

Women's Writing and Mission in the Nineteenth Century

Until now, the missionary plot in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* has been seen as marginal and anomalous. Despite women missionaries being ubiquitous in the nineteenth century, they appeared to be absent from nineteenth-century literature. As this book demonstrates, though, the female missionary character and narrative was, in fact, present in a range of writings from missionary newsletters and life writing, to canonical Victorian literature, New Woman fiction and women's college writing. Nineteenth-century women writers wove the tropes of the female missionary figure and plot into their domestic fiction, and the female missionary themes of religious self-sacrifice and heroism formed the subjectivity of these writers and their characters. Offering an alternative narrative for the development of women writers and early feminism, as well as a new reading of *Jane Eyre*, this book adds to the debate about whether religious women in the nineteenth century could actually be radical and feminist.

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