



# Women, Love, and Commodity Culture in British Romanticism

By Daniela Garofalo

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**Women, Love, and Commodity Culture in British Romanticism** By Daniela Garofalo

Offering a new understanding of canonical Romanticism, Daniela Garofalo suggests that representations of erotic love in the period have been largely misunderstood. Commonly understood as a means for transcending political and economic realities, love, for several canonical Romantic writers, offers, instead, a contestation of those realities. Garofalo argues that Romantic writers show that the desire for transcendence through love mimics the desire for commodity consumption and depends on the same dynamic of delayed fulfillment that was advocated by thinkers such as Adam Smith. As writers such as William Blake, Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, John Keats, and Emily Brontë engaged with the period's concern with political economy and the nature of desire, they challenged stereotypical representations of women either as self-denying consumers or as intemperate participants in the market economy. Instead, their works show the importance of women for understanding modern economics, with women's desire conceived as a force that not only undermines the political economy's emphasis on productivity, growth, and perpetual consumption, but also holds forth the possibility of alternatives to a system of capitalist exchange.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

'... in highlighting Romantic literature that both unites and decouples desire and consumer culture, Garofalo offers innovative readings that reimagine Romanticism in its engagement with the modern world, particularly its depiction of the feminine.' Keats-Shelley Journal

#### About the Author

Daniela Garofalo is Associate Professor of English at the University of Oklahoma, USA. She is the author of *Manly Leaders in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (2008).

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