

# **Anti-Individualism, Authority, and Identity: Susan Warner's Contradictions in *The Wide, Wide World***

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During the 1850s, the decade that culminated in the Civil War, competing interests struggled to shape a definition of America. Issues at stake were whether the national identity would be defined by slave states or free states, by agrarian interests or industrial-capitalist interests, and by what were coming to be perceived as men's interests or women's interests. Popular fiction, perhaps most clearly among literary texts, reflects such issues. And at least sometimes, it goes beyond simply endorsing readers' values and validating their world views to crystalize issues and to attempt to influence the values that will determine the direction the culture takes.<sup>1</sup> Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* (1850), the first American novel to sell more than a million copies, made such an attempt.<sup>2</sup>

This book, which has been said to "represent in its purest form an entire body of work that this century's critical tradition has ignored," promoted an ideology that combines domesticity and evangelical Christianity and which on its surface opposes the individualism and materialism basic to an expanding market economy.<sup>3</sup> Warner's ideology of course did not prevail against industrialist-capitalist values. But Warner's relation to the values becoming dominant was not one of simple opposition followed by defeat. Because those who shared Warner's values also shared economic disadvantage and thus dependence on the dominant culture, her work became implicated in the very individualism and materialism against which she argued. Further, the religion that was the foundation of these ideas was itself changing. Domesticity and evangelical Christianity came to be identified with

non-dominant groups and thus became marginal in American life. Warner's position is further complicated by her presenting her argument through the novel, a commercial genre with strong ties to individualistic ideas. Thus Warner's novel, though it argued against increasing individualism and materialism, in some ways fostered the movement of the culture in those directions.

The development of commercial capitalism was a major factor in the polarization of nineteenth-century men's values and women's values. As Barbara Epstein has argued, the interests of middle-class women of this period came to be pitted against those of men.<sup>4</sup> Men and women were responsible for different activities, which required different and conflicting values. To compete in commercial capitalism, men "had to learn to separate morality and sentiment from self-interest, while women, in legitimizing their own domestic activity, called upon the values of the society that commercial capitalism was engaged in destroying." Men and women of the period clashed not just as individuals but as "representatives of antagonistic cultures."<sup>5</sup> The values generally associated with men and the values generally associated with women thus came to represent competing social orders.

That Warner would have been particularly sensitive to the stresses generated by the developing capitalist order is understandable in the context of her personal situation, which illustrates the changing patterns of prestige and authority in the larger culture. Warner was born into an elite family that traced its ancestry back to colonial Ipswich, but the panic of 1837 undermined her lawyer father's financial security and status, and his efforts to recoup his losses were unsuccessful.<sup>6</sup> Privileged as a child, a maturing Warner watched a new and different order become dominant, an elite based not on inherited status and moral-religious authority but on money earned in a market economy, an economy from which women were automatically excluded.

Warner's endorsement of domesticity and evangelical Christianity, which was a response to these changes, served both the interest theory function and the strain theory function of ideology as described by Clifford Geertz. "In the interest theory, ideological pronouncements are seen against the background of a universal struggle for advantage; in the strain theory, against the background of a chronic effort to correct sociopsychological disequilibrium."<sup>7</sup> The interest theory suggests that the function of ideology is to "pursue power," while the strain theory, which "refers both to a state of personal tension and to a condition of societal dislocation," has as its function the relief of anxiety.<sup>8</sup>

As Geertz says and Warner's response illustrates, the two functions of ideology, the promotion of the advantage of a particular group and the relief of anxiety generated within its members, are not mutually exclusive. Warner's ideology promoted what she saw as the interests of the family and religion. At the same time, her assertions both reflected and relieved the anxiety concurrent with the uncertain status of family and religion in a changing culture. Her ideology accepted and reinforced the authority of the family, which was located primarily in the husband and father and the authority of the patriarchal God of evangelical

Protestantism. Warner believed that young women should submit to these authorities and should subordinate their own wishes to those of others. She believed that the sacrifices made in this world would be more than compensated for in the next. Her efforts on behalf of this ideology were ultimately unsuccessful for reasons that Warner's experiences did not enable her to foresee. Her beliefs were at odds with crucial economic changes that were determining the direction of shifts in power and therefore had little chance of acceptance except among marginal groups.

The principle focus of *The Wide, Wide World* is the conflict between the individual and authority, and Warner's characters generally exist apart from the market economy. However, Warner gives brief negative glimpses of the world of commerce. One such incident occurs early in the novel. A clerk at first disregards and then tries to cheat Ellen Montgomery, the novel's protagonist, who is shopping for her sick mother. Though this scene reveals Warner's view of the world of commerce, it is incidental; her characters generally are set apart from that world. Women are of course excluded from competitive business on the basis of their gender, and Warner's major men characters live on money from some unspecified source or they are ministers. Characters who perform other work do so in rural, agrarian settings. Warner's anti-individualistic and anti-materialistic ethic was more compatible with the contexts of home and religion than with the capitalist economy.

The novel records Ellen Montgomery's learning to subject herself to the authority of others, specifically the interrelated authorities of her father, of her Aunt Fortune, of John Humphreys, of her Scottish uncle, and of the novel's thoroughly patriarchal God. Ellen's submission to these secular and religious authorities, however, is entangled with the individualism it counters. Warner reinforces traditional authority, but does so in such a way as to ultimately give authority to the individual.

Ellen's first lesson in submission comes from her unfeeling father. Mr. Montgomery separates the child from her dying mother, emphasizing his control by withholding until the last day information regarding when Ellen is to be sent away to live on a farm with his sister. The aptly-named Miss Fortune is a stand-in for Ellen's father; because she is single and has property, she is identified with the masculine world of power. She requires hard labor, refuses to arrange for Ellen to go to school, and withholds from Ellen her mother's letters. Ellen, however, must learn to submit to this aunt, whose authority at times is totally arbitrary.

Lessons in submission continue. The gentle Alice Humphreys befriends and counsels Ellen, but the forceful, demanding John, who is studying for the ministry, becomes her major teacher. He directs Ellen's reading, instructs her in drawing and riding, and, most importantly, gives her religious guidance. Being subject to this man's authority, however, does not free Ellen from that of her father. Though her father has been dead for some time and Ellen is behaving as a responsible adult managing the Humphrey household, she and the Humphreys

agree that she must go to live with her mother's family in Scotland, as prescribed by a letter that had been concealed by Ellen's aunt. The authority of the father is absolute; after his death it is enforced by others. Mr. Montgomery's plan places Ellen at the mercy of still another authority figure, her wealthy Scottish uncle. Compared to the deprivations of life with Aunt Fortune and even with the comforts provided by the Humphreys, Ellen's life in Scotland is privileged; but her uncle is perhaps the harshest authority that Ellen encounters. Demanding that she forget her past, he insists that he is her father and wants to possess her entirely.

One of the conventional criticisms of mid-nineteenth-century popular fiction is that its heroines are unbelievably good children. But "goodness" (which in this context means submissiveness) is not inherent, and, at least in this case, is not easily attained. Ellen requires repeated and harsh lessons in subduing the self; only with great difficulty does she learn to give up her own desires for the sake of others. A scene which takes place at her aunt's combination apple and sausage "bee," (a major social event at which the community helps with work and is entertained) reveals that Ellen is making progress in her moral development. A crisis arises when Ellen, for whom pleasurable occasions are especially rare at this time, is given the last portion of an unnamed but immensely popular dish. But before she can enjoy it, her attention focuses on Nancy, a mischievous girl whose friendship she has rejected. Ellen experiences conflict but knows what she should do. She graciously gives the treat to Nancy. It is more difficult for Ellen to learn the further lesson of eradicating her anger and her sense that she is being personally wronged. A strong-willed child, Ellen becomes "vexed" over and over again. At times she resists her aunt, she resists John, and she resists her uncle. But the lessons are repeated and repeated until finally Ellen learns that anger will not get her what she wants and that she must do as she is told by the authority figures in her life.

Both her mother and Alice have guided Ellen in learning to subdue her desires and her temper, but most of the authorities to whom she submits are men. And each man's authority is linked with that of another and linked, finally, to the authority of a patriarchal God. John reinforces the control of Ellen's father when he says Ellen must obey her dead father's instruction that she go to live with her Scottish relatives. Her Scottish uncle's discipline erases what is left of Ellen's willfulness. Although it is not the uncle's intent, his discipline prepares Ellen for eventual marriage to John and for the discipline of a Christian life. And John, who frees her from other masters, becomes almost synonymous with God. Warner's ideology did not, however, require all women to submit to all men; for her, authority was located not in men in general but in the father as representative of God. Warner also did not argue for a separate sphere for women. *The Wide, Wide World* teaches women self-sacrifice, but it argues that the whole world should be organized on this principle.

Ellen's lessons in submission would perhaps not have seemed unduly harsh or unusual to nineteenth-century readers in the light of current child-rearing practices. Carl Degler has recorded an episode in which family discipline was

used for a similar purpose.<sup>9</sup> Francis Wayland, a prominent minister and later President of Brown University, described for a religious journal his experience in disciplining his fifteen-month-old son, who had refused to accept food from him. The child was isolated and not fed, until, after twenty-four hours, he finally accepted food from his father. But the child continued to refuse to go willingly to his father's arms. After further isolation, broken by an hourly visit from his father, he became subdued and welcomed his father. Wayland reported that thereafter his son was extremely attached to him. Through the process of disciplining, the father reinforced his authority in the family and also prepared his son to submit to God. Wayland interpreted the episode as illustrating the value of submitting to Christ, thereby linking his authority as father with religious authority.

Ellen likewise learns submission early in life so that she can finally submit to God's authority. Warner's God requires and will reward the heroine's total devotion; by taking away what stands in the way, God brings her closer to him. Her mother has told Ellen that God is separating them because Ellen loves her too much. The child learns to submit to this loss, as she must later submit to the loss of her mother-substitute, Alice Humphreys. Ellen's mother tells her that God doesn't punish because he wants to; he punishes for her own good. When Ellen responds appropriately, the punishment will end. Warner's reasoning was that when Ellen is no longer angry, when she accepts loss and draws closer to God, it will no longer be necessary for God to punish her by subjecting her to further losses. To today's reader who does not share Warner's faith, this religion sounds at best like a way of rationalizing suffering and at worst like masochism. But to Warner (and her readers) the belief served a valuable purpose. It organized for them both this world and the next, and it allowed them to live with conditions they could not change and to look forward to another world in which their values would prevail.

The ultimate goal of family discipline in the nineteenth century, as Degler says, was internalization of standards. But once the individual has successfully internalized controls, she becomes the authority. And at that point, external sources of authority are likely to be questioned. Warner's ideology, however, precludes the conflicts that to modern readers seem inevitable. The end of *The Wide, Wide World* comes close to presenting conflicting authorities, to putting Ellen in a situation in which her sense of right and wrong (not just her sense of being personally offended) is violated by the authority of the Scottish relatives with whom she is living—by, in other words, her family. The Lindseys live a much more worldly life than Ellen had been accustomed to in America, and her uncle insists that Ellen adopt their ways. When Uncle Lindsey insists that she drink a glass of wine, Ellen, who has followed the Humphreys' example in refusing wine, appears to be faced with a serious moral conflict. Her uncle insists that he is her father and must be obeyed. Ellen obeys, though the example of the Humphreys has led her to believe that drinking is wrong. Warner, however, later explains away this potential conflict. When Ellen reports the incident to him, John assures her that drinking wine is not "a matter of great importance."<sup>10</sup> He

encourages Ellen to do as her new family says, as long as they do not ask her to do something wrong. Two father figures at first appear to disagree, but Warner's belief in the necessity of authority kept her from actualizing this conflict.

But later, a more serious conflict threatens to develop. Ellen's grandmother, who objects to the girl's religious "notions" because she believes they are spoiling her for the "world," orders that Ellen not be permitted time alone in the morning for reading her Bible. Ellen's uncle, however, comes to her rescue; because Ellen has gradually and with difficulty learned to submit to him, he is willing to use his authority to arrange for Ellen to have her room again. This restores Ellen's privacy, her opportunity for self-nurture.

Thus Warner paves the way for reconciling two authorities, Ellen's uncle and her future husband. Though he has earlier tried to erase even her memories of the people in her past, Lindsey eventually allows Ellen to write to John, who has proved his forcefulness and authority in an initially unwelcome visit. From the time she first meets John, the reader suspects that Ellen is intended to marry him, and in the final chapter of the novel as originally published, John makes two requests of Ellen and tells her that another will come later. Warner continues that "for the gratification of those who are never satisfied" she will add that Scottish discipline continued to improve Ellen's character and that she then "went back to spend her life with the friends and guardians she best loved."<sup>11</sup> An additional chapter published for the first time in the 1987 Feminist Press edition of the novel makes explicit what the originally published version of the ending implies.

In the full ending of the novel, Warner still subjects Ellen to external authority, that of her husband John. But Warner emphasizes that John understands Ellen thoroughly. Ellen marvels at John's ability to find "the very knot of her thoughts" and untie it.<sup>12</sup> John, like God, knows her better than she knows herself. Like Christ as he was newly interpreted by nineteenth-century Protestantism, John becomes the friend that exists within. His will therefore does not conflict with Ellen's own wishes. Warner thus effects a reconciliation—at the end of the novel Ellen is no longer in a hierarchical arrangement in which she is always subjected to external authority. She has internalized authority by making it her own in a relationship that will not violate her integrity.

In her new home, Ellen's inner room of her own symbolizes the identity she has achieved. John has furnished the room with heirlooms and works of art, and the entrance to the room is through his study. Ellen, however, "may set open" this door whenever she likes, and she is free to make "additions" to the room. Unlike the Victorian parlor, Ellen's room reflects the private rather than the public self; it has been furnished with an "utter carelessness of display." While the room contains a wide variety of objects, Warner emphasizes that there is nothing incongruous about the room: "all was in keeping though nothing was like anything else."<sup>13</sup> Ellen's room thus reflects an existence characterized by fullness and by freedom from both conflict and the need to please others. Ellen has ironically attained the selfhood symbolized by this room through learning to subdue her own will to that of others. The contradictory process by which Ellen

finds her identity is a female version of Emerson's process of finding the essential self through losing superficial egotism. By becoming passive, Warner's protagonist, like Emerson's persona, ironically becomes more powerful.

Protestantism, Warner's major source of external authority, ironically becomes a means of giving authority to the individual. The history of Protestantism in America reveals a shift from outward to inner authority. The Puritans hoped to be chosen by God; nineteenth-century Protestants felt that the individual had the power to choose (or not choose) God. In spite of efforts by the established clergy, the focus of religious authority was shifting from the ministers of the established churches to the individual worshipper. Warner does not depict the church as being central even in the lives of John Humphreys and his minister father; they are portrayed almost exclusively in a domestic context. Ellen rarely goes to church. What is more important to her than attending services is time alone to read her Bible, time that provides, on a secular level, the opportunity for self-nurture. While Warner's theology had not moved entirely away from the idea of God as harsh punisher, the major focus had shifted to Christ as internalized friend and guide. Since the individual was now interpreter of the Bible and Christ as he exists within the person, submitting to religious authority began to approach learning to rely on oneself.

Through the very act of writing her novel, Warner was herself assuming authority not previously available to women. Ann Douglas, in her exploration of the alliance between popular women writers and the clergy, has noted that Warner and other writers were also competing with theological and religious work in direct ways, that they "could and did by-pass clerical sanction even while they usurped clerical authority."<sup>14</sup> It has been argued persuasively that popular culture (of which Warner's novel is of course a highly representative artifact) has taken on the function once served by religious institutions. Peter Homans in *Theology after Freud* concludes that ". . . what is usually called popular culture is at once the result of the collapse of a theological dimension in human life and also an attempt to recover some sense of religious form."<sup>15</sup> Warner's novel may be a great distance from traditional Protestant theology, but she clearly intended Ellen as a model of religious character formation for her readers.

The traditional function of Christian faith, according to Peter Homan's extension of Philip Rieff's argument, is that through a primarily unconscious process it "'superintends' personality organization and social relatedness." It is, in other words, central to both personal and social identity. Its function is to pattern "internal energies in the direction of moral passion and social cohesion." But because Ellen's identity develops under the influence of a religion that is in the process of losing its external referent, she is at the end of her development alone, though in a comfortable room of her own. Ellen's final isolation thus prefigures the modern "therapeutic" type for whom, according to Homans, "well being . . . replaces moral passion and social commitment."<sup>16</sup>

Both Warner's domesticity and her evangelical Christianity thus retreated from the larger world at the same time they opposed its tendencies. Warner

participated in the evangelical movement during the 1850s, a time when, as Sandra Sizer says, “evangelical religion generally became part of a private sphere, a matter of the individual’s heart, having little to do with the larger communal structures of the society.”<sup>17</sup> Her resistance to individualism (to the extent that she does resist it) did not lead Warner to a vision of people joining together with those beyond the immediate family. The focus came to be on change within the individual, perhaps because attempts to change the outside seemed futile. Unlike Harriet Beecher Stowe, who argued that changes inside the individual will lead to changes in the world, Warner’s attention was limited to the destiny of her protagonist. And she did not, like Stowe with the Quakers of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, create a vision of ideal community. As Jane Tompkins has observed, the character in *The Wide, Wide World* who has the most satisfying life is Mrs. Vawse, a self-sufficient woman who lives alone on top of a nearly inaccessible mountain.<sup>18</sup> Warner in this respect is again like Emerson. Both avoided social problems; and, like Warner, Emerson used the imagery of domestic retreat, saying that “every spirit builds itself a house.” Emerson advised readers to build their own worlds through their minds; this, he wrote, will bring about “correspondent revolution in things” in which “disagreeable appearances, . . . mad-houses, prisons, enemies, vanish.”<sup>19</sup> The disagreeable outer world has vanished for Ellen. Although she is a minister’s wife at the end of the novel, she focuses not on a life of service but on her household. And even within her household, she can retreat to her own sanctuary.

If American Protestantism was changing, so was Warner’s other source of authority, the patriarchal family. Degler finds through his examination of letters and journals that the roots of the modern, democratic family go back to the period between the Revolution and 1830. Alexis de Tocqueville had commented on the weak patriarchal authority in America in the 1830s, and Degler observes that while many of the child-rearing books of the time continued to insist that the father was the head of the household, they at the same time recognized a central role for women in child-rearing. In arguing for the authority of the father, Warner argued for an authority that was diminishing, partly, as Degler says, because fathers were simply not present in the home as much as they had been in the past.<sup>20</sup>

Warner’s concern with teaching self-control and encouraging the internalization of authority places her in the tradition of much nineteenth-century writing. Order at mid-century was threatened in countless ways; those interested in promoting their version of the public good attempted to encourage self-control as the external controls of religion, community and family lost their power. Warner’s work responded to the same anxieties surrounding personal and social identity in the same manner as numerous advice manuals of the period. Karen Halttunen has argued that those advice manual writers, believing that youth was very malleable and that the republic would be in danger if young people abandoned virtue for luxury and sin, wrote particularly for young men alone—those without their families present to guide them. Writers emphasized the importance of fixed principle as a guide in a world that to many Americans appeared to be a “giant,

threatening game of hazard.”<sup>21</sup> Certainly the world appeared as such to Warner, whose financial security and chances for a “good” marriage had been lost with her father’s money. But rather than presenting a young man going to the city to seek his fortune, Warner chose to give us a young woman alone; she orphaned her heroine and thrust her out into a “wide, wide world” at a time when both the family and religious institutions were losing much of their power to shape children’s lives.

Warner’s ideal of selflessness has its individualistic component; her ideal of spirituality is likewise not immune to the materialism that it resists. Ellen’s spiritual growth is rewarded by material goods. Deprived during her time with Aunt Fortune (who is not poor but is ungenerous), Ellen enjoys a life of comfort with the Humphreys and of luxury with her Scottish relatives. Married to John (in the Feminist Press final chapter), Ellen has overall responsibility for the household, but a trusted and efficient housekeeper will allow her to spend her time in her interior room, where “nothing had been spared which wealth could provide or taste delight in.” Perhaps the most impressive object in this room is an elaborate secretary with a concealed drawer “well lined with gold and silver pieces and bank bills.”<sup>22</sup> John assures Ellen that he will never ask how the money was spent and that the drawer will be perpetually re-filled. Representing spiritual reward by material goods is of course not peculiar to Warner; the practice permeates Hebraic-Christian tradition and reveals the difficulty the economically disadvantaged have in maintaining an anti-materialistic stance.

The contradictions Warner’s ideology involved her in are further seen in her complex relation to the genre in which she worked. In her effort to communicate her message and to support herself and her sister, Warner used the genre available to her as a writer without an elite education--a genre that was also marketable. The form of the novel, however, is not consistent with her overt message. The novel is “organically individualistic,” even when it attacks individualism. It is “always about the unitary self versus the others.”<sup>23</sup> And in crucial ways, the novel encourages individualism. Reading novels has always been a private, personal experience; no institution mediates between novel and reader. Reading empowers individuals as surely as expanded political freedoms do; and novels, along with newspapers and magazines, were the reading material of those without elite educations.<sup>24</sup> The fierce opposition with which political, social and religious leaders greeted the earliest American novels had abated by the time Warner wrote, but those who protested the novel were nonetheless correct in seeing the novel as a form subversive of their authority.<sup>25</sup>

When John visits Ellen in Scotland, he leaves her with two requests—that she write to him and that she not read novels. Warner thus used *The Wide, Wide World* to criticize novel-reading and to dissociate herself from the genre in which she worked. This action was not a hypocritical effort to make her work more acceptable to readers who might be suspicious of the moral effects of fiction; rather it was a way of emphasizing her seriousness of purpose. Critics ranging from Nathaniel Hawthorne in Warner’s own time to Ann Douglas in our time have

underestimated Warner (and other popular women writers) by believing that they merely echoed platitudes developed out of their own self-interest.<sup>26</sup> Warner's thinking on cultural values was not systematically worked out nor was it explicitly stated. But there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of feeling behind Warner's claim that she wrote *The Wide, Wide World* on her knees; this perception of her writing as religious practice reveals that she was writing about what was vitally important to her.

But if the use of the novel genre undermined her position, Warner in turn undermined the novel form by her non-conformity to generic expectations. The genre from its beginning required individualized characters; and by the mid-nineteenth century, the novel was coming more and more to be valued by critics on this basis. Individualism as discussed here is of course not synonymous with individuality; to say that Warner's ideology denied that authority is inherent within each person is not to say that she resisted the idea that each person is unique. Nonetheless, the concepts are related, and Warner did not value individuality as highly as do twentieth century readers. It is not surprising that later critics (and some of her contemporary reviewers as well) praise her minor characters as being clearly and realistically drawn while rejecting her major characters, whom she used as representative (not perfect) models. Uninterested in psychological analysis, Warner made explicit her lesson but not her characters' thoughts.

Market-place values were of course victorious in the mid-century struggle to define America. Their victory is evident even in the terminology I have chosen—"anti-individualism" and "anti-materialism" define that which they oppose. In her later years, Warner apparently recognized that she had fought a losing battle. Her final journal entry reads: "'The world is on one side, and we on another—with our Lord'."<sup>27</sup> As the dominant culture became more firmly established, readers could no longer take Warner's ideology seriously, could no longer appreciate the conflict she depicted. Her works therefore became less appealing to general readers. Critics too have turned away from works such as *The Wide, Wide World*, devaluing them because of our strong tradition of individualism, which as Nina Baym has pointed out, has defined the "Americanness" and thus the value of our national literature.<sup>28</sup> Part of my argument has been that the interest Warner shares with other nineteenth-century writers in the problem of identity in a changing world and her complicity in promoting individualism indicate that she was not as removed from the mainstream as has been assumed. But the greater significance of this examination of the non-dominant ideology and its appeal for the mass of readers from the middle to the end of the nineteenth century is that it contributes to an understanding of the struggle to define dominant American values and reveals one way in which the beliefs of those without economic and political power are subsumed by the beliefs of those with these kinds of power.

## Notes

1. Joanne Dobson, "The Hidden Hand: Subversion of Cultural Ideology in Three Mid-Nineteenth-Century American Women's Novels," *American Quarterly* 38 (Summer 1986), 223-42. Dobson also uses the book as an example of popular fiction that "clearly coalesces the issues." She says that readers "probably read for a literary experience that affirmed the ideology structuring their lives," but that the book communicates on a second level which recognizes the cost to women of that ideology (228).
2. Susan Warner, *The Wide, Wide World*, ed., Jane Tompkins (New York, 1987).
3. Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York, 1985), 145.
4. Barbara Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism and Temperance in Nineteenth Century America* (Middletown, Connecticut, 1981).
5. *Ibid.*, 62.
6. Mary Kelley, *Private Women, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 1984), 31.
7. Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973), 201.
8. *Ibid.*, 203.
9. Carl Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present* (New York, 1980).
10. Warner, *Wide World*, 562.
11. *Ibid.*, 569.
12. *Ibid.*, 581.
13. *Ibid.*, 572-575.
14. Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York, 1977), 86.
15. Peter Homans, *Theology after Freud* (Indianapolis, 1970), 227.
16. *Ibid.*, 152.
17. Sandra Sizer, *Gospel Hymns and Social Religion: The Rhetoric of Nineteenth-Century Revivalism* (Philadelphia, 1978), 85.
18. Warner, *Wide World*, 165.
19. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," in *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed., Ralph E. Whicher (Boston, 1960), 56.
20. Degler, *At Odds*, 75, 82.
21. Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven, 1982), 19.
22. Warner, *Wide World*, 574, 582.
23. Myra Jehlen, "Archimedes and the Paradox of Feminist Criticism," in *The Signs Reader: Women, Gender and Scholarship*, ed., Elizabeth Abel and Emily Abel (Chicago, 1983), 89.
24. Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York, 1986).
25. Nina Baym, *Novels, Reader, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America*, (Ithaca, New York, 1984). Baym concludes on the basis of original reviews in widely-read periodicals that the educationally elite of the period she studies no longer resisted the novel genre but rather tried to "establish some control over novels" (30).
26. Hawthorne's remarks about the "damned mob of scribbling women" are well known; and while Douglas claims to be sympathetic, her tone is disdainful.
27. Kelley, *Private Woman*, 295.
28. Nina Baym, "Melodramas of Beset Manhood," *American Quarterly* 33 (Summer, 1981), 123-139.