Godwin Reads Wollstonecraft
Posthumousness, Protest and Romantic Education

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Among the more poignant artifacts of Romantic-era publishing history is the edition of Mary Wollstonecraft's works that William Godwin compiled in the aftermath of her death, two weeks after the birth of their daughter Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. The tenor of those weeks is suggested by the terse entries in Godwin's diary, entries evoking the sequence of events that ended in Wollstonecraft's death, and chronicling Godwin's activities in the days and weeks following. On 16 September 1797, two days after Wollstonecraft's funeral, Godwin resumed a course of Wollstonecraft reading he had begun during her final days, continuing to read her novel Mary, which he had put aside on the day of their daughter's birth, and then, on 17 September, taking up *The Wrongs of Woman*. On Saturday, 23 September, Godwin was reading Wollstonecraft's letters; on 5 October 1797, he was reading *Original Stories from Real Life*; on 14 October 1797, he was reading *Letters from Norway;* on 31 October 1797, he was reading *The Cave of Fancy*; and on 5 December 1797, he was reading *An Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution.* Throughout much of this course of reading, Godwin was working on his memoir of Wollstonecraft, and also on the editorial plan for the four-volume anthology, *Posthumous Works of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Women.* Both were published by Joseph Johnson in 1798. Godwin channelled his grief into his editorial work, settling into the scholarly task of selecting what would be included in a posthumous collection of his wife's work at the most emotionally fraught moment in his life.

Ildiko Csengei describes Godwin's reading, compiling and editing of Wollstonecraft's papers as 'a more soothing, even healing form of literary activity' than the 'destructive, dangerous, or even impossible' work of his own writing.[1] Csengei underscores the emotive quality of Godwin's editorial activity, insisting on the affective aspect of what could, under many circumstances, be viewed as bloodless, cerebral work. In the pages that follow, I want to use Godwin's mournful editorial effort, the products of which have recently become available in digital format, as a basis for discussing the important relationship between scholarly work, affective feeling, political action and graduate training. For Godwin, there was no disconnect between the mourning work and editorial work—the sentimental and the intellectual were inevitably intertwined. In more recent history, there have been periodic calls to make the emotive side of literary critical work more

visible, including Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's contrasting of reparative versus paranoid reading and Rita Felski's call for literary studies 'to embrace a wider range of affective styles and modes of argument'.[2] Judith Butler, too, has contributed to debates over the role of powerful feeling in scholarly work through her attention to how affective responses are regulated by regimes of power. Butler decries how some lives are depicted (by news media, for instance) as being inherently less 'grievable' than others.[3] Following Butler, we might read Godwin's grief-fuelled editorial project as an assertion of the value of his wife's life and as an effort at feminist alliance, albeit a vexed one that highlights the complexities of the ally relationship. Informed by these critics' writing, I want to use Godwin's editorial work to initiate a discussion of the emotional sediment underlying scholarly research and teaching, and also of our current emotionally fraught moment in the history of graduate education and professional training.

The four-volume *Posthumous Works*, I suggest, stands as a repository of Godwin's love and sorrow. The editorial project was infused with Godwin's feelings, and, in that regard resembled the popular literary genres of his era. Lindsey Eckert, in 'Reading Lyric's Form: The Written Hand in Albums and Literary Annuals' (2018), emphasises the prevalence in lyric poetry of rhetoric that evokes 'the interpersonal familiarity and intimacy of manuscript albums'.[4] These albums were characterised by one contributor as repositories for 'the most endearing sentiments of friendship, & affection'.[5] Deidre Lynch, in *Loving Literature: A Cultural History* (2015), calls into question 'humanities disciplines' long-held investment in the notion that there may be special epistemic virtue in practicing criticism from a position of alienation'.[6] Lynch highlights the creativity on display in gothic novels' 'pseudo-editorial authenticating devices', epigrams and historical frame stories that established a proximity between cheap fictions produced for circulating libraries and the bibliographical antiquities sought out by book collectors.[7] Lynch helps us to see the ways in which the writers and advertisers of gothic novels used editorial framing to engage with readers' dreams and aspirations. In Godwin's own moment, that is, there was an awareness of how mechanical editorial signposting could stir readerly desire. In the pages that follow, I will comment on Godwin's grief-fuelled editorial work before turning to an innovative recent dissertation which animates the emotional underpinnings of the seemingly dry academic credentialling ritual of the dissertation defence. I aim to challenge the notion that academic work is best carried out at a cool, intellectual remove, and to encourage dissertation directors to acknowledge the emotionally perilous aspects of professional training.

The pivotal moment when William Godwin went from being the husband of Mary Wollstonecraft to being the curator and editor of her literary corpus looms large in biographical accounts of the two writers. In his 1987 introduction to Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* and Godwin's *Memoirs of the Author of The Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Richard Holmes writes that after Wollstonecraft's death, Godwin, '[s]truggling to control his grief, [...] moved his study into Mary Wollstonecraft's

own room at the Polygon, [...] immersed himself in her papers, and began to re-read all her books'.[8] In *The Godwins and the Shelleys* (1989), William St Clair describes how, within a week of the funeral, Godwin, convinced that Mary Wollstonecraft had been the most remarkable woman 'perhaps in the whole history of the world', resolved that it was his duty to prepare for publication the works which she had left unfinished.[9] St Clair writes: 'He reread her printed works; he talked to her friends and wrote to others; and he studied his journal for the times they had been together'. He also, 'with the scrupulousness of an archivist', dated and numbered the 160 letters he had exchanged with Wollstonecraft.[10] Charlotte Gordon, in her intertwined biography of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley (2015), describes Godwin grieving in 'the only way he knew, alone in his study, with a book open and a pen in his hand'.[11] Mitzi Myers, analysing in 1981 Godwin's memoir of his wife, writes: 'He abandoned the separate lodgings where he had always worked for his wife's study, enshrined her portrait as enspiriting muse, and steeped himself in her writings, as if he were trying to absorb her very essence'.[12] In *Mary Wollstonecraft: A New Genus* (2005), Lyndall Gordon writes of how in Wollstonecraft's former study 'the continued presence of the dead broke through the limits of the lifespan'.[13]

Lyndall Gordon also notes the speed with which the *Memoirs* and the *Posthumous Works* were ushered into print, writing, '[a] month after the funeral, [Godwin] was not only well into the *Memoirs*, he had also performed the massive editing job required by the half-finished *Wrongs of Woman*. By 15 November [1797], two months after the funeral, Godwin had a complete draft of the memoir. He proceeded to give it a scant four days for revision'.[14] Both works were available for sale in February of 1798, and a revised edition of the *Memoirs* was published within months of the first, in an effort to appease a public that had been shocked by Godwin's frank treatment of his wife's sexual history and suicide attempts. Myers describes how the life of Wollstonecraft caught fire, with 'juicy tidbits greedily seized by the conservative press for a brutal propaganda campaign'.[15] And Claire Tomalin, among others, objects to the way in which the *Memoirs* diminished Wollstonecraft's importance by presenting her as 'the female Werther, a romantic and tragic heroine'.[16] As the *Memoirs* took off, becoming what Myers calls the 'the substratum upon which even the newest lives erect their varying portrayals', and being revised and reprinted, the *Posthumous Works* were, in Tomalin's words 'allowed to rest'.[17]

As a publishing enterprise, the *Posthumous Works* is an odd grab-bag compilation, juxtaposing Wollstonecraft writings with no overt relationship to each other and encompassing unfinished and fragmentary projects. The first two volumes present *The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria; a Fragment* along with *Lessons*, the first book of a planned series aimed at children. The third and fourth volumes of the *Posthumous Works* bring together letters and miscellaneous pieces, including Wollstonecraft's 'On Poetry and Our Relish for the Beauties of Nature', 'Extract of the Cave of Fancy, a Tale' and 'Hints'. Gina Luria, the editor of an excellent facsimile edition of the *Posthumous Works*, describes 'Hints'

as the most interesting of the miscellaneous fragments Godwin gathered since they were preliminary notes for a companion volume to *The Rights of Woman*.[18] They can be read as one might read Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell', that is, as enigmatic, aphoristic passages, that include assertions such as 'Indolence is the source of nervous complaints, and a whole host of cares' (IV, 179) and 'Lust appears to be the most natural companion of wild ambition; and love of human praise, of that dominion erected by cunning' (IV, 185). But whereas Blake's aphorisms fit into the structure of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793), and are collected under a heading that tells one how to read them, Wollstonecraft's 'Hints' are a writer's working notes which Godwin, by an act of editorial assertion, elevates to the level of a literary entity worthy of publication.

Although Godwin's *Memoirs* came to overshadow the *Posthumous Works*, both in his own moment and subsequently, this does not seem to have been his conscious intention, nor that of the publisher who brought out the *Memoirs* in tandem with the *Posthumous Works*. We might consider the advertisement for the *Posthumous Works* and the *Memoirs* which ran in the 8 February 1798 issue of the *Courier and Evening Gazette* newspaper. In the advertisement for 'New Books Published by J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-yard', the *Posthumous Works* assumes pride of place. At the top of the advertisement is announced 'In Four Volumes small Octavo, price 14s. in Boards', and then, with a dramatic enlargement of font size, 'THE POSTHUMOUS WORKS of the AUTHOR of the RIGHTS of WOMAN: containing The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria, a Fragment; Letters and Miscellaneous Pieces'.[19] Following these lines is the announcement of Godwin's *Memoirs* ('same size, price 3s. 6d.') 'With a Portrait engraved by Heath, from a picture by Opie, painted a few weeks before her death'. The public notice of these two newly published works is followed by an index of other Wollstonecraft volumes available for purchase, a library of nine works ranging from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* to *Young Grandison; Letters from Young Persons to Their Friends*. The advertisement announces the *Posthumous Works* in a way that emphasises the range of Wollstonecraft's writings, staking her claim to deserving a *Posthumous Works*, a genre of memorialisation which, a survey of other eighteenth-century publications entitled 'Posthumous Works' reveals, was typically bestowed upon religious leaders and renowned authors. If one looks for similarly titled works published in the decades preceding the publication of Godwin's edition, one finds volumes devoted to the work of religious figures, such as *The Posthumous Works of the Rev. Thomas Adam, Late Rector of Wintringham* (1786); of political leaders, for example, *Posthumous Works of Frederic II. King of Prussia* (1789); or of renowned literary figures, such as *The Posthumous Works of Laurence Sterne* (1794). In other words, by the very act of compiling Wollstonecraft's unpublished writings and by titling them *Posthumous Works*, Godwin was staking a claim for Wollstonecraft as a major writer and thinker. Godwin's decision to edit something entitled 'Posthumous Works' was, on its own, a claim for Wollstonecraft's importance.

Andrew Bennett has written suggestively about Romantic poets' proclivity for anticipating their posthumous fame, for projecting a future in which readers would develop sufficient sophistication to appreciate the innovations of a Wordsworth or a Keats. Bennett writes that '[d]uring the eighteenth century, the textual afterlife becomes increasingly important as an impulse for the production of poetry and increasingly prominent in the theory of literature'.[20] Poets, in Bennett's analysis, begin to figure reception in terms of an ideal audience, and to define the poem as something 'that cannot (immediately) be read'.[21] Godwin, by asserting his wife's claim to a posthumous works collection, was anticipating her claim to the public's attention and imagining a reading public that would be interested in everything, no matter how ephemeral, that she had written.[22]

In his Preface to the first volume of the *Posthumous Works*, Godwin defends his decision to publish fragmentary work. 'There are few, to whom her writings could in any case have given pleasure, that would have wished that this fragment should have been suppressed, because it is a fragment', he writes.[23] He points to

> a sentiment, very dear to minds of taste and imagination, that finds a melancholy delight in contemplating these unfinished productions of genius, these sketches of what, if they had been filled up in a manner adequate to the writer's conception, would perhaps have given a new impulse to the manners of a world.

Throughout, he depicts himself as happy to 'intrude nothing of himself into the work', apologising for those instances when he took the editorial liberty to 'connect the more finished parts with the pages of an older copy' or to add an additional phrase.

Godwin also highlights the difficulties of editing an author's posthumous works, avowing that 'something is to be allowed for the difficulty of arranging the miscellaneous papers upon very different subjects, which will frequently constitute an author's posthumous works' (II, 172–73). But he claims even the fragmentary *Lessons* as evidence of the author's importance. While other works of the same nature had been published, he conceded, 'It is obvious that the author has struck out a path of her own, and by no means intrenched upon the plans of her predecessors' (II, 172). Here Godwin emphasises Wollstonecraft's originality, depicting her as a trailblazer, and he also defends her against those who would suggest she had trespassed into 'intrenched' regions in which she did not belong.

Godwin's editorial work inevitably encouraged the reader to forge connections between works that adjoin each other in the four volumes. 'Godwin's choices', writes Tilottama Rajan, 'have a direction'.[24] Wollstonecraft's *Lessons* make up the last part of the second volume of the *Posthumous Works*, and are headed by Wollstonecraft's note that they comprise the 'first book of a series which I intended to have written for my unfortunate girl' (II, 175). Godwin concludes the manuscript to have been written 'in a period of desperation, in the month of October, 1795'. The 'unfortunate girl' was Wollstonecraft's first child Frances Imlay, born in May 1794. Lesson I of the *Lessons* was presumably conceived as a primer of simple vocabulary words arranged in affinity groups.

Lesson I
Cat. Dog. Cow. Horse. Sheep. Pig. Bird. Fly.
Man. Boy. Girl. Child.
Head. Hair. Face. Nose. Mouth. Chin. Neck. Arms.
Hand. Leg. Foot. Back. Breast.
House. Wall. Field. Street. Stone. Grass.
Bed. Chair. Door. Pot. Spoon. Knife. Fork. Plate.
Cup. Box. Boy. Bell.
Tree. Leaf. Stick. Whip. Cart. Coach.
Frock. Hat. Coat. Shoes. Shift. Cap.
Bread. Milk. Tea. Meat. Drink. Cake.

Positioned right after Wollstonecraft's fragmentary novel *The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria*, the *Lessons* seem like a continuation of, or appendix to, the novel, and so as the work of the bereft mother who is the novel's main character. Godwin encourages this inclination in the 'Advertisement', in which he notes that the circumstance which determined him to annex the *Lessons* to *The Wrongs of Woman*

> was the slight association (in default of a strong one) between the affectionate and pathetic manner in which Maria Venables [the novel's protagonist] addresses her infant, in the Wrongs of Woman; and the agonizing and painful sentiment with which the author originally bequeathed these papers, as a legacy for the benefit of her child. (11, 174)

As Rajan notes, by including the letters to Gilbert Imlay as works, 'Godwin foregrounds the autobiographical nature of Wollstonecraft's novel'. In placing the *Lessons* in close proximity to the novel, Godwin invites us to read the two texts as glosses on each other, to project the plight of the fictional Maria onto Wollstonecraft, and to attribute Wollstonecraft's writings for her actual daughter to Maria. In so doing, Godwin draws attention to how the patriarchal constraints that underpin the fictional heroine's dilemma loomed over Wollstonecraft herself as well.

Godwin's editorial choices sometimes encourage us to conflate Wollstonecraft's life and work, but literary works inevitably become charged with readers' emotional investments in authors' lives. I first encountered Godwin's record of his Wollstonecraft reading as a dissertation researcher at the Bodleian Library, where I trolled through Godwin's diary on microfilm and encountered the poignant details of Wollstonecraft's final days. I recall being dismayed by the 4 September 1797 diary entry that mentions 'puppies', a glimpse of eighteenth-century obstetric practice (the puppies were introduced as a means of drawing off excess breast milk) that viscerally conveyed Wollstonecraft's plight. And I was so moved by the poignancy of Godwin's notation on Wollstonecraft's death—a series of dashes—that I carefully reproduced the dashes in my notes. Through many years and several moves, I held on to my handwritten transcripts of Godwin's diary pages, ostensibly because I could not easily access either the original

diary or the microfilm, but actually because they had inspired a deep emotional investment in Wollstonecraft's work. As a notetaker, I inadvertently recapitulated Wollstonecraft's reception history. I was especially attentive to the most intimate entries, the ones chronicling Wollstonecraft's medical treatment and death, less so to Godwin's record of his reading. In my notes, Wollstonecraft, the woman subjected to the indignities of late eighteenth-century medical practice, took precedence over Wollstonecraft, the editorial subject. And when I taught Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* or Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, I was not above inciting my students' heightened engagement through reference to Godwin's diary account of Wollstonecraft perishing as a result of clumsy obstetric practices.

Thanks to the work of David O'Shaughnessy, Mark Philp and Victoria Myers, in collaboration with a team of student researchers, scholarly experts, librarians and technical staff (and with the support of the Leverhulme Trust, the John Fell Fund, the British Academy and the Bodleian Library), Godwin's diary is now available in an authoritative and wonderfully accessible digital format. It allows one to easily confirm, from any location, and with a few keystrokes, when Godwin commenced his course of Wollstonecraft reading, and over how many days he focused on particular works.[25] The digitised diary also permits one to track Godwin's visitors and dinner companions, and to speculate as to how those people may have contributed to the Wollstonecraft syllabus that Godwin designed for himself in the aftermath of her death. We can also now easily pull up the newspaper advertisement for the *Posthumous Works* in the digitised archive of the Burney Collection of newspapers in the British Library. Researchers of the past had to turn the pages of fragile newsprint or scroll through microfilm without knowing whether such an ad existed or in what day's newspaper they might find it. The digitisation of library collections, too, has made it possible to flip through the pages of the *Posthumous Works* with ease.

In writing an address for the Romanticism Goes to University symposium at Edge Hill University in May 2018, I took Wollstonecraft as my starting point so that I could return to Godwin's diary and the *Posthumous Works* as opportunities to think about the advent of new kinds of archival technologies in relation to graduate student training. I wanted to contemplate how new research tools and data-driven methods might lead us to reconceptualise graduate education—especially in light of a shrinking academic job market that is forcing graduate students to acquire the enhanced and flexible functionality of a Swiss Army knife. I also wanted to highlight the work of one of my graduate students who had proven particularly adept in training herself as a traditional humanities scholar and as a new media sound recording technician.

I began by offering up a collection of education-related data, inspired by the symposium title and compiled with the assistance of three undergraduate researchers. My students culled from the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* the educational histories of Romantic writers, creating a spreadsheet to highlight the gendering of university attendance, and the quixotic nature, for both women *and* men, of Romantic-era education. I focused on Wollstonecraft, in particular,

because she seemed especially relevant at the time when the symposium was being held, a moment when the #MeToo movement was catching fire in the US and when the USS (Universities Superannuation Scheme) strikes had just taken place in the UK. During the strikes, Wollstonecraft was evoked in both persona and quotation. The scholar Jane Hodson had just a few weeks before dressed in attire—black cap, white fichu—that recalled John Opie's portrait of Wollstonecraft, and she had carried a sign bearing the title of Wollstonecraft's most famous work. On another day, Hodson wore a cape, on the back of which were stitched letters spelling out this Wollstonecraft quote: 'All the sacred rights of humanity are violated by insisting on blind obedience'. To an unusual extent, Wollstonecraft's persona and words seemed to resonate with current events, but not for the first time. Eileen Hunt Botting has argued persuasively that Wollstonecraft was the first woman to become an international feminist meme, writing, 'Wollstonecraft's various self images led to countless public reimaginings of the meaning of her life and writings for the evolution of feminism itself'.[26] Wollstonecraft's life and writings, when viewed through the refracting lens of each new feminist epoch, seemed always newly pertinent

Wollstonecraft's writings also served as Exhibit A in discussions of feminism's blind spot in regards to race, and in discussions of the Romantic-era canon and its neglect of minoritised writers. These limitations had been highlighted recently by the twitter feed @BiggerSixRomantix, begun by Manu Chander, author of *Brown Romantics: Poetry and Nationalism in the Global Nineteenth Century* (2017). And they had also been revealed by PhD candidate Stephanie Edwards' chart of 2018 NASSR conference papers. Both the Twitter feed and the chart underscored the ways in which white male authors continue to dominate disciplinary discussions, decades after the Romantic canon's exclusions were called into question by feminist and New Historicist scholars. In a parallel intervention, Patricia Matthews, in a 2017 essay entitled 'On Teaching, but Not Loving, Jane Austen', had expressed her discomfort with the whiteness of Austen novels, noting that 'many of [Austen's] contemporaries wrote stories about interracial marriage and biracial women' and 'used their fiction and poems to contribute to the debates about abolition'.[27] Recent digital projects, such as *Freedom on the Move*, a crowdsourced database that aims to make available all North American runaway slave ads, had begun to make the experiences of enslaved people visible through the processes of archival consolidation and social media amplification.

Closer to my own home ground, the question of what it means to teach and research British Romanticism at a moment of political, socio-economic and methodological upheaval had been on my mind as I organised a National Endowment for the Humanities Next Generation PhD planning year, a collaborative project aimed at reimagining doctoral training so as to enable graduate students to integrate discipline-specific work, digital humanities literacy and flexible career preparation. The project was informed by the work of Sidonie Smith, who, in *Manifesto for the Humanities* (2016), challenges the orthodoxy of the traditional dissertation. Referencing new ways of circulating knowledge in a shifting and expanding media

environment, Smith writes: 'To effectively negotiate this scholarly communication system, academic humanists will expand their familiarity with all kinds of tools and platforms useful in pursuing their research and composing their scholarly products'.[28] The planning year activities included a series of symposia organised around rhetorical forms: the dissertation, the footnote, the tweet, the blog, the CV or resume and the elevator pitch. Three of the participants revised graduate syllabi so as to emphasise digital research methods and writing across varied venues. As part of the planning process, I taught a graduate Romanticism class in which I combined an introduction to the Romantic period with an introduction to computational research tools, with expertise in mapping tools provided by Sarah Bond in the Classics Department, and in text analysis by librarians in the Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio at the University of Iowa.

The new capabilities of digitised archives and computational research methodologies serve to enrich old discussions circling around questions of disciplinary clarity and intellectual rigour. I'll offer up an examples of a research project that evolved from the Next Gen year, and that expands the range of what we have traditionally looked for in student research work.

In 2019, Anna Williams, a doctoral graduate in English at the University of Iowa, defended a dissertation created in podcast form that comments on the relationship between affect and intellect in graduate student training. 'My Gothic Dissertation' is, in Williams' words, 'a self-reflexive study that historicizes and critiques the genre of the humanities dissertation while also performing the skills traditionally assessed in one'.[29] Anna carried out a reading of gothic fiction in parallel with an analysis of the gothic perils of modern-day graduate education in the humanities. The first 'chapter' of Anna's podcast dissertation finds her trying to convince a sceptical dissertation committee that her prospectus is defensible. In what is surely a first in the history of such events, Anna left her recorder running when committee members asked her to leave the room so that they could deliberate over her performance. The audience for her dissertation can witness Anna's effort to defend her prospectus, the committee's frank assessment of her shortcomings and Anna's pained response to their criticism. Soon after Sidonie Smith called on humanities departments to reimagine the dissertation, Anna carried out an autopsy of the dissertation genre, while she also, and more in keeping with traditional dissertation practice, offered up new analyses of gothic texts, reading Victor Frankenstein, for example, as a frustrated graduate student.

Anna Williams' project is innovative in its format—in her decision to create a podcast rather than a three-hundred-page monograph—and the unconventional form inevitably necessitates alterations in content. One of the basic requirements of a dissertation is to convey mastery of a field, to show one has 'covered' that field, a task most often accomplished through citational density. How do you communicate in a podcast the rich allusiveness of a footnote into which you can deposit the work of as many scholars as could be packed into a conference elevator. Footnotes are a way for young scholars to show that they are conversant with other scholars' work, even as they nudge those scholars

aside. In the podcast, Anna can't read the names and article titles of scholars with whose work she is engaging, or at least not without trying the patience of her listeners. She innovated her own solution to this problem by introducing the kind of cheerful ping made by a front desk bell as a way to alert listeners to the existence of footnotes in a transcript of the podcast. The podcast form, however, uniquely allowed Anna to include the actual voices of scholars, for example, when she incorporated clips of the literary critic David Punter speaking authoritatively about the gothic tradition or of the clinical psychologist Marcia Linehan discussing theories of emotion.

Anna Williams' podcast brings to the foreground the emotional dynamics of graduate student mentorship and of the dissertation writing experience. I began by talking about Godwin's work in the aftermath of his wife's death because I am interested in the emotional underpinnings of Godwin's editorial work. In the immediate aftermath of Wollstonecraft's death, Godwin insisted on the primacy and inescapable quality of his grief. 'I do not want consolation; it is the only thing I dread', he wrote.[30] A week later, in a letter to Anthony Carlisle, he deliberated on the importance of friends expressing their honest feelings to each other. 'I love these overflowings of the heart', he wrote, '& cannot endure to be always treating, or being treated by my friends, as if they were so many books'.[31] Godwin's insistence on the affective and personal investments that went into the production of the *Posthumous Works* warns against the assumption that scholarly work can be carried out at a remove from emotional investments.

A second reason I began with Godwin's diary and his editing of Wollstonecraft's works and letters is because I was fascinated by how that diary's digitisation has made life easier for researchers by allowing them to easily access the diary from any point in the world, as well as to search through the diary and to track patterns in Godwin's reading and in his social interactions with speed and ease. Those of us who carried out our research apprenticeships working primarily with paper materials sometimes wax nostalgic about the tactile and olfactory evocativeness of old books and manuscripts. Although I can easily access a digitised version of the *Posthumous Works*, the volumes of the original 1797 edition, which I handled in the British Library, made a bigger impression on me than have the pages of those volumes illuminated on my laptop screen. We need to find new ways to help students explore the capacities of both analogue and digital research materials.

Exploring a well-worn nineteenth-century copy of Felicia Hemans' collected works, Andrew M. Stauffer and his students came across an elegy written in the style of Hemans and pencilled in the book by its owner. In order for his students to unspool the story of that reader's relationship to the book, Stauffer notes, they needed both the paper volume that had survived in the circulating stacks of the University of Virginia's library and digital archives like *Google Books*, *HathiTrust* and *Ancestry*. 'It was the synthesis of two types of searching', Stauffer writes, '—one among the books in the stacks and another among massive databases online—that brought this volume to life'.[32] Stauffer notes that

his students' discovery of a handwritten elegy which memorialised a daughter who had died at the age of seven came about through what he calls sympathetic reading ('part evocation, part projection'), a way of reading that is often discouraged. He writes: 'We urge instead objectivity and hermeneutical rigor, leading [students] through alienation to tentative mastery by means of careful reading, theorizing, and research'.[33] In a similar but somewhat more critical vein, Anna Williams' podcast addresses the ways in which the gothic heroine and the humanities graduate student are trained to mistrust and undervalue their emotions, emotions which, in many cases, were at the core of the student's decision to begin the lengthy process of becoming a scholar in the first place.

Those who work in the Digital Humanities talk about 'iterations' of projects, a useful concept for faculty who become collaborative project managers when they work with students who are using forms of technology and computational methods with which the faculty mentors are not themselves conversant. Students have often gotten out in front of their mentors, but most mentors are more comfortable directing a student as she explores a writer whose work they don't know well, than they are overseeing a student who is using modes of statistical analysis with which the mentor is unfamiliar. I am reminded of Nick Sousanis, creator of the first comic book dissertation, who has spoken movingly about a key mentor for his project, the 96-year-old education philosopher Maxine Greene, who was not knowledgeable about comics, but who, by her thoughtful attention, empowered Sousanis to find his own way. His dissertation, *Unflattening* (2015), was snapped up by Harvard University Press, and his ideas about the importance of visual thinking in teaching and learning have earned him prominence as a public scholar.

Jeffrey T. Schnapp, in an essay entitled 'On Disciplinary Finitude' (2017), asks what lies beyond disciplinarity, and makes a distinction between 'modes of cross- or inter-disciplinarity that leave largely intact the shapes that research, training, and publication assume, and modes that are revolutionary, imposing new models of teaching and training and alternative methods of dissemination'.[34] New scholarly methods, the changing demands of higher education and the collapse of the academic job market have led to a tipping point for scholars committed to graduate education in the humanities, with accompanying emotions of fear, despair, and anxiety. Godwin's method of dealing with his despair was not to avoid the materials most closely associated with his uncomfortable feelings, but to immerse himself in them.

Godwin's efforts on behalf of Mary Wollstonecraft were not perfectly executed and did not lead to the outcome he anticipated, but they did take Wollstonecraft's work seriously and attempt to advance her writings. Our current moment in graduate education calls for graduate student mentors to embrace new research and publishing technologies, to experiment with more collaborative modes of teaching, and to acknowledge the emotional complexity of all aspects of their work.

Notes

1. Ildiko Csengei, 'Godwin's Case: Melancholy Mourning in the "Empire of Feeling"', *Studies in Romanticism*, 48.3 (Fall 2009), pp. 491–519, doi: 10.1057/9780230359178_6 (p. 507).
2. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 'Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Vain, You Probably Think This Essay Is about You', *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 123–52; Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 3.
3. Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (Verso, 2009).
4. Lindsey Eckert, 'Reading Lyric's Form: The Written Hand in Albums and Literary Annuals', *ELH*, 85.4 (Winter 2018), pp. 973–97, doi:10.1353/elh.2018.0035 (pp. 974–75).
5. Ibid., p. 979.
6. Deidre Lynch, *Loving Literature: A Cultural History* (University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 10.
7. Ibid., p. 214.
8. Richard Holmes (ed.), 'Introduction', in Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (Penguin, 1987), p. 14.
9. William St Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys: A Biography of a Family* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 180.
10. Ibid.
11. Charlotte Gordon, *Romantic Outlaws: The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley* (Random House, 2015), p. 464.
12. Mitzi Myers, 'Godwin's "Memoirs" of Wollstonecraft: The Shaping of Self and Subject', *Studies in Romanticism*, 20.3 (1981), 299–316, doi: 10.2307/25600307 (p. 306).
13. Lyndall Gordon, *Mary Wollstonecraft: A New Genus* (Little, Brown, 2005), p. 411.
14. Ibid., p. 368.
15. Myers, 'Godwin's "Memoirs" of Wollstonecraft', p. 301.
16. Claire Tomalin, *The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft* (Penguin, 1992), p. 296. As Amy Rambow points out, Godwin's *Memoirs*, by defying readers' expectations that biographers would conceal their subjects' faults or unsanctioned life choices, did permanent, however unintentional, damage to Wollstonecraft's reputation—see '"Come Kick Me": Godwin's Memoirs and the Posthumous Infamy of Mary Wollstonecraft', *Keats–Shelley Journal*, 13.1 (1999), pp. 24–57, doi:10.1179/ksr.1999.13.1.24 (p. 25). Michelle Faubert notes that among the more shocking of the *Memoirs* revelations was Godwin's candid depiction of Wollstonecraft's suicide attempts 'as radical acts consistent with her unconventional sexual choices and blatant flouting of society's rules'—see 'The Fictional Suicides of Mary Wollstonecraft', *Literature Compass*, 12.12 (2015), 652–59, doi: 10.1111/lic3.12282 (p. 653).
17. Myers, 'Godwin's "Memoirs" of Wollstonecraft, p. 299; Tomalin, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, p. 296.
18. Gina Luria, 'Introduction', Mary Wollstonecraft, *Posthumous Works*, ed. William Godwin, 4 vols (Garland Publishing, 1974), I, 9.
19. 'New Books', *The Courier and Evening Gazette*, 9 February 1798, p. 2.
20. Andrew Bennett, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 1.
21. Ibid., p. 3.

22. The reading public Godwin anticipated did find its realisation among women writers. Andrew McInnes reveals how Wollstonecraft's life and work played a crucial role in women writers' efforts to position themselves in the public sphere. See *Wollstonecraft's Ghost: The Fate of the Female Philosopher in the Romantic Period* (Routledge, 2017).
23. Godwin, Preface to Mary Wollstonecraft, *Posthumous Works*, I, unpag.
24. Tilottama Rajan, 'Framing the Corpus: Godwin's "Editing" of Wollstonecraft in 1798', *Studies in Romanticism*, 39.4 (Winter 2000), 511–31 (p. 515).
25. See *William Godwin's Diary* <http://godwindiary.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/index2.html>.
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29. Anna Williams, 'My Gothic Dissertation: A Podcast' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Iowa, 2019) <https://iro.uiowa.edu/esploro/outputs/doctoral/My-Gothic-dissertation-a-podcast/9983777133102771>.
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