero, he extends his hatred to “all gods of heaven and earth.” Since the Christian God was in his eyes the chief god of the establishment, Christ is his primary target. His apostacy from god was not a mere walking away into atheism, but a passionate hatred of Him whom he had formerly professed to love. The Christian God blocked the way to his own messianic dream which was spurred by his acute awareness of Jesus’ and his own Jewishness. If the whole gentile world bows to a Jew from Nazareth, the young Marx must have thought, “Why can’t they bow to a Jew from Trier?” Didn’t the example of the French Revolution and Napoleon prove that nothing is out of reach for a determined will? A return to the religion of his forefathers was out of question, for it would have meant an exchange of the old god of Christianity for the one yet older.

Marx’s pride in his Western secular learning, now for the first time wide open for the Jews, would not accept any submission at all. But where would he find an outlet for his youthful vigor after the shackles of the old gods had been cast away? Marx found it in the task of defeating and subjugating all the new “earthly” secular gods of Western civilization. Among them there were Feuerbach, Saint-Simon, Proudhon, Bakunin, and especially his fellow Communists, the “crowd of godless self-appointed gods” as his erstwhile friend the poet Heine had called them.18 The newly-baked doctor’s immediate task was to prove that “Man’s self-consciousness” deserved the title of “the highest divinity” only when equated with his own. The Communist Manifesto seven years later did just that.

**Which Prometheus?**

It is known that upon the completion of his doctoral dissertation Marx planned to make his career as a university professor. Had he succeeded in his plan, he would have had an ample opportunity to indulge in proving to his students that “man’s self-consciousness” is identical with his own. In that case his whole Promethean drive would probably have exhausted itself in intellectual narcissism thus saving the world a lot of trouble. But his plan failed, and Marx landed instead in the field of journalism. The failure proved to be a blessing in disguise. For one thing, journalism assured Marx of a larger audience for propagating his ideas. Second, it helped him to realize that his best chance to defeat the gods lay in forming an alliance with men, especially with “the oppressed people.” In other words, he realized that Prometheus Plastcator needs a mask of Prometheus Pyrphoros.

One generation the junior of Frankenstein, Marx grew up in a significantly different political climate. The former grew up in the atmosphere of a political backlash against everything for which Napoleon and the French Revolution stood. This discouraged him from seeking an outlet for his theomachic impulse in the arena of social and political action and channeled it instead into natural sciences. Marx’s youth, on the other hand, coincided with the years of a rapid activization of radical political movements, including socialism, all spurred by the success of the 1830 revolution in France. It is not surprising therefore that this theomachic drive went not in the direction of animating a single human corpse, but was aimed at creation of a totally new mankind. Marx entered the political arena of theomachy precisely.
at the time of an unprecedented growth of a new social force, the industrial proletariat. He seized the opportunity to harness and to saddle the horse that would take him to Olympus. Not unlike Frankenstein who combined in his endeavor an old chimera of the alchemists with a keen interest in science, Marx fused together the romantic quest for omnipotence with the Enlightenment notion of scientific infallibility to produce his blueprint for the destruction of the old and creation of the new mankind. He thus set the stage for the most ambitious and fantastic attempt at science-fiction ever.

Now wonder that Soviet leaders commonly speak of “the new Soviet man” as if he were a new species, “Homo Sovieticus.”

Besides the theomachic Prometheanism and the desire to put science to use, Frankenstein and Marx had a number of other traits in common. Both grew up in families where the influence of the Enlightenment was strong. Both had a distinctly cosmopolitan outlook: Frankenstein because of his Swiss background, Marx as a converted Jew. Both belonged to the heartland of Western civilization. Both were endowed with great natural talents and perseverance. Once they hit upon an idea, they dedicated themselves entirely to its pursuit. Above all, in both cases this dedication led to an alienation from their families and amounted to an obsession. Frankenstein admits having “lost all soul or sensation but for this pursuit.” Marx’s father was just as flabbergasted by his son’s “stupid wandering through all branches of knowledge, stupid brooding over melancholy oil-lamps” as he had been first by his “wild-rampaging.”

But there were also some very significant differences between the two. While both emulated Prometheus Plasticator rather than Prometheus Pyrphoros, Marx was more actively and strongly driven by a hatred of God and his world. Because he formerly vowed his loyalty to Christ, Marx was more like a Fallen Angel.

Marx’s ontological hatred of the world made him far more ruthless. Frankenstein’s project did not call for a preliminary murder to procure the corpse for his “scientific” animation. Marx, on the other hand, not only included a destruction and murder as an integral part of his blueprint, but justified it as a “scientific” necessity.

Yet Marx was decisively less scientific of the two. While Frankenstein’s project bore the character of an experiment, Marx made no provision for any experiment that could be terminated at will. In his “scientific” arrogance he apparently forgot about the first rule of science.

Lastly, while they both succeeded, Marx’s success was only posthumous. Yet one cannot deny that it was his blueprint that his Russian followers put to practice. Moreover, they succeeded in accomplishing both parts of the blueprint: (1) procuring a corpse through a violent murder of Russia; and (2) animating it into a powerful reality. While only the second accomplishment is worthy of Frankenstein’s feat, it is just as dubious. For had the author of The Communist Manifesto lived to see his blueprint put to practice in 1917 in Russia, he would have in all probability run from it, just as Frankenstein did at the first sight of the monster,

... for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. His success would terrify the artist; he would rush away from his odious handywork, horror-stricken. He would hope that, left to itself, the slight spark of life which he had communicated would fade; that this thing, which had received such imperfect animation, would subside into dead matter ...

And the artist he was—an egotistic romantic poet—who bequeathed his Promethean handiwork, in the shape of The Communist Manifesto, to his followers. Many of them, the avowed followers of Marx, did indeed rush away—or stayed aloof—horror-stricken, from the monster of
the Communist Russia they had helped to create. They ran away because they were terrified by the odious looks of their brain child. Like Victor Frankenstein they ran away from their “victory,” and from their responsibility. Unlike Frankenstein, however, they never admitted their complicity in the creation of their monster, never assumed their responsibility for his misdeeds. Even today many a Marxist in the West indulges himself in a wishful thinking that “the slight spark” of animation which he had helped to communicate to the Communist monster would fade away and that, when “left to itself,” the monster would subside into dead matter. For, the reality of Communism is to him a source of embarrassment. However, impotent to bring himself to cope with that reality, he tries to sleep it away.

He might sleep in the belief that the silence of the grave would quench forever the transient existence of the hideous corpse which he had looked upon as the cradle of life. He sleeps; but is awakened; he opens his eyes; behold the horrid thing stands at this bedside, opening his curtains, and looking on him with yellow, watery, but speculative eyes.17

How many Marxists in the West did not feel ashamed at Lenin’s treatment of Mensheviks? How many were not brought to a rude awakening during the Stalinist purges? How many were not dismayed at “the Zionist doctors’ plot”? How many did not feel the cold showers of the Soviet intervention in Germany in 1953, in Hungary in 1956, in Czechoslovakia in 1968? How many do not shudder now at every motion of the Iron Curtain? For how many didn’t Solzhenitsyn open the eyes? Behold the horrid thing stands on the threshold of your bedchambers in Western Europe itself.

But of course you think you’ve got a perfect excuse for not taking care of your brain child. Closing your eyes on Lenin’s crimes, you blame Stalin’s oriental despotism for unleashing the monster on the Communists themselves. But you find nothing wrong or morally reprehensible with Marx and his blueprint.

I would be the last one to claim that Lenin did not deviate from Marx or that Stalin did not deviate from Lenin. But the fact remains that nobody in the West has shown us a better use of Marx’s blueprint. Therefore, the burden of responsibility for the murder of old Russia and for the “animation” of her corpse into the Communist monster belongs as much to the author of the blueprint and his proselytes in the West as to the actual “artists” who perpetrated the crime.

Meanwhile, the Marxists of the West, with an exception of those who still despair at finding a Communism with a human face, try to prove their allegiance to Marx by grovelling before the monster. Susceptible to the beautiful lies that the ugly ogre spins for them, they transmit those lies to others infecting with them even the non-Marxist governments and parties. This combination of fear, lies, and “parental” sympathy has produced in the West the faddish belief that the ogre would turn into a gentleman as soon as he is assured of Lebensraum befitting his gigantic stature. It is also fashionable to believe that, though the Communist ogre may indeed appear ugly and scary to us, the civilized and democratic white folks of the West, he looks irresistibly attractive to all those underdeveloped Russians, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cubans, and Angolans. On these assumptions—and in the hope to placate the ogre—the Western powers have been more than generous in their concessions to him. They forget one thing, however: just as the Communist ogre’s origin is similar to that of Frankenstein’s, so are his problems.

Getting a Wife

We remember that the monster of Frankenstein was a giant superior to men in physical strength and endurance, and could exist without many comforts requisite
for men. He was also said to be benevolent and had nothing but good intentions. Nevertheless he was an utterly miserable and unhappy creature, ugly, and lonely. Being unloved was his greatest problem, and he likes to tell others that “misery made me a fiend.” And the fiend he was. “If I cannot inspire love,” he declares, “I will cause fear.” He indeed destroys many innocent people, and causes others to fear him. But that does not solve his problem. In fact, his problem cannot be solved by himself. For the solution of his problem he is totally dependent on his creator. Alternating threats with evocation of the creator’s guilt, the monster makes Frankenstein promise to create him a wife. Frankenstein finally consents on one condition: that the monsters would “quit Europe” and live only in scarcely populated areas as “the vast wilds” of South America or Russia. By introducing this bargain into the story Mary Shelley seems to suggest that the Western Frankensteins are likely to dump the unwanted products of their creative urge somewhere else.

As to the Communist fiend, he has his problems too, and they are not dissimilar from those of Frankenstein’s. He too is a giant superior to other countries in many ways. In fact, in the matter of sheer power he has been faring much better than his fictional predecessor. In the last few decades he has been steadily gaining control over the world, and currently rules over one-third of mankind and inspires fear in the rest. But he is just as miserable and unhappy as Frankenstein’s ugly wretch, and is so because he is an utterly artificial creature. Like his literary predecessor he even may have originally had good intentions but they came to nil. His greatest problem is the same: he is unloved, and therefore can sustain and procreate himself only by deception and violence. He was unloved when he raped Russia, and he continues to be unloved despite the many attractive masks he now wears. That’s why people take every opportunity to run away from him.

Despairing at the prospect of ever concluding a marriage of love at home—where they have seen him without a mask—he now seems especially fervid to contract a marriage of convenience abroad. He needs this marriage both to legitimize his existence and to assure his procreation. Proudly displaying his awe-inspiring physique, he bids high. While wooing many a bride, he definitely prefers those of the West. Now he has set his eyes on the bride of Rome. A marriage in Rome, the cradle of Western civilization, would reconcile him, he hopes, with the matrix of his origin. For that purpose he is more willing than ever to sweat under the masks of popular fronts and democratic coalitions, just to make people vote him democratically into a bona fide bridegroom.

As Mary Shelley informs us, Frankenstein in the last moment broke his promise to the monster, and destroyed the half-ready wife. He did so in full awareness of his parental duties toward his offspring. But his duties and responsibility toward his fellow human beings took precedence. He also realized that the destiny of mankind is indivisible and therefore, even if the monsters were to leave Europe, “a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth.”

Since the godfather of Communism is now dead, the chief burden of the upcoming decision on presenting the Communist fiend with a Western, democratically adorned, wife falls now on those in the West who claim to be the true heirs of the “humanist and humanitarian” Marx. It remains to be seen which allegiance would take precedence in their decision: their allegiance to their teacher—and then they must act as Frankenstein did—or their allegiance to his and their monster. Provided, of course, that Oulanem did not speak for Marx when he prophesied: “Embracing me, the world will dumbly pass away . . .” If he did, they would now realize that by comparing Marx to Frankenstein I am giving him and them a lot of credit.
The Will of Frankenstein

The Frankenstein myth is also instructive as to how not to cope with the monster. We learn that after the monster had avenged the recalcitrant creator by slaying his best friend and his bride, Frankenstein devoted himself to the task of undoing his offspring. From the heart of Europe he chased him down to the Mediterranean and then to the Black Sea. Prophetically, the monster found his refuge in no other place than Russia. "Amidst the wilds of Tartary and Russia," reports Frankenstein, "although he still evaded me, I have ever followed in his track." At one point he is informed by the local peasants that "A gigantic monster ... had arrived the night before, armed with a gun and many pistols, putting to flight the inhabitants ... through fear of his terrific appearance" and that he "carried off their store of winter food." In spite of their help, Frankenstein failed in his efforts to undo the monster. Lured to the inhospitable climes of the Arctic North, he died of physical and mental exhaustion. Although he bequeathed to Walton to "seek him, and satisfy my vengeance in his death," his will remained unfulfilled. Shortly after Frankenstein's death, the monster himself appears on-board Walton's ship to mourn the death of his creator. His expressions of grief disarm Walton's determination to fulfill the will of the dead. Besides there seemed to be no need to, for the monster himself promises to go to "the most northern extremity of the globe" and reduce to ashes his "miserable frame."

Mary Shelley wisely left out the scene of the monster's self-immolation. The last we saw of him was when he left the ship, sprung on an ice-raft, and "was soon born away by the waves, and lost in darkness and distance." So ends the novel, and the reader is left free to speculate whether the monster indeed destroyed himself or simply outwitted Walton and his creator. Given his previous record of perfidy, the latter appears most likely.

What is for sure, however, is that his political hypostasis, the Communist fiend, has been for many years virtually "lost in darkness and distance." He has been lost in the darkness of his own propaganda mist and in the distance of Russia, far away from the womb of Europe that discharged him. But now he is, like a boomerang, coming back to Europe. Now he is really haunting the whole world as he is haunting the soul of his chief engineer, Karl Marx. Until the monster is at large, Marx's soul will hardly attain its peace.

But if the soul of the dead is not troubled by the monstrous reality of Communism, what about the souls of the living? Wouldn't they ask themselves this simple question: Why Frankenstein charged Walton, not the "magistrates," not the Russian "peasants," with the task of undoing his monster?

Because he is ambitious and creative, because he is an individualist and a seeker. Whether a poet or navigator he looks for "a land surpassing in wonders and in beauty every region hitherto discovered on the habitable globe" and yearns for the secrets which uphold the universe. Because he is Faustean. Because he is Promethean. A theomach or not, he embodies the creative striving in which Western civilization has so excelled. In a word, because he is Frankenstein's kindred soul.

But isn't he also a kindred soul to Marx and to all those who identify with his creative impulse, non-complacency, and dedication? If it is so, they are charged too with the task of undoing the Communist fiend, more so than the "magistrates" of the West or the people ruled by the monster. They may call themselves Marxists, and then it is their duty to assume their responsibility in the manner of Frankenstein. They may be non-Marxists, and yet challenged to the task in the manner of Walton, that is by the virtue of friendship. But no matter who they are or how they call themselves, they are challenged to the
task of undoing the monster because he is a product of the West.

However, so far the creative intellectuals of the West, friends or no friends to Marx, have been conspicuously absent in the struggle against the monster. Many of them, knowingly or not, have been in effect aiding and abetting the monster in his misdeeds. They are ever ready to nudge the West into a guilt-feeling about the technological progress. They accuse their own countries of polluting the world with radioactive matter and industrial waste. They accuse the West of using the less developed countries as a dumping ground for the rejects of its technology. But they forget that the chief pollutant that the West spat on the world is the ideological pollutant of Marxist Communism. They forget that Marxism, an ideological reject of the West, was dumped onto a less selective market of Russia who in her passionate love for the West succumbed to the temptation cunningly advertised as a shortcut to Westernization. Now that reject has been enjoying for too long a total monopoly on the Russian market at the exclusion of even such genuine native products as Dostoevsky, Solovyov and Tolstoy.

I address this appeal—the will of Frankenstein—primarily to the creative intellectuals of the West, even though I realize that the problem is global. Not that I necessarily believe they are more creative. But they are more free than the others to meet this challenge. While the people of Russia, even the Communists and the Marxists, are not permitted to know what happens to the Communist monster in China, the people of Red China are barred from knowing about his progress in Russia. And this is the case, more or less, with all Communist countries. So, the best way to get information about the current trends of the Communist and Marxist thought is to stay out of the Communist countries and to get to the West.

While approaching the challenge of Communism we may well learn yet another lesson from the nineteen year old maiden of the nineteenth century. No, she did not give any practical advice how to undo the monster. But she had some idea as to how to approach the task. She made the stubborn Frankenstein, on his deathbed, bend his mind and mellow his will. He finally realizes that just as he had created the monster “in a fit of enthusiastic madness,” so his pursuit of him was “actuated by selfishness and vicious motives” of revenge. Even though he repeats his request to Walton to undo the monster, it is no longer dictated by hatred and revenge-seeking but is “induced by reason and virtue.”

Applied to Communism, this lesson would mean that whatever we undertake in order to undo the monster should be primarily creative; that our creative effort, although no less titanic than that of any Prometheus in strength and daring, should be above all self-sacrificial and thereby agreeable to all gods of heaven and earth. “But the consideration of these points, and the well balancing of what you may esteem your duties, I leave to you”—merely forwarding what Frankenstein had bequeathed to his friend.