

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910450553203321
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Titolo	Equivocal beings [[electronic resource]] : politics, gender, and sentimentality in the 1790's : Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen / / Claudia L. Johnson
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Chicago, : University of Chicago Press, 1995
ISBN	1-282-53740-7 0-226-40179-0 9786612537400
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (256 p.)
Collana	Women in culture and society
Disciplina	823/.6099287
Soggetti	English fiction - Women authors - History and criticism Politics and literature - Great Britain - History - 18th century Women and literature - Great Britain - History - 18th century English fiction - 18th century - History and criticism Femininity in literature Sentimentalism in literature Authorship - Sex differences Sex role in literature Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [205]-231) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- CONTENTS -- FOREWORD -- ACKNOWLEDGMENTS -- ABBREVIATIONS -- INTRODUCTION. The Age of Chivalry and the Crisis of Gender -- PART TWO. Ann Radcliffe -- PART THREE. Frances Burney -- AFTERWORD. Jane Austen -- NOTES -- INDEX
Sommario/riassunto	In the wake of the French Revolution, Edmund Burke argued that civil order depended upon nurturing the sensibility of men--upon the masculine cultivation of traditionally feminine qualities such as sentiment, tenderness, veneration, awe, gratitude, and even prejudice. Writers as diverse as Sterne, Goldsmith, Burke, and Rousseau were politically motivated to represent authority figures as men of feeling, but denied women comparable authority by representing their feelings

as inferior, pathological, or criminal. Focusing on Mary Wollstonecraft, Ann Radcliffe, Frances Burney, and Jane Austen, whose popular works culminate and assail this tradition, Claudia L. Johnson examines the legacy male sentimentality left for women of various political persuasions. Demonstrating the interrelationships among politics, gender, and feeling in the fiction of this period, Johnson provides detailed readings of Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, and Burney, and treats the qualities that were once thought to mar their work-grotesqueness, strain, and excess-as indices of ideological conflict and as strategies of representation during a period of profound political conflict. She maintains that the reactionary reassertion of male sentimentality as a political duty displaced customary gender roles, rendering women, in Wollstonecraft's words, "equivocal beings."

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