

### Social Reform in Gothic Writing: Fantastic Forms of Change, 1764-1834

Ellen Malenas Ledoux



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Breaking with traditional analyses of Gothic literature that limit its influence to a reactive critique of current events, *Social Reform in Gothic Writing* argues for a new political reading of Gothic writing from England, America, and colonial Jamaica - one that recognizes the transformative power of this popular literature. *Social Reform in Gothic Writing* provides a transatlantic view of Gothic literature's intervention into the public discourse surrounding seminal issues of the Revolutionary era such as women's property rights, population pressure, public health, and abolition.

Informed by genre and reader-response theories, the unique contribution of *Social Reform* is its insistence that Gothic fantasy can have real-world political impact through documenting ideological shifts wrought by author/audience interaction and identifying the social policies that Gothic texts helped to shape. Authors examined include Horace Walpole, Charlotte Smith, Ann Radcliffe and William Godwin.

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