

Edited by Michael Eberle-Sinatra

MARY SHELLEY'S FICTIONS

From *Frankenstein* to *Falkner*



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with an Introduction by

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Mary Shelley's Fictions

To my mother

Editor's Preface and Acknowledgements

The idea for this volume originates in my attending a number of British and North American conferences devoted to Mary Shelley during the bicentenary anniversary of her birth. I was very much impressed by the quality and diversity of new work done on Shelley by both established and emerging scholars from Canada, England, Ireland, Scotland and the United States of America. I decided to put together a volume of essays that would reflect the vitality and richness of current Shelleyan criticism.

The sub-title, 'From *Frankenstein* to *Falkner*', could have lent itself to a purely chronological arrangement, and indeed it is literally true that the first essay is on *Frankenstein* and the last on *Falkner*. While this would have been one way of attempting to unite the Other Shelley to her *Frankensteinian* Self, and thus to reassemble a single Being, this collection has eschewed simple linearity and adopted another method: that of grouping contributions thematically into four main sections. Within each section essays primarily on the 'early' Shelley (from *Frankenstein* to *The Last Man*) are juxtaposed to those primarily on 'later' Shelley (*Perkin Warbeck* to *Falkner*). The sections are not intended to be watertight. Each hooks on to the other; there are several currents running across all boundaries. Several of the essays might, with equal appropriateness, have been assigned to sections other than the ones in which they are to be found.

Most of these essays are based on papers (since extensively rewritten), which were first offered at these following national and international conferences in Britain, Canada and the USA: 'Beyond *Frankenstein*' (University of Bristol, England, 22 February 1997), convenor Timothy Webb; 'Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley in Her Times' (Keats-Shelley Association of America, in conjunction with the University Center and Graduate School of the City University of New York, 21–24 May 1997), convenors Betty T. Bennett and Stuart Curran; the Fifth British Association of Romantic Studies (BARS) Conference, 'Romantic Generations' (University of Leeds, 24–27 July 1997), convenors Vivien Jones and John Whale; 'Mary Shelley: Parents, Peers, Progeny' (Anglia Polytechnic University and the Open

University, Cambridge, 12–14 September 1997), convenors Nora Crook and Marilyn Brooks; North American Society for Studies in Romanticism (NASSR) Conference, 'Romanticism and Its Others' (McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, 21–24 October, 1997), convenor David Clarke; and MLA 1997 (Toronto, 27–30 December 1997).

Earlier versions of Lidia Garbin's and Daniel E. White's contributions appeared in *Romanticism On the Net*, 6 (May 1997), since when they have been substantially revised. Fiona Stafford's essay was published in *Romanticism*, 3.2 (1997) and is here reprinted, with a few changes, by kind permission of the editors and Edinburgh University Press.

Many persons have assisted me, directly and indirectly, with this volume. First among these I must mention Jonathan Wordsworth, who gave me some extra time on a different project in order that I might accommodate this one. Without his friendship, patience, and mentorship, this book would not have seen the light. Charles E. Robinson generously gave invaluable scholarly advice in the middle of an exceptionally busy schedule. I would also like to thank Betty T. Bennett, William D. Brewer, David Chandler, Pamela Clemit, Syndy M. Conger, Stuart Curran, Marilyn Gaul, Nicholas Halmi, Chris Koenig-Woodyard, Lucy Newlyn, Michael O'Neill, Joel Pace, Seamus Perry, Matthew Scott, Nicola Trott, Timothy Webb, Astrid Wind, and Duncan Wu. It has been a real pleasure to work with Charmian Hearne, my editor at Macmillan, whose support throughout I have greatly appreciated. Thanks are also due to Eleanor Birne, Ann Marangos and everyone at Macmillan who has helped with production. I would also like to thank all the contributors, for the camaraderie, good humour and professionalism that have made this project such a gratifying experience.

Special thanks are due to Nora Crook for her acceptance of my invitation to write the introduction. But her contribution to this volume goes beyond what goes under her name, beyond scholarly inspiration and valuable suggestions; it extends to her taking on the role of temporary editor when my other commitments threatened to stall the project at an advanced stage. She has left the impress of her expertise throughout. On my own behalf, and on behalf of the other contributors, I wish to express my deep gratitude for all the work she has put into this volume.

Last, but not least, I would like to acknowledge the constant support, encouragement, and patience of my wife Wendy. For a

comparatist, she has probably heard more about Mary Shelley over the last three years than she may have wished. For her endless patience, and for much more, I am endlessly grateful.

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Abbreviations and Sigla

Quotations from Mary Shelley's novels and pagination are taken from *MWS Pickering* (see below). Volume and chapter numbers of the *first* editions are, where appropriate, given in square brackets after the primary reference in order to facilitate the location of quotations in a range of editions other than *MWS Pickering*. Following what appear to have been Shelley's final intentions, the spelling 'Matilda' is used for the title of the novella. 'Mathilda', however, is used for the character, following the spelling in Shelley's fair-copy manuscript.

- Bennett, *Evidence* Betty T. Bennett, 'The Political Philosophy of Mary Shelley's Historical Novels: *Valperga* and *Perkin Warbeck*', in *The Evidence of the Imagination: Studies of Interactions between Life and Art in English Romantic Literature*, eds Donald H. Reiman, Michael C. Jaye and Betty T. Bennett (New York: New York University Press, 1978), pp. 354–71.
- F Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, ed. Nora Crook, vol. 1 of *MWS Pickering*. [1818 edition, with collations]
- FN —, *Falkner, a Novel*, ed. Pamela Clemit, vol. 7 of *MWS Pickering*.
- Frankenstein Notebooks* *The Frankenstein Notebooks: a Facsimile Edition of Mary Shelley's Manuscript Novel, 1816–17 (with alterations in the hand of Percy Bysshe Shelley) as it survives in draft and fair copy deposited by Lord Abinger in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Dep. c. 477/1 and Dep. c. 534/1–2)*, transcribed and ed. Charles E. Robinson, 2 vols (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996).
- L Mary Shelley, *Lodore*, ed. Fiona Stafford, vol. 6 of *MWS Pickering*.
- LM —, *The Last Man*, ed. Jane Blumberg with Nora Crook, vol. 4 of *MWS Pickering*.
- M —, *Matilda, Dramas, Reviews & Essays*,

- Prefaces & Notes*, ed. Pamela Clemit, vol. 2 of *MWS Pickering*.
- Mellor Anne K. Mellor, *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988).
- MWSJ *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814–1844*, eds Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, 2 vols (Oxford: OUP 1987) [corr. and repub. as one vol. with same pagination (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995)].
- MWSL *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, ed. Betty T. Bennett, 3 vols (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980–88).
- MWS Pickering *The Novels and Selected Works of Mary Shelley*, General Editor Nora Crook, with Pamela Clemit, introd. Betty T. Bennett, 8 vols (London: William Pickering, 1996).
- MWST Mary Shelley, *Collected Tales and Stories*, ed. Charles E. Robinson (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976; corr. pbk edn, 1990).
- Other MS *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*, eds Audrey A. Fisch, Anne K. Mellor and Esther H. Schor (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
- PBSL *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).
- PW Mary Shelley, *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck, a Romance*, ed. Doucet Devin Fischer, vol. 5 of *MWS Pickering*.
- Sunstein Emily W. Sunstein, *Mary Shelley: Romance and Reality* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1989; corr. pbk edn, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).
- TW Mary Shelley, *Travel Writing*, containing *History of a Six Weeks' Tour and Rambles in Germany and Italy*, ed. Jeanne Moskal, vol. 8 of *MWS Pickering*.

V	—, <i>Valperga: or, The Life and Adventures of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca</i> , ed. Nora Crook, vol. 3 of <i>MWS Pickering</i> .
< >	Encloses deletion in MS.
^ ^	Encloses insertions in MS.

Notes on the Contributors

Graham Allen is a college lecturer in the Department of English, University College, Cork. He is the author of *Harold Bloom: a Poetics of Conflict*, and has published various articles and chapters in the fields of Romantic studies and literary theory.

Richard Cronin teaches at the University of Glasgow. His latest book, *The Politics of Romantic Poetry: In Search of the Pure Commonwealth*, was published in 1999.

Nora Crook, Reader in English at Anglia Polytechnic University, Cambridge, is the General Editor of *The Novels and Selected Works of Mary Shelley* (1996) and *Mary Shelley: Literary Lives and Other Writings* (forthcoming 2002). She recently joined Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat as a member of the team currently editing *Complete Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley* for Johns Hopkins.

Michael Eberle-Sinatra is an Associate of the Northrop Frye Centre, Victoria University. He is the founding editor of *Romanticism On the Net*, and a former junior fellow of St Catherine's College, Oxford. He is the General Editor, with Robert Morrison, of *The Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt* (forthcoming). He has published articles on the Shelleys, Leigh Hunt, the French Romantics and science fiction. He has recently completed a book-length study of Leigh Hunt and is currently working on a project on French and British Romantic writers.

Anne-Lise François is an assistant professor in the English and Comparative Literature Departments at UC Berkeley. She is currently completing a book on passive agency and the ethics of reserve entitled *Open Secrets: the Literature of Uncounted Experience*.

Lidia Garbin has recently completed her doctoral dissertation on the interrelations between the works of Walter Scott and Shakespeare at the University of Liverpool. She has given papers and published on Scott and his influence on his contemporaries (Mary Shelley, Byron, Manzoni) and successors (Hardy and Forster).

A. A. Markley is Assistant Professor of English at Penn State University, Delaware County. His research interests include William Godwin's novels and Mary Shelley's fiction, particularly her short stories. He has published essays on the poetry of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, has co-edited, with Gary Handwerk, editions of Godwin's novels *Caleb Williams* and *Fleetwood*, and is a volume editor of *Mary Shelley: Literary Lives and Other Writings*.

Daniel Mozes graduated from Columbia University and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He has taught for six years in the City University, and is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Lehman College of CUNY. Dr Mozes is writing a memoir of teaching at CUNY.

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Fiona Stafford, Tutor in English at Somerville College, Oxford, is the author of *The Last of the Race: the Growth of a Myth from Milton to Darwin* (1994) and the editor of the Pickering *Lodore* (1996). She has research specialisms in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Scottish literature and publications in these areas.

Sophie Thomas is Lecturer in English at the University of Sussex. The essay included here is part of a forthcoming book on the fragment, tentatively entitled *Undoing Romanticism: Coleridge and the Ends of the Fragment*.

David Vallins studied at Cambridge, Sussex and Oxford Universities, and is currently Research Fellow in English at the University of Hong Kong. His book *Coleridge and the Psychology of Romanticism* was published in 1999, and his articles have appeared in *JHI*, *ELH*, *Modern Philology* and *Prose Studies*.

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Julia M. Wright is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Waterloo. She specializes in British and Irish literature of the Romantic period, and has published on that subject in a number of journals and collections. She co-edited (with Tilottama Rajan) *Romanticism, History and the Possibilities of Genre*, and is currently editing Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary*.

Introduction

The year 1997, the double bicentenary of Mary Shelley's birth and Mary Wollstonecraft's death, proved that Shelley had in some sense 'arrived'. Special exhibitions were held at the National Portrait Gallery, London, the New York Public Library and the Horsham Museum in Sussex. An ugly British postage stamp depicting Frankenstein's monster was issued, Shelley's mythological dramas were premiered (in Cambridge and Bologna) and plays about her were written and performed. *Pour comble de merveille*, a lost children's story, *Maurice*, was found. In national and international conferences entirely or partly devoted to one or both Marys – in Bristol, New York, Leeds, Calgary, Cambridge, Bologna and Parma, Toronto – this elusive writer was celebrated, analysed, explicated, contextualized, theorized – a situation unthinkable twenty-five years ago.

If we look at the landmark collections of essays on Shelley over this period in order to map the growth of her canonicity, we find three distinct phases. The first may be called 'Author of *Frankenstein*' phase. This built up during the 1970s, when *Frankenstein* rose in eminence as a studied feminist, Gothic and science-fiction text, and was consolidated by Levine and Knoepfelmacher's *The Endurance of Frankenstein* (1979). For the public at large and for most university students this phase has, of course, never passed away; Shelley remains the originating cause of a series of *Frankenstein* films and author of the most widely studied novel in the universities of the USA – and that is that.

In academia, however, the very success of the canonization of *Frankenstein* itself provoked what I call the 'Not *Frankenstein*' or 'Other Mary Shelley' phase, after the title of the landmark collection of 1992. Pointing out the irony that Shelley was now in danger of being 'obscured even by her own renown'¹ the editors, Fisch, Mellor and

Schor, offered their book as a corrective. As Levine and Knoepfmacher had drawn on work of the 1970s, so this collection drew on that of the 1980s – an explosion of Mary Shelley scholarship: monumental editions of Shelley's *Letters* (MWSL, 1980–88), Shelley's *Journals* (MWSJ, 1987), biographies by Spark and Sunstein² and influential critical overviews such as Poovey's *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer* (1984) and Mellor's *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fictions, Her Monsters* (1988). *The Other Mary Shelley* was followed up by *Iconoclastic Departures: Mary Shelley after Frankenstein* (1997),³ which focused on challenging/modifying the view that Shelley was a defeated radical, crippled by gentility, the society of Dead (male) Poets, and her own idealization of the bourgeois family. However, the 'Other Mary Shelley', despite being a necessary and valuable historical response, produces its own form of distortion.

Complicating the 'Other Mary Shelley' phase has been the virtually simultaneous emergence of a 'Early Mary Shelley'. The increased availability of the novella *Matilda* (written 1819, first published 1959), of her apocalyptic *The Last Man* (1826), and (more recently) of her feminist historical novel *Valperga* (1823) has promoted recognition of Shelley as a three-book – maybe four-book – author,⁴ while her novels of the 1830s – *Perkin Warbeck* (1830) and her two 'domestic' novels, *Lodore* (1835) and *Falkner* (1837) – remain in comparative obscurity. This phenomenon is, nevertheless, symptomatic of a readiness for progress beyond a simple *Frankenstein*/Not *Frankenstein* binary opposition and towards a synthesis, where her oeuvre might be restored to its wholeness. Such a progress has been advanced by Betty T. Bennett and Charles E. Robinson's anthology, *The Mary Shelley Reader* (1990) and by the first collected edition of all her novels (1996). The surprising number of 1997 conference papers on *Lodore* and *Falkner*, especially on *Lodore*, was another portent. We are now in a phase of transition towards – let us say – 'The Inclusive Mary Shelley'. This collection is, I believe, partly its product, and, I hope, partly its producer.

'From *Frankenstein* to *Falkner*', Betty T. Bennett has written, 'Mary Shelley's novels dwell on questions of power, responsibility and love.'⁵ Here is common ground, but once we step beyond it we find debate and controversy – indeed, we do so even as we probe the terms. What, for instance, was Shelley's attitude towards power? What is the relationship in her work between 'love' and 'self-sacrifice'? Michael Eberle-Sinatra takes no sides; he has, of course, his own views and leanings, but with his editor's hat on he does not set out

to be a 'judge of controversies';⁶ his approach to selection is that of the broad church, of an opening-up of a space where views may clash, coalesce or co-exist. Upon examining the four parts into which these essays have been arranged, we find that each raises a controversial key issue or issues. We observe markedly differing assumptions and alignments among the contributors. Yet it would be an exaggeration to say that contrariety and debate are defining features of this collection. Some of the essays seem almost intentionally to form a complementary pair – those of Cronin and Stafford, or Thomas and Wright, for instance.

Part I, 'The Craft of Writing', engages with the question of how far it is appropriate to regard Shelley's prose as *writerly*, as produced by a self-conscious artist, as distinct from its being a vehicle for large concepts and ruling themes, obsessively pursued – consciously or unconsciously, as may be. While none of these essays tackles the question head-on, each does so implicitly. My own contribution assumes that the dichotomy between writing-as-craft and writing-as-vehicle here posited is a false one. Scrutinizing Shelley as a self-reviser, it argues that her often minute alterations for the 1831 *Frankenstein* simultaneously offer aesthetic satisfaction and concentrate, not weaken, the energy of the 1818 text. Approaching Shelley as an experimental writer and using a formalist methodology, Sophie Thomas illuminates a rich subject: the temporal ruptures and displacements in *The Last Man*. She presents the text as a fragment, but not as the typical 'Romantic fragment'. The novel has been rendered unfinishable by the very nature of the relationship of the author's introduction to the rest of the text; it is 'a compelling meditation on the ends of writing' which may be read 'as a reflection on the infinitality of writing itself'. Richard Cronin's essay is that rarity, an analysis of the actual characteristics of Shelley's style, a technique which has scarcely advanced since Jean de Palacio's pioneering 1969 study⁷ and which is almost never applied to her later prose. He pinpoints what he calls the hybrid sentence, at once sentimental and 'styptic', as a prominent and significant feature of *Lodore*. His terms (one hopes they will catch on) help both to define new developments in the 1830s novel and to identify Shelley as one of the avant-garde of that decade.

'Gender', the title of Part II, on the other hand, is for many critics the issue which is *par excellence* associated with Shelley. Is she a victim of patriarchy? Does her work constitute a critique of Romantic male egotism – indeed of Romanticism itself? Or did her 'critique' work from within an alternative tradition of female Romanticism? Did she