



# Narratives of Child Neglect in Romantic and Victorian Culture

Galia Benziman

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Contextualizing the popular topos of the neglected child in nineteenth-century Britain within a large variety of texts and discourses, this book isolates a strand in literary history that has not been fully examined yet, and fills a gap in literary criticism. Rereading Romantic poems, Victorian novels and social documents of the period, it challenges the largely-accepted narrative according to which the turn of the century witnessed a clear transition from a Puritan, oppressive approach to children, to a Romantic, liberating one. Narratives of Child Neglect demonstrates that these contradictory trends continued to be a shaping factor of British literature and society way into the late nineteenth century. The book demonstrates the ways in which the oppressive approach managed to survive in the subconscious of the new discourses of childhood and traces a difficulty in representing the child's subjectivity as valuable even in texts written by key figures in the formation of the Romantic cult of childhood such as Rousseau, Blake, Wordsworth, and Dickens.



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