Reading Fiction in Antebellum America
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Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

Machor, James L.
Reading Fiction in Antebellum America: Informed Response and Reception Histories, 1820–1865.


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NOTES

CHAPTER ONE: Historical Hermeneutics, Reception Theory, and the Social Conditions of Reading in Antebellum America


rists who has attempted to unite theory and practice has been Mailloux, who has proposed that critics give up trying to forge a “general theory” of reading and turn instead to “rhetorical hermeneutics,” which would “provide histories of how particular theories and critical discourses have evolved” by tracing the rhetorical practices of interpretation as “historical sets of topics, arguments, tropes, ideologies, and so forth” (Rhetorical Power 15–17). In taking this turn, however, Mailloux opens up a different gap by neither explaining nor demonstrating how such rhetorical histories could provide—or intersect with—accounts of particular reading practices and the dynamics of reception as products of historically specific interpretive strategies.

5. These problematic tendencies of 1970s reader-oriented criticism did not extend in the same way to psychological reader-response critics such as David Bleich and Norman Holland, primarily because their work dealt with contemporary reading strategies and contemporary readers (mostly college students) and thus had no methodological implications for the issue of reading as a historical act. The same applies to the vast majority of reception study in cultural studies and mass communication because of its contemporaneous orientation. Hence, the question of history is a moot point even in the strongly contextualized ethnographic and active-audience work that began with David Morley’s The “Nation-wide” Audience: Structure and Decoding (London: British Film Institute, 1980) and Janice Radway’s Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1984) and has continued with such works as Jacqueline Bobo’s Black Women as Cultural Readers (New York: Columbia UP, 1995); Janet Staiger’s Perverse Spectators: The Practices of Film Reception (New York: New York UP, 2000); and Kimberly Chabot’s Postmodern Texts and Emotional Audiences (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue UP, 2007). For a discussion and representative examples of reception study in cultural studies, see the critical introduction and accompanying essays in the fourth section of James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein, eds., Reception Study: From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies (New York: Routledge, 2001) 203–317.

ing Holub and Mailloux, but it is a distinction somewhat problematized by the fact that Iser and Jauss developed their methods as members of the Konstance school, which has led some critics to group them together (e.g., Freund 134–51). Despite their affinity, however, a differentiation seems warranted in that Iser himself sought to distinguish his method from reception aesthetics (see *Act of Reading* x, 151).

“in reconstructing the horizon of social norms for a group of French lyrics in 1852 [an analysis contained in Toward an Aesthetic of Reception], Jauss discusses the effect of their reception on . . . bourgeois society; but his ‘horizon analysis’ leaves completely unexplained the interpretive work of readers that would have to be performed before such a socialization effect could take place”; in other words, notes Mailloux, “[l]ike traditional literary history . . . Rezeptionäesthetik tends to cover over the [contextually specific] interpretive work of readers . . . that underlies all literary history” (170, 11).


11. The term interpretive community was conceived most prominently, of course, by Stanley Fish (Is There a Text in This Class? [Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1980] esp. 167–73), though it has antecedents, particularly in Charles Sanders Peirce’s discussion of the communal intersubjectivity of semiosis (on this point in Peirce, see Umberto Eco, The Limits of Interpretation [Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990] 40–41). The term reading formation comes from Tony Bennett,
“Texts, Readers, and Reading Formations,” Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association 16, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 3–17. Fish has defined interpretive communities differently on different occasions: at one point he has said that an interpretive community consists of “those who share interpretive strategies” and “a structure of interests and understood goals” (Is There a Text in This Class? 14, 333). Elsewhere, he has explained that “the idea of an interpretive community [designates] not so much a group of individuals who share a point of view, but a point of view or way or organizing experiences that share[s] individuals in the sense that its assumed distinctions, categories of understanding, and stipulations of relevance and irrelevance [are] the content of the consciousness of community members” (Doing What Comes Naturally 141). Bennett characterizes a reading formation as “a region of discourse that is specifically concerned with the production of readings, with the operation of a hermeneutic,” and therefore consists of beliefs, interpretive strategies, and other activities that vary from one formation to another within “the variety of material, social, institutional, and ideological contexts” in which they are formed (14). Since Bennett’s reading formation and Fish’s interpretive community, in the second definition, work out to be much the same thing, the two terms are, in effect, interchangeable and even redundant. But I want to retain both terms to make an important distinction. That is, I will be using reading formation (and interpretive formation) to refer to any set of interrelated interpretive codes, ideologies, and beliefs, while interpretive community will designate any group of people, not limited by geographical proximity, who share a particular reading formation within a historically specific set of social conditions.


13. Jonathan Rose, “Rereading the English Common Reader: A Preface to the History of Audiences,” Journal of the History of Ideas 53 (1992): 51. Such a definition, it should be noted, is not without its problems. According to it, teachers, lawyers, doctors, nurses, and historians could never be “common readers” no matter what they read, since all depend to a substantial degree on book reading for their livelihood. This definition also begs the question as to whether, say, professional films reviewers, who do not necessarily rely on reading books for their living, are “common” readers when they review.


15. Representative, important full-length studies in this vein include David Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980); James Smith Allen, Popular French Romanticism: Authors, Readers, and Books in the 19th Century (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1981); Robert Darnton, Literary Underground of the Old Regime (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982); Cathy N. Davidson, Revolution and the Word: The


17. For these caveats, see Kintgen 63–65, 214; Rose, “How Historians Study Reader Response” 206; Raymond 190; Jackson 38; Rubin 253; Rose, *Intellectual Life* 2; St. Clair 5–6; William Sherman, “What Did Renaissance Readers Write in Their Books?” Anderson and Sauer 130–31; Scott E. Casper, “Antebellum Reading Prescribed and Described,” *Perspectives in American Book History: Artifacts and Commentary*, ed. Scott E. Casper, Joanne D. Chaisson, and Jeffrey D. Groves (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2002) 160; Price 312–13; Wakelin 17; and Loveman 13. One problem with the use of marginalia, letters, and memoirs not noted in these critiques is that historians who have employed such evidence have repeatedly turned to readers who were intellectuals and scribes, members of the British aristocracy or of the publishing industry, or themselves novelists and poets, which calls into question the claim that such records provide evidence of the activities of “common” or “typical” readers. Studies exemplifying this pitfall include Jackson; Bautz; Wakelin; Sharpe; Rubin; and Zboray and Zboray, *Everyday Ideas*.

18. This problem is apparent, for example, in Huot; Johnson; Allen; and Rose, *Intellectual Life*.


20. Patrocinio Schweickart, “Understanding an Other: Reading as a Receptive Form of Communicative Action,” Goldstein and Machor, *New Directions in American Reception Study* 3. Sharpe has noted a similar disjunction between response-and-reception criticism and historians of reading and of the book in that “historians have not for the most part been attracted to the programme of a historical reception theory or historical reader-response criticism” (37).

21. My use of the designation *historical hermeneutics* needs some explanation, since hermeneutics is a term that itself carries implications of an engagement with
history. As it originally developed within theological discourse, hermeneutics was a method of reading distinguishable from exegesis and interpretation. According to Paul Achtmeier, “exegesis normally meant determining what meaning the text had for its own author and intended readers, interpretation sought the meaning the text could have for the current age, and hermeneutics concerned the rules to apply in order to get from the former to the latter” (*An Introduction to the New Hermeneutic* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969] 13–14). In the twentieth century, however, the meaning of hermeneutics began to be expanded to include first exegesis and then interpretation, so that hermeneutics has come to designate loosely any activity concerned with the explanation and understanding of texts (see Robert Marsh, “Historical Interpretation and the History of Criticism,” *Literary Criticism and Historical Understanding*, ed. Phillip Damon [New York: Columbia UP, 1967] 1). By hermeneutics, however, I mean something more specific that draws on Paul Ricoeur’s assertion that hermeneutics is “the theory of the operations of understanding in their relation to the interpretation of texts” (“The Task of Hermeneutics,” *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. John B. Thompson [Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge UP and Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de L’Homme, 1981] 43). That is, I take hermeneutics to refer to a theoretically informed practice that studies both the act of interpretation—the making sense of a text—and the reading formation that produced it. Historical hermeneutics, therefore, is concerned with the dynamics of response and reception as the products of historically specific reading formations shared by particular interpretive communities. Conceived this way, historical hermeneutics differs from what Hans-Georg Gadamer means when he uses that same term, in that for Gadamer, historical hermeneutics signifies something closer to the traditional idea of hermeneutics as an activity seeking to contextualize a text to discover the historically specific meaning it contains. Gadamer’s historical hermeneutics is thus concerned, not with the process of interpretation by which a text’s original historical audience(s) made sense of it, but with the method by which subsequent readers can, within their own horizon of assumptions, come to an understanding of a text’s original and intrinsic meaning (Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall [New York: Crossroad, 1990] esp. 165–379).


23. The designations “positive” and “negative” belong to Suleiman, “Introduction: Varieties of Audience-Oriented Criticism”; “idealist” and “realist” are distinctions employed by Mailloux, *Rhetorical Power* 3–14.

25. Suleiman, “Introduction: Varieties of Audience-Oriented Criticism” 43–46. Fish first posed this question and his answer in Critical Inquiry in an essay later incorporated in Is There a Text in This Class? 147–73, esp. 165. Fish also went on to anticipate the claim of Suleiman and others by asserting that the question and its nonanswer had no relevance for critical practice (370–71)—an assertion he would later echo in Doing What Comes Naturally 315–41.


29. Regarding the issue of “normal” circumstances, see also Fish, “Normal Circumstances and Other Special Cases,” Is There a Text in This Class? 268–92.


31. On the hierarchical arrangement of interpretive assumptions, see also the brief comments by Mailloux, Interpretive Conventions 193; and Fish, Doing What Comes Naturally 146. In arguing for the “foundational” or “more funda-
mental” status of some interpretive codes, I do not mean that some codes are foundational in any totalizing manner—i.e., foundational to all interpretive activity. My point is that such foundations exits only as a result of and in regard to particular interpretive communities at particular times. My argument here is less radical than it may at first appear in that over a decade ago the semiotician William Rogers also asserted that “interpretation interprets itself” and can do so “only within the boundaries of some interpretive system” (*Interpreting Interpretation: Textual Hermeneutics as an Ascetic Discipline* [University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1994] 2, 9). A major difference between his claim and mine, however, is that, as a follower of Charles Sanders Peirce, Rogers did not attribute this self-deciphering to the work of readers or interpretive communities but instead claimed that “the nature of the sign is to interpret itself in interpreting its object” (13).

32. Of course, recognizing a pre-text as pre-text—i.e., particular signs that warrant an interpretive act—is itself an interpretation grounded in a reading code that consists of at least an elementary linguistic competency. But it seems necessary to assume such competency as a given before formalist or semantic interpretation begins. That is, the basic ability to recognize a pre-text as parole within a “natural” language system (or langue) will be shared by all interpretive communities working within that language, irrespective of historical context. Regarding the role of interpretation in determining when the interpretive act is warranted in the first place and thus “what counts as an interpretable object,” see Miguel Tamen, *Friends of Interpretable Objects* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) 3.


36. For an analysis of the way reprinting and repackaging can both have an impact on and serve as a form of reception, see Barbara Hochman, “Sentiment without Tears: *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as History in the 1890s,” Goldstein and Machtor, *New Directions in American Reception Study* 255–76.


42. Oscar Weglin, *Early American Fiction, 1774–1830*, 3rd ed. (New York: Peter Smith, 1929); Lyle Wright, “A Statistical Survey of American Fiction,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 2 (1939): 309; Dzwonkoski 76, 84, and throughout; “Works Published in 1855,” *Ladies’ Repository* July 1856: 441. John Tebbel sets the figures for fiction even higher, asserting that among the approximately 2,000
titles published in the United States in 1855, 1,200 were original or reprinted novels (224).


46. Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1938) 1: 341–42, 2: 4; *Ladies’ Repository* Apr. 1861: 248; “Newspaper Men,” *Ladies’ Repository* Mar. 1854: 103; “Journalism in France,” *British Quarterly Review*, rpt. in *Littell’s Living Age* July 1846: 67–89. These cumulative numbers, however, only hint at the magnitude of periodical publication in the United States between 1825 and 1850, since many ephemeral periodicals that began after 1825 disappeared by 1850 and thus were not part of the total for that year. Mott calculates that more than 4,000 periodicals appeared over those twenty-five years in the United States.


50. Zboray, *Fictive People* 212, n. 4, raises a similar cautionary note.


52. Allen, *In the Public Eye* 56, 61.


the Early Settlement to the Close of the Civil War Period (New York: Macmillan, 1940) 59, 202–90, and 309.

57. Ira Katznelson and Margaret Weir, *Schooling for All: Class, Race, and the Decline of the Democratic Ideal* (New York: Basic Books, 1985) 79. This distrust was true even in England, where such resistance was less pronounced than it was in other European nations. Hence by 1850, there were 80,000 public schools in the United States with enrollments of 3.3 million, in comparison to Britain's 15,000 public schools with 1.4 million students (*Seventh Census of the United States*, lx, lxiii).


64. On bookstores as a predominately urban institution in antebellum America, see Bode 111–12; and Zboray, Fictive People 136–55. Zboray 37–54, also provides an extensive discussion of the predominant urban itinerary of book peddlers. Regarding the connection between population density and number of libraries, Soltow and Stevens note that in 1850 counties of 10,000 or more inhabitants averaged 2.86 libraries, while counties of 1,000 or fewer averaged .37, or one library for every three rural counties (82).

65. Martin 248–54; Zboray, Fictive People 12, 66. One index to the urban character of print consumption is the few surviving subscription lists of antebellum periodicals, such as the Southern Quarterly Review. In the list of paid subscribers that magazine included in its July 1846 issue, urban inhabitants comprised 75 percent of the names.

Century America, ed. William L. Barney (Maldon, MA: Blackwell, 2001) 178–91; and esp. Stuart M. Blumin, The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760–1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989). Although urging caution, Blumin argues that if we approach this designation, not in terms of ownership of the means of production or solely in terms of income categories, but through structures of shared social and cultural experiences that constitute “class consciousness,” the descriptor “middle class” becomes a viable category for differentiating a segment of American society that developed and grew in the forty years before the Civil War.


70. Zboray, Fictive People 11–12, 145; Charvat, Profession of Authorship 75; Tebbel 243; Johanningsmeier 13; Louise Stevenson, “Homes, Books, and Reading,” Casper et al., eds. The Industrial Book, 1840–1880 320. The problem of working-class access to books and periodicals went beyond a mere percentage of cost to wages. It was also a function of discretionary income, which was significantly lower among the working class (Blumin 109–14). To underscore these disparities, however, is not to imply that the antebellum working classes were barred from access to print in general and fiction in particular. Besides the availability of some used books, the advent of inexpensive story newspapers in the 1840s provided working-class readers an avenue into print culture. On


72. Dudden 144–45.

73. On the increase in leisure time of middle-class women and its reconfiguration as a new kind of labor under the cult of domesticity, see Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820–1860,” American Quarterly 18 (1966): 51–74; Stansell 159 and throughout; Dudden 7, 127–29, and throughout; Matthaei 157, 178; and Cross 103. On the cult of domesticity as primarily a middle-class urban development, see Nancy Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England, 1780–1835 (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977) 9–13, 50–51, 92–93; Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class 155–65; Fox-Genovese 37–79; and Blumin 179–91.


75. Zboray, Fictive People 122, 205.

76. Zboray, Fictive People 163, table 15. The question of the representativeness of the holdings of the New York Society Library is also germane. For instance, Caritat’s Circulating Library in New York City in the early 1800s listed over a thousand works of fiction among the several thousand volumes in its catalog, figures that put its holdings for fiction closer to 20 percent (Johnson, History of Libraries 318).

78. David Leverenz, *Manhood and the American Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1989) 138; Zboray, *Fictive People* 163–64. Zboray notes, moreover, that although women tended to favor sentimental fiction while men were more likely to read novelists such as Cooper while men regularly checked out sentimental and “feminine” novels (164). On men as an important part of the antebellum reading audience for fiction and periodicals, including those designed primarily for women, see also Mary Lynn Stevens Heininger, *At Home with a Book: Reading in America, 1840–1940* (Rochester: Strong Museum, 1986).


81. It should be noted that few book historians have taken this attitude toward reviews vis-à-vis letters, memoirs, and marginalia; in fact, most hold the contrary view that the latter are superior as a window into “common” and everyday readers. A few book historians, however, have questioned that supposed advantage, pointing out that letters, memoirs, and even marginalia are hardly unalloyed avenues into readers’ private reading practices but are, like reviews, public performances designed to be viewed by others—performances shaped by their own sets of conventions (Rubin 253; Jackson, *Romantic Readers* 301; Kintgen 63–65; Raymond 190; Rose, “How Historians Study Reader Response” 206; and Scott E. Casper, “Antebellum Reading Prescribed and Described,” Perspectives on American Book History: Artifacts and Commentary, ed. Scott E. Casper, Joanne D. Chaison, and Jeffrey D. Groves [Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2002] 160). Others have questioned the typicality of remarks in letters and memoirs as
representative of the practices of the vast majority of historical readers who never self-consciously recorded their responses (e.g., Kintgen 214; Rose, *Intellectual Life* 2; St. Clair 5–6).

82. Wallace 26. The work of Ronald and Mary Zboray is relevant here because, while it questions, it also reinforces my argument about the affinities between periodical reviewers and the middle-class audience for fiction. In their study of reading practices of middle-class families in antebellum Boston, the Zborays argue that these readers had “limited critical vocabularies” for talking about books and that “these readers certainly do not seem to have acquired such a vocabulary from critics” (“‘Have You Read. . . ?: Real Readers and Their Responses in Antebellum Boston and Its Regions,” *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 52 [1997]: 148). However, the responses the Zborays discover cause them to admit, in a note following their claim about a lack of reviewer influence, that there are substantial “commonalities between the discourse of reviewers and readers” in their sample. Indeed, in another study of antebellum New England readers, the Zborays write that “[i]n an effort to learn more about works . . . readers often turned to reviews” (“Transcendentalism in Print”).


84. In designating the interpretive practices of reviewers and magazine essayists as components of a “public sphere” of interpretation, I am using that term somewhat analogously to the way Jürgen Habermas has employed it to designate a social or cultural (not physical) space in which access (in theory) is guaranteed to all (*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Culture*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989]). Originally developed in the seventeenth century to encompass “the lecteurs, spectateurs, and auditeurs as the addressees and consumers, and the critics of art and literature” (31), the public sphere had grown and increased in power via the mass culture of print in the nineteenth century. The manner in which that culture was demographically coded by class and location, however, indicates that the public sphere in antebellum America was hardly guaranteed to all.


1. On the fear among antebellum educators about the dangerous ramifications of literacy, see Lee Soltow and Edward Stevens, *The Rise of Literacy and the Common School in the United States: A Socioeconomic Analysis to 1870* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981) 60–61. This concern about the social dangers of reading—and particularly novel reading—was shared outside the public sphere as well. For example, Scott E. Casper quotes the following from an 1835 diary entry of one Michael Floy, a resident of Bowery Village, New York: “I fully believe novels and romances have made a greater part of the prostitutes of the world, to say nothing of the many miserable matches” (“Antebellum Reading Prescribed and Described,” *Perspectives on American Book History: Artifacts and Commentary*, ed. Scott E. Casper, Joanne D. Chaison, and Jeffrey D. Groves [Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2002] 145–46).

2. In this formulation of purpose, American reviewers mirrored the practice of British magazinists and critics, who, as Patrick Parrinder points out, “saw themselves as middlemen in an essentially corporate process of production and consumption” (*Authors and Authority: English and American Criticism, 1750–1900* [New York; macmillan, 1991] 121).

3. In analyzing the public forum of periodical responses to fiction, I treat reviewers and critics as one group even though at times in this period a distinction was made between the two. An 1853 article in *Putnam’s Magazine*, e.g., defined reviewing as an examination of a specific work or works but designated criticism as a more theoretical or general treatment of literary genres or literature as a whole. However, John Paul Pritchard points out that “this distinction . . . was almost completely ignored in general practice” (*Literary Wise Men of Gotham: Criticism in New York, 1815–1860* [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1963] 85).

4. William Charvat was one of the first to define antebellum literary criticism, especially in periodicals, as exercising a self-appointed “watchdog” function (*The Origins of American Critical Thought, 1810–1835* [1936; New York: Russell and Russell, 1968] 7–26 and 107). Hazel Dickson-Garcia has applied the same term to antebellum journalism as a whole, arguing that from 1830 to 1850 “the emphasis on the press’s ‘watchdog’ function . . . grew” as a result of a shift in the press’s role from overt political partisanship to an “information or news role,” which “emphasized . . . providing the individual with information useful in life’s conduct” (*Journalistic Standards in Nineteenth-Century America* [Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1989] 106–7). On the regulatory tendency of ante-

5. New York Mirror, qtd. in Pritchard 87.

6. A number of previous studies have shed substantial light on the practices of antebellum critics and reviewers, and I have found much of their work useful in my discussion in this chapter of the public codes of interpretation. This foundational work includes Charvat's Origins of American Critical Thought; Pritchard's Literary Wise Men of Gotham; Martin's The Instructed Vision; John Stafford's The Literary Criticism of “Young America”: A Study in the Relationship of Politics and Literature, 1837–1850 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1952); Richard H. Fogle's “Organic Form in American Criticism: 1840–1870,” The Development of American Literary Criticism, ed. Floyd Stovall (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1955), 75–111; Perry Miller's The Raven and the Whale: The War of Words and Wit in the Era of Poe and Melville (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1956); Sidney Moss's Poe's Literary Battles: The Critic in the Context of His Literary Milieu (Durham: Duke UP, 1963); and, as the most wide-ranging and sustained work in this group, Nina Baym's Novels, Readers, and Reviewers. Several of the general categories I focus on to examine the interpretive strategies of reviewers—particularly plot, character, narrative, morality, and instruction—parallel categories discussed in several of these studies, primarily because these were the areas to which reviewers repeatedly turned their attention, both as formal elements they ascribed to fiction and as categories in which their interpretive moves were played out. While building on these previous studies, however, my analysis seeks to move in a different direction or pursue substantially different ends. For one thing, while this scholarship has concentrated on particular critical battles, the intellectual basis of antebellum criticism, or the poetics of reviewers, my focus is on reviewers' interpretive strategies as they entailed assumptions about the way reading should proceed, the type of fiction readers that existed, the ways fiction engaged the audience, and the roles it implied for its readers. Only Baym has addressed briefly the second and third of these four dimensions of antebellum reviewing, but it has been in the form of examining reviewers' conceptions of the work fiction did or should do on its readers. While that element inevitably is part of my concern, my emphasis is on reviewers' ideas about the work readers should do on fiction. Moreover, in my study as a whole, I am
less interested in the interpretive practices of reviewers in and of themselves than in the way this antebellum reading formation constituted fictional texts that have come down to us (whether as well known or neglected) in forms that owe their shape and significance, in one degree or another, to reception events in the antebellum public sphere.

7. Baym extensively discusses reviewers’ emphasis on the primacy of entertainment as a function of their conception that plot was the defining feature of the novel (Novels, Readers, and Reviewers 24, 63–82).

8. These three functions, according to Steven Mailloux, mark the categories in which all communicative conventions fall (Interpretive Conventions: The Reader in the Study of American Fiction [Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982] 126–39).


12. Pritchard, Literary Wise Men of Gotham; Baym, Novels, Readers, and Reviewers. See also the other studies cited in note 6.

13. On this point, see Pritchard 78–81; and Baym, Novels, Readers, and Reviewers 24, 65–69. Pritchard points out, however, that this assumption about the primacy of plot was being challenged in this period through increased emphasis on character as equally important.

14. Roland Barthes, S/Z, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974) 19, 75. Although Barthes identifies this code as a function of the text itself, it is more accurate to say that it is a strategy readers bring to bear to decipher the discourse of the text. The same is true of Barthes’s other codes.


17. On these three as common categories in antebellum reviews, see Baym, *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers* 196–223, 235–41. Baym also includes as antebellum genre categories metropolitan novels and highly wrought novels, but my own research indicates that *metropolitan novel* was a designation rarely used. By contrast, *highly wrought* was less an adjective for designating a genre category and more a judgmental descriptor applicable to any novel that was viewed as sensational, excessively melodramatic, or morally suspect. That is, one could have highly wrought historical fiction or a highly wrought advocacy novel.

18. For related and in some cases parallel discussion of reviewers’ conceptions of advocacy novels, see Baym, *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers* 213–23.

19. Baym, *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers* 61. Recently, Suzy Anger has made a similar claim about British reviewers in the first half of the nineteenth century (*Victorian Interpretation* [Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005] 132). By contrast, John Paul Pritchard asserted, almost twenty years before Baym’s remark, that New York magazinists of this era believed “the proper way of telling a story, however it might be stated, required that it have some degree of meaning” (65).

20. In reading for meaning and idea, reviewers were engaging in a form of response that antebellum readers as a whole may well have shared. On this parallel, a remark by Ronald and Mary Zboray about antebellum New Englanders is especially telling. Based on data from over a thousand letters, diaries, and other manuscripts, the Zborays assert, “Few populations have made literature and the ideas they got from it as much a part of their daily lives” (*Everyday Ideas: Socio-literary Experience among Antebellum New Englanders* [Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 2006] xvi).


22. Antebellum periodical readers could have gained a familiarity with such emblematic reading of flowers from magazines themselves. See, e.g., the articles on the “Language of Flowers” in the *Home Journal* May 9, 1846: 4 (no pag.) and July 12, 1851: 4 (no pag.). For a relevant discussion of the widespread familiarity with “flower symbolism” (or more accurately, the emblematic use of flower imagery) among antebellum readers and its relevance to fiction reading, see Susan Harris, *Nineteenth-Century American Women’s Novels: Interpretive Strategies* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 80–82.


26. Although auto-biographical was the common antebellum designation, occasionally the more modern term first-person was employed. Poe, e.g., used it in one of his New York Literati sketches in Godey’s. See Edgar Allan Poe: Essays and Reviews, ed. G. R. Thompson (New York: Library of America, 1984) 1209.

27. This claim is made by Baym, Novels, Readers, and Reviewers 147–48. One reason for the absence among reviewers of the very term unreliable narrator may be that it was not invented until the second half of the twentieth century, according to Wayne Booth, who has asserted that he coined that descriptor in the “late fifties” (“Narrative Theory: Two Stories,” “Looking Backward, Looking Forward: MLA Members Speak,” PMLA 115 [2000]: 1992–93).

28. On the early-to-mid-nineteenth-century assumption that reading (through) fiction involved getting to know the author, see Hochman 11–28.

29. Pritchard 84, 87–88, and throughout. The founding document for this method of response appears to have been George Allen’s “Reproductive Criticism,” New York Review 1838: 49–75. Regarding the alternative designations for this form of response, as well as its prominence among magazinists and critics of the “Young America” movement, see Stafford 39–53.

30. For this idea among reviewers, see also Pritchard 72, who briefly discusses similar reminders in the New York Mirror and the Knickerbocker Magazine.

31. For related discussion of antebellum valorization of verisimilitude in conceptions of fictional characterization, see Pritchard 71–76; and Baym, Novels, Readers, and Reviewers 90, and throughout. I should note here that the remainder of my discussion of strategies shaping informed response to character in antebellum America parallels several of Baym’s and Pritchard’s points. What I have sought to emphasize, however, are different dimensions of these principles and, especially, the way they functioned as interpretive strategies for guiding and promoting the public formation of “informed” response at that time.

32. Regarding nineteenth-century magazinists’ efforts to empower, rather than discipline, women readers, see Jennifer Phegley, Educating the Proper

CHAPTER THREE: “These Days of Double Dealing”


3. See also the review of Cooper’s Wyandotte, in which Poe equates popularity in fiction with the ephemeral and a feeling of “something very nearly akin to contempt” (ER 480).


5. Poe’s public battles with reviewers, particularly from New England, began as early 1836 with his Drake–Halleck review in the Southern Literary Messenger (see ER 505–39). But his plan for the critical component of the aborted Folio Club Tales, which he explained in 1833 was “intended as a burlesque upon criticism,” indicates that at the very start of his career Poe conceived himself in a fight with the critical “establishment” (Poe to Joseph T. Buckingham and Edwin Buckingham, May 4, 1833, Letters 1: 52).


7. On the currency of this idea among antebellum reviewers, see Nina Baym,

8. Writings in the Broadway Journal 3: 67; Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. James A. Harrison, 17 vols. (New York: DeFau, 1902) 8: 71. On Poe's belief that magazinists were to serve as guides and mediators for the reading public, see James M. Hutchisson, Poe (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2005) 110.


11. Poe's objections to immoral and sensational fiction also have been pointed out by David S. Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville (New York: Knopf, 1988), who observes that “dismay at the wildness and repulsiveness” of some American fiction “is a common thread running through much of Poe's literary criticism” (227–28).


13. Although Poe articulated his theories about effect and aesthetic power in the 1840s, even earlier in his career he espoused those principles. See, e.g., his review of Dickens in the Southern Literary Messenger in June 1836 (ER 204–7). For a parallel concern with effect among antebellum reviewers, see Baym 141. One reason for this convergence between Poe and other reviewers may have been that all were drawing on a common source: August Wilhelm Schlegel. Arthur Hobson Quinn has suggested that articles on Schlegel in the North American Review “may well have given Poe direction” for his theory of effect (Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1941] 243). For discussions of Schlegel as a source for Poe’s ideas, see Jacobs 115–16; Kenneth Silverman, Edgar Allan Poe: Mournful and Never-Ending Remembrance (New York: Harper Collins, 1991) 166; and Thomas S. Hansen and Burton R. Pollin, The German Face of Edgar Allan Poe (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1995) 91–94.

14. Stephen Railton, Authorship and Audience: Literary Performance in the American Renaissance (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991) 133, 138. In also noting that Poe's conception of authorship "suggests a man who raged above all for control," James Hutchisson speculates that such an idea was "as much a cover-up as anything else for Poe's lack of control" (169–70).

15. On Poe's concern over the way audience activities within the new mass market of fiction threatened mastery over the writer, see Michael J. S. Williams, A World of Words: Language and Displacement in the Fiction of Edgar Allan Poe (Durham: Duke UP, 1988) 45–49. Williams argues that Poe located the danger
in the nature of language itself, specifically in the “potential surplus of meaning that threatens to overflow the constraints of intention” (48). Though such a conclusion is partially accurate, it does not account for the way Poe sought to produce surplus, slippery, and unstable meanings as a means of maintaining his ascendancy over the audience. An analogous argument to Williams’s appears in Jonathan Auerbach, “Poe’s Other Double: The Reader in the Fiction,” *Criticism* 24 (1982): 343.


17. Several critics have read Poe’s tales as thematizations or allegories of his battles with the reader. See, esp., Williams; Railton 132–51; and J. Gerald Kennedy, *Poe, Death, and the Life of Writing* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987) 116–17. For a different but parallel view, see Hartmann, who argues that Poe conceived the writer’s relation with readers not so much as a battle but as a two-pronged engagement, which involved overtly pleasing and covertly “diddling” the audience (31–33).


20. Williams 65.

21. *Southern Literary Messenger* May 1835, *Baltimore Republican* July 10, 1835, and *Baltimore Gazette* Aug. 7, 1835, qtd. in Dwight Thomas and David K. Jackson, *The Poe Log: A Documentary Life of Edgar Allan Poe, 1809–1849* (Boston: Hall, 1987) 155, 169, 164, respectively. Subsequent citations to reviews reprinted or excerpted in the *Poe Log* are given parenthetically by their original dates, followed by *PL* and the corresponding pages in the *Log*. For quotations directly from magazines, this and all subsequent chapters follow the method used in chapter 2 by providing parenthetical citations by periodical date and original page numbers.


23. On the absence of the term *gothic* in the lexicon of antebellum reviewers’ comments on fiction, see Baym 201. Michael Gamer has pointed out that in early nineteenth-century Britain, *gothic* had also not taken on its modern meaning as a genre category (*Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000] 2, 49.


25. These characters are from, respectively, “Duc de L’Omlette,” “A Tale of Jerusalem,” “Loss of Breath,” “Lionizing,” and “King Pest.”

26. Such parallels were well documented by modern Poe scholars during the time when source-and-influence studies were central to the profession. Most of those parallels are included in the notes to the tales in *Tales and Sketches*, vols. 2–3 of *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. Thomas Ollive Mabbott, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1978).


28. Mabbott, *Tales and Sketches* 2:18. All subsequent references to Poe’s tales will be to this edition and will be given parenthetically in the discussion.


30. Critics who have read “Metzengerstein” as a spoof or gothic hoax include Thompson 52–65; Edward H. Davidson, *Poe: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1957) 137–38; and Stuart Levine and Susan Levine,


34. Kennedy to Poe, Feb. 9, 1836, Complete Works 17: 28.

35. James M. Garnett to Thomas Willis White, June 22, 1835 PL 159; on the Harpers’ judgment, see Quinn 250–51.


40. “Preface,” Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque, Mabbott, Tales and Sketches 2: 473–74. Quotations in the next paragraph are also from these pages.

41. McGill 198.

42. The two other stories with major revisions, mostly in the form of deletions, were “A Decided Loss” (retitled as “Loss of Breath”) and “The Bargain Lost” (retitled as “Bon-Bon”). For the changes in these two stories as well as detailed information about alterations in the other twenty-three stories collected in Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque, see the bibliographical notes in Mabbott, Tales and Sketches 2: 18–471.

43. This narrative as the central paradigm for Poe’s career goes back at least as far as Fred Lewis Pattee’s discussion of Poe’s fiction in The Development of the American Short Story (New York: Harper, 1923) 124–37. For this paradigm and its prevalence, see also William Howarth, introduction, Twentieth-Century Interpretations of Poe’s Tales, ed. William Howarth (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971) 7. In his recent Cambridge Introduction to Edgar Allan Poe, Benjamin Fisher subscribes to the view that Poe began as a writer of comic fiction, but Fisher also admits that these early tales “elicited mixed responses from
readers, who were puzzled by the mix of comic and Gothic elements” (50–58). My conviction is that readers before 1839 were not puzzled but instead interpretively privileged the comedic as the distinguishing mode of Poe’s tales.


47. The most sustained case for such readings of Poe’s tales is by Thompson, who claims that “the burlesque, or ambiguously burlesque, intent is constant in Poe’s fiction” (137). See also Williams, who asserts that “almost all his texts are shot through with what we might call parodic self-criticism” (66).

49. On the decline in popularity of gothic fiction, see Allen 139. More telling are the statistics of Oral Sumner Coad, “The Gothic Element in American Literature Before 1835,” Journal of English and Germanic Philology 24 (1925): 72–93. Despite his claim that gothic literature enjoyed “one of the most prolific periods in America before reaching its apogee in the hands of Poe and Hawthorne,” Coad’s data tell a different story: Of the sixty poems, works of fiction, and plays he lists, only ten appeared after 1830.


51. On increases in urban violence, particularly in the form of riots during this time, see Michael Feldberg, The Turbulent Era: Riot and Disorder in Jacksonian America (New York: Oxford UP, 1980) 4–5. For the convergence of this rioting and the effects of the 1837 panic, see Thomas R. Heitela, Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandisement in Late Jacksonian America (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985) 109.


55. See, e.g., the Saturday Courier Aug. 4, 1838, PL 250.


57. Complete Works 8: 231.

58. Heath to Poe, Sept. 12, 1839, PL 270; Irving to Poe, Nov. 6, 1839, PL 275.


61. This expression of Glanville’s idea by the narrator occurs only in the initial 1839 version of the tale (see Mabbott, Tales and Sketches 2: 318 n.).


64. Several Poe critics have argued for a formalist version of this match by asserting that the disoriented narrators of “Ligeia,” “Usher,” and “William Wilson” serve as textual models for Poe’s ideal reader: e.g., Heller 170; and Ronald Bieganowski, “The Self-Consuming Narrator in Poe’s ‘Ligeia’ and ‘Usher,’” American Literature 60 (1988): 185.

65. Poe to Cooke, Sept. 21, 1839, Letters 1: 118. For these revisions and continuities in “Ligeia,” see the variorum edition in Mabbott, Tales and Sketches 2: 308–34.


68. Silverman points out that “Julius Rodman,” which appeared over six issues in the Broadway Journal, succeeded “well enough as a hoax . . . to have been cited as factual in an 1840 U.S. Senate document on the Oregon Territory” (Edgar Allan Poe 147).

69. Poe to Joseph E. Snodgrass, Sept. 19, 1841, Letters 1: 183. For a reading of “Never Bet the Devil Your Head” as a parody of reform literature, see Reynolds 528.

70. Poe to Philip Cooke, Aug. 9, 1846, Letters 2: 328.


73. Norman Dain, Concepts of Insanity in the United States, 1789–1865 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1964) 75, but see also 49–50, 73–74. A more recent

74. On the relation among the Mercer trial, Poe’s familiarity with the insanity defense, and these two stories, see John Cleman, “Irresistible Impulses: Edgar Allan Poe and the Insanity Defense,” *American Literature* 63 (1991): 623–40. Although Cleman’s analysis is substantially different from mine, in that he uses this historical context to argue that Poe’s two stories are about these issues, his discussion has aided my thinking about the context for the antebellum reception of these tales.


77. Reynolds 176.

78. Ketterer 102.


80. Halttunen 145.

81. On the temperance movement as a development of bourgeois ideology for promoting social discipline, particularly to meet the needs of capitalist transformation, see Sellers 259–68.

82. On the advent of the sympathetic view of the alcoholic in the 1840s, see T. J. Matheson, “Poe’s ‘The Black Cat’ as a Critique of Temperance Literature,” *Mosaic* 19, no. 3 (Summer 1986): 70.


87. Poe to Duyckinck 433; *ER* 1367; Poe to an unnamed correspondent in London, circa Apr. 1846, *PL* 631.

Robert H. Collyer of Boston, who told him, “Your account of M. Valdemar’s case has been universally copied in this city, and has created a very great sensation. It requires from me no apology, in stating, that I have not the least doubt of the possibility of such a phenomenon” (Collyer to Poe, Dec. 16, 1845, Complete Works 17: 225).


95. See Knickerbocker May 1846: 421; and PL 624, 633–35. For brief discussions of these responses and of libelous representations of Poe (in both fiction and nonfiction) in the 1840s, see Hyneman 47–48; and Ian Walker, “The Poe Legend,” Companion to Poe Studies, ed. Eric W. Carlson (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996) 22–23. Stories of Poe’s dissolute habits had apparently surfaced as early as 1840, circulated by William Burton, proprietor of Burton’s Gentlemen’s Magazine, at the termination of Poe’s editorship of that periodical (see Quinn 301–3).

96. Eveleth to Poe, Jan. 11, 1846, PL 716.

97. That impact resulted in part because within weeks of its Oct. 9, 1849, appearance in the New York Daily Tribune, Griswold’s defamatory article was reprinted in whole or in part in at least a dozen periodicals and newspapers around the country, including the National Anti-Slavery Standard, the Chicago Weekly Democrat, the New York Evening Mirror, the Oregon Spectator, the Cleveland True Democrat, the Richmond Enquirer, and the Philadelphia Dollar Newspaper (Burton Pollin, “A Posthumous Assessment: The 1849–1850 Periodical Press Response to Edgar Allan Poe,” American Periodicals 2 [1992]: 6–50).


Movement and Its Friends Look at Poe,” *Costerus* 2 (1972): 138. Pollin notes that “one of the oft-reprinted sermonizing notices of Poe’s death was entitled ‘Genius and Gin’” (“Posthumous Assessment” 8). One of the few antebellum readers to question such reading from text to author was one of Poe’s defenders, George Graham, who asserted that Poe’s character and temperament “were in no way reflected in or connected with his writings” (*Graham’s Magazine* Feb. 1854: 219).

100. Sarah Helen Whitman, *Edgar Allan Poe and His Critics*, rpt. in Clarke, *Edgar Allan Poe: Critical Assessments* 1: 174, 172. The fact that Whitman was for a short time engaged to Poe may well have played a role in her romanticized version of him as the misunderstood, troubled genius.


**Chapter Four: Multiple Audiences and Melville’s Fiction**


14, 1849; Melville to Hawthorne, Nov. 17, 1851; all in Correspondence, ed. Lynn Horth, vol. 14 of The Writings of Herman Melville, 38, 149, and 212, respectively.

7. Lawrence Buell, “Melville and the Question of America’s Decolonization,” Melville’s Evermoving Dawn, ed. John Bryant and Robert Milder (Kent, OH: Kent State UP, 1997) 96, n. 6. Despite subscribing to the standard narrative, Bryant periodically raises a similar point in Melville and Repose (e.g., 27, 185, and 264).


9. Dimock 8 and throughout; Parker, Herman Melville 1: 59 and 348. Suggestive in this regard is a June 1851 letter to Hawthorne, in which Melville confesses, “I can well perceive, I think, how a man of superior mind can . . . bring himself, as it were, into a certain spontaneous aristocracy of feeling” (Correspondence 190).


11. In this regard William G. Rowland Jr. has made a relevant but ultimately misguided remark in stating, “During Melville’s working lifetime, two conceptions of literary work were common: the American writer could be either a professional working for the growing reading public or a romantic genius working to satisfy his own impulses. Every student of Melville knows that he felt pressed to choose one conception over the other” (Literature and the Marketplace: Romantic Writers and their Audiences in Great Britain and the United States [Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1996] 145). Such a simple dichotomy, I believe, never pressed itself upon Melville as a fiction writer, because he sought to avoid the choice by embracing both roles.

12. Renker xix, 37, and throughout; Melville to Hawthorne, Apr. 16, 1851, Correspondence 186. On Melville’s “democratic imagination” as a product of his experiences in New York City, see Delbanco 119.


14. Sheila Post-Lauria, Correspondent Colorings: Melville and the Marketplace (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1996). Despite the major differences between my approach and Post-Lauria’s formalistic study, her arguments have been instrumental in my thinking about Melville and his conception of audience.

15. Review of *The Confidence-Man*, *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review* July 1857, rpt. in Higgins and Parker, *Herman Melville: The Contemporary Reviews* 505. Subsequent quotations from reviews of Melville that are reprinted in this edition will be designated CR and will be cited parenthetically by the original date of the review, followed by the pages in the Higgins and Parker collection.


18. The reviews in the *United State Magazine* and the *Anglo American* are reprinted in Higgins and Parker, *Herman Melville: The Contemporary Reviews* 8 and 20, respectively.


20. Howard, *Herman Melville* 92. On the vogue and audience for travel literature, esp. about the South Pacific, see also Post 109–10; and Parker, *Herman Melville* 1: 208 and 267. For periodical attention to this genre and its connections


22. Hetherington, in his useful overview of seventeen British reviews of *Typee*, offers the conclusion about the generally positive response (31–32). My own examination of twenty-three British reviews reprinted in Higgins and Parker’s *Herman Melville: The Contemporary Reviews* has convinced me of the accuracy of Hetherington’s claims. Hetherington also (3–4) concisely explains the conditions and nature of the effects of British reviews on the American reception of Melville’s novels. For a brief discussion of that impact on American reviews of *Typee* in particular, see Parker, *Herman Melville* 1: 410. Both Hetherington (21, 31, and throughout) and Parker (410–15) point out important parallels between the British and American reviews of *Typee* and offer useful overviews of the prominent issues addressed by each.

23. For this strain in the British responses, see Hetherington 21–25.


25. Specifically, these were the *Evangelist* and the *Christian Parlor Magazine* in New York and the *Universalist Review* and the *Christian Observatory* in Boston, though the review in the *New Haven New Englander* also responded to *Typee* in kind. For a discussion of this response as limited to a few religious periodicals, see Hetherington 47–48; and Parker, *Herman Melville* 1: 431–33.


27. Sophia Hawthorne qtd. in Metcalf 91.

28. For a useful discussion of the relation between *Typee* and earlier accounts, see Charles Anderson 90 ff. and 117–78.

29. John Coward, *The Newspaper Indian: Native American Identity in the*


31. Melville to John Murray, July 15, 1846, Correspondence 56.


33. For this growth in Melville through his reading, see, Charvat 232; Howard, Herman Melville 115–16; and Parker, Herman Melville 1: 573–74.

34. The review in the American Whig Review, which appeared in July 1847, is also reprinted in Higgins and Parker, Herman Melville: The Contemporary Reviews 131–42. For discussions of both these reviews and the responses they generated in defense of Melville in the periodical press, see Hetherington 85–90; Miller 21–28; and Parker, Herman Melville 1: 529–40.


37. These are the most common critical views of Mardi in Melville scholarship, exemplified in Parker, Herman Melville 1: 609, from which the “declaration” remark comes, and Railton 156, which offers the other quoted characterization. See also Charvat 217 and Dimock 43. A notable voice of dissent that somewhat anticipates my claim is Post-Lauria, who asserts, “By demonstrating how popular
materials can be used for aesthetic purposes” in Mardi, Melville curried the “allegiance of literary readers who sought writers able to transform the democratic materials of popular culture into art” (66–67).


39. Melville to John Murray, Jan. 1, 1848, Correspondence 100.

40. Melville made the request for a larger advance in at least two letters to Murray, one on Oct. 29, 1847, and the second on Jan. 28, 1848 (Correspondence 98–99 and 114–115). For the argument that Mardi was a novel in which Melville was “narrowing” his readership, see John Evelev, Tolerable Entertainment: Herman Melville and Professionalism in Antebellum New York (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2006), 72–73.


42. Hetherington 101–12 provides an excellent discussion of these British reviews of Mardi.

43. See, e.g., Higgins and Parker, introduction, xv; Howard, Herman Melville 131; Renker 66; Railton 156; Miller 248 ff.; and Dryden 10.

44. Hetherington 131. Other sources for the sales figures of Mardi include Tanselle 210; Leyda, Melville Log 313; and Elizabeth Foster, “Historical Note,” Mardi 671.

45. On the cost of Mardi, see Foster 664; for the British printing and sales figures, see Tanselle 198.

46. Charvat 233. Other Melville scholars expressing the same view include Branch 2; and Leland Person, “Mardi and the Reviewers: The Irony of (Mis)reading,” Melville Society Extracts 72 (Feb. 1988): 3–4.

47. Putnam’s Monthly Feb. 1853, rpt. in Branch 328.

48. Qtd. in Metcalf 61.

49. Putnam’s Monthly Apr. 1857, rpt. in Branch 364.

50. Melville to Evert Duyckinck, Dec. 14, 1849; Melville to Richard Bentley, June 5, 1849, Correspondence 149 and 131, respectively; Hetherington 133.

51. Correspondence 131.

52. This view is held by most critics who have addressed the question of Melville’s conception of audience relations in 1849, e.g., Charvat 232–33 and 271; Dimock 109–10; and Parker, Herman Melville 1: 654.


54. Melville to Lemuel Shaw, Apr. 23, 1849, Correspondence 130; Brodhead, School of Hawthorne 28.
55. Melville to Evert Duyckinck, Dec. 14, 1849; Melville to Lemuel Shaw, Oct. 6, 1849, Correspondence 149 and 139, respectively.

56. Melville to Hawthorne, circa Nov. 17, 1851, Correspondence 212.

57. Springfield Republican Nov. 19, 1849, qtd. in Hetherington 145.

58. Qtd. in Parker, Herman Melville 1: 670.


61. For further discussion of support in the popular press for the reformist position in White-Jacket, see Hetherington 174–80.

62. These phrases appear respectively in the Boston Zion’s Herald Apr. 14, 1850: 58; Boston Christian Register Apr. 6, 1850; New York Knickerbocker May 1850; and New Bedford Mercury Apr. 4, 1850. The last three are reprinted in Higgins and Parker, Herman Melville: The Contemporary Reviews 330, 344, and 328, respectively.


65. Melville to Evert Duyckinck, Feb. 12, 1851, Correspondence 181.


67. Correspondence 191, Charvat 240.

68. Correspondence 160.

70. For a somewhat related but different account of “Hawthorne and His Mosses” as a repository of Melville’s ambivalence about audience, see Railton, who calls the essay Melville’s “fullest statement” of himself as a writer “performing for an audience that has come to seem his bitterest foe, even while it remains the only possible friend to his hopes for a literary career” (188).

71. Melville to Hawthorne, June 1, 1851, and Nov. 17, 1851; Melville to Sarah Morewood, Sept. 1851, Correspondence 193, 212, and 206, respectively.

72. Melville to Nathaniel Hawthorne, Nov. 17, 1851; Melville to Sophia Hawthorne, Jan. 8, 1852, Correspondence 213 and 219. Regarding reviewer assumptions about the gendered propriety or impropriety of some novels, see Baym, Novels, Readers, and Reviewers 183–85. It is relevant to note that among Melville scholars, Pierre “is commonly viewed as Melville’s failed attempt to attract female readers of the sentimental mode” (Post-Lauria 127).

73. Melville to Richard Bentley, Apr. 16, 1852, Correspondence 226. On Melville’s goal of making Pierre a popular novel, see also Charlene Avallone, “Calculations for Popularity: Pierre and Holden’s Dollar Magazine,” Nineteenth-Century Literature 43 (1988–89): 82–110. Brian Higgins and Hershel Parker speculate about another factor in Melville’s conceptualization of Pierre, which seems at least indirectly relevant to his thinking about audience: Hawthorne’s popular and critical success with the House of the Seven Gables. That success may have induced Melville to believe that he could achieve the same results by creating his own “Gothic-flavored romance” with a domestic American setting (Reading Melville’s Pierre; or, the Ambiguities [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2006] 4–5).

74. On the early British reviews and their negative impact, see Parker, Herman Melville 2: 19–21; and Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle, “Historical Note,” Moby-Dick, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle, vol. 6 of The Writings of Herman Melville 701. It is worth mentioning that scholars disagree substantially over whether the British reviews of The Whale were largely negative or positive. Those who hold to the former include Hetherington 201–3, Charvat 242, and Matthiessen 251. Support for the latter comes from Higgins and Parker, introduction xviii; and Parker, Herman Melville 2: 106.

75. The dominant critical view that the American reception of Moby-Dick was captious is represented in Matthiessen 251; Howard Vincent, The Trying-Out of Moby-Dick (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1949) 3; Steven Mailloux, Interpretive Conventions: The Reader in the Study of American Fiction (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982) 171; and Parker, Herman Melville 2: 17–30. One of the few exceptions is Hetherington 215–19.

77. *American Literary Gazette* Nov. 16, 1863, rpt. in Branch 382.

78. *Daily Gazette* Nov. 19, 1851, rpt. in Parker and Hayford 39.

79. Charvat 139. The variety of reviewers’ reactions to Ahab also belie Robert Milder’s claim that the narrative of *Moby-Dick* structures reader response so that at first “the reader, like Ishmael, has identified with Ahab’s hunt” but that the structure later turns Ahab into a character “who absorbs the reader’s cosmic anger and who is repudiated, expelled from the moral community of the audience” (“*Moby-Dick*: The Rationale of Narrative Form,” *Approaches to Teaching Moby-Dick*, ed. Martin Bickman [New York: MLA, 1985] 45). Antebellum responses to Ahab cannot be reduced to such a lockstep, uniform pattern.

80. Leyda, *Melville Log* 438 and 446; Hetherington 221.

81. *United States Magazine* Jan. 1852 and *To-Day* Jan. 10, 1852, rpt. in Higgins and Parker, *Herman Melville: The Contemporary Reviews* 410–11 and 412–13, respectively. It is important to distinguish this factor from Charvat’s claim that *Moby-Dick* did not sell well because the reviews were horrible (241–42). As I have demonstrated, such a characterization of the reviews simply is not accurate. There is also no evidence to support Charvat’s other conjectured factor: that *Moby-Dick* suffered from a lack of “word-of-mouth recommendations” by women readers, who did not buy or read the novel because there were no women in it (242).


83. Bentley to Melville, May 5, 1852, *Correspondence* 620.

84. Melville to Evert Duyckinck, Feb. 14, 1852, *Correspondence* 222–23. Melville repeated the request in a letter of Apr. 16, using the impersonal salutation “Editors of the Literary World” (*Correspondence* 225). Despite the rift, Melville wrote to Evert on at least seven occasions afterward and clearly continued to value Duyckinck’s literary judgment and advice.


87. *North American Review* Apr. 1856: 368. On this protocol in informed reading, see chapter 2 of this study.


92. Leyda, *Melville Log* 468; Howard and Parker, “Historical Note,” *Pierre* 379; Higgins and Parker, *Reading Melville’s Pierre* 184. On the deleterious impact of the reviews of *Pierre* on the sales of *Moby-Dick*, see Hayford, Parker, and Tanselle, “Historical Note,” *Moby-Dick* 728. Compounding the problem with *Pierre* were its debilitating economic consequences. Not only were sales low, but unlike his previous contracts with Harpers, which allotted Melville half the profits after manufacturing costs, his contract for *Pierre* specified a 20 percent royalty only after 1,190 copies were sold (Susan S. Williams, “Authors and Literary Authorship,” *The Industrial Book, 1840–1880*, vol. 3 of *The History of the Book in America*, ed. Scott E. Casper, Jeffrey D. Groves, Stephen W. Nissenbaum, and Michael Winship [Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2007] 92).


94. Qtd. in Parker, *Herman Melville 2*: 142. Regarding Melville’s conception
of a successful writing career as one marked by a “consistent movement upward,” see Evelev, Tolerable Entertainment 17.


100. Melville to Lemuel Shaw, Oct. 6, 1849, Correspondence 139. This modern view of The Confidence-Man is so widespread that a full citation would need to include almost every article and book chapter that has treated the novel. In lieu of that, see Matthiessen 411–12; Railton 189–94; Dimock 207–12; Nina Baym, “Melville’s Quarrel with Fiction,” PMLA 94 (1979): 909–23; and Dauber 221–22. One of the few exceptions to this position is Leon Howard, who asserted over fifty years ago, “there is no evidence of any sort that Melville anticipated the failure of his new book” (Herman Melville 232).

101. The modern critical view of the antebellum reception of The Confidence-Man as marked by “hostility and bafflement” is exemplified in Renker 71; and Higgins and Parker, introduction xxi. Compare Kelley, who asserts that antebellum “readers saw it as an improvement over Pierre” (129). While that response is closer to the novel’s actual reception, there is little evidence to support Kelley’s claim that those same readers likened the novel to Mardi and Moby-Dick (129).


103. Bryant, Melville and Repose 236.

104. Tanselle 198.

106. On Melville’s conception of poetry as a private form of writing and the role of that view in his decision to turn to that genre, see Post-Lauria 229; Robertson-Lorant 503; Dryden 148–66; and Kelley 138.


108. For publication figures for Clarel, John Marr, and Timoleon, see Parker, Herman Melville 2: 839 and 879.

109. “Bok’s Literary Leaves,” Publisher’s Weekly Nov. 15, 1890, rpt. in Branch 417–18.

110. On Melville’s British admirers in the 1880s, see Hetherington 270–83; Robertson-Lorant 574; Melville Correspondence 744; and Hayford, Parker, and Tanselle, “Historical Note,” Moby-Dick 338–39.


112. North American Review Feb. 1892; Springfield Republican Oct. 4, 1891; New York Times Oct. 2, 1891; and Mail and Express Oct. 8, 1891, rpt. in Branch 429, 421, 418, and 424, respectively. For the botched headline in the Oct. 6, 1891, New York Times, see Leyda, Melville Log 788. The gaff in the Times may, however, have been a typesetter’s error rather than a mistake by the writer (see Parker, Herman Melville 2: 921).


CHAPTER FIVE: Response as (Re)Construction


2. MLA International Bibliography of Books and Articles on the Modern Languages and Literature (New York: MLA, 1921–).

3. On the positive side, Sedgwick, with 98 articles devoted to her, is ahead of other marginally canonical antebellum women novelists such as Susan Warner (54), Sara Payson Willis / Fanny Fern (49), E.D.E.N. Southworth (25), and

4. The one post-1980 work is the Damon-Bach and Clements collection cited in the previous note. The two other studies were Mary Welsh, Catharine Maria Sedgwick (Washington, DC: Catholic U of America P, 1937); and Edward Halsey Foster, Catharine Maria Sedgwick (New York: Twayne, 1974).

5. On those links made by antebellum commentators, see Rebecca R. Saulsbury, “Catharine Maria Sedgwick,” Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook, ed. Denise D. Knight (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1997), 353, 356; and Foster 20. Foster also claims that “until Harriet Beecher Stowe published Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Miss Sedgwick was the only woman who was widely considered a major American writer” (21).

6. Lucinda L. Damon-Bach and Victoria Clements, introduction, Damon-Bach and Clements, eds., Catharine Maria Sedgwick xxiii. Melissa J. Homestead has argued that antebellum praise of Sedgwick as a national American author transpired within, and as part of, a particular economic and legal context: the debate over international copyright (American Women Authors and Literary Property, 1822–1869 [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005] 77–78 ff.).


10. Melissa J. Homestead, “Behind the Veil? Catharine Sedgwick and Anonymous Publication,” Damon-Bach and Clements, eds., *Catharine Maria Sedgwick* 23–27. Homestead claims that Sedgwick’s use of anonymous authorship actually was a “market strategy for constructing an authorial persona” (20) as a “reluctant” women author, through which, as Homestead explains elsewhere, Sedgwick “positioned herself in the literary field as a producer responding to readers’ needs” and expectations (*American Women Authors* 70).


15. Catharine Sedgwick to Henry (Harry) Sedgwick, June 1, 1825, qtd. in Kelley 202–3; Catharine Sedgwick to Charles Sedgwick, Mar. 7, 1830, Dewey 205.


17. Sedgwick to Susan Channing, June 15, 1822, Dewey 156; Sedgwick to “Dear Sir,” Nov. 6, 1827, qtd. in Kelley 203.


19. Sedgwick to William Channing, Aug. 24, 1837, Dewey 271; Sedgwick to St. Leger, July 4, 1841, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers I, Massachusetts Historical Society; Sedgwick to Susan Channing, Apr. 6, 1857, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers I, Massachusetts Historical Society.


26. Saulsbury 352. Widely divergent—and largely unsubstantiated—claims have been made by modern scholars regarding the sale of Sedgwick’s first novel. Saulsbury, for instance, asserts that it “was a best seller in Britain and America” (352). By contrast, Helen Papashvily writes that the novel “did not rank among the best sellers of the decade” (*All the Happy Endings: A Study of the Domestic Novel in America, the Women Who Wrote It, the Women Who Read It, in the Nineteenth-Century* [New York: Harper, 1956] 41).

27. Henry (Harry) Sedgwick to Catharine Sedgwick, May 25, 1822, Dewey 152.


32. James to Sedgwick, May 17, 1822, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers III, Massachusetts Historical Society.


34. Wilde to Sedgwick, Oct. 25, 1852, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers II, Massachusetts Historical Society; Cabot to Sedgwick, Nov. 16, 1822, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers III, Massachusetts Historical Society.

35. Douglas, esp. 6–8, 13, 17–19.


37. On the assumption in informed reading linking emotional response and women readers, see chapter 2.


40. Sedgwick to Cabot, June 2, 1824, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers I, Massachusetts Historical Society.

41. Lazarus to Sedgwick, July 16, 1826, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers II, Massachusetts Historical Society.


43. For this view of *Redwood’s* characters among modern readers, see Baym, *Women’s Fiction* 58.

44. William Minot to Catharine Sedgwick, July 16, 1824, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers III, Massachusetts Historical Society.


49. For a brief comment on the appeal of *Hope Leslie* to the patriotic and nationalistic ideology of the antebellum audience, see also Bardes and Gossett 25.  

50. Aikens to Sedgwick, Sept. 15, 1827, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers II, Massachusetts Historical Society.

51. Buell 194, 230; Reynolds 106. Baym makes a relevant point on this issue by arguing that Sedgwick “perform[s] no culturally subversive acts when deplor[ing] Puritan shortcomings” because she was operating within a Unitarian notion of cultural progress, in which “the Puritans need not—should not—be presented as history’s culmination” but only as an important but flawed step in the “long road traveled from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century” (*American Women Writers and the Work of History, 1790–1840* [New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1995] 157).


53. Maddox 97. The claim about antebellum readers’ applause is from Singley 111.

55. Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 73. One modern critic, it should be noted, has, in fact, interpreted the novel as an elegiac expression of the antebellum racist conception of the “vanishing” Indian (Nelson 202).


58. Sedgwick to Susan Channing, Mar. 14, 1830, Dewey 207.

59. Catharine Sedgwick to Charles Sedgwick, Mar. 7, 1830, Dewey 205.

60. Saulsbury 357.

61. Follen to Sedgwick, Dec. 25, 1837, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers II, Massachusetts Historical Society.

62. Osborne to Sedgwick, July 29, 1830, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers III, Massachusetts Historical Society.

63. Reynolds 118; Foster 117.


68. Sedgwick to Louisa Minot, Nov. 26, 1836, Sedgwick Family Papers, qtd. in Phelps 133.

69. In the same year, Sedgwick also published a volume of short stories, *Tales and Sketches*, but the eleven stories that composed it had all been previously published in periodicals and gift books (Lucinda L. Damon-Bach, “Chronological Bibliography of the Works of Catharine Maria Sedgwick,” Damon-Bach and Clements, eds., *Catharine Maria Sedgwick* 298, 302–5.

70. Dillingham to Sedgwick, Nov. 12, 1835, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers II, Massachusetts Historical Society.

71. Cf. such remarks to the interpretation of Isabelle by modern Sedgwick readers. For example, in her introduction to *The Linwoods* Maria Karafillis as-
serts that in the course of the novel not only is Isabelle transformed “from Tory to Rebel” but that “[i]n the process, Isabelle rebels against . . . the institutions of slavery, gender norms, and patriarchal authority” (The Linwoods or, “Sixty Years Since” in America, by Catharine Sedgwick, ed. Maria Karafilis [Hanover, NH: UP of New England, 2002] xv).

72. George Haven Putnam, George Palmer Putnam: A Memoir (New York: Putnam’s, 1912) 22. The printing and sales figures for The Linwoods were recorded by Sedgwick on an informal accounting sheet dated Nov. 25, 1841, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers I, Massachusetts Historical Society.

73. The other review to remark on length was in the American Quarterly Review Mar. 1837: 18–28.

74. Between the publication of Hope Leslie in 1827 and the appearance of The Linwoods in 1835, Sedgwick published a total of ten pieces in these two venues with eight of those appearing in the Juvenile Miscellany (Damon-Bach, “Chronological Bibliography” 303–5). Interestingly, two years before Hope Leslie Sedgwick had published a freestanding novella, The Travellers. A Tale, that was “Designed for Young People,” as its title page announced, but that volume had no impact on reviewer responses to Hope Leslie and Clarence or on their conceptions of the audiences of those two novels.

75. For such a modern characterization of Means and Ends see, e.g., Maria Lamonica, “‘She Could Make a Cake as Well as Books . . .’: Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Anna Jameson, and the Construction of the Domestic Individual,” Women’s Writing 1 (1995): 236.

76. Sedgwick, Means and Ends, or Self-Training (Boston: Marsh, Capen, Lyon, and Webb, 1839), 12.

77. The sales figures for the two novels are from Sedgwick’s Nov. 25, 1841, accounting sheet, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers I, Massachusetts Historical Society.

78. Foster 117.

79. Rev. Dr. Bellows to Sedgwick, undated but probably between July 1848 and Jan. 1849, Dewey 310–11.

80. Robbins 5.


82. Undated ms. review, circa 1841, Catharine Maria Sedgwick Papers II, Massachusetts Historical Society.

83. Richard Darling, The Rise of Children’s Book Reviewing in America, 1865–1881 (New York: Bowker, 1968) 46. Sarah Wadsworth points out that by the 1840s a market for books and other reading materials specifically designed

84. Clark 69. Telling in this regard is Hawthorne’s own attitude toward the fiction he had written for the juvenile market and its young readership in that, according to Sarah Wadsworth, Hawthorne’s “correspondence suggests that he regarded these early juvenile stories as a kind of hackwork” (In the Company of Books 31).


88. One index to Sedgwick’s continued prominence is that among the seventy-two writers Rufus Wilmot Griswold included in his 1847 Prose Writers of America, Sedgwick was one of only five women in that assembly (Fred Lewis Pattee, The Feminine Fifities [New York: Appleton-Century, 1940] 50).
89. Sedgwick to Katherine Minot, Apr. 2, 1857, Dewey 370; Sedgwick to Orville Dewey, Mar. 1857, Dewey 369.
91. For a modern critical view of Married or Single? as a novel that “questions the commonplace assumption that any marriage is preferable to a single life for women, and intersects with the discourse of women’s rights,” see Deborah Gussman, “Equal to Either Fortune: Sedgwick’s Married or Single? and Feminism,” Damon-Bach and Clements, eds., Catharine Maria Sedgwick 257.
92. Interestingly enough, at least two modern Sedgwick scholars have reached the same conclusion about the ending of Married or Single?: Foster 130; and Gussman 260.
93. The Harpers reissued Poor Rich Man in 1872 and 1876, Live and Let Live in 1876, Means and Ends in 1870, and Love Token for Children in 1871. The one exception to this pattern was the Harpers’ 1872 reissue of Hope Leslie (Damon-Bach, “Chronological Bibliography” 295–301).
94. Dewey 10, 446, 430.


**CHAPTER SIX: Mercurial Readings**


4. Beyond a passing sentence on this topic in one of her biographical dictionary entries, Freibert devotes in her other entry two half-pages of discussion to Chesebro’s nineteenth-century reception (38–39), while Baym briefly quotes comments about *Isa* from a *Harper’s* review and from John Hart’s 1854 *Female Prose Writers of America* (210–11).

5. When *Harper’s* began compensating American authors for their contributions, several of Chesebro’s short stories—along with Melville’s—were among the first to appear. For an extensive, though slightly incomplete, bibliography of Chesebro’s magazine fiction, see Hunt 31–84.

6. Chesebro’ may have been working on—and possibly completed—a tenth novel at her death, according to the entry for her in the 1886 *Appleton’s Cyclopædia of American Biography*, but if so, the novel was never published (Hunt 8).


11. Although no sales figures of Chesebro’s novels appear to have survived, there is general agreement about her lack of popularity and broad sales. See Derby 586; Baym 208; and Tess Lloyd, “Caroline Chesebrough,” *American National Biography*, ed. John H. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes (New York: Oxford UP, 1999) 4: 783. Regarding Peter Carradine, the *New York Tribune* announced that the novel was “out of print” shortly after its publication but that a second edition “is now ready” (Oct. 2, 1863: 6).

12. See, e.g., her letters to R. H. S., Apr. 4, 1859, Anthony Collection, New York Public Library, and to William Conant Church, Jan. 29, 1867, *The Galaxy Correspondence*, William Conant Church Mss., New York Public Library. In the former, Chesebro’ bluntly asks, in regard to several stories she has submitted, “will you let me know what price you would pay for them.” Of Church she inquires when she can expect him to “remit payment” for a story that appeared in the Feb. 1867 issue of the *Galaxy*.


15. Chesebro’ to the *Atlantic Monthly*, Dec. 4, 1860, Correspondence with the Publishers, Cairns Collection of American Women Writers, Special Collections, Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Of additional interest in this letter is Chesebro’s claim that she is owed $10 more for two printed pages of the story. If her calculations were correct, they indicate that the *Atlantic* was paying her at the same rate of $5 per page that Melville received from *Harper’s* and *Putnam’s* in the mid-1850s.

16. Chesebro’ to “Messrs. Duyckinck,” 1851. In this area, Chesebro’ provides a specific instance of Susan William’s recent claim that, contrary to the standard division literary historians have often invoked between authors (usually female) who wrote for the marketplace and authors (usually male) who wrote for artistic purposes, male and female authors in nineteenth-century America often wrote “to achieve ‘high art’” just as both frequently wrote for economic gain (“Authors and Literary Authorship,” *The Industrial Book, 1840–1880*, vol. 3 of *The History of the Book in America*, ed. Scott E. Casper, Jeffrey D. Groves, Stephen W. Nissenbaum, and Michael Winship [Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2007] 90).

17. Chesebro’ to William Conant Church, circa 1870, *The Galaxy Correspondence*. 


20. *Dream-Land* included Chesebro’s first published story, “An Exhausted Topic,” which had appeared originally in *Graham’s* in December 1848. Eight of the nineteen previously published stories in the collection had been published in that periodical, with the remainder having appeared in *Holden’s Dollar Magazine* (six), the *Knickerbocker* (four), and *Sartain’s* (one).

21. *Churchman* and *Albany State Register* qtd. in Redfield advertisement in *Isa, a Pilgrimage*, by Caroline Chesebro’ (New York: Redfield, 1852) 321.

22. Qtd. in Redfield advertisement, *Isa* 321.

23. For this characterization and claim, see, e.g., Baym 209 and Wolfe 77.

24. It should be mentioned that Chesebro’ was probably deep into writing *Isa* when the reviews of *Dream-Land* came out in January and February, since her publisher announced the novel as available for purchase only a month later in an advertisement in the Mar. 6, 1852, *New York Tribune* (1).

25. Qtd. in Redfield advertisement in *Children of Light* by Caroline Chesebro’ (New York: Redfield, 1853) 381.

26. *Albany Argus* and *Christian Freeman* qtd. in Redfield advertisement, *Children of Light* 381.

27. See Baym 209.

28. Qtd. in Redfield advertisement, *Children of Light* 381.

29. Qtd. in Redfield advertisement, *Children of Light* 381. This view of *Isa* as ultimately a conventional novel that subscribes to traditional gender values is held by at least one modern critic; see Warren 227. For a contrary modern interpretation of *Isa* as a narrative that supports its protagonist and critiques patriarchal culture, see Baym 214–15.

31. Although the publication year of *Children* was officially 1853, the *New York Tribune* announced the novel as published “this day” in its Nov. 24, 1852, issue (1).

32. The part of Borland’s speech about true worship, quoted by the *National Era* reviewer, is in *Children of Light* 273.

33. Freibert asserts that *Children* “met no criticism for its morality” (38). Curiously, Freibert also declares that Chesebro’s second novel is actually more iconoclastic than *Isa* because of what she sees as its homosexual character relations and “the lesbian overtones of the ending” (37–38).

34. The publication date listed in *Little Crossbearers* is 1854, but the *New York Tribune* announced it in early December 1853 as available for a price of fifty cents (Dec. 6, 1853: 1).


36. The *New York Tribune*, one of the major outlets for publishers’ advertising, regularly listed “books received,” often as a prelude to upcoming reviews. In the two years following its publication, *Crossbearers* never appeared in the paper’s list of receipts from Derby, Miller, Orton, and Mulligan. Instead, the *Tribune* announced, for instance, receipt of those firms’ *Life of Mary Queen of Scots* and *The Three Colonies of Australia* (Mar. 2, 1854: 6–7) and their temperance tales entitled *Dick Wilson, the Rum-seller’s Victim* and *Minnie Brown: The Landlord’s Daughter* (Jan. 6, 1855: 1).

37. Tebbel 342–43. Derby sold Miller his half of their partnership at about the time that *Crossbearers* came out (Dzwonkoski, ed., *American Literary Publishing Houses* 116).

38. Miller, Orton, and Mulligan regularly advertised Fern’s *Fern Leaves* and Douglass’s *My Bondage and My Freedom* in the *American Publishers’ Circular and Literary Gazette* (see, e.g., Oct. 6, 1854: 94, and Oct. 13, 1855: 107) and the *New York Tribune* (e.g., Jan. 3, 1855: 1, and July 21, 1855: 1). The firm also must have distributed review copies of their nonfiction titles, since in 1855 Miller, Orton, and Mulligan ads in the *Tribune* started including excerpts from reviews of *My Bondage and My Freedom* as well as *Memoirs of the Court and Reign of Catherine the Second, Empress of Russia* and the biography *Henrietta Robinson* (Dec. 22: 1855: 1). Compounding the problem for Chesebro’ was that the firm went out of business because of mismanagement two years after *Beautiful Gate* came out (Dzwonkoski 117). It should be noted, however, that Chesebro’s third collection did make it into one Miller, Orton, and Mulligan ad in the *Tribune*, which described the volume as “a gem for little folks” (Dec. 18, 1855: 1).
39. The copy of the original 1855 edition of *Beautiful Gate* with this inscription is in Special Collections, Hale Library, Kansas State University.

40. An interesting side fact is that during the time between *Crossbearers* and *Susan* Chesebro’ largely abandoned publishing short fiction in periodicals.

41. More specifically, ten major periodicals and newspapers carried reviews of *Children of Light*, while seven did so for *Susan*. I have also found a fragment of an eighth review from the *Worcester Palladium*.

42. Baym 221–22; Freibert and White 322; Lloyd 783.

43. *Philly and Kit* was announced that month in the *American Publishers’ Circular and Literary Gazette* as a “new work” priced at $1 (May 10, 1855: 282).


45. For the view of *Victoria* as a conventional sentimental novel, see Brown 285. Brief interpretations of the book as a feminist critique appear in Wolfe 79 and Baym 223, 226.

46. Eleven of the seventeen appeared in *Harper’s*, in whose pages Chesebro’ averaged roughly a story a year until 1863, when, in that one year, *Harper’s* published five of her tales.

47. Tebbel 361.

48. Derby 46; Tebbel 348.

49. Tebbel 350.


51. Lawrence Buell and Sandra Zagarell, introduction, The Morgesons & Other Writings 3.


53. Tebbel 350.

54. Although reviews of *Carradine* appeared in five major periodicals and newspapers, which was slightly less than what each of her previous novels had secured, several smaller regional publications ran reviews of the book, making its overall total approximately equal to the numbers for her first four books.

56. Interestingly enough, seven years earlier a reviewer in the *United States Magazine* had reached just the opposite conclusion, claiming that her fictional techniques indicate that “Miss Cheseboro [sic] is deficient in imagination” (Sept. 1862: 243).


61. The *American Publishers’ Circular and Literary Gazette* inverted its title when it moved from New York to Philadelphia in 1863 to become the *American Literary Gazette and Publishers’ Circular*.

62. These copies of *Sparrow’s Fall* and *Glenn Cabin* are in Special Collections, Hale Library, Kansas State University.

63. Such reception indices may help explain Chesebro’s motivation for turning to the American Tract Society for the publication of *Glen Cabin*. The society was already a prominent publisher of books for children, and with *Sparrow’s Fall* and *Amy Carr*, Chesebro’ had demonstrated that she could write fiction that could be marketed to and have some appeal for a juvenile audience. Hence, she
may have seen the society as a good match that also offered a promising opportunity for national distribution—and possibly successful sales—of Glen Cabin.

64. Freibert 37; Hunt 4–6.

65. Some evidence suggests that Chesebro’ may have finished at least a partial draft of Foe as early as 1863, for in February of that year she informed Robert Bonner that “I have a story, a novel, in Mister Miller’s hands . . . of life in the Pennsylvania Coal Mines, amongst the Mennonites,” which is the scenario of Foe (Chesebro’ to Bonner, Feb. 9, 1863, Correspondence, Robert Bonner Papers, New York Public Library).


67. Freibert 38; Wolfe 80.


70. Baym 209; Wolfe 77.

71. Wolfe 76; Lloyd 784; Fleenor 348.


CONCLUSION: American Literary History and the Historical Study of Interpretive Practices


2. Richard Chase, The American Novel and Its Tradition (New York: Gord-


11. It should be mentioned that the stability—or lack thereof—of the ro-
The performance/novel distinction in antebellum America has itself been the subject of interpretive disagreement among late-twentieth-century critics. Two of the strongest critiques of the stability and consistency of the dichotomy before the Civil War include Nina Baym, “Concepts of the Romance in Hawthorne’s America,” Nineteenth-Century Fiction 38 (1984): 426–43; and John McWilliams, “The Rationale for ‘American Romance,’” The New Americanists: Revisionist Interpretations of the Canon, ed. Donald Pease, special issue of boundary 2 17 (1990): 71–82. By contrast, Glazener has maintained that “polemics about the novel, which contrasted it most frequently with the ‘romance,’ coursed through the 1850s and 1860s” in American periodicals (47). Thompson and Link argue more forcefully and at great length for this position, claiming that the novel versus romance distinction “directly reflect[ed] the dominant understanding in mid-nineteenth-century America of the two main varieties of modern prose fiction” (14–15).


15. Not surprisingly, perhaps, there has been some disagreement among critics as to what exactly Twain is claiming about Cooper’s novel. Everett Carter, for example, read the essay as an attack upon Cooper as a romancer and as an argument for realism (Howells and the Age of Realism [Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1954] 72), but Chase felt that Twain was faulting Cooper for producing an incompetent romance (American Novel and Its Tradition 147–48). Thompson and Link argue that Twain “is not rejecting the romance but advocating a form of it in which improbabilities do not subvert realistic attention to detail” (Neutral Ground 144).


18. Church Review Jan. 1851 and Southern Literary Messenger June 1851, both rpt. in Hawthorne: The Critical Heritage, ed. J. Donald Crowley (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 181 and 216, respectively. Subsequent references to reviews in this volume will be given parenthetically as HCH.

19. These reviews are all reprinted in Hawthorne: The Critical Heritage

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250–52, 253–58, 264–67, and 340–51. If it seems odd that antebellum reviewers saw the Blithedale Romance as realistic, despite its title, one need only look at modern academic critics who have done the same. See, e.g., Katherine Kearns, Nineteenth-Century American Literary Realism: Through the Looking-Glass (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 205–32.


30. James, Literary Criticism 2: 978.


32. “Frank Norris’ Weekly Letter,” Chicago American Aug. 3, 1901, rpt. in Literary Criticism of Frank Norris, ed. Donald Pizer (Austen: U of Texas P, 1964) 73–75. Exemplifying further the shape shifting that marked postbellum conceptualizations of genres, Norris on another occasion championed Zola as a romancer, while asserting that “Naturalism is a form of romanticism, not an inner circle of realism” (Zola as a Romantic Writer,” Literary Criticism of Frank Norris 72).
33. The phrase “vividly realistic” appeared in a review of *Tom Sawyer* in the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* Jan. 20, 1877, rpt. in *Mark Twain: The Contemporary Reviews*, ed. Louis J. Budd (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999) 165. For other reviews characterizing Twain’s novels as realistic, see 157, 162, 166, 267, 277, 288, and throughout. Subsequent citations from this volume appear parenthetically as *MTCR*.


40. It should be noted that both Glazener and Barbara Hochman have partially anticipated my argument about postbellum realism by pointing out that “reading practices played a formative role in shaping the realist aesthetic” (Hochman, *Getting at the Author: Reimagining Books and Reading in the Age of American Realism* [Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2001] 29) and by calling “high realism,” in particular, an “institution of reception” (Glazener 14). Bell also makes a related point by questioning the claim that “a generic tradition of realism,” marked by “mimetic practices” within texts, existed in the United States in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. The “true story of the transformation of American fiction after the Civil War,” argues Bell, “is less a triumphant saga of the rise of realism . . . than a history of this contention” about such a rise (5).


42. Bell 6 and 18–37; Glazener 108–46.


44. For an extended discussion of the “linguistic turn” in historiography and its effects on the philosophy and practice of history, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge: Harvard UP,


52. Stanley Fish, “Commentary: The Young and the Restless,” Veeser, *New Historicism* 303–16. More recently, Fulbrook has offered a somewhat similar argument. Though not going so far as to claim that theory can have no impact on historical practice, she has argued that the constructed, interpretive nature of historical explanations “does not logically preclude them from also being an effective means of communicating with an audience an insight based on extensive research in the sources, on the basis of which certain generalizations and arguments may be made” (154).

53. Fish 308.


55. Fulbrook 189.
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