

Moore sold them to Byron's publisher John Murray, who allowed them to be burned at the request of Byron's friend John Cam Hobhouse, neither of whom had read them, over the objections of Moore, who had. When I was in London in 1987, doing archival research, Virginia Murray showed me the grate.

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Eleanor Ty. *Empowering the Feminine: The Narratives of Mary Robinson, Jane West, and Amelia Opie, 1796-1812*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: U of Toronto P, 1998. Pp. x, 224, 5 ill. \$45.00.

In this well-written and cogently argued book, Eleanor Ty continues the ground-breaking examination of uncanonical female novelists she initiated in her first book, *Unsex'd Revolutionaries* (U of Toronto P, 1993). Here she turns her attention to the less well known novels and prose narratives of Mary Robinson, Jane West and Amelia Opie. She focuses on the ways in which these authors contest their society's construction of gender and female subjectivity, on the role played by female sexual desire in these novels, and on the evaluation of maternity and the exploration of the mother-daughter bond engaged in by these three writers. Ty's emphasis on the representations of the mother in these texts is particularly engaging and provides many valuable new insights into these three authors' fictions.

In sum, Eleanor Ty argues that Mary Robinson challenges any cultural notion of a female "essence," thus anticipating contemporary feminist resistances to an essentialist definition of woman; that Jane West finally empowers the woman only within the realm of domesticity; and that Amelia Opie rewrites her society's dominant construction of the ideal woman as "delicate and ornamental, hence weak and useless except as alluring mistresses" (179), putting the concept of the fallen woman "under erasure" (142). Each of these women writers, Ty insists, offer accounts that finally empower the feminine.

Ty begins with four chapters on Mary Robinson. Her reading of the *Memoirs* recapitulates the fine essay on Robinson's concept of the

female as a Kristevan "subject-in-process" which she published earlier in *English Studies in Canada* (1995). Here she adds a discussion of Robinson's *Thoughts on the Condition of Woman*, pointing out the degree to which Robinson allowed her anger at her own subjection to emerge in this tract. Her discussion of *Walsingham*, while not attaining the level of theoretical sophistication of Sharon Setzer's or Chris Cullens' brilliant readings of this text, perceptively analyses the ways in which Robinson (anticipating Judith Butler's work) presents gender identity as a performance, rather than as a stable identity. Her analysis of the "feminisation" of Walsingham himself is particularly perceptive, as is her commentary on the ways in which the text challenges the concept of a patrilineal entail.

Ty's discussion of Robinson's less well-known works *The False Friend* and *The Natural Daughter* are especially rewarding. *The False Friend*, written in 1798 after Banastre Tarleton's desertion of her, emphasizes the "vulnerability" of women, who are often undone by their own excessive sensibility (an argument presented by Mary Wollstonecraft in *The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria*, also published in 1798). As Ty brilliantly shows, this novel is full of images of female dismemberment, symbolic or real; here the mother's body is deformed into the site of death (68-71). In contrast, *The Natural Daughter* empowers women by re-writing such excessive sensibility as a more humane sympathy or active charity, through the autobiographical character of Martha.

Turning next to Jane West, Eleanor Ty resists the conventional readings of West as a pro-patriarchal writer to focus instead on the ways in which West's fictions become obsessed with that very "abjected" woman whom her texts overtly condemn. As Ty perceptively observes, in West's *The Gossip's Story*, the "good" sister needs the "bad" sister, both to stabilise her own identity and to reveal the sexual desire which she herself cannot acknowledge. In West's more nationalistic fictions, *Tale of the Times* and *The Infidel Father*, as Ty shows, West equates the salvation of England with the social construction of the good mother. Even as she demands better male protection for her female heroines, Ty intriguingly suggests, Jane West implies that only women can truly provide the good mothering required to support the new British nation.

In her final three chapters on Amelia Opie's fiction, Ty shows the ways in which Opie rewrote some of the dominant myths of her time. In her prose tale *Father and Daughter* and her novel *Adeline Mowbray*, Opie directly contests the concept of the fallen woman as permanently corrupted, inevitably a prostitute, who can only die. Instead, as Roxanne Eberle first argued in *Studies in the Novel* (1994) in a more nuanced account than we get here, Opie redefines the sexually transgressive woman as redeemable. Ty adds an important element to Eberle's analysis, however, by pointing out the degree to which Adeline's primary desire in the novel is not for her lover(s) but for her

rejecting mother. As Ty shrewdly observes, this novel can be read as a mother-daughter "love story," one tragically frustrated by Editha Mowbray's obsession with abstract, Godwinian theory, and subsequent inability to *feel* any maternal love for her daughter. In the last novel Ty discusses, Opie's *Temper*, Ty persuasively shows how the daughters in this two-generation plot consistently sacrifice or compromise the sexual independence and desire of their mothers.

Throughout *Empowering the Feminine*, Eleanor Ty provides judicious and perceptive readings of these fictions, readings finely informed by Kristeva's and Luce Irigaray's theoretical discussions of female subjectivity and the mother-daughter bond. By focusing on issues of gender and maternity, Ty goes far beyond the class-based analyses of these novels previously offered by Gary Kelly. Ty's theoretical model might have been further enriched by attending to Nancy Chodorow's more sociological and historical conceptualisation of maternity in *The Reproduction of Mothering*, but her accounts of individual fictions are always sensible and at times profoundly insightful. This is a book that anyone interested in these three women authors will need to consult.

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Brian Trehearne. *The Montreal Forties: Modernist Poetry in Transition*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1999. Pp. 380. \$60.00

The Montreal Forties offers a broad look at English Canadian poetry in Montreal in the late forties and early fifties, and a detailed examination of four poets: P.K. Page, A.M. Klein, Irving Layton, and Louis Dudek. Brian Trehearne has written his book as an antidote for the accepted historical narrative of the period. Unfortunately, in setting the record straight, he performs an unjustified hatchet job on John Sutherland, one of the seminal figures in the Montreal poetry scene of that era.

Trehearne takes as his starting point the idea that the legendary feud between *Preview* and *First Statement* is not all that important, and that what should be emphasized are the similarities shared by the members of the two camps. "We have," he argues, "ignored the appar-