

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

Dr Will Bowers (Merton College, Oxford)

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Introduction

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797–1851) was born in Somers Town, London, the daughter of the radical philosophers William Godwin and the Mary Wollstonecraft. Her mother died days after her birth, and Shelley grew up one of five siblings under the aegis of her unconventional father, who encouraged the children under his care to read, and to educate themselves. Her adult life and career has often been defined by the eight years (1814–22) she spent with her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley, but her best critics have also appreciated the work Shelley produced in the second half of her life (e.g. Palacio 1967 and Wright 2017 cited under *General Overviews and Introductions*). Shelley is known for writing *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* one of the best-selling and most culturally enduring novels to emerge from the Romantic period. Although it was published to little acclaim in 1818, from the 1820s to the present day *Frankenstein* has inspired countless novels, plays, musicals, and films, and remains a staple of high school syllabi and university courses. For most of the twentieth century if Shelley was discussed at all it was either for this novel or in the context of her remarkable family. Two distinct but interrelated movements in literary studies led to a reappraisal of Shelley in the 1980s that has seen her emerge as one of the major, and most versatile, literary figures of the nineteenth century. First, the importance of Shelley to influential feminist critics (see Mellor 1982 and Gilbert and Gubar 1979 cited

under *Feminism*) who attempted to shift predominantly male and poetic focus of the Romantic canon via a reappraisal of Shelley's writings. Second, the initiation and completion of a number of textual projects provided scholarly editions of Shelley's letters, journals, novels, and other writings (see Bennett 1980–88, Feldman and Scott-Kilvert 1987, Crook 1996, Crook 2002 cited under *Editions*). These editions have allowed Shelley to be appreciated as a novelist, travel-writer, and diarist, and have catalysed a study of her numerous other interests beyond writing, with recent essays paying due attention Shelley's study of foreign cultures, and her role as the first, and best, editor of her husband's poetry. This growing literature has allowed some of Shelley's core themes—the centrality of love, the importance of the domestic realm, the value of cosmopolitanism—to be appreciated, and for her literary vision to be placed at the centre of Romanticism.

General Overviews

To quickly get a sense of Shelley's writing the short introductions Bennett 1998 and Wright 2017 should be consulted. The essays collected in Schor 2003 allow readers to appreciate the full range of Shelley's work and the various approaches to them. The three best book-length studies of Shelley as a writer are Palacio 1969, Mellor 1988, and Blumberg 1993: all three monographs pursue very different approaches to a chronological narrative of Shelley's literary development.

Bennett, Betty T. 1998. *Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley: An Introduction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

An extended version of the General Introduction to Crook 1996 (cited under *Editions*), which gives a chronological account of Shelley's life and works. Unusual in that it gives as much space to Shelley's life after 1823 as it does to the years before.

Blumberg, Jane. 1993. *Mary Shelley's Early Novels*. London: Macmillan.

A study of literary development from the early essay "A History of the Jews" to *The Last Man*, which examines Shelley's works in the context of, and often in opposition to, those of her husband. The book employs an impressive range of approaches to discuss Shelley's works, including textual analysis of manuscripts, intellectual study of her reading, and biographical and literary analysis of the novels.

Mellor, Anne Kostelanetz. 1988. *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*. London: Routledge.

A new historicist study that stresses the originality of Shelley's exploration of family dynamics. It includes a thorough consideration of Shelley's childhood and other novels alongside a reading of *Frankenstein*, to show how essential Shelley's works are to an 'exploration of female consciousness'.

Palacio, Jean de. 1969. *Mary Shelley dans son oeuvre: Contributions aux études shelleyennes*. Paris: Editions Klincksieck.

This study is hard to find, in French, and its age means it lacks the cross-references to the editorial feats of the 80s and 90s: despite all this it remains the best monograph on Shelley's work. The approach is scholarly and comprehensive, with particular attention paid to Shelley's knowledge of Italian literature and contemporary politics.

Schor, Esther, ed. 2003. *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sixteen short essays by leading scholars divided between sections on *Frankenstein*, and its legacy in film, robotics, and literary criticism; Shelley's other novels; and her role as a journalist, travel writer and editor.

Wright, Angela. 2017. *Mary Shelley*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

An introduction to Shelley's works that is something between a biography and a literary life. Space is given to all of the novels and some of the shorter works. Wright's analysis is particularly strong on the Gothic elements of Shelley's oeuvre.

Biographies

All serious biographers owe a significant debt to the pioneering work of Muriel Spark, whose appreciation of Shelley's literary life is best represented in Spark 1988. The best of the modern biographies consider the full extent of Shelley's writing: Sunstein 1991 is the most innovative, Seymour 2000 is the most accomplished narrative, and Garrett 2002 provides the best short overview. There is an ever-growing number of sensational romps through Shelley's early life that spend much time discussing the events of the Geneva summer 1816 — these should largely be ignored in favour of the excellent account of this important period in Clubbe 1991. An innovative way of understanding Shelley's life in relation to her parents and husband was begun by the group biography of St Clair 1989 and developed further in Carlson 2007.

Carlson, Julie. 2007. *England's First Family of Writers: Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin, Mary Shelley*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Something of a retort to the male-dominated study of St. Clair 1989, this is a biography of a family unit and considers the works of Godwin, Shelley, and Wollstonecraft, as collective writing.

Clubbe, John. 1991. "The Tempest-toss'd Summer of 1816: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*". *Byron Journal* 19. pp. 26-40.

An important contextualisation of the Geneva summer and the climatic conditions that Clubbe claims created 'the ideas that went into [*Frankenstein*], and, to a degree difficult to define precisely, the novel's underlying power'. [au: Please provide page numbers for this quotation.]

Garrett, Martin. 2002. *Mary Shelley*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

An engaging short biography with a predominantly literary focus, supplemented by a number of colour illustrations.

Spark, Muriel. 1988. *Mary Shelley*. London: Constable.

A complete rewriting of Spark's *Child of Light: A reassessment of Mary Shelley* (1951), which was the first critical biography of Shelley. It maintains the central thesis that Shelley is the progenitor of modern science fiction, who must be appreciated as both a professional writer and an experimenter with genre.

Seymour, Miranda. 2000. *Mary Shelley*. London: John Murray.

The most enjoyable read of all the serious biographies, which offers a compelling narrative without slouching into exaggeration or embellishment.

St. Clair, William. 1989. *The Godwins and the Shelleys: The Biography of a Family*. London: Faber and Faber.

Although it spends more time on William Godwin and the 1790s this remains a useful text for understanding Shelley's political and philosophical milieu.

Sunstein, Emily W. 1991. *Mary Shelley: Romance and Reality*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

The best researched of the dozens of critical biographies of Shelley in the last thirty years. Not always to be trusted on fine details, but brilliant in its ambition and scope.

Reference Works

The difficult task of finding contemporary reviews of Shelley's novels is made much easier by the compendious work of Lyles 1975, and the work of Garrett 2002 synthesises the editorial endeavours of the 80s and 90s into a valuable biographical resource. The best online repository for factual information on Shelley is Lawson 1998, which also provides a guide to other online resources.

Garrett, Martin. 2002. *A Mary Shelley Chronology*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Effectively a combination of records in Feldman and Scott-Kilvert 1987 (cited under *Letter and Journals*), Bennett 1980–88 (cited under *Letter and Journals*), the letters of Percy Bysshe

Shelley, and the journal of Shelley's stepsister Claire Clairmont. Includes the information from letters first published in Bennett 1997 (cited under *Letter and Journals*).

Lawson, Shanon, with assistance Charles E. Robinson. 1998. * *The Mary Shelley Chronology & Resource site* [<https://www.rc.umd.edu/reference/chronologies/mschronology>]*

Contains a chronology, bibliography, and records of contemporary reviews (including those of dramatic productions of *Frankenstein*), all of which are updated as new discoveries come to light.

Lyles, William H. 1975. *Mary Shelley: An Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Garland.

Although frequently out of date in its attributions of primary material, this bibliography is still an good resource for tracking down the various editions and contemporary reviews of Shelley's novels.

Editions

Over the last forty years Shelley has been unusually well served by editors of her work, and as a result there are a wealth of good scholarly and classroom editions of her work. Proper modern editing of Shelley's fiction—with explanatory notes, cross-references, and a consideration of texts and variants—began with Robinson 1976. Editorial attention then turned to Shelley's personal writings, with the outstanding and painstaking work of Bennett 1980–88, and Feldman and Scott-Kilvert 1987. Shelley's fiction and non-fiction are given full and expansive editorial treatment in the twelve volumes of the Pickering editions (Crook 1996 and Crook 2002) that provide authoritative texts of all of the known works aside from those in Robinson 1976. Running in parallel to these multivolume projects, dozens of textbook editions of Shelley's work have been produced, and at present all the novels aside from *The Fortunes of Perkins Warbeck* (1830) and *Falkner* (1837) are available in this format.

Works

The editions listed below represent the authoritative canon of Shelley's works, comprising the full range of her writing from editions of the well-known novels to her prefaces to the 1824 and 1839 editions of her husband's poetry. These editions have been spared the fads of overly complicated apparatuses that have plagued many editions of Romantic writers, so that Crook 1996 and Crook 2002 require no prior training to use. The critically underappreciated shorter fiction, such as 'Valerius: The Reanimated Roman', are well served by Robinson 1976, which also includes more than a dozen engravings. Robinson 2008 and Robinson 2016 clarify, seemingly without agenda, the vexed question of to what extent *Frankenstein* is a work of both Mary and Percy Shelley, and the multiple texts of these editions are essential reading for undergraduates and scholars alike.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 1976. *Mary Shelley: Collected Tales and Stories*. Edited by Charles E. Robinson. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

The first critical edition of Shelley's shorter fiction, which gives authoritative texts of 25 works (8 of which are collected in this edition for the first time). Although the texts are occasionally unreliable, this edition remains an essential resource for its explanatory notes.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 1996. *The Novels and Selected Works of Mary Shelley*. 8 volumes. Generally edited by Nora Crook, with Pamela Clemit. London: William Pickering.

The first and only edited collection of Shelley's six novels. With a few exceptions the editors use the first published text as their copy text. It includes an excellent General Introduction and Chronology, alongside assiduous notes on textual and contextual matters. This edition also includes Shelley's dramas, reviews, and essays (Volume 2) and the travel writings from her time in Geneva in 1816 to her *Rambles* in Europe during the 1840s (Volume 8).

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 2002. *Mary Shelley's Literary Lives and Other Writings*. 4 volumes. Generally edited by Nora Crook. London: Pickering and Chatto.

Supplementary volumes of works not included in Crook 1996, including Shelley's *Literary Lives* (biographies of European writers), an edition of her unfinished "Life of William Godwin", and a number of poems attributed to her. The editors produce meticulous texts of these lesser-known works and include excellent notes.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 2008. *Frankenstein, or, The modern Prometheus: The Original Two-Volume Novel of 1816–1817 from the Bodleian Library Manuscripts*. Edited by Charles E. Robinson. Oxford: Bodleian Libraries.

A feat of editing: Robinson meticulously separates the revisions and comments of Percy Bysshe Shelley from Shelley's original manuscript, and prints the original unaltered text followed by the revised version.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 2016. *The Frankenstein Notebooks*. 2 volumes. Edited by Charles E. Robinson. Abingdon: Routledge.

This comprehensive work includes facsimiles and transcriptions of all of the surviving manuscripts related to the novel and a corrected critical text of *Frankenstein*. Its notes and references clarify much of the complicated journey of the novel from manuscript to print.

Letters and Journals

Shelley was an assiduous writer of letters and journals, and these personal writings remain the best resource for the study of her life and literary opinions and those of her husband.

A great many of these letters and journals survive and, as Bennett 1997, Scott 2005, and Crook 2013 show, new letters are still being discovered. As well as being detailed and precise editions that give a great deal of information about their manuscript sources, Bennett 1980–88, and Feldman and Scott-Kilvert 1987 also provide reading lists and indexes that are valuable resources in their own right.

Bennett, Betty T., ed. 1980–1988. *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*. 3 volumes. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

The complete edition of all correspondence available at the time of publication. Volume three also includes a very useful “Comprehensive Index”.

Bennett, Betty T. 1997. “Newly Uncovered Letters and Poems by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley”. *Keats-Shelley Journal* 46. pp. 51–74.

An introduction and edition of 24 Shelley letters from 1820–1846 not contained in Bennett 1980–88, along with an edition of three unpublished poems.

Crook, Nora. 2013. “Fourteen New Letters by Mary Shelley”. *Keats-Shelley Journal* 62. pp. 37–61.

An introduction and edition of 14 letters of the 1830s and 40s not contained in Bennett 1980–88.

Feldman, Paula R., Diana Scott-Kilvert, eds. 1987. *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814–1844*. 2 volumes. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Shelley’s five extant journals from 1814–1844 are expertly edited here. The footnotes expand upon Shelley’s often cryptic entries, and volume 2 includes “The Shelleys’ Reading List” which is an essential resource for work on Mary and Percy Shelley.

Scott, Grant F. 2005. “New Mary Shelley Letters to the Severns”. *Keats-Shelley Journal* 54. pp. 62–77.

An introduction and edition of 3 letters of Shelley to the artist Joseph Severn and his wife Elizabeth, which also includes an edition of a few other relevant letters of the Severns.

Textbook Editions

There are numerous good textbook editions of Shelley’s works published in all the major series (Oxford World’s Classics, Penguin Classics, Norton, and Broadview). Those listed here are selected for having the best introductions and explanatory notes. The clear comprehensive introduction and detailed notes of Rossington 2000 should be the template for textbook editions. Although Joseph 1980 and Butler 1994 are relatively old, they both include introductions with an impressively broad discussion of the major talking points of *Frankenstein*. The best way into the complications over *Frankenstein*’s authorship and its

various editions is Curran 2009. The Broadview editions (McWhir 1996, Vargo 1997, Flaubert 2017) provide quite sophisticated discussions of issues in the texts and are supplemented with useful selections of contextual works.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 1980. *Frankenstein* (1831). Edited by M. K. Joseph. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The introduction to this edition of the much-altered 1831 text of Shelley's masterpiece discusses the structure of the novel and the use of *Paradise Lost* in the narrative of both Victor and the Monster.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 1994. *Frankenstein* (1818). Edited by Marilyn Butler. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

A classic edition published in a number of subsequent impressions, with an introduction that stresses the intellectual contexts (especially the contemporary literature of science) and personal issues that may have influenced the novel.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 1996. *The Last Man*. Edited by Anne McWhir. Peterborough, ON: Broadview.

The best edition because of the hundreds of succinct and helpful footnotes that illuminate the novel's confusing narrative.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 1997. *Lodore*. Edited by Lisa Vargo. Peterborough, ON: Broadview.

Uses the 1835 first edition and maintains the original, and frequently idiosyncratic, spelling and punctuation. Includes copious appendices of contextual material, contemporary reviews, and a few shorter works by Shelley.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 2000. *Valperga*. Edited by Michael Rossington. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The introduction gives an excellent overview of the novel's publication history and reception, and also pays attention to Shelley's reading in Italian history. The succinct explanatory notes continue this historical focus.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 2009. **Frankenstein*[<http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/Frankenstein>]*. Edited by Stuart Curran. Online:

Uses internet technology to offer the most comprehensive edition of the novel. Prints the 1818 and 1831 editions, with copious annotations, alongside a number of very useful study aids.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 2017. *Mathilda*. Edited by Michelle Flaubert. Peterborough, ON: Broadview.
An impressive edition of this originally unpublished novel, with a text produced by an entirely new transcription of the fair-copy manuscript. The introduction and additional materials positions *Mathilda* in the context of the similar novels by Mary Wollstonecraft (*Mary* and *The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria*) and Percy Shelley's engagement with incest in *The Cenci*.

Selections

An edited selection of Shelley's letters is given in Bennett 1995, and a good introduction to the broadening of primary materials in the Shelley canon is provided by Bennett and Robinson 1990.

Bennett, Betty T., and Charles E. Robinson, eds. 1990. *The Mary Shelley Reader: Containing Frankenstein, Mathilda, Tales and Stories, Essays and Reviews, and Letters*. New York: Oxford University Press.

An excellent selection from Shelley's oeuvre edited by two of the most significant scholars of her work.

Bennett, Betty T. 1995. *Selected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.

A single-volume overview containing 230 of Shelley's most important letters, with text and notes taken from Bennett 1980–88 (cited under *Letters and Journals*).

Essay Collections

Proper critical consideration of the full canon of Shelley's works began with Fisch, Mellor, Schor 1993, which established the *status quo* for appreciating and taking seriously a wide range of her works. This eclectic approach continued in two collections—Bennett and Curran 2000, and Conger, Frank, O'Dea 1997—that grew out of conferences and celebrations for the bicentenary of Shelley's birth in 1997. A waning of the theoretical bent of the 80s and 90s led to a greater focus on Shelley's craft, and a number of the essays in Eberle-Sinatra 2000 are indicative of this literary turn.

Bennett, Betty T., and Stuart Curran, eds. 2000. *Mary Shelley in Her Times*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.

A wide-ranging collection with, as the title suggests, a predominantly historicist focus.

Conger, Synda M., Frederick S. Frank, and Gregory O'Dea, eds. 1997. *Iconoclastic Departures: Mary Shelley After Frankenstein: Essays in Honor of the Bicentenary of Mary Shelley's Birth*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.

A collection that shows Shelley as not just a challenger of the prevailing societal norms, but also as an experimenter in a literary sense, especially with regards to genre. The final section is especially useful for discussion of the three late novels *Perkins Warbeck*, *Lodore*, and *Falkner*.

Eberle-Sinatra, Michael, ed. 2000. *Mary Shelley's Fictions: From Frankenstein to Falkner*. London: Macmillan.

Covers all the novels, and also includes good essay on Shelley's short stories. The range of approaches is as eclectic as the material discussed, and the collection is a good microcosm of the rich variety of scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic.

Fisch, Audrey A., Anne Kostelanetz Mellor, Esther H. Schor, eds. 1993. *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

These essays attempt to transfer some of the enthusiasm for *Frankenstein* to Shelley's wider corpus. While some appear dated in their strict adherence to theoretical approaches, this collection does contain two of the best pieces on Shelley's mythological dramas and short stories by Richardson (pp. 124–139) and Hofkosh (pp. 204–219) respectively.

Frankenstein Criticism

Following Shelley's recognition as a major figure in the Romantic canon, dozens of essays and books have been published annually on *Frankenstein* and its reception, most of which are indifferent in quality. Of the criticism before the flood Bloom 1965 is the best, but this reading does tend to demean the novel's quality when comparing it to the work of Romantic poets. Levine and Knoepfelmacher 1979 is a Janus-faced collection: it contains established old historical readings while also including essays that point toward the psychoanalytic and feminist readings that dominated in the 80s. The best of the feminist criticism on the novel is cited under "Gender", but two works which benefit from feminist approaches, alongside psychoanalytic and queer theory, are Veeder 1986 and Youngquist 1991. For establishing the contexts of the novel Morton 2002 is a good primer, the opening section of Smith 2016 is also useful, and the most lucid unpicking of its various texts is Robinson, 2015. Of the dizzying number of books and articles published on the afterlife of *Frankenstein*, the best on its literary influence is Baldick 1987, on adaptation in stage is Forry 1990, and on screen is Dixon 1990.

Baldick, Chris. 1987. *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-Century Writing*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Unlike many of the reception surveys of Shelley's novel, Baldick's has the advantage of beginning with a proper reading of *Frankenstein* itself, and has a relatively short scope of a hundred years after publication. It is particularly strong in a discussion of Shelley's influence on Dickens and Melville.

Bloom, Harold. 1965. "Frankenstein or the New Prometheus". *Partisan Review* 32. pp. 611–618.

A reading that pushes the power of the shadow or double in the novel to some remarkable conclusions. Bloom's insistence on situating the novel among very canonical work of Romantic poetry and on admitting the novel has various weaknesses led to this essay coming under sustained attack in the 1980s.

Dixon, Wheeler Winston. 1990. "The Films of *Frankenstein*" in *Approaches to Teaching Shelley's Frankenstein*. Edited by Stephen C. Behrendt. New York: MLA, 1990. pp. 166–179.

Not simply a survey of the numerous film adaptations of *Frankenstein*, but also an excellent discussion of the complications of converting the novel to the big screen.

Forry, Steven Earl. 1990. *Hideous Progenies: Dramatizations of Frankenstein from Mary Shelley to the Present*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

A historical overview of the fate of Shelley's characters from the 1820s to the 1990s, via the famous film adaptations featuring Boris Karloff and Gene Wilder. Forry attempts to explain the layers of varnish that colour our idea of Frankenstein and the Monster, and how far current appreciations depart from Shelley's original.

Levine, George and U. C. Knoepfelmacher, eds, 1979. *The Endurance of Frankenstein*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

The best essay collection of the period before Shelley's recovery in the 1980s, with a number of good historical and literary readings of the novel.

Morton, Timothy. 2002. *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein: A Sourcebook*. London: Routledge.

Carefully selected excerpts from scientific writing that influenced Shelley, contemporary and modern reception, and key passages from the novel itself, make this a useful brief introduction to *Frankenstein*.

Robinson, Charles E. 2015. "Percy Bysshe Shelley's Text(s) in Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein*" in *The Neglected Shelley*. Edited by Timothy Webb and Alan M. Weinberg. Farnham: Ashgate. pp. 117–136.

The most detailed and best of the many essays on Percy Shelley's input (of more than 4000 words) to his wife's best-known work.

Smith, Andrew, ed. 2016. *Cambridge Companion to Frankenstein*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sixteen essays by leading scholars in the field. The first six on 'Historical and Literary Contexts' are the high point, with excellent introductory essays by Robinson, Lanone, and Vargo, with the

low point being the rushed attempts to understand the novel via theoretical approaches that make up the second section.

Veeder, William R. 1986. *Mary Shelley and Frankenstein: The Fate of Androgyny*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

A somewhat dated combination of a Freudian and feminist approach is brought to bear on *Frankenstein*, and Shelley's upbringing. When some of the self-indulgent references are stripped away, Veeder's idea that bifurcation and androgyny are central Shelleyan themes is an illuminating one.

Youngquist, Paul. 1991. "Frankenstein: The Mother, the Daughter, and the Monster". *Philological Quarterly* 70. pp. 339–59.

A challenge to the numerous feminist readings of the novel, which attempts to show how different Shelley's ideas on gender are from those of her mother. Uses the ideas of Ricoeur to argue that the novel is an idealist escape from the pressures of motherhood, and a work that has a number of ambiguities regarding the role of women in society.

Criticism of the Post-1818 Novels

The most effective formalist (in its broadest sense) readings of Shelley's literary skill are given in Brewer 1995 and Rajan 1994. Biographical readings of Shelley's novels are usually the mainstay of bad criticism, as Allen 1997 points out, but the utility of the biographical approach when done well is shown in Hopkins 2002. Shelley's consistent belief in the importance of historical research, and the role of history in 'the Present Time', has been a rich vein for critics for some time, and is shown in Bennett 1978, Bennett 1995, Stafford 1994, and Stafford 1997.

Allen, Graham. 1997. "Beyond Biographism: Mary Shelley's *Mathilda*, Intertextuality, and the Wandering Subject". *Romanticism* 3. pp. 170–184.

A successful attempt to nuance the predominantly biographical approaches to Shelley's work; aims to show her aesthetic craft, with *Mathilda* as its case study.

Bennett, Betty T. 1978. "The Political Philosophy of Mary Shelley's Historical Novels: *Valperga* and *Perkins Warbeck*", in *The Evidence of the Imagination: Studies of Interactions between Life and Art in English Romantic Literature*. Edited by Donald H. Reiman, Michael C. Jaye, and Betty T. Bennett. New York: New York University Press. pp. 354–71.

The essay sets out to show the ambitious philosophical principles behind Shelley's historical novels, which were based around the Promethean and Platonic ideals of a struggle towards love.

Bennett, Betty T. 1997. "Machiavelli's and Mary Shelley's Castruccio: Biography as Metaphor". *Romanticism* 3. pp. 170–84.

A comparison of Shelley's and Machiavelli's lives of Castruccio Castracani, one purportedly factual and the other fictional, which shows that both works embellish and alter their protagonist's story to fit their respective purposes and historical moments.

Brewer, William D. 1995. "Mary Shelley on the Therapeutic Value of Language". *European Romantic Review* 5. pp. 387–407.

Uses a number of well-chosen examples in order to argue for the importance of oral and written testimony in Shelley's novels, particularly *Valperga* and *Mathilda*, and how characters often emerge from depressed states via self-expression in these modes.

Hopkins, Lisa. 2002. "'A Medea, in more senses than the more obvious one': Motherhood in Mary Shelley's *Lodore* and *Falkner*". *Eighteenth-Century Novel* 2. pp. 383–405.

A neat study that looks again at the common theme of motherhood, and the mother–child bond, but does so with an uncommon and admirable attention to specific incidents, and Shelley's craft, in these two later works.

Rajan, Tilottama. 1994. "Mary Shelley's *Mathilda*: Melancholy and the Political Economy of Romanticism". *Studies in the Novel* 26. pp. 43–68.

Although the opening is quite tough going due to its stylised adherence to Freud and Lacan, the essay proper is an excellent reading that sees *Mathilda* as the 'object' centre of the work — an objectness that influences the genre, content, and publication of the novel.

Stafford, Fiona. 1994. "The Last Men" in *The Last of the Race: The Growth of a Myth from Milton to Darwin*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. pp. 197–230.

A chapter that situates Shelley's novel among other romantic interpretations of 'the myth of the last of the race' including a poem by Thomas Campbell, a ballad by Thomas Hood, and a painting by John Martin.

Stafford, Fiona. 1997. "*Lodore*: A Tale of the Present Time?". *Romanticism* 3. pp. 209–19.

An excellent study of Shelley's neglected fifth novel that situates *Lodore* as a work defined by and engaged with the tumultuous politics of the period 1830–1833, especially the Great Reform Act.

Feminism

The expansion of the predominantly male and poetic canon of Romantic literature was brought about by feminist critics of the 1980s who argued for the importance of female novelists such as Frances Burney,

Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley. *Frankenstein* was a core text for feminist critics and some of the best readings of the novel take a feminist approach. The most influential of these readings is that of Gilbert and Gubar 1979, in which Milton's *Paradise Lost* is shown not just to provide *Frankenstein's* epigraph, but also to create a universe in which the monster, like Eve, suffers due to the absence of a mother. Mellor 1982 establishes the idea that the novel is a critique of the male-centred intellectual culture of the Romantic period, an idea that is expounded in more detail in Mellor 1988, and expanded by Aaron 1991 to consider the revenge of repressed femininity in *The Last Man*. The three influential 1980s essays by Johnson, collected in Johnson 2014, prove the importance of French theory to a number of feminist readings. Kucich 2000 pays attention to Shelley's *Lives* of eminent female intellectuals to prove that Shelley's critique of gender biases did not lose its vigour in the 1830s.

Aaron, Jane. 1991. "The Return of the Repressed: Reading Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*" in *Feminist Criticism: Theory and Practice*. Edited by Susan Seller. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. pp. 9–21.

The essay applies a biographical–feminist approach to *The Last Man*, and reads the apocalyptic novel as a revenge tale of repressed women against a patriarchal society.

Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. "Horror's Twin: Mary Shelley's Monstrous Eve", in *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979. pp. 213–247.

An incredibly influential treatment in one of the foundational texts of feminist literary criticism, which repositions traditional readings of Shelley's approach to *Paradise Lost* in a predominantly biographical analysis.

Johnson, Barbara. 2014. *A Life with Mary Shelley*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

A collection that includes two important and influential essays— "The Last Man" (1980) and "My monster/my self" (1982)—which owe much to the wittier side of French theory, especially Derrida. The collection also includes an afterword by Judith Butler.

Kucich, Greg. 2000. "Mary Shelley's *Lives* and the Reengendering of History", in *Mary Shelley in Her Times*. Edited by Betty T. Bennett and Stuart Curran. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. pp. 198–213.

Argues that Shelley's *Lives* for Dionysius Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopaedia* offer a 'compelling type of historiography' that allow her to sustain 'progressive gender politics' throughout the 1830s.

Mellor, Anne K. 1982. "On Feminist Utopias". *Women's Studies* 9. pp. 241–262.

One of the classic works of feminist critical theory, which contains a brief but influential reading of *Frankenstein* as a feminist critique of the scientific practices of a patriarchal society.

Mellor, Anne K. 1988. "The Female in *Frankenstein*" in *Romanticism and Feminism*. Edited by Anne K. Mellor. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. pp. 220–232.

Argues that Shelley constructs a 'gendered universe' in *Frankenstein* that subjugates the female, and in which the only positive unit is the reclusive and motherless De Lacey's. Mellor goes on to cogently show that Victor's destruction of the female monster is due to her potential for inappropriately public female sexuality.

Correspondent, journalist, and editor

Due in no small part to the scholarly endeavours to create authoritative texts of Shelley's published and personal writing (cited under *Editions*), an excellent critical literature has developed around her techniques of letter and journal writing, including explorations of the code used in her journal (Crook 2004) and the achievement of her epistolary style (Bennett 1992). The difficult middle ground between personal and professional writing represented by travelogues is explored in Schor 1993, and the extent to which Shelley was aware of and engaging with the idea of a Romantic tourism is explored in Dekker 2005. The canonical status of Percy Shelley's poetry and prose is a product of Shelley's editions of her husband's work; her role in establishing, editing, naming, and publishing collected volumes of his poetry is explored in Crook 2012, O'Neill 2000, and Wolfson 1993.

Bennett, Betty T. 1992. "Finding Mary Shelley in Her Letters" in *Romantic Revisions*. Edited by Robert Brinkley and Keith Hanley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 291–306.

Advocates an approach in which scholars pay proper attention to the figure that emerges from Shelley's 1276 letters rather than mining her novels for biographical insight. The benefits of this reasonable but still unpopular approach are shown by illuminating examples of Shelley's scrupulous and professional attitude toward editing.

Crook, Nora. 2012. "Mary Shelley's concealing 'To—': (Re)addressing Poems". *The Wordsworth Circle* 43. pp. 12–20.

An essay that examines Shelley's approach to editing addressed poems by her husband (e.g. 'Letter to Maria Gisborne'), and how Shelley's choices to name, re-name, or un-name the addressees affects readers' experience.

Crook, Nora. 2004. "'Work' in Mary Shelley's Journals". *The Keats-Shelley Review* 18. Pp. 123–137.

An exploration of what Shelley means by the term 'work' in her journals. This nice short essay speculates on the possibility of the term meaning needlework, and justifies this speculation via some analysis of sewing in Shelley's novels.

Dekker, George. 2005. "Mary Shelley and the Fictions of Companionable Tourism" in *The Fictions of Romantic Tourism: Radcliffe, Scott, and Mary Shelley*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. pp. 200–220.

The first half of this chapter shows the borrowings and allusions of Shelley from the literature of Romantic tourism in *A History of a Six Weeks' Tour* (1817), and then moves on to mine certain passages in *Frankenstein* for their interaction with touristic tropes.

O'Neill, Michael. 2000. "'Trying to make it as good as I can': Mary Shelley's Editing of P. B. Shelley's Poetry and Prose" in *Mary Shelley in Her Time*. Edited by Betty T. Bennett and Charles E. Robinson. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. pp. 185–197.

Succeeds in stripping away myths surrounding Shelley's supposed suppression of her husband's poetry, and offers a critique of gender-based accounts of her editing. The second half of the essay contains important close readings of Shelley's editorial practice in altering her husband's translation of *The Symposium* and in compiling *Posthumous Poems* (1824).

Schor, Esther H. 1993. "Mary Shelley in Transit" in *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*. Edited by Audrey A. Fisch, Anne K. Mellor, and Esther H. Schor. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 235–257.

Discusses Shelley's travel writings as important works in their own right and for their relationship to the major travel works of the late Enlightenment, especially Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*.

Wolfson, Susan. 1993. "Editorial Privilege: Mary Shelley and Percy Shelley's Audiences" in *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*. Edited by Audrey A. Fisch, Anne Kostelanetz Mellor, Esther H. Schor. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 39–72.

An ambitious reading that postulates that Shelley had two competing ambitions when editing her husband's poetry, prose, and letters: to present texts that would clarify and demystify Percy Shelley's work to a reading public, and to present herself as the only qualified reader of his works.

Foreign Cultures and Languages

Shelley's approach to life was relentlessly cosmopolitan: she learnt foreign languages and read the literature of a number of ancient and modern cultures. It was a cosmopolitanism modelled, as Morrison 2004 shows, on the example of her mother Mary Wollstonecraft and the French intellectual women of the 1790s. Shelley also had a great desire to travel, and Moskal 2000 convincingly argues that her approach to her first trip abroad in 1814 should be read through the prism of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. She spent more time in Italy than any major Romantic writer and Shelley's sense of herself as a hybrid of English and Italian attitudes towards life and literature is given in Schoina 2009. While in Italy Shelley learnt Ancient Greek from Alexander Mavrocordato (who would go on to be the Prime Minister of Greece); her

translation of Homer is discussed in Bowers 2018 and her later use of Greek is discussed in Wallace 2011.

Bowers, Will. 2018. "On First Looking into Mary Shelley's Homer". *The Review of English Studies* 69. pp. 510–531.

Based on the discovery of a translation of Book 1 of Homer's *Odyssey* by Shelley, the essay reconsiders the Philhellenic character of the Shelleys' and Byron's circle while at Pisa, and puts Mary Shelley at the centre of its literary productions.

Morrison, Lucy. 2004. "Writing the Self in Others' Lives: Mary Shelley's Biographies of Madame Roland and Madame de Staël". *Keats-Shelley Journal* 53. pp. 127–51.

A thorough look at the possible motivations and stylistic originality of Shelley's biographies of two French female authors, which is particularly good at exploring the complicated triangulation of these biographies between Shelley's mother, Shelley herself, and these prominent French intellectuals.

Moskal, Jeanne. 2000. "'To speak in Sanchean phrase': Cervantes and the Politics of Mary Shelley's *History of a Six Weeks' Tour*" in *Mary Shelley in Her Times*. Edited by Betty T. Bennett and Stuart Curran. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. pp. 18–37.

Shelley's claim to be 'thinking of Don Quixote and Sancho' and her reading of *Don Quixote* in 1816 is used as vantage point to look at her engagement with the "female Quixote" tradition and the Spanish liberal cause.

Schoina, Maria. 2009. 'Mary Shelley, *Anglo-Italicus*' in *Romantic 'Anglo-Italians': Configurations of Identity in Byron, the Shelleys, and the Pisan Circle*. Farnham: Ashgate. pp. 57–88.

A brilliant and wide-ranging appreciation of Shelley's interaction with Italy, and her challenge to English perceptions of Italians. The chapter includes the best reading of Shelley's poem 'The Choice' and her *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843*.

Wallace, Jennifer. 2011. "'Copying Shelley's Letters': Mary Shelley and the Uncanny Erotics of Greek". *Women's Studies* 40. pp. 404–28.

This essay analyses and theorizes Shelley's use of Greek language and literature while she was editing her husband's letters. Wallace teases out some excellent connections between Shelley's intellectual life and her private feelings in the 1830s.