

Devoted Sisters

Representations of the Sister Relationship in Nineteenth-Century British and American Literature

Sarah Annes Brown, Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge

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Devoted Sisters seeks to explore - and explain - the power of the sister bond in nineteenth-century literature. Paired or grouped, allies or rivals, similar or (more usually) sharply contrasted, sisters offered an irresistible structuring framework to both novelists and readers. Texts which focus on contrasting sister heroines can be perceived as sites of urgent struggle, demanding that difficult choices be made by narrator, reader, hero and sister heroines.

Sarah Annes Brown has researched a wide range of British and American texts, including both canonical works, such as *Pride and Prejudice*, *Little Women* and *Middlemarch*, and fascinating but lesser known novels by authors such as Dinah Mulock Craik and Catharine Sedgwick. In addition to contemporary resources such as conduct books, letters, and accounts of parliamentary proceedings, *Devoted Sisters* draws on recent psychoanalytical and anthropological research to illuminate nineteenth-century depictions of the sister relationship. Building on the work of Girard and Kosofsky Sedgwick, Brown concludes her study with an exploration of the Deceased Wife's Sister Act and the 'lesbian incest effect'.

As well as scholars and students of Victorian literature, this book is aimed at all readers with an interest in the dynamics of family relationships, particularly those who are - or have - a sister.

Contents

Preface; Introduction; Corinne's daughters; *The Deerslayer* and *The Woman in White*; Sacrifice and rescue; *Sense and Sensibility* and *Middlemarch*; The larger picture; Deconstructed sisters; The deceased wife's sister act; Enemies and rivals; The double taboo: lesbian incest in the 19th century; Afterword; Bibliography; Index.

About the Author

Sarah Annes Brown is a Lecturer in English at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge. Her first book, *The Metamorphosis of Ovid: From Chaucer to Ted Hughes*, was published by Duckworth in 1999. She is currently working on a study of the creative reception of *The Tempest*.

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