



# Women, Epic, and Transition in British Romanticism

*Elisa Beshero-Bondar*

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## **Women, Epic, and Transition in British Romanticism** Elisa Beshero-Bondar

Women, Epic, and Transition in British Romanticism argues that early nineteenth-century women poets contributed some of the most daring work in modernizing the epic genre. The book examines several long poems to provide perspective on women poets working with and against men in related efforts, contributing together to a Romantic movement of large-scale genre revision. Women poets challenged longstanding categorical approaches to gender and nation in the epic tradition, and they raised politically charged questions about women's importance in moments of historical crisis. While Romantic epics did not all engage in radical questioning or undermining of authority, this study calls attention to some of the more provocative poems in their approach to gender, culture, and history. This study prioritizes long poems written by and about women during the Romantic era, and does so in context with influential epics by male contemporaries. The book takes its cue from a dramatic increase in the publication of epics in the early nineteenth-century. At their most innovative, Romantic epics provoked questions about the construction of ideological meaning and historical memory, and they centralized women's experiences in entirely new ways to reflect on defeat, loss, and inevitable transition. For the first time the epic became an attractive genre for ambitious women poets. The book offers a timely response to recent groundbreaking scholarship on nineteenth-century epic by Herbert Tucker and Simon Dentith, and should be of interest to Romanticists and scholars of 18th- and 19th-century literature and history, gender and genre, and women's studies.

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