CHAPTER 10

Creatrix Witches, Nonbinary Creatures, and Shelleyan Transmedia

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However many idealized feminine characters populate Shelley's earlier poems, including *Alastor*'s veiled and Arab maidens, Queen Mab, Ianthe, and Cythna, these figures become even more ethereal in Shelley's last works as they turn less human and, arguably, less gendered.[1] *Prometheus Unbound*'s Asia transmutes into the boat of light akin to *The Triumph of Life*'s "the shape all light," and both spread visionary casts of different varieties over the globe. This worldwide communication has marked resemblances to the Witch of Atlas's "sexless" creation, who first circles the world with her in a pinnace, then flies off while the Witch doses humans with dreams. What has all too often remained unnoticed of the Witch and her creation is the degree to which these figures are increasingly neither real women nor really human.

What if we were to consider the Witch, for example, not simply as a mythical woman who creates a poetic self-reflection in the making of a "Hermaphroditus" but rather as a nonhuman being whose creation of a "sexless thing" interrogates at once binarized sex, gender, and racialized thingliness? Such a reading would take more seriously the nonhuman qualities of the new shape of its being; we could likewise understand the Witch of Atlas as more than an idealized woman but as a posthuman creatrix playing with and undoing forms and substances to offer new instances of being in the world. These figures, as they loosen the shapes of the human, reconsider the ideology of dimorphic biological sex that was arguably just coming into discursive sway at the turn of the nineteenth century.[2] The Witch's creature, with its nonhuman, fluid shape, consequently delinks bodily sex from gender and heteronormative sexuality, even as it offers more fluid bodily performances or social behaviors that verge on what we might call nonbinary genders.

Although scholars have often read a Wollstonecraftian feminism into figures such as Asia and have cited Shelley's forward-thinking polyamory, they also have critiqued the solipsistic masculinity entrenched in

his abandonment of Harriet Westbrook, his dalliance with Jane Williams, and his later neglect of Mary Shelley.[3] When it comes to Shelley's relation to gender, sex, and sexuality, it has been difficult to surmount the view of Percy as a veritable Victor Frankenstein – ambitious and idealistic, obsessed with pursuing the hidden secrets of the universe while insensitive or negligent of economic and emotional needs.[4] Shelley may have held a poetic masculine, aristocratic privilege to dodge creditors or to remain distant from his wife's well-documented series of miscarriages, pregnancies, if not the deaths of Clara and William, yet such a feminist Marxist analysis cannot entirely account for Shelley's inventiveness and desire to outthink normative categories of race and gender that were quickly becoming a means of solidifying white bourgeois definitions of the human. *The Witch of Atlas*, with its creatrix figure of the Witch, offers Percy's rewriting of *Frankenstein*'s examination of nonnormative gender, race, and humanity endemic to Victor's creature, and while it may be a privileged one based on an idealism seemingly divorced from the quotidian realities of work and maternity, it offers another model for nonbinary being, one more celebratory of the possibilities of living otherwise.

While it is surprising that Shelley scholars have not put the two works in earnest conversation, it is even more astounding that no scholarly purview has taken seriously Shelley's "Hermaphroditus" figure as a commentary on the thick, derogatory eighteenth-century discourse of "the hermaphrodite," as a critique of Ovid's more violent myth of the genesis of intersex beings, or, more imaginatively, as the dream of an alternative to the period's binary gender-sex systems.[5] For the Witch's creation – whom the Witch only hails as "Hermaphroditus" when it flies off to leave her – exhibits both "gendered" gentleness and strength alongside the morphologies of neither sex. Shelley's poem tries at the very least to move beyond critiques of the multiple ideological models of sex available at the time, "gender relations," or even biopolitical heteronormative sexuality to redraw the very creation of beings whose sex, gender, and human status might likewise be reconfigured in more radical ways.

The poem, as it invents the creation stories of the Witch and then her "sexless thing" as its doubled central narratives, does not see gender or sex as an isolated system; rather, it interrogates an array of intersectional binaristic systems including human/nonhuman, male/female, and racial other/white. While the poem can be read as an allegory of imperial domination,[6] with the Witch's African heritage obviated through Apollo's rape of her mother and the poem's subsequent erasure of Africa, Debbie Lee has argued that the poem's comical veneer presents a

parody of the period's simultaneous feminization and colonizing of the African interior. Nahoko Alvey reads the Witch as a hybrid figure of encounter between West and East, created from a union of Apollo and one of the Atlantides (from the Atlas Mountains of Africa), and Jared Hickman has argued for Shelley's use of cosmology as a means of exoticizing Africa even as it offers alternatives forms of love and liberation.[7] Understanding the poem, however, through Valerie Traub's work, which indelibly ties together the Early Modern period's obsession with sexed bodies and the colonial mapping of foreign land, can help us understand the project of reimagining sex and racial categories as necessarily intertwined.[8] Therefore, we might read this poem as an attempt to rewrite several Westernized mythos at once – however much it falls short to our modern ears.

To understand what Shelley might be doing with the myths of gender, race, and the human, we need to look at the host of sources he was reading, including Ovid and Lucian on the Hermaphroditus myth; William Lawrence and John Abernethy on scientific sex and reproduction in Britain and its empire; Erasmus Darwin on nonhuman intersex conditions; and perhaps most importantly Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* for its thinking about the relations among creation, creation myths (including the Bible and Milton), and gender/sex/sexuality. In his typical syncretic fashion, however, Shelley, does not merely recombine the old stories about gender and sex but rather seeks to rewrite the creation story of Enlightenment Man and his binary others from the very start.[9] To consider how he transmutes this stash of foundational stories, to reimagine Shelley's methodology of (re)creation, I put the Witch's hijinks into conversation with Sylvia Wynter's ideas about the genres of Enlightenment Man and Karen Barad's feminist science studies about materialities recombining within "intra-actions" and new space-times.[10] What I wish to highlight is how the Witch's acts of creation offer a praxis to undo the category of the human (and its gender/racial categories) in ways that are already speaking to our contemporary resistance to anthropocentrism and neoliberal humanism.

In some sense, I do mean "speaking" literally: the Witch's creation – eventually described as an "image" – offers a technology for the communication of new, anti-Enlightenment shapes of being. As a global traveling "image," the creature circulates its new being across time and space, potentially reshaping itself to different constitutions of audiences. This is a Shelley who dreams his idealism past the feminism of Asia's revolution, sister soul mates, or sexual possession.[11] Apposite *Frankenstein*'s melancholy, violent creature who can only see a future alongside a female companion colonizing

the South American wilds or a queer exilic "no future" of Arctic proportions, the Witch's creature manifests a labile figure whose posthuman, nonbinary multiplicity of form and communication posits a traveling medium of futural transformation – for us and other generations who will or have already recreated their own genders, relations, and stories of creation.

I The Witch's Genre of Being

One key to Shelley's project to undo creation myths that center (white) Man, and therefore subordinate a whole host of others, is offered to us with the very first, if allegorical, lines of the poem. At the very start of *The Witch of Atlas*, Shelley is at pains to emplot the Witch in a narrative before the instantiation of "Error and Truth."

> Before those cruel Twins, whom at one birth
> Incestuous Change bore to her father Time,
> Error and Truth, had hunted from the earth
> All those bright natures which adorned its prime
> And left us nothing to believe in (49–53 [*SPP* 368])

The poem begins in a time – and space – where the oppositional categories of Error and Truth do not yet exist, in a time before rational or empirical Truth could dispute superstitious Error, in a time before Enlightenment Man had come to deify himself as the exclusive Human. Explaining how modern forms of the Human came to dominate Western thought, Wynter theorizes that the over-representation of biological, rational, political Man as the only "genre" of being human occurred at the behest of a concomitant collapse of the heavenly and earthly realms.[12] Recombining the sublunar and the supralunar into a homogeneity of matter – or what Romanticists have famously called the "natural supernatural" – enabled or forced a new split between the primitive/animalistic/chthonic and rational man, with two forms: "one rationcentric and still hybridly religio-secular, the other purely secular and biocentric."[13] These respective definitions of "Man1" and "Man2" plot the othering of the Global South through two "shifts" that take place first during the Renaissance and then during the development of the physical sciences at the turn of the nineteenth century, a change which reaches its apex with Darwinian evolution and theories of biological race.

By placing the Witch in a timespace before Truth and Error, Shelley locates her before (or after) rational, biocentric time. As the natural/supernatural, feminine focal point of the poem, she rewrites the trajectory to

Man1 and Man2 with an alternative story – of the Witch and her progeny. Her "'being' is a matter of 'becoming,'" to use Neil Fraistat's Shelleyan phrase, into a global, re-mythified world.[14] Her becoming tenders a response to Victor Frankenstein, who could be a quintessential example of Wynter's Men. The dually Enlightenment and alchemical scientist, son of a syndic, collapses life and death's supernatural mystery through his insatiable scientific, biocentric rationality, only to create an abject, Calibanish Other. Percy's poem offers not simply a de- but also a re-mythification needed to remake rational Man (Victor) as magical, alchemical being (the Witch). Rather than creating an abject, primitive other, the Witch creates an even more radically and nonbinaristically defined being – indeed not a Man or Human at all. With her bizarre blend of witchy, mythic pranks and colonial journey through the African continent, the Witch remixes, uninvents, and re-figures a mode of posthuman being that transgresses, however stumblingly, through gendered, racial, and humanistic nineteenth-century boundaries. Such creation does not directly respond to the ills of African colonization or racial capital; it does, in its privileged, whimsical, and utopian way, begin to undo gendered and racial ideologies – the so-called feminine and primitive – to open new spacetimes for other "genres of being," as Wynter terms such alternatives.

The Witch's posthumanism may represent Percy's jocular response to the pessimism of *Frankenstein*'s attitudes toward the fate of those who attempt to reorient the Human. While Percy scholars have made much of his allegedly defensive prologue to the poem and Mary's explanation in the headnote to the poem in her *Posthumous Poems*, we might reread the preliminary six stanzas as his teasing and arguing with her.[15] I want to acknowledge that his comical, lighthearted approach in both the preface and the poem perhaps speaks to his privilege to sideline the material traumas of minoritized being, a position that nevertheless enables him to attempt to dream new dreams about gender.

With the faux imperative "Content thee" with his writing "visionary rhyme," Shelley may not necessarily be exculpating himself from ignoring "human interest" but instead resisting that which is too absorbedly human (8 [*SPP* 367]). The six stanzas of the prologue repeatedly figure animal (nonhuman) metaphors for his poems alongside the question of what constitutes life (or aliveness), perhaps the main topos of *Frankenstein*. He asks whether Mary will condemn his verses "Because they tell no story, false or true" but, likening his verse to a young kitten, further queries, "[m]ay it not leap and play as grown cats do" (4, 6 [367]). This sense of play, of experimentation, may be proleptically resisting

our own desire to allegorize Mary's creature or find a clear moral tale in either *Frankenstein* or *The Witch of Atlas*. Yet Percy continues to joke about his sense of life and death: the silken-winged fly "doom to die / When Day shall hide"; his "winged Vision / Whose date should have been longer than a day"; his lament whether "anything of mine is fit to live!" (13–14, 17–18, 24 [367]). All these nonhuman things (cats, flies, poems) manifest a vitality that may die (either at the day's end or the end of their public life), yet their playfulness, their liveliness, become more important than their fated dying. Here, Percy seems to figure a non-allegorical commentary on Mary's creature whose life has lived on through its propositions about who might live and how. Shelley's Witch is not to be unveiled as an allegory for or representation of a particular form of human life; rather, we are to let her live as the not-Human being that she is. Moreover, we are also meant to play across the sub- and supra-lunar, to become posthumans rather than separate ourselves from experimentation (poetic, material, heavenly) through allegory's representation of allegedly hidden truths or identities.

The Witch's Grecian origin/birth story/story of creation would at first seem to reiterate Man1 and Man2 – with its Hellenistic enthusiasm and the Witch's Apollonian patrimony – as god of light, logic, and reason. The Witch comes into being when the Sun "kissed" her mother, one of Atlas's nymphs, "with his beams" (62 [*SPP* 369]). Often read as a Grecian rape, we might also read it as Wynter's fusion of earth and heaven into homogeneous matter. Shelley may be recycling this narrative from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* with its drama of political-rational Western man's colonization and absorption of non-Western magic.[16] This phallic, invasive sexual encounter disappears or destroys the mother, and her African or Titanic heritage, as she births the Witch.

Yet, such transformation may not figure a despoiling as much as an Ovidian shapeshifting, where beings frequently (and violently) change forms through transformations that cannot easily be categorized as death and life and that reorient the relation between rationality and alchemy.[17] During the Witch's creation and gestation scene, her mother "first was changed into a vapour, / And then into a cloud," "then into a meteor," and finally "into one of those mysterious stars / Which hid themselves between the Earth and Mars" (65, 69, 71–72 [*SPP* 369]). The encounter of Apollonian light and the Atlantidean "fair creature" transforms the matrix of materiality four times, a transformation of forms suspended between the heavenly and earthly. As with *Prometheus Unbound*'s Asia, whose metamorphosis into the boat of light re-forms the world, here the mother,

when excited by light, changes shape and matter, and endues new, disparate (nonhuman) embodiments. This encounter between god and goddess produces the sublunar mist and cloud but then becomes a "mysterious star," hung between those realms. The suspension between the supra- and sublunar reverses the binarization that Wynter locates as a foundation for rational man and places us in a time and space where linear time and rational truth are likewise suspended. Although it is ten months' time before the Witch comes into being, she "[t]ook shape and motion: with the living form / Of this embodied power," a shape, motion, and power that is "garmented in light" and cannot be accounted for with the rational (Newtonian) motions of Time or the Human codifications of shape (79–80, 81 [369]).

The Witch is already endued, from her very creation, with the changeable qualities of light, which Shelley repeatedly returned to in *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Triumph of Life*. As Mark Lussier, Arkady Plotnitsky, Chris Washington, Richard Sha, and Mary Fairclough have pointed out, Shelley's interest in early physics redraws his understanding of the materiality of light – as both particle and wave – as two forms of materiality at once.[18] Light – and not simply in its abstract form of Enlightenment knowledge – becomes a bringer of posthuman change because its own materiality is multiple and changeable. Barad offers us a seminal feminist scientific account of light's ontological nature, whose particle-wave material status depends upon the apparatus of measurement or observation.[19] Observation alters whether we see light as particles or as waves, and from this principle she derives her notion of "intra-action," where materials are not separate and then put into relation but rather are always already entangled until they are "cut" by apparatuses and discourses into various kinds of things, whether subject and object or other ontologies altogether. For Barad, materialities retain within themselves the possibilities of transformation – of new intra-actions that might alter shape or ontology. Barad leaves the potential for multiple "cuts" that define, iteratively, relations among things and among humans and nonhumans. For Barad, the rational, biocentric human (Wynter's Man1 and Man2) would present only one possible ontological cut of human beings, as Wynter's work undermines allegedly stable and dominant accounts of such ontologies.

The Witch's mom's final materiality as the "mysterious star" evokes both Wynter's collapse of the sub- and supralunar as well as the Baradian potentiality of its light to diffract another ontological future for her daughter. An unknown star hangs in the balance, its thingly nature not jettisoned

or forgotten but intrinsic to the Witch's nonhuman status and her interrelations of the human and nonhuman world. This vital shifting of materiality intimates how the collapse of human and nonhuman matter need not automatically validate the binary splitting of rational (white) man and primitive nonwhite other – as it does with Victor and his creature. For both Victor and the Witch entangle science and alchemy to produce creations that redraw the human. Yet Victor notoriously oscillates between his desire, on the one hand, to repatriate himself into his Genevan, human republican family (by finally finishing his degree, returning home, marrying Elizabeth) and his loathed queer orientation to the creature.[20] The Witch, already a being outside the human, embraces her singularity, her own creature, and, consequently, their derangement of European ideologies of race, gender, and the human.

We might further read the purported scene of imperial conception as Shelley's problematic way of thinking past racial binaries along the way to his attempt to deconstruct sex-gender systems. Alvey argues that this moment puts into permanent relation the masculine Western Apollo and a feminine African figure linked to North Africa through the geographic reference to the Atlas Mountains in Morocco and Algeria. The Witch, as their union's "newly born hybrid," marks "something more than an African enchantress or a sensuous female East," a "benevolent queen" who moves well beyond the exploratory imperial penetration of the poem's African landscape through her "power at the margin."[21] We could, alternatively, subsume these varieties of hybridity (posthuman, racial, and, as we shall see, gendered) into Jerrold Hogle's seminal accounts of Shelley's methodology: "this poem seems the supreme example in Shelley's writing of what Wasserman and others have called his 'syncretic mythology', his drawing together of myriad classical and Christian myth figures."[22] Rather than a "fixed reference to a single Truth," Shelley's syncretism offers the "hope of many new interconnections freeing human thought from its most established constructs."[23] Zakiyyah Iman Jackson calls such ideological pliability and violability of racialized bodies a dangerous plasticity, and Shelley's interweaving of myth or the abstraction of hybridity may mark a failed attempt to redraw imperial violence in ways that make invisible the real, material, bodily harm done to African women, black bodies, and the geography of the Global South through the substitution of a pliant figuration of Blackness.[24] Yet the confluence of figuration that alludes to the material but does not relinquish it suggests another – nonbinary – relation between them. The poem attempts to use the seemingly supernatural qualities of pre-Enlightenment and perhaps pre-Platonic materiality to

redraw posthuman being to subtend the very categories of gender and race. The Witch's supposed origin may be not so much a feminine, African queen but rather a transmuting matrix who recreates (or intra-acts) her own allegedly representational origins (East and West). The Witch does not spend her time worrying about fixing the human Victors of Man1 and Man2; instead, she concentrates on the alchemy of a new creation who might operate outside the increasingly naturalized categories of race or gender, rationality or biology, science or alchemy.

II Recreating Nonbinary Creations

As with *Frankenstein*, *The Witch of Atlas* is plotted around a series of creations, which together reconsider the Romantic-era twinned births of modern race and binary gender as colonial categories. Mary's modern Prometheus offers a story of posthuman creation, as Washington has argued, that confabulates our understanding of posthuman materiality as intermixing the human and nonhuman.[25] Working with an assemblage of parts, from human and non-human bodies, through a hybrid of alchemical and modern sciences, Victor single-handedly creates a creature that continues to allegorize difference – and abjection – of all kinds, racial, queer, working-class, to name just a few. The Witch's own creation and her early pranks among animals locate her experimentation outside a university laboratory and within the wider world of being and becoming. If she resists Man1's Victoresque rationality, she likewise avoids Man2's biocentric humanism, inherent to his creature's request for a mate. Although critics have reviled what they deem her anti-social nature, her "sad exile," as Omar F. Miranda terms it in this volume, constitutes a safer spacetime away from people for re-visioning the human apart from Man1's and Man2's categorical imperatives.

If her creature's ontology is posthuman, nonbinary, or otherwise indeterminate, its gender and sexuality have, like Victor and his creation, been a hot topic of speculation. Mary's pair are arguably involved in a homosocial/queer tension, which comes to a head in Volume III's master-slave, sado-masochistic globe-trotting.[26] The creature's medicalized creation, which Victor uses to pathologize and deny him humanistic sympathy, has evinced resonances with trans being since Susan Stryker's seminal essay, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamonix."[27] Yet the creature's queerness is tempered as much by Victor's obtuse rationality as by their indoctrination by the DeLaceys into the gendered demands of biopolitical reproduction. As much as they learn language from watching "DeLacey TV," they likewise absorb the gendered

position of Safie as "treasure" as requisite payment for Felix's revolutionary activities in saving her father from a French *lettre de cachet*. This education in heteronormativity arguably eventuates in the creature's own demands for a female companion – and Victor's imperialist fear of their hideous "new race" of a progeny.

The Witch, however, does not simply allegorize a critique of that novel's Men through a feminine origin point for the creation of new being. She is already born from hybrid human/nonhuman, racial, textual, and geographical sources and thus redoubles her own creation as a Baradian intra-action. This "contexture," what Fraistat terms "a larger whole fabricated from integral parts," extends beyond the textual, as it is woven from texts, bodies, materialities, sexualities, and genders that reconstruct what it means to collaborate in posthuman (re)creation.[28] The Witch's creature comes into being and re-ontologizes being in an intra-action of embodied materials where stories become again written through bodies as recombinant, self-transforming myths.

Unlike the creature in *Frankenstein*, the Witch's creature is not an assemblage or agglomeration of human and animal body parts; she creates her new being with more elemental matter, fire and snow. Initially a "repugnant mass," its elemental matter, though oppositional in temperature, harmonizes through the admixture of "liquid love": "Then by strange art she kneaded fire and snow / Together tempering the repugnant mass / With liquid love – all things together grow / Through which the harmony of love can pass" (321–324 [*SPP* 377]). It is as if Shelley rewrites, in these four lines, one of the essential allegories of creation in *Frankenstein*. Where Victor's creature becomes repugnant to him at the moment of its birth into life, then monstrous when raised without love, sympathy, or human interest, the Witch tempers the ill harmonized elements through liquid love. Such affect is liquid both in its fluidity and in its ability to knead different sorts of matter so that they might "together grow."

As with Victor's creature, much has been made about this creation's gender as a site of precocious creativity. Diane Hoeveler avowed its representation of Romantic androgyny; Amanda Blake Davis has more recently suggested it typifies the opposite of the androgyne.[29] Hogle sees the figure as a representation of Shelley's process of metaphorical transfiguration, channeling Diogenes's four-limbed, ambi-sexed beings in *The Symposium*, Ovid's Hermaphroditus myth, and Pygmalion's pedagogy of gender (also from *The Metamorphoses*).[30] Following a long line of commentators, Karen Swann reads it as a figure for the relationship between artist and creation, though for her this is a creation "impervious to human

needs and aims" and thus a form of "radical alterity."[31] Somewhat ironically, no one has taken the figure – whom the Witch only fleetingly calls out as "Hermaphroditus" when it flies off toward the end of the poem – to refer to the actual and rife period discourse on "hermaphrodites." Nor have scholars taken this narrative as a rewriting of the story of gender and its creation, considering the Greco-Roman source texts as one site of the instantiation of the one-sex model and contemplating Shelley's own age as the murky transition into a two-sex model.[32] As Sha has convincingly argued, the Romantic period was one of palpable ambiguity, with these different models of sex and gender circulating in tension.[33] I want to suggest that Shelley's myth of creation and its ties to the myths of sex and gender reveal his interest not simply in what some have read as adolescent polyamory or even more serious pansexuality. Shelley's reading in Roman literature (Ovid and Lucian), in Botany (Darwin), and in medicine (Abernethy, Lawrence, among others) would have offered him medical notions of bodily shape and gender. This archive helped Victoresque men of science construct and medicalize a dimorphic, inherited model of binary sex/gender. Yet it likewise offered alternative and more flexible constructions of body, behavior, and identity still circulating from earlier periods or emerging as a resistance to the growing ideologies of binary sexuation and species on the make.

Shaped from the elements, the Witch's creature may seem, at first, to be a binaristic being made from ice and fire. This combination of icy cold and vital heat resonates with what Thomas Laqueur describes as the Galenic one-sex model, a model endemic in Ovid and Lucian, influenced by Hippocrates and Galen respectively. According to classical Greek medicine, which held sway with the Romans and the British for some time into the eighteenth century, the body's heat determined whether it would manifest male genitalia outside the body or whether, with a more frigid temperament, the penis and testes would retain the homological uterus and ovum inside the body. Even after birth (or puberty), the one-sexed body was labile to friction and overuse: stimulation of the clitoris, particularly in same-sex encounters, could transform bodily morphology.[34] Sha's discussion of puberty likewise attests to the prevalence in the Romantic period of understanding all bodies through a one-sex model until they developed secondary sex characteristics.[35] As the histories of intersex people became increasingly pathologized through medical accounts of masturbation, puberty, and taxonomies of species, a hefty and abusive discourse circulated in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century medical literature around those who were termed "hermaphrodites" and who often served as

medical or legal test cases to reestablish social gender binaries or biological species (created through heterosexual reproduction).

Returning to the creature's composition of hot fire and cold snow, we might then read the creature as being created from equal parts heat and cold, in a kind of continuous puberty or sexed fluidity. The Witch's tempering, the harmonization of cold and heat with "liquid love," kneads the binary into something not so much unitary as harmonic, having constituent elements arranged in pleasing multiplicity, as varied materials, qualities, or tones are layered, woven, or sounded together. That infamous Shelleyan binding agent – fluid love – itself bespeaks a force and a thing, as Sha has suggested of emotion. Material and discursive, human and nonhuman, nonbinary in myriad ways, "liquid love" figures a metalepsis for nonbinary fluidity itself: at once the harmonization of distinct qualities (heat and cold) and the continuous extension of non-opposing, agglomerated, unsubsumed differences.

Shelley gleaned some part of this fluidity and ambiguity from his Romantic Hellenism, which, as Jonathan Sachs has argued was "skeptical and ambivalent," "complex and ambiguous," and "aggressively political."[36] Sachs is writing about the politics of the Roman Empire – its channeling of Greek democracy, its failures in despotism, and its possible redemption in post-Waterloo Europe. Yet, because Shelley believed in gender equality as a cornerstone of social change, his uses of Ovid's myth likewise triangulate a politics of democratic Hellenism with a play and revivification of other models of gender/sex/sexuality. His commentary on Platonic models of sex and gender filter through his reading of Roman poetry and empire in similarly complex and ambiguous ways, but here it is the Greek binary gender system that fails in its ideas of equality, while Ovid's more trenchant resistance to patriarchal control within *Metamorphoses* reveals an anti-imperial thrust to a re-mythified queer ontology.

In "A Discourse on the Manner of the Ancient Greeks," Shelley repeatedly cites not just gender inequality but binarism as the downfall of Greek manners: "This invidious distinction of humankind as a class of beings [of] intellectual nature into two sexes is a remnant of savage barbarism which we have less excuse than they for not having totally abolished."[37] Tutored in Wollstonecraft's arguments about gender inequality, Shelley ties this problem to the craving after sensation, which likewise results in debauchery (the "habitual libertine"), prostitution, and gay sex.[38] However much Shelley might have attached sexual orientation to gender and however homophobic to anal sex he might have been, that relation does not

preclude Shelley's belief in the need to alter the binary sex-gender system, a revolution that he advocates for pretty strenuously.[39] As Alex Gatten argues when historicizing Greek bodily form/shape, Shelley suggests that women were once less beautiful and, in doing so, indicates that the sexed body is not universally stable but would change over time and space.[40] Perhaps despite and due to Shelley's fears of penetrative anal sex and lascivious sexuality, he seemed much more amenable to more radical imaginings of bodily shape that would offer new forms of gender, sex, and sexuality. Shelley's resistance to the sex-gender system in *The Witch of Atlas* repeatedly imagines this shifting of bodily shape – through creation, poetry, dreaming, and traveling.

His many source texts help him recreate this story of labile gender and embodied sex. Roman understandings of sex-gender often tied together bodily and social shiftings, particularly in cases of male effeminacy.[41] Ovid's *Metamorphoses* include numerous stories of shifting sex, from the escape of women into nonhuman bodies (Daphne), prayers that enabled women to become men (Ianthe), unexpected cursed encounters in nature (Tiresias), and of course Hermaphroditus's attempted rape by Salmacis. Such crossings complement Diogenes's account in *The Symposium* of an eight-limbed "third sex," which Shelley translated in 1818, and Shelley's Hermaphroditus might seem to posit a Platonic reversal, as the metamorphosis of Hermes and Aphrodite's son plots a fusing of his masculine body with Salmacis's. The nymph, excited by watching Hermaphroditus bathing, is rebuffed in her seductions. She waits until the youth jumps naked into the pool, wraps herself around him, and prays to the gods never to divide them. Salmacis's violation is not an act of penetration but the denial of Hermaphroditus's consent and the trespass of bodily boundaries, as she forces the two to merge into a single being. Ovid locates this transformation via several metaphors: a snake coiled around its prey, ivy interlacing trees, and a polypus wrapping its tentacles around its prey. The fusion itself is figured as a twig grafted to bark: "So they, by such strict imbracement glew'd / Are now but one, with a double form indew'd"[42] / "two-form fold, so that they could not be called male or female, and seemed neither or either"[43] / "neutrumque, & utrumque videntur," which might read as "neither and both."[44] Hermaphroditus does not, however, remain a singular oddity: he turns and admires himself and then prays to his parents to drug the fountain so that every man that swims in the water will "Return as halfe-woman" ("exeat inde Semivir," or unmanned, effeminate, half a man).

It perhaps cannot be stated too strongly how different a story Ovid tells of the creation of people with intersex conditions than the medicalized

othering of "hermaphrodites." Neither does Ovid's merging of sexed bodies create a figure who is shamed for their effeminacy, as many Roman men might be. Rather, Hermaphroditus becomes a site of reproducible, liquid transformation, which then instigates a performative speech to recreate the pool as a space to repeat and transfer that initial bodily and gendered transformation. Unlike the Sapphic sexual encounters that, in eighteenth-century Galenic medical texts, document how mutual masturbation might distend a woman's clitoris into a penis, this Ovidian story leverages female passion as a change that leaves its beings in a sacred and replicable "neither/both" position with regard to sex and gender.

Shelley, in turn, refuses to write his version of Ovid's tale as a gender-sex crossing caused by a violent encounter; neither is this creature simply born this way, as in Plato's account of the third sex or Lucian's account of Hermaphroditus. Rather, the Witch creates her "sexless thing" as a being who does not easily fit into either the one-sex and two-sex humanistic models, sexual dimorphism, or gender binaries.

> A sexless thing it was, and in its growth
> It seemed to have developed no defect
> Of either sex, yet all the grace of both—
> In gentleness and strength its limbs were decked;
> The bosom swelled lightly with its full youth—
> The countenance was such as might select
> Some artist that his skill should never die,
> Imaging forth such perfect purity. (329–336 [*SPP* 377])

Though the Witch calls it "Hermaphroditus" later in the poem, here as "a sexless thing" it lingers in Sha's nonbinary pre-pubescence, defying developing biological and species boundaries. Even if we were to understand "gentleness" and "strength" as feminine and masculine gendering, the two construct a continuum of motion: the softness of action on the one hand and an intensity of agency on the other. Rather than attached to sex organs or to cultural performances, gender becomes a varying intensity of bodily and affective movement. These movements might be modulated without instantiation into specific performances of biological/bodily categories, self-identity, or (social) subjectivity.

We might read this merger or movement of "either" and "both" as a marked resistance to the medicalization of the intersex body, similar to the Sapphic swerve away from the body and into the Neoplatonic metaphysics used by Katherine Philips and her sisterhood when they proclaim love between each other to be one soul in two bodies.[45] Hoeveler argues that the Hermaphroditus idealizes the psychic union of opposing genders,

which the poem then parodies when Hermaphroditus disappears into the ether.[46] Rather than a union of the best of both sexes or genders, the term "youth" may extend a Hermes-esque fluidity that offers a body and being before having been gendered through social circulation, medical anatomy, or scientific theories of biological sex. The poetic syntax reinforces the paradox at the heart of Shelley's fluidity of forms that continually turns any Platonic or Ovidian mergers into more restless, multidirectional materialities that continue to move. The line's anaphora of "Of" emphasizes the line's beginning enjambed preposition "Of either" and the end preposition "of both," such that the creature prepositionally possesses "either" gender, "both," or the movement among them. "Either" and "both" would seem to double the binary, to suggest that there is either only one contingent gender present or two. Yet the enjambed double negative "no defect/Of either" also deconstructs the possibility of "either" – that there is no either/or binary. Structuring the line to flow over an open-legged en*jamb*ment, which is then echoed at both the beginning and the end of the line, Shelley suggests that sex is at once "either" and "both" and a series of morphing possibilities. Our minds place both ends of the line together in their parallel syntax, which is then deconstructed by the anaphora of "of," the expression of relationality between two entities as ever-changing and multiple (one-sex, two-sex, both, some, and more). The creature both is sexless and models the possibility of multiple sexes and genders, their "intra-sex," an intra-action of a "sexless thing." In this way, the Witch's creation shares much with what Dana Luciano and Mel Y. Chen describe as the queer inhumanity that transverses the categories of gender and the human and that "has never, in truth, been stable."[47] They write: "the figure of the queer/trans body does not merely unsettle the human as norm; it generates other possibilities – multiple, cyborgian, spectral, transcorporeal, transmaterial – for living."[48]

As we reorient our readings of Shelleyan gender around the notion of the "sexless," we need also attend to the use of "thing" as no simple, celebratory nod to the mythic and nonhuman. Coupled with the passage's remark on "perfect purity," the creature's thingliness resounds with contemporary debates that tied sexual dimorphism (and the alleged gender binary that arose from genital difference) to racial and species difference being mapped out in Western discourse upon the backs of enslaved women. Shelley's one-time doctor and associate William Lawrence's 1819 *Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man* gives just one example of the turn in medical discourse from the one-sex to the two-sex model constructed from examples of African women. Lawrence,

in early chapters, dwells solely on the biological basis of binaristic genital difference found in all mammals across humans and animals, partially in response to Darwin's poetic glorification of ambi-sexed plant species.[49] In his later extensive remarks on the climatological enlargement of African women's labia, nymphae, and buttocks, he asserts, "[t]here are no essential differences in the organs of generation; their construction and functions are the same in the various races of mankind."[50] As Jennifer Morgan has argued about earlier British texts of colonial encounter, "[g]ender did not operate as a more profound category of difference than race; instead, racialist discourse was deeply imbued with ideas about gender and sexual difference that, indeed, became manifest only in contact with each other."[51] The dimorphic binarization of sexed bodies underwrites the idea that multiple races nevertheless constituted the same species, even as the comparative distention of black women's bodies becomes a limit case of humanity. Shelley's "sexless thing" therefore might be seen as a blunt tool of resistance to the ideologies of sexual dimorphism as well as the racial gendering that contributed to that model. His attempt to re-ontologize a posthuman, nonbinary being poses a poetic if idealistic critique of humanistic, racial bioreproduction, including what Wynter would call the myth of Man2.

With such texts in mind, the youth's "lack of defect" and its "perfect purity" may echo to us with Aryan overtones that would then paint any resistance to bodily difference as white (ableist) privilege. Here we might see Shelley's double radicalism and complicity. Such a creature could be said to defy contemporaneous gender or racial (biological) identification while also verging into a post-racial/post-gender future. This strong, gentle "youth" might erase the violent histories of racialized and hermaphroditic discourse in the very attempts to route those signifying and ideological systems away from the medicalized, empirical reification of race.

Shelley's refusal to call the Witch's creature a "hermaphrodite" – or even a refusal to label it as the Greek "Hermaphroditus" – until the moment it flies off into the world is perhaps most suggestive of his evasion of deterministic discourses or historical poetics and his venture into new forms of embodiment, being, and signification. My choice to avoid calling the Witch's creature "Hermaphroditus" is meant to enact this skepticism. To repeat that naming would cement this creature as only Greco-Roman in its mythological provenance, rather than a recreation of Greek, Roman, and colonial sources that is likewise seeking to flee from them. Moreover, using that name would instantiate the creature within the violent and problematic discourse on eighteenth-century intersex people, whose empirical

fixity Shelley challenges with a necessarily changeable, iterative myth. As with *Frankenstein*, the creature is only called "monster" or "wretch" by those who would abject its otherness (including the creature himself). The Witch only calls her creation "Hermaphroditus!" as it leaves her – perhaps as a poem in the world, perhaps as a child into adulthood, but perhaps as a being that will escape whatever exclamatory identifications a creator might belatedly try to give it. Its body – ungendered and unraced but now ready to unfurl its wings, made iteratively moveable – becomes a medium, a being and its own mediated transmission of that being. As the Witch and her creation take their riverine boat trip through time and space, so the creature eventually flies from the river into more nebulous ether, becoming part of the world beyond the Witch's ken. Shelley in this way links gender as fluid movement to a medium that might transverse bodily and material boundaries – and all those stifling conventionally imposed categories.

III The Creature's New Media

For the Witch, Shelley tells us, has fashioned her creature as a "shape" and "image": "And a fair Shape out of her hands did flow— / A living Image, which did far surpass / In beauty that bright shape of vital stone / Which drew the heart out of Pygmalion" (323–328 [*SPP* 377]). Numerous commentators have read the allusion to Pygmalion as the Witch's solipsistic enrapture with her own creation, which she places facing her in the Apollonian pinnace, to bask at during the first part of her river journey.[52] Rather than assume the "living Image" represents the Witch's self-image, we might envision the creature with the power to embody a shape and image that is a living enactment of a being beyond binaries. As an "image," this creature could be the simulation of an unreal person or a mental picture or representation of an idea. As a "Shape" that has flowed from the Witch, it constitutes a moving embodiment of nonbinary gender and/or sex. This figure – a bodily shape and a figure of speech – offers a metalepsis for a fluid, vital, and moving being that is not one life but a liv*ing* in the world.

Made from the elements, it embodies and transmits a moving image of its multidirectional, fluctuating materiality that does not become beholden to gender or sexed reproduction of life. Unlike the creature and Victor's queer panicked chase around the world in Volume III of *Frankenstein*, the Witch as a posthuman creatrix unbinds herself and her creature from the biopolitical tyranny of the heteronormative family romance when she creates another sort of shape with its own ontology. Even when she might

desire to keep it close or identify it as "Hermaphroditus," it necessarily absconds from her grasp – and graduates into the world to intra-act with other bodies and (re)create them. Equally as important, the transversal potentiality of the creature as sexless movement itself transforms how we understand embodied communication – or how we might come to know and understand nonbinary being.

As a material "image" of fluidity, the creature becomes a sort of incipient media for labile being – a living form of communication for about nonbinary being. As text and body, material and discourse, raced and unraced, this creature is a living transcoding of cultural categories through shifting, transitive movements of its moving embodiment. While the Witch and her creation move down river, "the Image lay / With folded wings and unawakened eyes, / And o'er its countenance did play / The busy dreams" (362–364 [*SPP* 378]). As a dreaming image, the creature continues to shape and spread the image of new being even while dreaming it. Through its dreams, the Witch's creation does not simply store or process the "information" of nonbinary sex; rather, in its circulation and transmission of its body amid a global world, it intra-acts and transfigures that very "information" about sex as itself fluid, material, and transmissible.[53] Her creature revises Shelleyan idealism as a medium and means, a non-static apparatus, to bend and cross realities, rather than simply or suddenly "recut" them, as Barad theorizes one intra-action to the next. Shelley's "transreal" recreation of reality entails a transmission – the "in" and "through" of media – that reinvents reality through new media.[54] This is the creature's radical potential: its traveling as an image of fluidity that, in its transreality, potentially (re)circulates and (re)communicates Witch2 and Creation2, and on and on.

Her creation may implicitly figure those abstractions especially available to the white imagination, with idealism that routes the hard reality of the many gender-nonconforming people attempting to live in the first decades of the nineteenth century. That plasticity of the living "Image" may depend upon an "unraced" and therefore invisible whiteness that enables the circulation, transmission, and amplification, inadvertent or not, of the colonizing imagination. Lee's and Hoeveler's readings, however, both suggest that we might see such circulation as a parody of white cartography and communication. Yet, because the poem works within a logic "[o]f either […] of both," it suggests that the creature's new media employs either, both, and neither white indoctrination and radical communication via living image, always potentially shifting into one another, no matter the radicality of the message.

Shelley is ultimately concerned with a creatrix – likened at the poem's end to a "sexless bee," who transmits confabulatory media that might recreate the very distinctions among human and nonhuman materialities (589 [*SPP* 385]). Not the dream of a universal medium but a transmedia that can move across difference without evanishing it, the Witch's creature circulates in a restive world that cannot be cordoned off by binary gender, by impending racialization, by life and death, or by clear demarcations of reality and myth. Such worldwide mediation may be too fantastical for quotidian gendered and racial violence, and it certainly bequeaths a heavily ethereal burden on people such as Anne Lister, Mary Diana Dods/David Lyndsay, or the Public Universal Friend, all writing and dreaming new forms of gendered living. If not an everyday means of gender revolution, Shelley nonetheless offers dreams of queerness for bodies that may "wake to weep" but also must live by the performative exhortation "Dream thou," as he writes in "The Flower That Smiles Today" (21, 20 [469]).[55] Rather than simply understanding gender as a nonbinary resistance to a binary, the Witch and her creation urge us to remythify being as reorienting movements, as bodies that will change and signify over time and space. Even so, they ask us to consider how we might recreate the nonbinary as our bodies intra-act with the body of Shelley's nonhuman poems and his dreams of ever-moving creations.

Notes

1 Much initial thinking for this chapter was done in intra-action with Chris Washington for a paper titled "Intersex Posthumanism? Wollstonecraft, Shelley, and Romantic Politics in the Anthropocene" given at the Seattle Modern Language Association conference in 2020. I need to extend so many thanks to my coeditor Omar F. Miranda, who graciously and expertly edited multiple versions of this essay, to Lily Gurton-Wachter and Amelia Worsley for always helping me organize and figure out the work's real being, as well as to the University of San Francisco students of "Percy Shelley's Life and Works" Spring 2022 and Mount Holyoke College's "Nonbinary Romanticism" Fall 2022, who braved tangling with the poem alongside me.

2 See, for starters, Thomas Laqueur, *The Making of Sex: Body and Gender from Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Valerie Traub, *Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); and Richard Sha, *Perverse Romanticism: Aesthetics and Sexuality in Britain, 1750–1832* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

3 For discussions of Wollstonecraft and Shelley, see Jillian Heydt-Stevenson and Kurtis Hessel "*Queen Mab*, Wollstonecraft, and Spinoza: Teaching 'Nature's Primal Modesty'," *European Romantic Review* 27.3 (2016), 351–363 and Charlotte

Gordon, *Romantic Outlaws: The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecraft and Her Daughter Mary Shelley* (New York: Random House Publishing, 2015).

4 See Christopher Small, *Ariel Like a Harpy: Shelley, Mary and Frankenstein* (London: Gollancz, 1972), 101; and Mary K. Patterson Thomburg, *The Monster in the Mirror: Gender and the Sentimental/Gothic Myth in Frankenstein* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987), 8.

5 Colin Carman's chapter on *The Witch of Atlas* and *The Sensitive Plant* offers an exception as it considers Ovid's myth as a part of Shelley's Platonism and reads the Witch's creature through Foucauldian, Freudian, and botanic hermaphroditism as a "precursor to the homosexual role and to the androgyny ascribed to his (and her) mysterious subjectivity." My account takes different historicist and theoretical tacks that necessarily understand eighteenth-century discourses of anatomy and racial science as entwined in Shelley's reading and as provoking Shelley to imagine something outside either "homosexuality" or "androgyny." See Carman, *The Radical Ecology of the Shelleys: Eros and Environment* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 77–117, 102. For other accounts of the Witch's creature and gender, see Harold Bloom, *Shelley's Mythmaking* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 165–204; Diane Hoeveler, *Romantic Androgyny: The Women Within* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990); and Karen Swann, "Shelley's Pod People," in Forest Pyle and Marc Redfield, eds. *Romanticism and the Insistence of the Aesthetic*, *Romantic Circles* Praxis Series (February 2005), https://romantic-circles.org/praxis/aesthetic/index.html.

6 See Frederic S. Colwell, "Shelley's 'Witch of Atlas' and the Mythic Geography of the Nile," *ELH* 45.1 (1978), 69–92.

7 See Debbie Lee, "Mapping the Interior: African Cartography and Shelley's *The Witch of Atlas*," *European Romantic Review* 8.2 (Spring 1997), 169–184; Nahoko Alvey, *Strange Truths in Undiscovered Lands: Shelley's Poetic Development and Romantic Geography* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2009), 145–180; and Jared Hickman, *Black Prometheus: Race and Radicalism in the Age of Atlantic Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 217–264.

8 Valerie Traub, "The Psychomorphology of the Clitoris, or The Reemergence of the Tribade in English Culture," in Valeria Finucci and Kevin Brownlee, eds. *Tropes of Reproduction in Literature from Antiquity through Early Modern Europe* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2001), 153–186.

9 See the Introduction to this volume, Note 25, for sources on syncretism.

10 See Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007) and Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation – An Argument," *Centennial Review* 3.3 (1993), 257–337.

11 See especially Teddi Chichester Bonca, *Shelley's Mirrors of Love: Narcissism, Sacrifice, and Sorority* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999); Barbara Gelpi, *Shelley's Goddess: Maternity, Language, Subjectivity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Nathanial Brown, *Sexuality and Feminism in Shelley* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

12 Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom."
13 Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom," 282.
14 Neil Fraistat, *The Poem and the Book* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 176.
15 Although she first publishes this poem without the introductory stanzas in 1824, she does publish it as the second poem in the volume, and eventually includes those stanzas in the 1839/40 edition. Many thanks to Madeleine Callaghan for her reminding me of these complexities – and for the Zoom conversation she indulged on the poem.
16 As Prospero had enchained the ambi-gendered Ariel and learned bookish arts to steal Sycorax's birthright, Apollo rapes a nymph to create a hybridly raced Witch, stealing magic from indigenous beings through reproduction (and miscegenation). Percy read *The Tempest* in 1818, and Mary read it in 1820, according to "Mary Shelley's Reading List" on *Romantic Circles*, https://romantic-circles.org/editions/frankenstein/MShelley/readalph.
17 Mary and Percy read Ovid's *Metamorphoses* together twice, in 1815 and 1820, according to "Mary Shelley's Reading List" on *Romantic Circles*, https://romantic-circles.org/editions/frankenstein/MShelley/readalph.
18 See Mark Lussier, *Romantic Dynamics: The Physicality of Matter* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999); Arkady Plotnitsky, "All Shapes of Light: The Quantum Mechanical Shelley," in Betty T. Bennett and Stuart Curran, eds. *Shelley: Poet and Legislator of the World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 263–273; Chris Washington, "The Dark Side of the Light: Triumph of Love in Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*," in Joel Faflak, ed. *The Futures of Shelley's Triumph*; *Romantic Circles* Praxis Series (October 2019), https://romantic-circles.org/praxis/triumph; and Richard Sha, *Imagination and Science in Romanticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018).
19 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.
20 See, for example, James Holt McGavaran, "'Insurmountable Barriers to Our Union': Homosocial Male Bonding, Homosexual Panic, and Death on the Ice in *Frankenstein*," *European Romantic Review* 11.1 (2000), 46–67.
21 Alvey, 158, 159, 180. See also Lee's reading of the Witch as a satire of masculine penetration of the mysterious African continent.
22 Jerrold E. Hogle, "Visionary Rhyme: The Sensitive Plant and The Witch of Atlas," in Michael O'Neill, Anthony Howe, and Madeleine Callaghan, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 360–374, 367.
23 Hogle, "Visionary," 370.
24 Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World* (New York: New York University Press, 2020).
25 See Chris Washington, "Non-binary *Frankenstein*?" in Orrin N. C. Wang, ed. *Frankenstein in Theory: A Critical Anatomy* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2021), 65–83, as well as Kate Singer, Ashley J. Cross, and Suzanne L. Barnett, *Frankenstein in Material Transgressions: Beyond Romantic Bodies, Genders, Things* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), 1–3.

26 For a discussion of the intersections (and misalignments) of Eve Sedgwick's notions of the homosocial and homophobic and Mary's novel, see Andrew Parker "The Age of *Frankenstein*," in Lauren Berlant, ed. *Reading Sedgwick* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2019), 178–188.

27 See also Jack Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 1995); Anson Koch-Rein, "*Trans-lating* the Monster: Transgender Affect and *Frankenstein*," *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory* 30.1 (2019), 44–61; Jolene Zigarovich, "The Trans Legacy of *Frankenstein*," *Science Fiction Studies* 45.2 (July 2018), 260–72; and Harlan Weaver, "Monster Trans: Diffracting Affect, Reading Rage," *Somatechnics* 3.2 (2013), 287–306.

28 Fraistat, *The Poem and the Book*, 4.

29 See Hoeveler, *Romantic Androgyny*, and Amanda Blake Davis, "Androgyny as Mental Revolution in Act 4 of *Prometheus Unbound*," *The Keats-Shelley Review* 34.2 (2020), 160–177.

30 Hogle, "Visionary."

31 Karen Swann, *Lives of the Dead Poets: Keats, Shelley, Coleridge* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 87.

32 See Lacquer's account in *Making Sex*.

33 Sha, *Perverse Romanticism*, 78–140.

34 See Valerie Traub, "The Psychomorphology of the Clitoris," *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly* 2.1–2 (1995), 81–113.

35 According to Richard Sha, "The Uses and Abuses of Historicism: Halperin and Shelley on the Otherness of Ancient Greek Sexuality," in Richard Sha, ed. *Historicizing Romantic Sexuality*, *Romantic Circles* Praxis Series (January 2006), para. 41.

> Unlike us, Romantic medical writers tended to think of puberty as the moment in which two essentially feminine sexes became fully differentiated into male and female. The surgeon William Lawrence and friend of the Shelleys referred to pre-pubescent children as 'equivocal beings.' Unlike us, who tend to see the primacy of genital difference, the Romantics saw puberty as the moment in which secondary differentiation made feminized males become real men.

36 Jonathan Sachs, "'Yet the Capital of the World': Rome, Repetition, and History in Shelley's Later Writings," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 28.2 (June 2006), 105–126, 124.

37 Timothy Clark, *Shelley's Prose or The Trumpet of Prophecy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966), 277.

38 Clark, *Shelley's Prose*, 221.

39 Sha has persuasively argued in "The Uses and Abuses of Historicism" that Shelley others Greek "homosexuality" for, to his mind, its violent and non-consensual pederasty, even as he identifies the inequality of the sexes that he argues led Greek men to invest in intellectual, emotional, and sexual relations among themselves.

40 Alex Gatten, "Formal Perversions: Queer Poetics and the Turn in Romantic Verse," PhD diss. (University of Connecticut, 2020).

41 See, for example, Maud W. Gleason, "Elite Male Identity in the Roman Empire," in David Stone Potter and David J. Mattingly, eds. *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 67–84.

42 I have quoted from George Sandys' 1632 English translation of Ovid, which was popular with Keats, and which seems to bear resonance to *The Witch of Atlas.* George Sandys, *Ovid's Metamorphosis (1632: An Online Edition)*, ed. Daniel Kinney (University of Virginia E-text Center, n.d.), https://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/sandys/4.htm.

43 This rendering is taken from the more recent Kline translation. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Anthony S. Kline (University of Virginia E-Text Center, 2000), IV.346–388, https://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/trans/Metamorph.htm.

44 Shelley would have of course read Ovid in the original. The 1727 Burmann edition of Latin text reads: "Sic ubi complexu coierunt membra tenaci, / Nec duo funt, & forma duplex, nec femina dici, / Nec puer ut poflint; neutrumque, & utrumque videnturr." A rough translation follows: "Thus, when members are joined together, Neither are there two nor the form doubled, nor can it be called female, / Neither a child to be desired; neither and both are seen" (translation mine). Peter Burmann, *Ovidii Nasonis, Metamorphosen* (Amsterdam: R. & J. Westenios, & G. Smith), 1727, https://archive.org/details/publiiovidiinaso02ovid/page/n7/mode/2up.

45 See, for example, Katherine Philips's "Friendship an Emblem, or the Seal. To My Dearest Lucasia":

> The hearts thus intermixed speak
> A Love that no bold shock can break;
> For Joyn'd and growing, both in one,
> Neither can be disturb'd alone. (1–4)

The Collected Works of Katherine Philips: Volume One: The Poems, ed. Patrick Thomas (Essex: Stump Cross Books, 1990), 106.

46 Hoeveler, *Romantic Androgyny*, 249–255.

47 Mel Y. Chen and Dana Luciano, "Queer Inhumanisms," *GLQ* 25.1 (2019), 113–117, 113.

48 Chen and Luciano, "Has the Queer Ever Been Human?" *GLQ* 21.2-3 (2015), 183–207, 187.

49 See Myra J. Hird, "Animal Trans," in *Queering the Non/Human*, ed. Noreen Giffney (New York: Routledge, 2008), 227–247.

50 William Lawrence, *Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man* (London: J. Callow, 1819), 419.

51 Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 15.

52 See Michael O'Neill, "Fictions, Visionary Rhyme and Human Interest: A Reading of Shelley's 'The Witch of Atlas'," *The Keats-Shelley Review* 2 (1987), 103–133 and Richard Cronin, "Shelley's Witch of Atlas," *The Keats-Shelley Review* 26 (1977), 88–100.

53 I am influenced by Micha Cárdenas's notion of the transreal: "Building on the notion of 'trans' from 'transgender,' I propose that transreal aesthetics cross

the boundaries of realities created by a fragmentation of reality that occurred as a result of postmodern theory and emerging technologies." They elaborate: "To say that I am transreal is a strategy for embracing a gender that exceeds daily reality on Planet Earth and that says back to all the people who have tried to make me choose between man or woman that I choose to be a shape-shifter, a dragon and a light wave." Cárdenas, *The Transreal: Political Aesthetics of Crossing Realities* (New York: Atropos Press, 2012), 23, 30.

54 As Orrin N. C. Wang suggests in his recent book *Techno-Magism: Media, Mediation, and the Cut of Romanticism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2022), the "'in' and 'between' prepositioning of media" manifest "as not phenomenal quandaries, but more exactingly as tropes – not hopelessly beholden to such categories as time and space but aboriginally inciting them," 11.

55 Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (Philadelphia: Chrissy and Markley, 1852), 320.