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Sommario/riassunto	Mary Robinson, a fantastic beauty and popular actress, and once lover of the Prince of Wales, received the epithet 'the English Sappho' for her

lyric verse. Amelia Opie, a member of the fashionable literary society and later a Quaker, included amongst her friends Sydney Smith, Byron, and Scott, and reputedly refused Godwin's marriage proposal out of admiration for Mary Wollstonecraft. Jane West, who tended her household and dairy while writing prolifically to support her children, was in direct opposition to the radically feminist ideas preceding her. These authors, each from different ideological and social backgrounds, all grappled with a desire for empowerment. Writing in an atmosphere hardened towards reform in response to the French revolution's upheavals, these women focus their narratives on typically feminine attitudes - docility, maternal feeling, heightened sensibility (that key word of the period). Their focus invested these attitudes with new meaning, making supposed female weaknesses potentially active forces for social change. Eleanor Ty's convincing argument, arrived at through close readings of ten key texts, is an important addition to the recent spate of publications which bring to the fore neglected women authors whose fascinating lives and works greatly enrich our understanding of the late eighteenth century and British Romanticism.

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