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978-1-107-01668-2 - The Cambridge Companion to Women's Writing in the Romantic Period

Edited by Devoney Looser

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO WOMEN'S  
WRITING IN THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

The Romantic period saw the first generations of professional women writers flourish in Great Britain. Literary history is only now giving them the attention they deserve, for the quality of their writings and for their popularity in their own time. This collection of new essays by leading scholars explores the challenges and achievements of a fascinating set of women writers, including Jane Austen, Mary Wollstonecraft, Ann Radcliffe, Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, and Mary Shelley, alongside many lesser-known female authors writing and publishing during this period. Chapters consider major literary genres, including poetry, fiction, drama, travel writing, histories, essays, and political writing, as well as topics such as globalization, colonialism, feminism, economics, families, sexualities, aging, and war. The volume shows how gender intersected with other aspects of identity and with cultural concerns that then shaped the work of authors, critics, and readers.

DEVONEY LOOSER is Professor of English in the Department of English, Arizona State University. She is the author of *Women Writers and Old Age in Great Britain, 1750–1850* (2008) and *British Women Writers and the Writing of History, 1670–1820* (2000), co-editor of *Generations: Academic Feminists in Dialogue* (1997), and editor of *Jane Austen and Discourses of Feminism* (1995).

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*England* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), editor of *Anti-Pamela/Shamela* (Broadview, 2004) and *The Cambridge Companion to Women's Writing in England, 1660–1789* (2015), and co-editor of *British Women Poets of the Long Eighteenth Century* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), *The Blackwell Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel and Culture* (2005), and “More Solid Learning”: *New Perspectives on Pope's Dunciad* (Bucknell University Press, 2000).

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*Self-Control* for Pickering & Chatto (2014) and is also one of the General Editors of *The New Edinburgh Edition of the Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* (39 vols., 2014–).

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The Romantic period – often defined as beginning in 1780, 1789, or 1798 and ending in 1830, 1832, or 1837 – was a watershed moment for British women's writing.<sup>1</sup>

That statement now seems so self-evident and inarguable that it is difficult to believe that, just a few decades ago, it was neither. The Romantic period has long been characterized as a time of innovation and change in both literary form and content, as well as a momentous era of new political thought and social upheaval. But for most of the twentieth century, the term "Romantic" did not serve to plumb the depths of that innovation and change. Instead, it focused on a small number of writers said to be the greatest ones. The Romantic period separated out the writings of what came to be called the Big Six male poets – William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, and Lord Byron – placing them at the center of a new tradition.

Despite our pigeonholing them in this way, the Big Six penned more than poetry, and most did not imagine themselves as in league with each other. Writers we now call part of the Romantic period in Great Britain certainly did not label themselves Romantics. That labeling came into wide use later, as critics looked back on this period of literary history. Other so-called minor male writers also came to be considered Romantic, among them Thomas De Quincey, William Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, and Robert Southey. But prior to the 1980s, as Stephen C. Behrendt's chapter in this book carefully describes, the study of British Romanticism did not encompass many – or sometimes any – women writers. This is strange, because, as Behrendt notes, between 1770 and 1835, there were at least 500 women publishing poetry in Great Britain. This number does not include those who circulated their poems, perhaps deliberately and widely, in manuscript, rather than seeking print – a then common practice that scholars have come to call manuscript circulation or scribal publication. The figure of 500 also leaves out women

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who did not seek a wider audience for their verse and those who wrote in genres other than poetry.

The shift from our slighting of Romantic women writers' contributions to including them in our conversations can be measured in many ways. It is evident in the changing tables of contents of literature textbooks. These anthologies provide collective assessments of the writings that make up our literary canon. Prior to the 1980s and even into the 1990s, female authors were poorly represented. Although the first edition of *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* was published in 1985, it was skewed toward representing women who published after 1830.<sup>2</sup> Today that anthology has grown to two volumes, with approximately twenty Romantic-era women writers featured among its 219 authors.<sup>3</sup> Some may argue that this is still not sufficient as a percentage of the total contents, but it is at least a move toward greater representation. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* went from virtual absence to greater inclusion for women writers in its updated contents. (Authors who have been newly included – and dropped – in the *Norton Anthology* can be tracked on the publisher's website.) Women's writings are now much better represented in the pages of that anthology. By design, these oft-used textbooks feature but a fraction of known authors of any given period. We are still in the process of discovering and documenting the full range of women writers and their published and unpublished texts in the Romantic era.

Even in the case of the most familiar Romantic female authors, reputations have changed profoundly. Jane Austen was among the few read widely from the late nineteenth century forward, but she was not imagined as Romantic until the late 1970s. Instead, she was grouped with eighteenth-century novelists, a classification said to be more in keeping with her Augustan (or neo-classical) literary sensibilities. Feminist philosopher and novelist Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–97) was absent from classrooms and textbooks until second-wave feminist literary critics successfully brought her back into our conversations in the 1970s. Formerly, when Wollstonecraft's daughter, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797–1851), was mentioned, it was as the wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley and as the author of one novel, *Frankenstein* (1818). She was rarely considered, as she is today, as a prolific and notable novelist, short story writer, biographer, and travel writer. Similarly, Dorothy Wordsworth (1771–1855) was not taken seriously as a writer in her own right. She was condescended to as her famous brother's helpmate, muse, or inspiration, rather than as the original creative force we now know her to be from her journals.

Austen, Wollstonecraft, Shelley, and Wordsworth were, and remain, the most recognized female names in British Romanticism, but hundreds

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of others were active. Cataloguing them and assessing their contributions in aggregate is a project that scholars are now vigorously engaged in, as Anthony Mandal's chapter on fiction shows. Still, accurately counting these writers remains a difficult task. Among other things, it presents us with a problem of categorization. What is a "Romantic" woman writer? Do we consider a woman writer to belong to the Romantic period if she died in the early 1790s, or if she didn't start publishing until the late 1830s? Do her birth and death dates matter most, or is it the dates of her published works, or might it be some other qualities of her career or writings that lead us to describe her as Romantic? Placing women writers in the traditional literary categories of eighteenth-century, Romantic, nineteenth-century, or Victorian literature is definitely not an exact science. Lives and careers are rarely so neat. Most authors from the period straddle more than one chronological category (e.g. eighteenth century and Romantic, or Romantic and Victorian), but we tend to label them as belonging to just one group, making it difficult to envision and attend to the entirety of their careers.

Compounding the problem of hazy chronology is the question of the sex of unmarked or ambiguously marked authors. A portion of authors in this period, male and female, published anonymously or used pseudonyms. Even in the case of those who identified their anonymous authorship by gender, we may never know with certainty whether their claims were truthful. A text said to have been written "by a lady" may or may not have been authored by a female. Jane Austen published her first work, *Sense and Sensibility* [1811] as "By a Lady" – an accurate claim. But *Confessions of an Old Maid* (1828), once believed to have been written by a woman, was later revealed as the work of a man, Edmund Frederick John Carrington (1804–74). Anonymous and pseudonymous mysteries aside, it is clear that this period saw the first generations of professional women writers to flourish in larger numbers. We often encounter Aphra Behn (c. 1640–89) being labeled as the first professional woman writer, the first to make her living by writing. But if this is an accurate claim – and stories of origins always deserve our skepticism! – then Behn made a living by authorship at a time when there were just a handful of literary women actively publishing. A century later, more women were trying than ever before to make a living by the pen. Some were financially successful, and some were not, as Jacqueline M. Labbe's chapter on the economics of authorship shows. The number of women writers making the attempt had unquestionably swelled.

Once-celebrated Romantic female authors have made a forceful return to our textbooks, syllabi, classrooms, and scholarship, among them Joanna Baillie, Anna Letitia Barbauld, Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, Felicia Dorothea Hemans, Letitia Elizabeth Landon (popularly known as L. E. L.),

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Hannah More, Ann Radcliffe, Mary Robinson, and Charlotte Smith. All of these, and many others who remain lesser known, are discussed in the chapters of this book. Behrendt and Mandal consider them as poets and fiction writers respectively. Catherine Burroughs looks at women as contributors to British drama, and Anne K. Mellor – in focusing on Wollstonecraft, More, Mary Hays, and Anna Letitia Barbauld – looks at women's essays and political writings. Angela Wright unpacks female-authored Gothic texts, and Elizabeth A. Fay considers women travel writers, whose contributions remain less frequently examined. Crystal Lake explores the innovations in history writing and the vogue for antiquarian pursuits by women writers during the period, and Catherine Ingrassia focuses on women, particularly poets, who were actively writing about war during this tumultuous time. Caroline Franklin's essay makes sense of the ways in which mid- to late eighteenth-century feminists (particularly in what is called the Bluestocking Circle) established political and social ideas and ideals that endured into the nineteenth century. Deirdre Coleman looks at how British women writers entered a literary marketplace shaped by global concerns, including imperialism and colonialism. Julie A. Carlson helps us to understand the ways that writers functioned within familial and literary networks and relations. Jacqueline M. Labbe's chapter examines women writers' financial circumstances, particularly the financial challenges they faced in producing profitable, publishable writing, using Charlotte Smith as a focal point. My chapter investigates the role that age and aging played in a woman writer's life, career, and reception by readers and critics during this pivotal period in literary history. Fiona Price considers national identities and regional affiliations as they shaped female authors' sense of themselves, their readers, and the circulation of their writings. Finally, Jillian Heydt-Stevenson looks at sexual expression and sexualities in a range of Romantic-era women's texts.

The longstanding neglect of the fascinating, pioneering group of women writers of the Romantic period is now a thing of the past. This *Cambridge Companion* devoted to studying them is a testament to that fact. It is, at the same time, evidence that our merely recognizing their existence does not mean that our work is done. Some accomplished Romantic-era women writers already have extensive entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, the *Cambridge Orlando Women's Writing* database, *The Literary Encyclopedia* online, or the less reliable, ever-changing *Wikipedia*. The project of adding more trustworthy, well-documented introductory information about this group of British women writers is a noble goal. Simply put, we need more introductions, as well as full-scale biographical studies. In the case of many of these women, there is as yet no book-length work devoted to them or their writings. Or, if there is one, it was often published half a

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century or more ago and may have drawn on partial, outdated, or even incorrect information or assumptions. As the essays in this *Companion* show, continuing biographical neglect of this body of women writers does not arise from a lack of interesting subjects. Burroughs's description of playwright Hannah Cowley, Fay's discussion of traveler and travel writer Hester Stanhope, and Heydt-Stevenson's assessment of lesbian diarist Anne Lister will no doubt leave many wondering not if, but when, further biographies, literary studies, and even biopic films may appear.

More Romantic-era women writers and writings seem poised for revivification. Nevertheless, in our era of "big data" and more precise large-scale claims to measure impact – made possible by online databases like *British Fiction, 1800–1829* – some critics and readers may remain skeptical about whether women writers *deserve* greater notice.<sup>4</sup> Old debates have prompted new questions. How ought we to gauge Romantic-era women writers' noteworthy successes and high visibility in their own day? Does extensive publication point to greater significance, or might quantity here be just quantity, rather than quality or importance? (I certainly believe we will conclude that it means more than mere quantity.) In short, what makes Romantic women writers worthy of rereading and worthy of further study? The question may turn on how these women writers' first critics and readers valued them. It may turn on whether critics and readers of today do so. We may choose to read these authors because of their literary importance, their historical importance, or their social importance – or some combination of these factors. Such debates will certainly continue and are helpful in propelling our scholarship forward.

Some have questioned whether we ought to continue to study women's writings separately from men's. I believe there is value in doing so. When we look at Romantic-era women's writings in aggregate, we stand to gain new perspectives and notice different patterns of self-presentation and critical reception based on sex. These patterns shaped how women writers wrote and how all readers read. They created the conditions for what we came to call male or female – or, more properly, masculine or feminine – in literary terms. If we do not continue to study and read women writers as a group, both in comparison and contrast, we risk misconstruing the reach and implications of these gendered patterns in literary history, as well as how such patterns led the way to where we are now.

Whether today's readers think so or not, most eighteenth- and nineteenth-century readers and writers believed that the author's sex mattered. How and why it mattered – how gender shaped writing and reception – is worth knowing, particularly as it intertwined with other aspects of identity that are explored in this book, including class, race, nation, age, and

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## PREFACE

sexuality. Genres were seen as having gendered dimensions, which no doubt had an impact on authors, readers, critics, and publishers, whether they acceded to or defied such stereotyping. Certain kinds of diction and rhetoric were imagined as gendered. How did writers and readers respond to female authors who either followed or flouted what was expected of them in their writings, based on their sex? This *Companion* sets out to convince you that we stand to gain vital knowledge by looking at Romantic-era women writers *en masse*.

Regardless of where your opinion ultimately falls on these questions, the asking of them – and seeking better answers to them – is crucial to creating more nuanced literary histories in generations to come. Today's students and scholars who seek to gain expertise in the Romantic era are rightly *expected* to read once-celebrated women writers' once-famous texts, just as educated readers would have done when these texts were first published. Rereading Romantic-era women writers – and reading about them – helps us to interrogate what our literary values are and were. In the course of rereading these and other female-authored texts, two centuries hence, all of us take part in the project of building and rebuilding a significant body of knowledge.

Devoney Looser

## NOTES

- 1 A quick word about the Romantic period may be needed. When “Romantic” is defined as beginning in 1789, it marks the beginning of the French Revolution. When 1798 is used, it is to reference the publication of the “Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*,” a groundbreaking piece of writing about changes in poetic form and content. When the Romantic period is said to end in 1832, it marks the passing of the first Reform Bill, and when 1837, Queen Victoria's coming to the throne. The choice of 1780 or 1830 reflects our desire to delimit periods using beginnings of decades.
- 2 Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, eds., *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985).
- 3 Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, eds., *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Traditions in English*, 3rd edn. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007).
- 4 Peter Garside et al., *British Fiction, 1800–1829: A Database of Production, Circulation, and Reception*. Cardiff: Cardiff University Center for Editorial and Intertextual Research, 2004–14. [www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk](http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk).

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## CHRONOLOGY

- 1741 Foundling Hospital established in London  
Hester Lynch Piozzi and Sarah Trimmer born
- 1742 Anna Seward born
- 1743 Anna Letitia Barbauld and Hannah Cowley born
- 1745 Hannah More born
- 1749 Charlotte Smith born
- 1750 Sophia Lee born
- 1752 Frances Burney born
- 1753 Elizabeth Inchbald and Ann Yearsley born
- 1754 French and Indian War begins
- 1755 Anne MacVicar Grant born
- c. 1756 Elizabeth Hamilton born
- 1757 William Blake, Ellis Cornelia Knight, Harriet Lee, and Mary  
Robinson born
- 1758 Jane West born
- 1759 Mary Hays, Helen Maria Williams, and Mary Wollstonecraft  
born
- 1760 George III becomes King of Great Britain
- 1762 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*  
Joanna Baillie born
- 1763 Seven Years War/French and Indian War ends with signing of  
treaty in Paris

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## CHRONOLOGY

- 1764 Mary Lamb, Ann Radcliffe, and Regina Maria Roche born  
Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*
- 1766 Eliza Fenwick born
- 1768 Maria Edgeworth born
- 1769 Amelia Opie born
- 1770 William Wordsworth born
- 1771 Dorothy Wordsworth born
- 1772 Lord Mansfield's ruling declares that there is no legal basis for  
slavery in England  
Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Mary Tighe born
- 1773 Anna Letitia Barbauld, *Poems*
- 1775 Start of American Revolutionary War or the American  
Rebellion  
Jane Austen born
- 1776 Hannah Cowley, *The Runaway*  
Declaration of Independence of American Colonies  
Jane Porter baptized
- c. 1778 Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, likely born, although later  
claiming a birthdate of 1785
- 1778 Britain declares war on France  
Mary Brunton born  
Frances Burney, *Evelina*
- 1779 Mary Robinson acting as Perdita catches eye of 17-year-old  
Prince of Wales  
Frances Trollope born
- 1780 Elizabeth Inchbald makes her London stage debut  
Charlotte Cowley, *The Ladies History of England*  
Hannah Cowley, *The Belle's Stratagem*  
Sophia Lee, *The Chapter of Accidents*  
Sarah Trimmer, *An Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of  
Nature ... Adapted to the Capacities of Children*
- 1781 Lucy Aikin born  
Anna Seward, *Monody on Major André*
- 1782 Susan Ferrier born
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## CHRONOLOGY

- Frances Burney, *Cecilia*  
Hannah More, *Sacred Dramas*
- 1783 Treaty of Paris signed, ending the war and establishing the United States of America as its own country  
Sophia Lee, *The Recess, or A Tale of Other Times* (1783–5)
- 1784 First manned hot air balloon flight made in England  
Hannah More, *The Bas Bleu, or Conversation*  
Anna Seward, *Louisa: A Poetical Novel in Four Epistles*  
Charlotte Smith, *Elegiac Sonnets*
- 1785 Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*  
Ann Yearsley, *Poems, on Several Occasions* (with help and patronage of Hannah More)  
Lady Caroline Lamb born
- 1786 Helen Maria Williams, *Poems*
- 1787 Mary Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*
- c. 1787 Jane Austen begins her juvenile writings
- 1788 United States constitution is ratified and comes into effect  
George III's first signs of mental illness appear  
George Gordon, Lord Byron born  
Hannah More, *Slavery, a Poem*  
Hester Lynch Piozzi, *Letters to and from the Late Samuel Johnson*  
Charlotte Smith, *Emmeline*  
Mary Wollstonecraft, *Mary: A Fiction*  
Ann Yearsley, *A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade*
- 1789 Storming of the Bastille (July 14); mob forces Louis XVI out of Versailles and to Paris; Declaration of the Rights of Man  
George Washington elected president of the United States of America  
Elizabeth Inchbald retires from acting to concentrate on writing  
William Blake, *Songs of Innocence*
- 1790 Ellis Cornelia Knight, *Dinarbus*  
Catharine Macaulay, *Letters on Education*  
Helen Maria Williams, *Letters Written in France*  
Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*

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## CHRONOLOGY

- 1791 Anne Lister born  
Elizabeth Ogilvie Bengier, *The Female Geniad*  
Elizabeth Inchbald, *A Simple Story*  
Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*
- 1792 Overthrow of French monarchy  
Proclamation against seditious writings, made by George III;  
Paine charged with sedition  
Percy Shelley born  
Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*  
Charlotte Smith, *Desmond*
- 1793 Execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette in France  
France declares war on Britain  
Felicia Hemans born  
Anna Maria Porter, *Artless Tales*
- 1794 End of the Reign of Terror and execution of Robespierre in France  
William Blake, *Songs of Experience*  
Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*
- 1795 Food riots in Britain  
John Keats born  
Maria Edgeworth, *Letters for Literary Ladies*  
Eliza Fenwick, *Secresy, or The Ruin on the Rock*  
Hannah More, *Cheap Repository Tracts* (1795–8)
- 1796 Frances Burney, *Camilla*  
Elizabeth Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*  
Mary Hays, *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*  
Mary Robinson, *Hubert de Severac*  
Regina Maria Roche, *Children of the Abbey*  
Charlotte Smith, *Marchmont*  
Jane West, *A Gossip's Story, and A Legendary Tale*  
Napoleon begins his campaign in Italy; French forces attempt to invade Ireland  
Mary Lamb stabs her mother to death in a fit of insanity
- 1797 Coleridge walks 40 miles to meet the Barbaulds  
Mary Wollstonecraft dies in childbirth; Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (later Mary Shelley) born  
Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian*

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## CHRONOLOGY

- Harriet Lee, *The Canterbury Tales* (later with Sophia Lee, 1797–9)
- 1798 Samuel Coleridge and William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*  
 Joanna Baillie, *Plays on the Passions*  
 Mary Hays, *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in behalf of Women*  
 Mary Wollstonecraft, *Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman*, published posthumously  
 Rev. Richard Polwhele, *The Unsex'd Females*  
 Irish Rebellion; French army lands in Ireland
- 1800 Maria Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent*  
 Elizabeth Hamilton, *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*  
 Mary Robinson, *Lyrical Tales*  
 Wordsworth and Coleridge, expanded second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, with Preface  
 Mary Robinson dies  
 Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland
- 1801 Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda*
- 1802 Letitia Elizabeth Landon (L. E. L.) born  
 Mary Hays, *Female Biography*  
 Amelia Opie, *Poems*  
 Hester Piozzi, *Retrospection*
- 1803 Louisiana Purchase doubles the territory of the United States  
 Jane Porter, *Thaddeus of Warsaw*
- 1804 Napoleon crowns himself Emperor of the French  
 Amelia Opie, *Adeline Mowbray*
- 1806 Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan), *The Wild Irish Girl*  
 Elizabeth Barrett Browning born  
 Charlotte Smith and Ann Yearsley die
- 1807 Anne MacVicar Grant, *Letters from the Mountains*  
 Charles and Mary Lamb, *Tales from Shakespear*, published under Charles's name  
 Charlotte Smith, *Beachy Head, Fables, and other Poems* (published posthumously)  
 Abolition of the slave trade in Great Britain (but not of slavery itself, which continues in the British colonies)

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## CHRONOLOGY

- 1808 Felicia Browne (later Hemans), *Poems*  
Hannah More, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*
- 1809 Hannah Cowley and Anna Seward die
- 1810 Lucy Aikin, *Epistles on Women*  
Jane Porter, *The Scottish Chiefs*  
Mary Tighe and Sarah Trimmer die
- 1811 Regency begins, as George III is deemed mentally unfit to rule  
Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*  
Anna Letitia Barbauld, *The Female Speaker*  
Mary Brunton, *Self-Control*  
Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (first two cantos)  
Mary Tighe, *Psyche* (after private printing, 1805)
- 1812 War of 1812; United States declares war on the British  
Charles Dickens born
- 1813 Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
- 1814 Napoleon abdicates and is exiled  
Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*  
Frances Burney (Madame D'Arblay), *The Wanderer*  
Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*  
Maria Edgeworth, *Patronage*
- 1815 Battle of Waterloo, ending Napoleonic wars  
Louis XVII installed as King of France  
Napoleon escapes from exile, briefly returns to power, and is exiled again
- 1816 Jane Austen, *Emma*  
Lady Caroline Lamb, *Glenarvon*  
Charlotte Brontë born  
Elizabeth Hamilton dies
- 1817 Jane Austen dies  
Maria Edgeworth, *Harrington*  
Felicia Hemans, *Modern Greece: A Poem* (anonymously)
- 1818 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (published anonymously)  
Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* (posthumous publication)

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## CHRONOLOGY

- Susan Ferrier, *Marriage*  
Mary Brunton dies
- 1819 Peterloo Massacre; a large public demonstration in Manchester seeking reform in parliamentary representation results in citizens being attacked by troops  
Queen Victoria born  
Lord Byron, *Don Juan* (1819–24)  
Felicia Hemans, *Tales and Historic Scenes in Verse*
- 1820 Death of George III; accession of Regent as King George IV
- 1821 Letitia Elizabeth Landon, *The Fate of Adelaide*  
Napoleon, Elizabeth Inchbald, John Keats, and Hester Piozzi die
- 1822 Percy Shelley dies
- 1823 Second edition of *Frankenstein*, published with author's name, Mary Shelley  
Ann Radcliffe dies
- 1824 Lord Byron, Sophia Lee, and Jane Taylor die
- 1825 Anna Letitia Barbauld dies
- 1826 Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*  
First photograph taken (c. 1826–7)
- 1827 Helen Maria Williams dies
- 1828 Repeal of Test and Corporation Acts; Dissenters now able to hold government posts  
Felicia Hemans, *Records of Woman with Other Poems*  
Lady Caroline Lamb dies
- 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act ends ban on suffrage and allows the ownership of property and the holding of public office
- 1830 Death of George IV; his brother, King William IV, enthroned  
Manchester and Liverpool Railway opened  
Christina Rossetti born
- 1832 First Reform Act passed; extends voting rights to some previously disenfranchised men  
Frances Burney (Madame D'Arblay), *Memoirs of Doctor Burney*  
Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*
- 1833 Slavery Abolition Act outlaws slavery in the British Empire

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## CHRONOLOGY

- Factory Act limits children under 12 to 48-hour work week and stipulates that young children must be permitted to leave work for two hours a day to attend school  
Hannah More dies
- 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act establishes system of workhouses  
Maria Edgeworth, *Helen*
- 1835 Felicia Hemans dies  
Dorothy Wordsworth contracts a form of dementia, adding to her *Journal* only sporadically hereafter
- 1837 King William IV dies; reign of his niece, Queen Victoria, begins (d. 1901)  
Civil List Act establishes pensions for needy authors; Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan becomes the first woman writer to receive an annual pension of £300  
Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*  
Ellis Cornelia Knight dies
- 1838 Anne MacVicar Grant and Letitia Elizabeth Landon (L. E. L.) die
- 1840 Anne Lister and Eliza Fenwick die  
Queen Victoria marries her first cousin, Prince Albert
- 1843 Mary Hays dies
- 1845 Regina Maria Roche dies
- 1846 Commercial telegraph service established
- 1847 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*; Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*  
Mary Lamb dies
- 1848 Maria Edgeworth, *Orlandino*
- 1849 Maria Edgeworth dies
- 1850 William Wordsworth dies  
Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*
- 1851 Joanna Baillie, *Dramatic and Poetical Works of Joanna Baillie*  
Joanna Baillie, Harriet Lee, and Mary Shelley die
- 1852 Jane West dies

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CHRONOLOGY

- |      |                                  |
|------|----------------------------------|
| 1853 | Amelia Opie dies                 |
| 1854 | Susan Ferrier dies               |
| 1855 | Dorothy Wordsworth dies          |
| 1859 | Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan dies |
| 1863 | Frances Trollope dies            |
| 1864 | Lucy Aikin dies                  |

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