# VICTORIANISM

In Great Britain, literature written during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) is called Victorian. In the United States, characteristics of "Victorianism" appear earlier, as evident in "The Wife" and "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) by Washington Irving. Americans, in particular the emerging middle class, were importing popular literature from Britain and shared Victorian values. An American form of Victorianism flowered in the writings and the marriage of Nathaniel Hawthorne, most clearly in "The Old Manse" (1846) and *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851).

In the United States, "Victorianism" refers to the prevailing values of the rising middle class in a democratic culture. Middle-class Victorian women produced American popular culture, as documented by the objective feminist scholar Ann Douglas in *The Feminization of American Culture*. Victorian women controlled the schools and churches, dictated the morals and most of what got published, since they did by far the most reading and editing. They were Victorian feminists. Their taste is evident in *Godey's Lady's Book* (1804-1878), the most successful of all American magazines in its day, edited after 1836 by Sarah Josepha Hale, a strong Victorian advocate of women's rights.

Victorians were Christian and based their morality on the family, exalting children above all. Men were the *heads* of their families and responsible for supporting them, devoted to traditional Puritan virtues including self-denial and hard work, while women upheld the values of the *heart*, typically expressed as sentimental Pastoralism. The strong consensus of values produced art that tends to be iconic, like much religious art. Irving, Hawthorne and Cooper were part of popular Victorian culture, though they criticized it. Thoreau marched to his own drumbeat and Emerson rose into his Oversoul as a "transparent eyeball." Poe went mad attacking Victorianism, represented for example by the fair lady Rowena he "loathes" in "Ligeia." Melville rebelled in particular against Christian missionary exploitation of native peoples in the South Seas and Victorian suppression of free speech and sexuality, as in *Pierre* (1851). He sailed beyond his time into a tragic vision as a precursor of Modernism.

The Civil War eroded it, but Victorianism continued to dominate the publishing culture, inhibiting the development of Realism in fiction. Even the leader of the Realist movement, William Dean Howells, was a Victorian who thought nothing should be published unfit for a young girl to read. In literary history, the Nobel Prize awarded to Sinclair Lewis in 1930 marks the eventual triumph of Realism.

Victorianism revived to some extent after WWII, as Americans returning from the war got married and had families. Then in the turbulent 1960s the countercultural revolution further eroded all traditional values. In cultural mythology, especially in the Feminist movement, the 1950s were depicted thereafter by politically correct secular liberals as an oppressively backward decade with the "negative" features of Victorianism—religious faith, genteel manners, sexual restraint, family values, patriotism--as represented for example by the Hollywood movie Production Code, abolished in 1966.

Feminists replaced the Victorian paradigm of gender roles with a Feminist paradigm, inverting traditional values. In her fiction Caroline Gordon dramatized the archetypal dynamics of gender relations, revealing that some Victorian principles are valid even in modern marriages of intellectuals and artists, particularly in her novels *Aleck Maury, Sportsman* (1934), *The Women on the Porch* (1944), *The Strange Children* (1951), and *The Malefactors* (1956).

## THE WIFE

The following excerpt from "The Wife" (1820) by Washington Irving expresses major Victorian values that have been rejected by Feminists in the 20th century. Because American culture is now so politically correct most students today are likely to respond to this passage in disbelief: Are you kidding me? No, it is not ironic, it is straight Victorianism:

> "I have often had occasion to remark the fortitude with which women sustain the most overwhelming reverses of fortune. Those disasters which break down the spirit of a man and

> prostrate him in the dust seem to call forth all the energies of the softer sex, and give such intrepidity and elevation to their character that at times it approaches to sublimity. Nothing can be more touching than to behold a soft and tender female, who had been all weakness and dependence and alive to every trivial roughness while treading the prosperous paths of life, suddenly rising in mental force to be the comforter and support of her husband under misfortune, and abiding with unshrinking firmness the bitterest blasts of adversity.
>
> As the vine, which has long twined its graceful foliage about the oak and been lifted by it into sunshine, will, when the hardy plant is rifted by the thunderbolt, cling around it with its caressing tendrils and bind up its shattered boughs, so is it beautifully ordered by Providence, that woman, who is the mere dependent and ornament of man in his happier hours, should be his stay and solace when smitten with sudden calamity, winding herself into the rugged recesses of his nature, tenderly supporting the drooping head, and binding up the broken heart."

Above all, this passage is politically incorrect because (1) it affirms belief in God as the moral and philosophical foundation of society. Gender relations have been "beautifully ordered by Providence." In the 20th century, atheist liberals were able to make Atheism in effect the state religion of the United States. By now, God cannot even be mentioned in most schools. As a consequence, many say, society has lost its coherence and moral community and is now in rapid national decline. As Voltaire said, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him." (2) Most offensive to Feminists is "The Patriarchy," as expressed in the traditional Victorian relationship of husbands and wives. The most "evil" phrase is the one calling woman "the mere dependent and ornament of man in his happier hours." However, this phrase acknowledges (3) the condescending views of wives that too many husbands are prone to take. The word *mere* implies that, as many men think, a man does not actually *need* a wife, but the whole passage argues that he *does*. In 1820 over 90% of Americans lived on farms. Farmers need wives. And they usually wanted as many children as possible to help with the farm work. Crèvecoeur idealizes the marriage in *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), but his depiction of the agrarian husband and wife as mutually dependent partners is essentially accurate. Victorian women populated the country, Feminists lower birth rates toward extinction.

Washington Irving became a popular writer because he catered to women, who constituted about 80% of his audience. In this passage, believe it or not, he is saying *what Victorian women wanted to hear*: (1) that husbands should treasure their wives and treat them better; (2) that a wife is more than a "mere dependent and ornament of man," that in fact she may save him. (3) This passage begins by asserting that the wife is *stronger* than the husband, able to sustain disasters that "break down the spirit of a man." The "patriarchal order" is reversed by the end of this passage when the man is "smitten by sudden calamity" and depends upon his wife to sustain him. Most of the time she is like a vine, yet in adversity she is the *stronger* one, "supporting the drooping head, and binding up the broken heart." The vine is a traditional symbol of Christ, who uses the metaphor. Victorians saw women as superior to men, as their *saviors* in fact, like the women in Hawthorne. (4) Irving is affirming Victorian mythology depicting women as closer than men to God and the wife as "The Angel in the House." Victorians believed that men are beastly and need to be civilized and saved by a woman in marriage. They saw bachelors as immature failures in spiritual development, like Coverdale in *The Blithedale Romance* (1852).

See analysis of "The Wife."

## VICTORIAN FEMINISM

Christian and domestic, expressing values of the enlarging middle class, advocating more power to women in the home, churches and schools, especially moral influence on men, which was accomplished primarily through the institution of marriage, as illustrated by Washington Irving's "The Wife" (1819), Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and William Dean Howells's *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885). Rip Van Winkle rebels and runs away. Many men ran to the West. Victorian feminism was by far the most popular feminism of the 19th century and represents an adaptation to conditions of life at that time, which were more natural and rural--less industrialized and regulated by government. In *Seven Gables*

the rebellious radical Holgrave is turned into a conservative Victorian by Phoebe, Hawthorne's pet name for his wife. Phoebe is a Victorian redeemer of men like a female Christ.

Victorian Americans did not believe in equality of the genders in the modern sense, they believed that overall women are superior. They believed that the genders are essentially different by nature, and complementary to each other, as ordered by God. On the whole, allowing for individual exceptions such as Margaret Fuller, men are superior in matters of the head and women superior in matters of the heart and soul. Theoretically, most women are inclined by nature to be spiritual, whereas most men are "beastly" and inclined to dissociation from the soul. As in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Men*, males need to be civilized and "saved" by women, who are, ideally, "angels in the house." Hawthorne was a Victorian male feminist who consistently embodied salvation in women and believed that all ministers should be women. As implied by the term "Victorian," the cultural model of Victorian values, even for supposedly democratic American women—including Fuller and Emily Dickinson--was Queen Victoria of Britain.

On the whole, the province of men is mainly outside, in the fields, in business, and in the professions--providing for and protecting women and children. The province of women is mainly inside, in the home, though also in the church, in the local community and in the schools, except for professional schools. Even so, many women managed to become professionals anyway, as Charles Brockden Brown notes in *Alcuin* (1797), the first tract advocating women's rights in the United States. Most farm women worked outside too, and many women worked in factories and ran small businesses. Each gender had power within its own theoretical domain and deferred to the other gender in its domain, increasing tendencies to patriarchy and matriarchy. Throughout most of the United States, women extended their domain from the home to the culture at large through their Victorianism, the political correctness of the 19th century. Victorian feminists opposed "equality" because both genders considered women superior. They opposed "women's rights" because they believed it would *reduce* their power—in manners and morals, in the home, in the schools, and in the churches. Equal rights for women would mean equal rights for men, and women feared losing their protections and privileges.

In 1835 Alexis de Tocqueville, a French magistrate who visited the United States to study its democracy, observed that "The Americans have applied to the sexes the great principle of political economy which governs the manufactures of our age, by carefully dividing the duties of man from those of woman, in order that the great work of society may be the better carried on. In no country has such constant care been taken as in American to trace two clearly distinct lines of action for the two sexes, and to make them keep pace one with the other, but in two pathways which are always different. American women never…take part in political life; nor are they, on the other hand ever compelled to perform the rough labor of the fields, or to make any of those laborious exertions which demand the exertion of physical strength. No families are so poor as to form an exception to this rule. If, on the one hand, an American woman cannot escape from the quiet circle of domestic employments, she is never forced, on the other, to go beyond it. Hence it is, that the women of American, who often exhibit a masculine strength of understanding and a manly energy, generally preserve great delicacy of personal appearance, and always retain the manners of women, although they sometimes show that they have the hearts and minds of men….Although the women of the United States are confined within the narrow limits of domestic life, and their situation is, in some respects, one of extreme dependence, I have nowhere seen woman occupying a loftier position." (*Democracy in America*, 1835)

As the objective feminist scholar Ann Douglas documents in *The Feminization of American Culture*, Victorian women created popular or mass culture. Sophia Hawthorne--illustrator, linguist and wife of Nathaniel--is an example of Victorian feminism at its best. Her influence on her husband is evident in his writing and in their many letters. She disagreed with him in admiring Emerson and engaged in lifelong disagreements with her unmarried radical Feminist sister Elizabeth Peabody, in particular on the value of marriage. Sarah Josepha Hale, the strong advocate of women's rights in the home as Editor for 40 years of *Godey's Lady's Book* (1837-1877), the most popular magazine in America for most of that period, is another prominent example of Victorian feminism. *McGuffey's Reader* was a Victorian feminist textbook used throughout the country for most of the 19th century and the early 20th century, an anthology of classic literature that included illustrations of women posing to demonstrate the proper body language for expressing various emotions. The Realist movement in fiction that began in the late 19th century rebelled

against the constraints of Victorianism. The culture of the post-WWII 1950s was to some extent a revival of Victorian feminism, but gave women more opportunities in the workplace. Victorian women populated the country, whereas currently, Feminist women in some ethnic groups are reducing birth rates toward extinction, as is most evident in a dying Europe

## VICTORIAN WOMEN'S FICTION

American women fiction writers before the Civil War, unlike their British counterparts, apparently did not try to produce enduring literature. Their priorities were commercial, political, and pious. As the feminist Nina Baym acknowledges in *Women's Fiction: A Guide 1820 to 1870* (1978):

"A reexamination of this fiction may well show it to lack the esthetic, intellectual, and moral complexity and artistry that we demand of great literature. I confess frankly that...I have not unearthed a forgotten Jane Austen or George Eliot, or hit upon even one novel that I would propose to set alongside *The Scarlet Letter*." (14) "Earlier critics castigated this literature for certain allegedly female qualities, as the product of a timid, sentimental, narrow, trivializing sensibility, and some recent feminists, agreeing with this depiction, have seen the authors as hacks and traitors to their sex. Others, however, have claimed a covert feminism for these works, discerning beneath their sugary texture a poisonous brew." (18) "Could these talented women who failed to produce literature of the first rank have done better? If so, why didn't they?...They saw themselves not as 'artists' but as professional writers with work to do and a living to be made." (16)

Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (1977): "Sentimental 'domestic novels' written largely by women for women dominated the literary market in America from the 1840s through the 1880s...This literature seems today both ludicrous and painful in the evidence it offers of the enormous need of its authors and readers for uncritical confirmation of themselves and instantaneous satisfaction of their appetites" (72-3). The feminist Susan Conrad contends in *Perish the Thought: Intellectual Women in Romantic America 1830-1860* (1976) that women novelists of the period--she calls them "scribblers"--were deliberately anti-intellectual. The feminist Helen Papashvily argues in *All the Happy Endings: A Study of the Domestic Novel in America* (1956) that women's novels before the Civil War were "a witches' broth, a lethal draught brewed by women and used by women to destroy their common enemy, man" (xvii).

Today, many feminist academics teaching American fiction of this period reject literary, aesthetic and intellectual standards in order to get at least one woman onto their reading lists, usually Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1791), one of the best sellers of all time, considered pornographic in the later nineteenth century. A better choice would be Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), the most influential novel in American history, but it is a very long sermon, not a great work of art, and affirms the racial stereotype of Uncle Tom. Distinguished women fiction writers began to appear *after* the Civil War: Rebecca Harding Davis, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary Wilkins Freeman, Kate Chopin, Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, etc.

Among male fiction writers before the Civil War, Charles Brockden Brown wrote the first American feminist "novel," *Alcuin* (1797)--a tract in dialogue in which he pled for the legal, political, economic, and cultural equality of women; Irving catered to the Victorian female audience; Cooper depicted a spectrum of female types; Poe expressed a radical feminism in "Ligeia"; Hawthorne was a Victorian feminist who shared the values of most women in that period; and Melville represented Ishmael as somewhat androgynous in *Moby-Dick*. In his next book, *Pierre*, he advocated women's liberation from the constraints of Victorianism. His stories "The Paradise of Bachelors" and "The Tartarus of Maids" (1855) dramatize the contrast between privileged males and exploited women.

Helen Papashvily, *All the Happy Endings: A Study of the Domestic Novel in America* (1956): "The ladies at Seneca Falls and their converts...rallied but a small minority to their cause. At its peak the suffrage movement had the active support of less than 10 percent of the women in the United States." (23) "Nevertheless, the quiet women revolted, too, and waged their own devious, subtle, undeclared war against men--their manual of arms, their handbook of strategy was the sentimental domestic novel." (24) "Like many legal conceptions, the control of husband over wife was modified, of course, in actual practice.

Individual women by various and traditional methods achieved equality and even domination in the marriage relationship. Henpecked husbands, then as now, served as the butt of jokes. In a really intolerable situation a wife...could rely on the pressure of public opinion to alleviate her lot." (21) "Moreover, as customary in new settlements, a surplus of men (which persisted in some areas until the twentieth century) increased the bargaining power of women." (33) "The conflict no longer arose from the woman's struggle to acquire a husband but rather from her efforts to control him and the marriage." (34) "Equality might have satisfied that vociferous minority agitating far and wide for women's rights but the...sweetly smiling [Victorian] ladies at home sought, though perhaps unconsciously, another goal--complete domination ...Domestic novelists, all women...[There were a few men] veiled calculating aims and techniques under misty clouds of pious sentiment, fragile innocence, artless gaiety and heroic martyrdom." (57)

Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (1977): "Foreign travelers to the United States frequently remarked on the deference which seemed in their eyes to be a trademark of the middle-class American male's relations with the female." (70) "Paternal authority was a waning force in the middle-class American family...The American father, locked into tightening business patterns, was less and less likely to be at home." (87) "It is the women who read. It is the women who are the tribunal of any question aside from politics or business. It is the women who give or withhold a literary reputation. It is the women who regulate the style of living....It is the women who exercise the ultimate control over the Press" [writer Nathaniel Willis]. (122) "The sales of all the works by Hawthorne, Melville, Thoreau and Whitman in the 1850s did not equal the sales of one of the more popular domestic novels." (114)

Nina Baym, *Women's Fiction: A Guide 1820 to 1870* (1978): "This fiction was by far the most popular literature of its time, and on the strength of that popularity, authorship in America was established as a woman's profession, and reading as a woman's avocation." (11) "The success of an enormous number of women's books in the 1850s written by many different women suggests a virtually unlimited market open to any woman who could demonstrate drawing power with an audience....*The writers who suffered in the 1850s were not the women but the men who were aspiring to classic literary greatness*." (179) "While these writers and the critics enlisted in their cause have suffered, hundreds of women authors (I do not exaggerate here) and millions of women readers have enjoyed a mutually profitable relationship." (277) "Although the novelists of this period now considered important are all male, from 1850 until well after the Civil War (some would say until the 1920s) the novel was chiefly a form of literary communication among women." (32) [Italics added.]

"The major, repeated, varied story is that of the struggle of good women against the oppressions and cruelties, covert and blatant, of men." (115) "The novels of Southworth, Hentz, Holmes, and Marion Harland all permitted their heroines to triumph in satisfying ways over their enemies, thereby indulging the readers' wish for revenge." (252) "In the fourteen novels from the fifties that form the subject of my analysis, I have found only one thoroughly good man, the father in *The Lost Hieress*. Most are of limited intelligence and overwhelming vanity." (115) "In only two novels of the entire period...do the heroines have doubts of God's existence, but in most of them they have some trouble accepting his decrees." (42) "Turning to God becomes a device for calling on her own resources." (43) "The writers' religious faith coincided with their conviction that God's values were domestic, even if the concept of God himself remained masculine." (44)

"The 'cult of domesticity' that pervades this fiction is not equivalent to a later generation's idea of such a cult, as a simple injunction for woman willingly to turn the key on her own prison....Domesticity is set forth as a value scheme for ordering all of life, in competition with the ethos of money and exploitation that is perceived to prevail in American society. The domestic ideal meant not that woman was to be sequestered from the world in her place at home but that everybody was to be placed in the home, and hence home and the world would become one. Then, to the extent that woman dominated the home, the ideology implied an unprecedented historical expansion of her influence." (27) "The modern age is to be woman's age, an age of virtue, family harmony, and love." (58) "The cult opposed the radical demands of the woman's righters." (29) "Class exercises a greater limitation on potential than gender....Upward mobility is the heroine's destiny, but the rise of servants when it occurs is an occasion for satire rather than celebration." (69)

"As Christians and as Victorians [they] were disinclined to acknowledge the body and physical sexuality as elements of self either inherently spiritual or capable of being spiritualized....They had a non-androgynous certainty that men and women were essentially different...They saw this distinction as significant enough to warrant a stratified society based on it, with appropriately different behavior and occupations for the two sexes." (18) "Some historians feel that their primary purpose here was to free themselves from the dangers and difficulties of childbearing and child-rearing and thus make their lives safer and more free. But the psychological purpose, expressed in so much women's fiction, of controlling men's attitudes toward women also remains relevant within marriage....The liberated woman was sexually liberated, not in the modern sense but in the sense of being liberated from sex." (254-5)

David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (1989): "The period between 1800 and 1860 witnessed the emergence of two conflicting popular modes, the Conventional and the Subversive, and a third mode, Romantic Adventure, which occupied a kind of middle ground." (7) "Before 1800, Conventional fiction constituted nearly 60 percent of the volumes produced, whereas the figure hovered around 20 percent for the 1820-60 period. The proportionate number of Subversive and Romantic Adventure volumes, in contrast, rose from about 20 percent before 1800 to more than 55 percent for the 1841-50 decade....The Subversive had roots in eighteenth-century British criminal and Gothic fiction...There developed an intensifying debate between those who wanted to retain what was regarded as the calmness and polish of British prose and those, on the other hand, who called for a distinctly American wildness, roughness, and savagery, even at the expense of all past literary rules." (8) "Certain authors [such as Hawthorne and Melville] began to manipulate the modes and play them off against each other." (9) "The distinguishing quality of the literary text is not radical subversiveness but unique suggestiveness and great reconstructive power...The present book [*Beneath the American Renaissance*] rejects the notion of a 'definitive' close reading, recognizing that the literary text is a rich compound of socioliterary strands, each of which stems from a tremendous body of submerged writings that have been previously hidden from view." (10)

"I am inclined to split reform literature into two aspects: the Conventional and the Subversive. Both were ostensibly based upon an interest in preserving moral and physical healthiness, a belief in the sanctity of the home, and an identification of religion with moral practice. But the difference between the two groups lies in emphasis and imagery. Conventional reform writings, particularly the highly influential lectures and novels of Boston Unitarians, emphasize the ingredients and rewards of virtue rather than the wages of vice. Typical of the Conventional sensibility are Sarah Savage's domestic novel *The Factory Girl* (1814), the reform sermons by leading liberal preachers like William Ellery Channing and Joseph Tuckerman, Catherine Sedgwick's novels *Home* (1835) and *The Poor Rich Man and the Rich Poor Man* (1836*)* and the addresses of the abolitionist and education reformer Horace Mann....The novels of [William] Ware and Sedgwick are Conventional narratives on the power of family togetherness and active morality in the face of social inequities. Eventually, such themes would gain almost mythic status in such Conventional best-sellers as Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) and Maria Cummins's *The Lamplighter* (1854). In contrast to Conventional reformers, the Subversive reformers (often called 'ultraists' by their contemporaries) de-emphasized the remedies for vice while probing the grisly, sometimes perverse results of vice, such as shattered homes, sadomasochistic violence, eroticism, nightmare visions, and the disillusioning collapse of romantic ideals." (59)

"The sentimental-domestic fiction that is thought to have conquered the popular market actually ran a distant second to more sensational genres. For the whole 1774-1860 period, the proportion of highly wrought, adventurous volumes written by American authors was about 57 percent, while the proportion of sentimental or religious volumes was only 22 percent. Also, the idea that there was a single kind of fiction that can be absolutely designated as 'women's fiction' is inaccurate. Several male authors, such as Timothy Shay Arthur and Charles J. Peterson, were among the most prolific authors of sentimental-domestic fiction, while certain women writers, such as E.D.E.N. Southworth and Mary A. Denison, produced lurid sensational literature." (338) "By the end of the 1850s, a profound disillusion with both the piously Conventional and the politically feminist began to be registered in the so-called literature of misery, an ironic, stylized genre which...set the stage for [Emily] Dickinson's elliptical poems." (387)

"There has been neglect of the dazzling diversity of female character types in antebellum literature. Some of these types were indeed conservative, underscoring woman's domestic function, but passivity was rarely praised, and American writers were uniquely bold in fashioning alternative women characters representing a variety of protofeminist or feminist views, ranging from anger against exploitive males to revolutionary assertions of women's rights." (339) "American feminists...viewed the typical foreign heroine as too weak." (340) "The term I assign to the affirmative, pious heroine of sentimental-domestic fiction is the *moral exemplar.* In some of her manifestations, the American moral exemplar was gentle, but more often she was notably spunky and active, especially when compared with her counterparts in British and Continental fiction. In some works she became so bold as to fight, explore, command, or shoot just like a man, creating an androgynous stereotype I call the *adventure feminist.* While the moral exemplar and the adventure feminist represented affirmations of woman's power, the figure of the *woman victim* (the brutalized drunkard's wife or the seduced and abandoned woman) embodied dark 'women's wrongs' and manifested a variety of emotions, from torpid gloom to rebellious rage.

Another character type, the *working woman,* was similarly a victim of male exploitation who was variously depicted as depressed, stoical, or revolutionary. [Such as Priscilla in *The Blithedale Romance* by Hawthorne] When women's issues were taken up by radical-democrat novelists, two iconoclastic figures, what I term the *feminist criminal* and the *sensual woman,* appeared in a sizable body of pamphlet fiction. In time, the protofeminist assumptions behind several of these character types became fully politicized, as leading suffragists expanded upon issues that had been debated for years in popular culture. By the 1850s the women's rights movement was producing fiction of its own, adopting all previous character types and adding a new militant figure, the *feminist exemplar,* who openly demanded political rights for women. The numerous character types, reflecting a broad range of aggressions and fantasies within American women, proliferated and diversified to such a degree that by the 1850s there was a great complexity in perceptions of women's roles." (339-40)

"The power of the female exemplar grew in proportion to the decline of reliable male authority figures....The female moral exemplar takes the place of the male clergyman....In nineteenth-century American fiction there emerged two main types of moral exemplar: what may be called the *angel* (typified by gentle characters such as Eva St. Clare of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Beth March of *Little Women*) and the *practical woman* (such as the increasingly sturdy Gertrude Flint of Maria Cummins's *The Lamplighter*)." (342) "Phoebe Pynchon of Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*--fresh, unconventional, active, orderly, efficient--typifies the *practical exemplar.* The *adventure feminist* is an especially tough, active version of the *moral exemplar."* (345) "The novelists who were most successful in registering this hardy frontier spirit among women were Catherine Maria Sedgwick, John Neal, James Fenimore Cooper, and William Gilmore Simms." (346) "Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827) and *The Linwoods* (1836) stand out as particularly sophisticated treatments of different kinds of exemplars." (347) "But [she] decried public agitation for women's rights, avoided outspoken feminist militancy and chose instead to advance progressive ideas indirectly through her fiction." (348)

"The literature of women's wrongs emerged between 1832 and 1848 in dark writings connected with key reform movements--antiprostitution, antiseduction, temperance, antislavery..." (351) "This period witnessed the feminist coloration of two central stereotypical characters: the *working woman* (usually the starving seamstress but also other kinds of workers) and the *woman victim* (either the drunkard's wife, the slave woman, or the fallen woman)." (352) "[Melville's] 'The Tartarus of Maids' was a literary culmination of a rich tradition of fiction about women factory workers." (353) "By the 1840s...women and children constituted nearly two-thirds of the factory work force..." (354) "The broadening range of evils depicted in fiction about black women is also evidenced in Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* (1859), the first novel published by a black person in America." (361) "In many sensational novels the *fallen woman* became a fantasy figure of vindictive violence and unrestrained sexuality. The *feminist criminal* was the abandoned woman who avenges wrongs against her sex by waging war against society, especially against men and against proper women." (363)

"It should be noted that through the publication of *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), male authors were most successful in fashioning heroines that were complicated or iconoclastic (the main exception was Catherine Sedgwick, whose heroines are among the most interesting in pre-1850 fiction). While women reformers

were largely responsible for generating such intriguing stereotypes as the *fallen woman* or the *woman victim*, it was the male novelists, especially the sensationalists of the 1840s, who most often translated these reform stereotypes into fictional characters. Hawthorne's stature as the period's earliest fabricator of truly complex heroines owes much to this phenomenon of male authors giving fictional life to cultural stereotypes that were provoking political action in women's reform circles." (366-67)

David S. Reynolds

Michael Hollister (2015)