



# **Feminine Subjects in Masculine Fiction: Modernity, Will and Desire, 1870-1910**

*Meredith Miller*

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This book examines the proliferation of troubled, unstable and unreadable female figures in the English novels written by men between 1870 and 1910. This period saw the birth of literary modernism, the advent of psychoanalysis and the first wave of feminism. The faculty of will and the experience of desire structure a troubled relationship to modernity during this period. The tension between them is located in the feminine subject of popular fiction. Chapters focus on the work of Wilkie Collins, Anthony Trollope, George Gissing, Henry James, E.M. Forster and finally and briefly, James Joyce. These male novelists were far more engaged in the project of imagining a new feminine agency than their counterparts during feminism's second wave. The monograph focuses on the tension in their work between woman as aesthetic object of the novel and woman as troubling subject of a new modern consciousness. Inscrutable and troubling female characters were the ground on which fiction staged its move from the popular into high art.

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