



Refiguring the Muse

By Levy, Gayle A.

New York, Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt/M., Paris, Wien, 1999. 186 pp., 1999. Book Condition: New. Although the muse is an integral element in discussions of poetic creation, no extended study before Refiguring the Muse has addressed the role of this figure in French literature. This work focuses on the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé, Albert Samain, Sully Prudhomme, Anna de Noailles, and Renée Vivien and takes as its central concern the relationships between poetic expression and the social, cultural, and historical representations of gender between 1870 and 1914. Dr. Levy's approach to the subject is twofold. First, she redefines the term «muse» in order to take into account the changes that the word has undergone within the French historical and literary context since the thirteenth century. Then, she shows how the figure of the poetic muse itself changes and begins to be liberated from the nineteenth-century concept that had kept the trope frozen in a passive role. The discussion is contextualized through an examination of the evolution of the muse from Baudelaire through the Surrealists and ultimately demonstrates how the poetic muse changed at the turn of the century.



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-- **Natalie Abbott**

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