

Hebron concludes that the Shelley papers “could not be so shaped, or confined to a single, judicious impression” (pp. 13, 25). *Shelley’s Ghost* carefully recounts the various endeavors to rewrite the family history posthumously by those refashioning the past to serve the descendants’ own individual interests.

Denlinger, the curator of the Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, has contributed an excellent chapter on Shelley’s manuscripts outside the Bodleian that recounts the global dispersal of different Shelley-circle manuscripts. In observing that “Shelley’s ghost, in its papery forms, has given rise to a number of stories, some amusing, some chilling,” Denlinger admits to focusing “shamelessly” on the more interesting tales, particularly those surrounding the two copies of *Queen Mab*, the Scrope Davies Notebook, the Silsbee Notebooks, and the Esdaile Notebook (p. 163). These detailed, well-researched accounts make for fascinating reading as they reveal the exciting mysteries behind documents in collections beyond the Bodleian.

Hebron and Denlinger introduce their readers to a cast of variegated characters whose specters, like the ghost of the book’s title, flit hauntingly in and out of the story. While I have only one complaint about this stellar book, a disconcerting error in one chapter’s numbering of the endnotes, the splendid *Shelley’s Ghost* should help ensure that the Shelley family “legacy” will forever be “secured” (p. 181).

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Mary Shelley: Her Circle and Her Contemporaries. Edited by L. ADAM MEKLER and LUCY MORRISON. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010. Pp. 226. Cloth, \$59.99.

This small volume contains an impressive collection of essays characterized by a sidelining of the usual biographical approach to Mary Shelley. Instead, contributors’ “primary focus [is] upon the texts themselves,” writes co-editor Lucy Morrison; “these essays seek rather to expand critical consideration further into Mary Shelley’s placement within larger Romantic period contexts” (p. 2). This book’s focus on Mary Shelley’s role within her historical context and the attention of each article to close textual analysis make it a solid addition to the shelves of any Mary Shelley scholar.

The book opens with Zoe Bolton’s essay, “Collaborative Authorship and Shared Travel in *History of a Six Weeks’ Tour*,” which details the extensive collaboration between the Shelleys in producing Mary Shelley’s first published text. Most critics have shied away from looking too closely at the authorial process involved in the writing of *History* for fear that it would destroy the mythology of the solitary Romantic genius, but Bolton argues that the “joint creative process” inherent in the composition of *Six Weeks’ Tour* leads to a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which their lifelong partnership worked (p. 8). Stefan Esposito’s “Communicating Life: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Romantic Organicism,”

the second essay, investigates Coleridge's and P. B. Shelley's influence on Mary Shelley's concept of the life force that awakens Frankenstein's Creature. Esposito argues that Victor Frankenstein's silence about the details of that infusion of life should be attributed to Mary Shelley's deliberate "skepticism as to whether life can ever finally be mastered, even at a conceptual or linguistic level" (p. 28).

The next two essays address Shelley's connection to her father and his writing. L. Adam Mekler's essay, "Hideous Progenies: Mary Shelley, John Polidori, and Incest in the Godwinian Novel," though short, offers an interesting analysis of Polidori's little known text *Ernestus Berchtold; or, the Modern Œdipus* in relation to *Frankenstein* and Godwin's *St. Leon*. Nathaniel Leach's "Mary Shelley and the Godwinian Gothic: *Mathilda* and *Mandeville*" offers an alternative perspective on the use of the Gothic in the work of father and daughter. Rather than viewing the Gothic as merely a convenient genre for the Shelley circle to express their ideological views, Leach argues that Godwin and Mary Shelley "are attracted to the Gothic precisely because of their interest in questioning the relationship between inner states and outward expression" (p. 63).

Rachel Mann's "Speaking Bodies and Fe/Male Discourses in *Proserpine* and *The Cenci*," like Bolton's essay, looks at the collaboration between the Shelleys. Mann focuses on female discourse's entries into masculine discourse, specifically in narratives that focus on violence directed towards women. Mann's fascinating essay examines the search for voice by Mary Shelley herself and by the fictive characters of Proserpine and Beatrice Cenci, concluding that Mary Shelley herself was the most radical of the group because of her participation in male-dominated discourse. The next article, Meilee D. Bridges's "Ruining History: The Shelleys' Fragments of Rome," analyzes the Shelleys' visions of Rome in relation to antecedent texts by Edward Gibbon, Germaine de Staël, and Byron. Through close reading of P. B. Shelley's "The Colosseum" and of Mary Shelley's "Valerius: The Reanimated Roman," Bridges argues that Mary Shelley "adapts the Romantic fragmentary genre to demonstrate that the ruin functions as not just a topographical feature but also a textual strategy—a literary object that evokes a particular subjective experience of classical antiquity" (pp. 107–8). Bridges's investigation invites further attention to these two little-studied texts.

Lisa Vargo's "Writing for *The Liberal*" examines Mary Shelley's articles for the journal that was founded by her husband and Byron shortly before Shelley's death. Vargo demonstrates that the articles simultaneously enabled Mary Shelley to sustain her husband's memory and to contribute meaningfully, herself, to discussion of reform. Mary Shelley's entries, Vargo suggests, helped "establish her place as a liberal intellectual within her immediate circle and within the larger Romantic literary scene" (p. 146).

Although *The Last Man* was much maligned in the press when it was first published, Lucy Morrison makes a strong case for the novel's redeeming aspects and—surprisingly—for its inherent musicality in "Listen While You Read: The Case of Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*." Mary Shelley's apocalyptic novel

is usually read as a testament to her loss and isolation upon leaving her Italian coterie for a more solitary life in England. Morrison highlights the novel's abundant references to opera and music, showing that the resulting "musical subtext" culminates in a deafening silence that leaves readers with just the text itself—the written word (p. 166).

The next contribution is Rebecca Nesvet's "‘Like the Sultanness Scheherazade’: The Storyteller and the Reading Nation in *Perkin Warbeck*," which explores Mary Shelley's grappling with the reading public's demands. Nesvet compellingly demonstrates that the fictional heroine Monina de Faro enables the novel's readers to imagine themselves as participants in societal reform. The book concludes with Erin Webster Garrett's "White Papers and Black Figures: Mary Shelley Writing America," which examines Mary Shelley's "New World skepticism" in *Lodore* (p. 186). The American chapters of the novel, Webster Garrett suggests, demonstrate Mary Shelley's doubts "about whether, as a daughter nation, America can exist as something other than a patriarchal, European invention," ultimately suggesting that Mary Shelley's "commitment to liberal ideology" is more complicated than previously thought (p. 186).

All the essays rightly engage with recent discussions of Mary Shelley's oeuvre in relation to its biographical impetus, reception history, and philosophical import. Significantly, the contributors concentrate on the interconnections between Mary Shelley and her coterie and analyze texts that cover almost all of Mary Shelley's oeuvre, thus consolidating the wider view of Mary Shelley created in earlier scholarly collections such as *Mary Shelley in her Times* (ed. Betty T. Bennett and Stuart Curran, 2000) and *Iconoclastic Departures: Mary Shelley after Frankenstein* (ed. Syndy M. Conger et al., 1997), and putting to rest the old myth of Mary Shelley as a one-book author. While some of the essays revert to the biographical mode that the volume purports to supersede, most provide an astute analysis of Mary Shelley's writing, grounded in an attention to her coterie and to the philosophical and societal debates of nineteenth-century Europe.

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William Godwin and the Theatre. By DAVID O'SHAUGHNESSY. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010. Pp. xii, 211. Cloth, \$99.00.

The Plays of William Godwin. By WILLIAM GODWIN. Edited by DAVID O'SHAUGHNESSY. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010. Pp. lx, 285. Cloth, \$180.00.

An avid theatergoer who venerated the great tragedians, William Godwin devoted considerable time and effort to researching, writing, and revising his four tragedies; solicited theatrical advice from his friends Thomas Holcroft, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Charles Lamb; and relentlessly pestered stage managers to have his plays performed. He hoped that his dramas would ensure his literary immortality, transmit his philosophical ideas to a wide audience, influ-