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'All that fame hath cost . . .':

The Response to Fame of British Women Poets  
from 1770 to 1835.

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of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
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## ABSTRACT

The years 1770 to 1835 produced a considerable number of famous women poets. They were famous at a time when there was a conflict between the ideology of the feminine and the implications of being a published woman poet. Looking in particular at the most successful female poets of the period, I trace the various ways in which they perceived and dealt with that conflict in their lives and their poetry. I argue that the women poets of the period were a diverse group and cannot be regarded as homogeneous, and as such they responded to fame differently. They did, however, share some of the same ideological pressures, and I contend that they all found fame more or less burdensome.

In my first chapter I establish the socio-historical conditions in which the women poets were working, with particular reference to the position of poetry during the period. In my second chapter I examine the women poets (More, Barbauld, Seward, and Williams) who were directly influenced by the Bluestocking group, looking at their experience of fame and how fame is treated in their poetry. My third chapter focuses on the most successful women poets of the 1790s -- Smith, Yearsley, and Robinson. In my fourth chapter I look at the effect that the instability of the 1790s had on the later women poets. I also investigate how fame appears in the works

of some of the lesser-known, and some of the more conservative, women poets, as well as considering the important figure of Joanna Baillie.

My final two chapters concentrate on the two most famous women poets of the period, Felicia Hemans and Letitia Landon respectively. I examine the impact of their phenomenal fame on their lives and trace their poetry's concern with the effects of fame on a woman.

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