

Fall 2016

# Friendships and Influence Between Members of the Shelley Circle: An Annotated Bibliography

Kiera Duggan

Merrimack College, [duggank@merrimack.edu](mailto:duggank@merrimack.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/honors\\_component](http://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/honors_component)



Part of the [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Duggan, Kiera, "Friendships and Influence Between Members of the Shelley Circle: An Annotated Bibliography" (2016). *Honors Program Contracts*. Paper 3.

This Project - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors Program at Merrimack ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Program Contracts by an authorized administrator of Merrimack ScholarWorks.

Friendships and Influence Between Members of the Shelley Circle: An  
Annotated Bibliography

Kiera Duggan

Gods and Monsters: The Shelley Circle Honors Component

Professor Vatalaro

Lauritsen, John. "Love among the Romantics. (Essay)." *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide*, vol. 9, no. 5, 2002, p. 11+. *General OneFile*, libraries.state.ma.us/login?gwurl=http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=GPS&sw=w&u=mlln\_n\_merrcol&v=2.1&id=GALE%7CA90892982&it=r&asid=b2245c8f4d944539cad3a903f044c3ee. Accessed 8 Dec. 2016.

In this scholarly article, John Lauritsen argues that Percy Shelley's love life was defined by his feelings for other men, not women. He cites several excerpts from poems like "The Boat on the Serchio" and "Epipsychildion," and the epitaph he wrote for himself as evidence of his romantic love for Edward Elcker Williams, and demonstrates the ways in which some of his published writings about women make more sense after switching pronouns. He points out the unsuccessful ends of most of Shelley's relationships with women, and argues that in almost every case, Shelley preferred the company of men over women. Lauritsen offers a developed argument, but he treats Mary Shelley poorly and unfairly by suggesting she was a cold person who essentially manipulated Percy into marriage, and was not even the real author of Frankenstein. This article contributes important perspectives on the Shelley circle dynamic as it brings new depth and meaning to the relationship between Byron and Shelley, even if they were never linked romantically or sexually.

Mekler, L. Adam. "Mirrors and Multiplied Reflections in Lord Byron and Mary Shelley."

*Studies in Romanticism*, vol. 46, no. 4, Winter 2007, pp. 461-80. *JSTOR*,

[www.jstor.org/stable/25602116](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25602116).

In this scholarly article, L. Mekler discusses the ways in which both Mary Shelley and Lord Byron utilize the image of broken mirrors in their work. He identifies the specific imaginings of multiple, fractured reflections as first appearing in Byron's work, and then that of Mary Shelley; Percy's references to mirrors were always that of whole reflections, not the fragmented image characteristic of Byron and Mary. Mekler describes the years Mary Shelley acted as a copyist for work like *Don Juan*, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, and the third canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and argues that their relationship, both professional and personal, added new depth and influence on her work. While Melker's claim is very well-supported by his excerpts from *The Bride of Abydos* and *The Corsair* and his reference to Lacan's mirror stage, his focus on Shelley is lacking compared to his excellent close-reading of the work of Byron. This article offers important perspectives on the working relationship between Byron and Shelley, and the ways Byron's emphasis on fractured reflections was mirrored by Shelley.

BELL, KATHLEEN. "A family man: the Godwin and Shelley circles." *Critical Survey* 1992:

52. *JSTOR Journals*. Web.

In this scholarly article, Kathleen Bell explores the theme of father-daughter relations in Godwin and Mary Shelley's writings, both by themselves and in St. Clair's book, *The Godwins and the Shelleys*. Bell criticizes the sidelining of Mary Shelley in this Godwin biography and details her influence and experiences not solely as Godwin's daughter or Shelley's wife, but as her own independent person. She argues that not only did Mary Shelley completely understand Godwinian thought, she also saw the failings within it, and responded to those ideas within her own works. While her relationships with her father and husband obviously were quite important parts of her life, Bell illustrates how Mary Shelley was unafraid to critique a patriarchal society and the personal mistakes of the men in her life, using her writing as a conduit. Bell offers a well-reasoned argument against St. Clair, and close-reads passages from *Mathilda*, *Lodore*, *The Last Man*, and *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck* to support her point. This article contributes new perspectives on how Mary Shelley communicated with and debated members of the Shelley Circle through her writing, her published works serving to contest the viewpoints of Godwin and Percy Shelley.

Clubbe, John. "Mary Shelley as Autobiographer: The Evidence of the 1831 Introduction to Frankenstein." *The Wordsworth Circle* 1981: 102. *JSTOR Journals*. Web.

In this article, historian John Clubbe examines the validity and accuracy in Mary Shelley's 1831 introduction to Frankenstein, proving that her account of the conception of her story was true. As a response to James Rieger's "Dr. Polidori and the Genesis of Frankenstein," he studies the specific *Fantasmagoria* tales Shelley mentions and the topic of conversations during the nights at Diodati that led to the origin of the novel. He also looks at various pieces of correspondence between the circle of writers in order to pinpoint the night of Shelley's nightmare vision. Clubbe offers a well-reasoned argument that is strongly corroborated by his use of source material and journal entries, and successfully counters Rieger's claim that Shelley had a faulty memory and her introduction had many falsified elements. This article contributes valuable perspectives on the atmosphere that spawned Frankenstein, and provides new depth into the ways in which the members of this fellowship interacted, especially regarding their writings.

Wolfson, Susan J. "England's First Family Of Writers: Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin, Mary Shelley." *Modern Philology* 107.4 (2010): E117-E120. *Academic Search Premier*.  
Web.

In this review of *England's First Family of Writers* by Julie Carlson, Susan J. Wolfson identifies the way writing served as both public and private messages for individuals, family, and the world for Wollstonecraft, Godwin, and the Shelleys. She praises Carlson's identification of Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley as authors, separated from their statuses as wives and daughter, while still recognizing where their work communicates with their husbands and children. The family's writing, both Carlson and Wolfson agree, brings extremes together—the public and private spheres, individual and collective, adult and child, living and dead; through their work, all four of these authors conveys their personal values, their traumas, and their moral codes. While Wolfson does acknowledge mistakes and distractions in Carlson's book, both writer and reviewer provide developed and well-reasoned commentary on the Wollstonecraft, Godwin, and Shelley family. This review adds more depth and understanding to the way these writers saw their work as expansive modes for conversation and dialogue among seemingly contradictory groups of people.

Ellis, David. "Who Is King of the Cats? Byron, Shelley and the Friendship of Poets." *The Cambridge Quarterly* 2010: 61. *JSTOR Journals*. Web.

In this scholarly article, David Ellis argues that, despite Byron's claims to the contrary, he and Shelley had a long-lasting friendship, only called something different because of Byron's extreme pessimism. Ellis highlights the paradoxical manner in which Shelley viewed Byron, referencing the ways Shelley idolized his companion's poetry but also envied his success. Despite Byron being older, Ellis explains how Shelley was the more dominant personality in their relationship, and felt it was his duty to overcome Byron's prejudices and hopeless state of mind. The article describes the forces that put a strain on their closeness; though both men were able to put aside ideological differences in favor of maintaining their relationship, the questions of Claire Claremont and Allegra, along with Leigh Hunt, undeniably made their camaraderie somewhat tense. Ellis offers a developed assessment of the two men's connection over the years, thoroughly examining the duality of both Byron and Shelley and their opinions of each other. This article contributes an important outlook on the ways in which Shelley's voice featured in Byron's writing, and demonstrates how their friendship influenced their work.