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Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley: An Introduction



Synopsis

"Recognition of Mary Shelley's systemic dual focus on public and domestic power as the means to interrogate traditional norms and propose alternatives materially alters parochial perceptions of her objectives and her achievements. Her novels, outside of *Frankenstein*, and recently, *The Last Man*, have been dismissed as simple, mutually dissociated "romances" or experiments in genre solely to intersect with a market niche; they are neither. Rather, they and all of Mary Shelley's major works voice a cosmopolitan, socio-political reformist ideology that evolved as their author's acute awareness of world events enabled her to calibrate her literary voice to deal with unfolding rather than past societal issues. Her multidisciplinary fusion of literature, political philosophy, and history calls for a commensurate multidisciplinary reading in order to understand the complexities of both the author and her works." — Betty T. Bennett

In this book, Betty T. Bennett offers an extensively expanded version of the introduction she wrote for Pickering and Chatto's eight volume set, *The Novels and Selected Works of Mary Shelley*. Along with her insightful retelling of Mary Shelley's eventful life story, Bennett gives us a fresh reading of *Frankenstein* in the context of its author's full career. She also discusses a variety of Mary Shelley's lesser known works, including *Matilda*, *Valperga*, *The Last Man*, *Perkin Warbeck*, *Lodore*, *Falkner*, and her travel books. The result is a compelling portrait of Mary Shelley as she saw herself — an inventive, irreverent writer whose desire for political and social reform was at the heart of her literary expression for three decades.

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Customer Reviews

Mary Shelley fully deserves to be remembered and celebrated for her extraordinary talent and equally important life. Her parentage, her marriage, the circumstances of her widowhood all compel the imagination. (Times Literary Supplement)

Betty T. Bennett is Distinguished Professor of Literature at American University, Washington, D.C. Her books include Mary Diana Dods, a Gentleman and a Scholar; Selected Letters of Mary Shelley; and, in three volumes, The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley; all available from Johns Hopkins.

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