



ISSN: 2395-7852



# International Journal of Advanced Research in Arts, Science, Engineering & Management

Volume 10, Issue 5, September 2023



INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA

**Impact Factor: 6.551**

+91 9940572462

+91 9940572462

ijarasem@gmail.com

www.ijarasem.com



# The Role of Women in 19<sup>th</sup> Century English Literature

MAHIMA GAUR

Associate Professor, English, SPC Government College, Ajmer, Rajasthan, India

**ABSTRACT:** Modern critical analysis of nineteenth-century women's literature seeks, in part, to understand the underlying reasons that women authors, especially in America, Britain, and France, were able to gain such widespread exposure and prominence in an age known for its patriarchal and often dismissive attitude toward the intellectual abilities of women. In addition, scholars have examined the broad thematic concerns that characterize much of the literary output of nineteenth-century women writers, many arguing that it was in the nineteenth century that gender-consciousness and feminist attitudes first came to the forefront of the literary imagination, changing forever how the works of female authors would be written and regarded.

**KEYWORDS:** English, literature, women, 19<sup>th</sup> century, role

## I. INTRODUCTION

The number of published women authors was greater in the nineteenth century than in any preceding century. Women's access to higher education increased exponentially during the century, providing them with skills that they could use to develop their art. The growth of market economies, cities, and life expectancies changed how women in Europe and the United States were expected to conform to new societal pressures, and made many women more conscious of their imposed social, legal, and political inequality. Finally, the many social reform movements led by nineteenth-century women, such as religious revivalism, abolitionism, temperance, and suffrage, gave women writers a context, an audience, and a forum in which they could express their views. While most scholars agree that many women writers expressly or tacitly accepted the separate sphere of domesticity that the age assumed of them, they also argue that as the century progressed, an increasing number of women began to express, in their writing, their dissatisfaction with gender relations and the plight of women in general. Throughout the Victorian era, the "woman question" regarding woman's true place in art and society was a subject that was hotly debated, spurred in large part by the rapid rise in literature by and for women.<sup>5</sup>

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, women writers were largely confined to the genres of children's literature and poetry. The emotionalism of poetry, particularly poetry in which depth of feeling and sentiment, morality, and intuition were expressed and celebrated, was considered a "feminine genre," suitable for women writers. As nineteenth-century women increasingly began to write fiction, however, critical reviews of the age often derided the inferior talents of women novelists, faulting what they perceived as women's lack of worldly experience, critical judgment, and rationality—traits thought to characterize men—and dismissing their works as little better than pulp designed to appeal to the unrefined tastes of an ever-expanding female readership. Many of the century's greatest novelists, including Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, Mary Shelley, and George Sand, never completely escaped the condescension of critics whose negative assessments of their works were often based on the author's gender. Scholars argue that the legacy of this sexism has been a historic dismissal of the work of many of the age's most popular, gifted, and influential women writers, consistently judged as unworthy of academic study.

Some modern critics have continued to disregard the contributions of nineteenth-century women authors, while others have noted that by the end of the century, women novelists were more prevalent, and often more popular, than male novelists. Others have focused on representations of women in literature written both by men and women to illuminate the full spectrum of expectations of and perspectives on women and their perceived roles in society. Commentators have also compared the thematic concerns of women writers in England, France, and the United States, recognizing in these three cultures intersecting movements toward creative and feminist literary expression. In recent decades, critics have examined the contributions of African American and Native American women authors, as well as the influence of the nineteenth-century



periodical press, analyzing the increasing radicalism of journals and essays edited and written by feminist pioneers such as Frances Power Cobbe and Sarah Josepha Hale.<sup>12</sup>

Toward the end of the century, nineteenth-century women writers expanded their subject matter, moving beyond highlighting the lives and hardships suffered by women locked in domestic prisons. Instead, they increasingly expressed their individualism and demanded more equal partnerships—in marriage, public life, law, and politics—with men.

## **II. DISCUSSION**

English women writers have never suffered from the lack of a reading audience, nor have they wanted for attention from scholars and critics. Yet we have never been sure what unites them as women, or, indeed, whether they share a common heritage connected to their womanhood at all. Writing about female creativity in *The Subjection of Women* (1869), John Stuart Mill argued that women would have a hard struggle to overcome the influence of male literary tradition, and to create an original, primary, and independent art. "If women lived in a different country from men," Mill thought, "and had never read any of their writings, they would have a literature of their own." Instead, he reasoned, they would always be imitators and never innovators. Paradoxically, Mill would never have raised this point had women not already claimed a very important literary place.<sup>15</sup> To many of his contemporaries (and to many of ours), it seemed that the nineteenth century was the Age of the Female Novelist. With such stellar examples as Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, and George Eliot, the question of women's aptitude for fiction, at any rate, had been answered. But a larger question was whether women, excluded by custom and education from achieving distinction in poetry, history, or drama, had, in defining their literary culture in the novel, simply appropriated another masculine genre. Both George Henry Lewes and Mill, spokesmen for women's rights and Victorian liberalism in general, felt that, like the Romans in the shadow of Greece, women were overshadowed by male cultural imperialism: "If women's literature is destined to have a different collective character from that of men," wrote Mill, "much longer time is necessary than has yet elapsed before it can emancipate itself from the influence of accepted models, and guide itself by its own impulses."<sup>1</sup>

There is clearly a difference between books that happen to have been written by women, and a "female literature," as Lewes tried to define it, which purposefully and collectively concerns itself with the articulation of women's experience, and which guides itself "by its own impulses" to autonomous self-expression. As novelists, women have always been self-conscious, but only rarely self-defining. While they have been deeply and perennially aware of their individual identities and experiences, women writers have very infrequently considered whether these experiences might transcend the personal and local, assume a collective form in art, and reveal a history. During the intensely feminist period from 1880 to 1910, both British and American women writers explored the theme of an Amazon utopia, a country entirely populated by women and completely isolated from the male world. Yet even in these fantasies of autonomous female communities, there is no theory of female art. Feminist utopias were not visions of primary womanhood, free to define its own nature and culture, but flights from the male world to a culture defined in opposition to the male tradition. Typically the feminist utopias are pastoral sanctuaries, where a population of prelapsarian Eves cultivate their organic gardens, cure water pollution, and run exemplary child care centers, but do not write books.

In contradiction to Mill, and in the absence, until very recently, of any feminist literary manifestoes, many readers of the novel over the past two centuries have nonetheless had the indistinct but persistent impression of a unifying voice in women's literature. In *The History of the English Novel*, Ernest Baker devotes a separate chapter to the women novelists, commenting that "the woman of letters has peculiarities that mark her off from the other sex as distinctly as peculiarities of race or of ancestral traditions. Whatever variety of talent, outlook or personal disposition may be discernible among any dozen women writers taken at random, it will be matched and probably outweighed by resemblances distinctively feminine."<sup>2</sup> Baker wisely does not attempt to present a taxonomy of these feminine "peculiarities"; most critics who have attempted to do so have quickly found themselves expressing their own cultural biases rather than explicating sexual structures. In 1852, Lewes thought he could identify the feminine literary traits as Sentiment and Observation; in 1904, William L. Courtney found that "the female author is at once self-conscious and didactic"; in 1965, Bernard Bergonzi explained that "women novelists ... like to keep their focus narrow."<sup>3</sup> Women reading each other's books have also had difficulties in explaining their potential for



what George Eliot called a "precious speciality, lying quite apart from masculine aptitudes and experience." Eliot herself tried to locate the female speciality in the maternal affections.<sup>4</sup>

Statements about the personal and psychological qualities of the woman novelist have also flourished, and have been equally impressionistic and unreliable. The "lady novelist" is a composite of many stereotypes: to J. M. Ludlow, she is a creature with ink halfway up her fingers, dirty shawls, and frowsy hair; and to W. S. Gilbert, a "singular anomaly" who never would be missed.<sup>5</sup> To critics of the twentieth century, she is childless and, by implication, neurotic: "We remind ourselves," writes Carolyn Heilbrun, "that of the great women writers, most have been unmarried, and those who have written in the state of wedlock have done so in peaceful kingdoms guarded by devoted husbands. Few have had children."<sup>6</sup> Nancy Milford asks whether there were any women "who married in their youth and bore children and continued to write ... think of the women who have written: the unmarried, the married and childless, the very few with a single child and that one observed as if it were a rock to be stubbed against."<sup>7</sup>

There are many reasons why discussion of women writers has been so inaccurate, fragmented, and partisan. First, women's literary history has suffered from an extreme form of what John Gross calls "residual Great Traditionalism,"<sup>8</sup> which has reduced and condensed the extraordinary range and diversity of English women novelists to a tiny band of the "great," and derived all theories from them. In practice, the concept of greatness for women novelists often turns out to mean four or five writers—Jane Austen, the Brontës, George Eliot, and Virginia Woolf—and even theoretical studies of "the woman novelist" turn out to be endless recyclings and recombinations of insights about "indispensable Jane and George."<sup>9</sup> Criticism of women novelists, while focusing on these happy few, has ignored those who are not "great," and left them out of anthologies, histories, textbooks, and theories. Having lost sight of the minor novelists, who were the links in the chain that bound one generation to the next, we have not had a very clear understanding of the continuities in women's writing, nor any reliable information about the relationships between the writers' lives and the changes in the legal, economic, and social status of women.

Second, it has been difficult for critics to consider women novelists and women's literature theoretically because of their tendency to project and expand their own culture-bound stereotypes of femininity, and to see in women's writing an eternal opposition of biological and aesthetic creativity. The Victorians expected women's novels to reflect the feminine values they exalted, although obviously the woman novelist herself had outgrown the constraining feminine role. "Come what will," Charlotte Brontë wrote to Lewes, "I cannot, when I write, think always of myself and what is elegant and charming in femininity; it is not on these terms, or with such ideas, that I ever took pen in hand."<sup>10</sup> Even if we ignore the excesses of what Mary Ellmann calls "phallic criticism" and what Cynthia Ozick calls the "ovarian theory of literature," much contemporary criticism of women writers is still prescriptive and circumscribed.<sup>11</sup> Given the difficulties of steering a precarious course between the Scylla of insufficient information and the Charybdis of abundant prejudice, it is not surprising that formalist-structuralist critics have evaded the issue of sexual identity entirely, or dismissed it as irrelevant and subjective. Finding it difficult to think intelligently about women writers, academic criticism has often overcompensated by desexing them.

Yet since the 1960s, and especially since the reemergence of a Women's Liberation Movement in England and in America around 1968, there has been renewed enthusiasm for the idea that "a special female self-awareness emerges through literature in every period."<sup>12</sup> The interest in establishing a more reliable critical vocabulary and a more accurate and systematic literary history for women writers is part of a larger interdisciplinary effort by psychologists, sociologists, social historians, and art historians to reconstruct the political, social, and cultural experience of women.

Scholarship generated by the contemporary feminist movement has increased our sensitivity to the problems of sexual bias or projection in literary history, and has also begun to provide us with the information we need to understand the evolution of a female literary tradition. One of the most significant contributions has been the unearthing and reinterpretation of "lost" works by women writers, and the documentation of their lives and careers.

In the past, investigations have been distorted by the emphasis on an elite group, not only because it has excluded from our attention great stretches of literary activity between, for example, George Eliot and Virginia Woolf, but also because it has rendered invisible the daily lives, the physical experiences, the



personal strategies and conflicts of ordinary women. If we want to define the ways in which "female self-awareness" has expressed itself in the English novel, we need to see the woman novelist against the backdrop of the women of her time, as well as in relation to other writers in history. Virginia Woolf recognized that need:

As scholars have been persuaded that women's experience is important, they have begun to see it for the first time. With a new perceptual framework, material hitherto assumed to be nonexistent has suddenly leaped into focus. Interdisciplinary studies of Victorian women have opened up new areas of investigation in medicine, psychology, economics, political science, labor history, and art.<sup>14</sup> Questions of the "female imagination" have taken on intellectual weight in the contexts of theories of Karen Horney about feminine psychology, Erik Erikson about womanhood and the inner space, and R. D. Laing about the divided self. Investigation of female iconography and imagery has been stimulated by the work of art historians like Linda Nochlin, Lise Vogel, and Helene Roberts.<sup>15</sup>

As the works of dozens of women writers have been rescued from what E. P. Thompson calls "the enormous condescension of posterity,"<sup>16</sup> and considered in relation to each other, the lost continent of the female tradition has risen like Atlantis from the sea of English literature. It is now becoming clear that, contrary to Mill's theory, women have had a literature of their own all along. The woman novelist, according to Vineta Colby, was "really neither single nor anomalous," but she was also more than a "register and a spokesman for her age."<sup>17</sup> She was part of a tradition that had its origins before her age, and has carried on through our own.

Many literary historians have begun to reinterpret and revise the study of women writers. Ellen Moers sees women's literature as an international movement, "apart from, but hardly subordinate to the mainstream: an undercurrent, rapid and powerful. This 'movement' began in the late eighteenth century, was multinational, and produced some of the greatest literary works of two centuries, as well as most of the lucrative pot-boilers."<sup>18</sup> Patricia Meyer Spacks, in *The Female Imagination*, finds that "for readily discernible historical reasons women have characteristically concerned themselves with matters more or less peripheral to male concerns, or at least slightly skewed from them. The differences between traditional female preoccupations and roles and male ones make a difference in female writing."<sup>19</sup> Many other critics are beginning to agree that when we look at women writers collectively we can see an imaginative continuum, the recurrence of certain patterns, themes, problems, and images from generation to generation.

This book is an effort to describe the female literary tradition in the English novel from the generation of the Brontës to the present day, and to show how the development of this tradition is similar to the development of any literary subculture. Women have generally been regarded as "sociological chameleons," taking on the class, lifestyle, and culture of their male relatives. It can, however, be argued that women themselves have constituted a subculture within the framework of a larger society, and have been unified by values, conventions, experiences, and behaviors impinging on each individual. It is important to see the female literary tradition in these broad terms, in relation to the wider evolution of women's self-awareness and to the ways in which any minority group finds its direction of self-expression relative to a dominant society, because we cannot show a pattern of deliberate progress and accumulation. It is true, as Ellen Moers writes, that "women studied with a special closeness the works written by their own sex";<sup>20</sup> in terms of influences, borrowings, and affinities, the tradition is strongly marked. But it is also full of holes and hiatuses, because of what Germaine Greer calls the "phenomenon of the transience of female literary fame"; "almost uninterrupted since the Interregnum, a small group of women have enjoyed dazzling literary prestige during their own lifetimes, only to vanish without trace from the records of posterity."<sup>21</sup> Thus each generation of women writers has found itself, in a sense, without a history, forced to rediscover the past anew, forging again and again the consciousness of their sex. Given this perpetual disruption, and also the self-hatred that has alienated women writers from a sense of collective identity, it does not seem possible to speak of a "movement."

I am also uncomfortable with the notion of a "female imagination." The theory of a female sensibility revealing itself in an imagery and form specific to women always runs dangerously close to reiterating the familiar stereotypes. It also suggests permanence, a deep, basic, and inevitable difference between male and female ways of perceiving the world. I think that, instead, the female literary tradition comes from the still-evolving relationships between women writers and their society. Moreover, the "female imagination" cannot be treated by literary historians as a romantic or Freudian abstraction. It is the product of a delicate network



of influences operating in time, and it must be analyzed as it expresses itself, in language and in a fixed arrangement of words on a page, a form that itself is subject to a network of influences and conventions, including the operations of the marketplace. In this investigation of the English novel, I am intentionally looking, not at an innate sexual attitude, but at the ways in which the self-awareness of the woman writer has translated itself into a literary form in a specific place and time-span, how this self-awareness has changed and developed, and where it might lead.

I am therefore concerned with the professional writer who wants pay and publication, not with the diarist or letter-writer. This emphasis has required careful consideration of the novelists, as well as the novels, chosen for discussion. When we turn from the overview of the literary tradition to look at the individuals who composed it, a different but interrelated set of motives, drives, and sources becomes prominent. I have needed to ask why women began to write for money and how they negotiated the activity of writing within their families. What was their professional self-image? How was their work received, and what effects did criticism have upon them? What were their experiences as women, and how were these reflected in their books? What was their understanding of womanhood? What were their relationships to other women, to men, and to their readers? How did changes in women's status affect their lives and careers? And how did the vocation of writing itself change the women who committed themselves to it? In looking at literary subcultures, such as black, Jewish, Canadian, Anglo-Indian, or even American, we can see that they all go through three major phases. First, there is a prolonged phase of imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and internalization of its standards of art and its views on social roles. Second, there is a phase of protest against these standards and values, and advocacy of minority rights and values, including a demand for autonomy. Finally, there is a phase of self-discovery, a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity.<sup>22</sup> An appropriate terminology for women writers is to call these stages Feminine, Feminist, and Female. These are obviously not rigid categories, distinctly separable in time, to which individual writers can be assigned with perfect assurance. The phases overlap; there are feminist elements in feminine writing, and vice versa. One might also find all three phases in the career of a single novelist. Nonetheless, it seems useful to point to periods of crisis when a shift of literary values occurred. In this book I identify the Feminine phase as the period from the appearance of the male pseudonym in the 1840s to the death of George Eliot in 1880; the Feminist phase as 1880 to 1920, or the winning of the vote; and the Female phase as 1920 to the present, but entering a new stage of self-awareness about 1960.

It is important to understand the female subculture not only as what Cynthia Ozick calls "custodial"<sup>23</sup>—a set of opinions, prejudices, tastes, and values prescribed for a subordinate group to perpetuate its subordination—but also as a thriving and positive entity. Most discussions of women as a subculture have come from historians describing Jacksonian America, but they apply equally well to the situation of early Victorian England. According to Nancy Cott, "we can view women's group consciousness as a subculture uniquely divided against itself by ties to the dominant culture. While the ties to the dominant culture are the informing and restricting ones, they provoke within the subculture certain strengths as well as weaknesses, enduring values as well as accommodations."<sup>24</sup> The middle-class ideology of the proper sphere of womanhood, which developed in post-industrial England and America, prescribed a woman who would be a Perfect Lady, an Angel in the House, contentedly submissive to men, but strong in her inner purity and religiosity, queen in her own realm of the Home.<sup>25</sup> Many observers have pointed out that the first professional activities of Victorian women, as social reformers, nurses, governesses, and novelists, either were based in the home or were extensions of the feminine role as teacher, helper, and mother of mankind. In describing the American situation, two historians have seen a subculture emerging from the doctrine of sexual spheres.

### **III.RESULTS**

For women in England, the female subculture came first through a shared and increasingly secretive and ritualized physical experience. Puberty, menstruation, sexual initiation, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause—the entire female sexual life cycle—constituted a habit of living that had to be concealed. Although these episodes could not be openly discussed or acknowledged, they were accompanied by elaborate rituals and lore, by external codes of fashion and etiquette, and by intense feelings of female solidarity.<sup>27</sup> Women writers were united by their roles as daughters, wives, and mothers; by the internalized doctrines of evangelicalism, with its suspicion of the imagination and its emphasis on duty; and by legal and



economic constraints on their mobility. Sometimes they were united in a more immediate way, around a political cause. On the whole these are the implied unities of culture, rather than the active unities of consciousness.

From the beginning, however, women novelists' awareness of each other and of their female audience showed a kind of covert solidarity that sometimes amounted to a genteel conspiracy. Advocating sisterhood, Sarah Ellis, one of the most conservative writers of the first Victorian generation, asked: "What should we think of a community of slaves, who betrayed each other's interests? of a little band of shipwrecked mariners upon a friendless shore who were false to each other? of the inhabitants of a defenceless nation, who would not unite together in earnestness and good faith against a common enemy?"<sup>28</sup> Mrs. Ellis felt the binding force of the minority experience for women strongly enough to hint, in the prefaces to her widely read treatises on English womanhood, that her female audience would both read the messages between her lines and refrain from betraying what they deciphered. As another conservative novelist, Dinah Mulock Craik, wrote, "The intricacies of female nature are incomprehensible except to a woman; and any biographer of real womanly feeling, if ever she discovered, would never dream of publishing them."<sup>29</sup> Few English women writers openly advocated the use of fiction as revenge against a patriarchal society (as did the American novelist Fanny Fern, for example), but many confessed to sentiments of "maternal feeling, sisterly affection, esprit de corps"<sup>30</sup> for their readers. Thus the clergyman's daughter, going to Mudie's for her three-decker novel by another clergyman's daughter, participated in a cultural exchange that had a special personal significance.

It is impossible to say when women began to write fiction. From about 1750 on, English women made steady inroads into the literary marketplace, mainly as novelists. As early as 1773, the *Monthly Review* noticed that "that branch of the literary trade" seemed "almost entirely engrossed by the ladies." J. M. S. Tompkins finds that most eighteenth-century epistolary novels were written by women; the Minerva Press published twice as many novels by women as by men; and Ian Watt simply says that the majority of all eighteenth-century novels came from the female pen.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, men were able to imitate, and even usurp, female experience. Oliver Goldsmith suspected that men were writing sentimental novels under female pseudonyms, and men did write books on childcare, midwifery, housekeeping, and cooking.<sup>32</sup>

Early women writers' relationship to their professional role was uneasy. Eighteenth-century women novelists exploited a stereotype of helpless femininity to win chivalrous protection from male reviewers and to minimize their unwomanly self-assertion. In 1791 Elizabeth Inchbald prefaced *A Simple Story* with the lie that she was a poor invalid who had written a novel despite "the utmost detestation to the fatigue of inventing."<sup>33</sup> At the turn of the century, women evaded the issue of professional identity by publishing anonymously. In 1810 Mary Brunton explained in a letter to a friend why she preferred anonymity to taking credit for her novels:

Here again we need to remember the distinction between the novel as a form, and the professional role of the novelist. Many of the most consistent themes and images of the feminine novel, from the mysterious interiors of Gothic romance to the balancing of duty and self-fulfillment in domestic fiction, can be traced back to the late eighteenth century. Certainly nineteenth-century women novelists had some familiarity with Burney, Edgeworth, Radcliffe, and Austen, as well as with scores of lesser writers such as Inchbald and Hofland. But almost no sense of communality and self-awareness is apparent among women writers before the 1840s, which Kathleen Tillotson sees as the decade in which the novel became the dominant form. Tillotson points out that, despite the respectful attention paid by mid-Victorian critics to Jane Austen (attention that had some negative impact on Victorian women novelists), there appears to have been relatively little direct influence by Austen on Mrs. Gaskell, Harriet Martineau, the Brontës, and several minor writers.<sup>35</sup> Even George Eliot's debt to Austen has been much exaggerated by the concept of the Great Tradition.<sup>36</sup> The works of Mary Wollstonecraft were not widely read by the Victorians due to the scandals surrounding her life.

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1810-1865)

A figure of the "golden age" of nineteenth-century English literature, Gaskell is best known for her novels of social reform and psychological realism, notably *Ruth* (1853) and *North and South* (1854). Her treatment of issues ranging from prostitution to mother-daughter relations both captured the public imagination and



generated controversy during Gaskell's own lifetime. Critics have emphasized the tensions—between the working and middle classes, between traditional authority and young women, and between the responsibilities of the public and the responsibilities of the individual—that animate Gaskell's novels and foreshadow major social reforms. Gaskell's refined and compassionate portrayals of her central characters—often young, unmarried women who suffer misfortune—and her skillful use of detail have established an enduring popularity for and interest in her work.

Born in London, Gaskell developed her life-long love of reading at an early age. She married William Gaskell, a young Unitarian clergyman, in 1832 and lived in Manchester. Of her six children, five survived infancy; it was in response to the death of her second child, William, from scarlet fever in 1845 that her husband suggested Gaskell begin writing as a form of distraction from mourning. The resulting novel, *Mary Barton* (1848), reflected Gaskell's interest in the plight of families, and particularly of women, affected by the industrialization of England. Gaskell was active in charitable endeavors, and developed friendships with a number of prominent persons of literary or charitable circles, including George Eliot, Mary Howitt, Charlotte Brontë, and Florence Nightingale. After the popular success of *Mary Barton* Gaskell produced a prolific number of short stories and novels over the remaining years of her life, many of which appeared in *Household Words*, a popular journal edited by Charles Dickens.

More important than the question of direct literary influence, however, is the difference between the social and professional worlds inhabited by the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women. The early women writers refused to deal with a professional role, or had a negative orientation toward it. "What is my life?" lamented the poet Laetitia Landon. "One day of drudgery after another; difficulties incurred for others, which have ever pressed upon me beyond health, which every year, in one severe illness after another, is taxed beyond its strength; envy, malice, and all uncharitableness—these are the fruits of a successful literary career for a woman."<sup>37</sup> These women may have been less than sincere in their insistence that literary success brought them only suffering, but they were not able to see themselves as involved in a vocation that brought responsibilities as well as conflicts, and opportunities as well as burdens. Moreover, they did not see their writing as an aspect of their female experience, or as an expression of it.

Thus, in talking about the situation of the feminine novelists, I have begun with the women born after 1800, who began to publish fiction during the 1840s when the job of the novelist was becoming a recognizable profession. One of the many indications that this generation saw the will to write as a vocation in direct conflict with their status as women is the appearance of the male pseudonym. Like Eve's fig leaf, the male pseudonym signals the loss of innocence. In its radical understanding of the role-playing required by women's effort to participate in the mainstream of literary culture, the pseudonym is a strong marker of the historical shift.

There were three generations of nineteenth-century feminine novelists. The first, born between 1800 and 1820, included all the women who are identified with the Golden Age of the Victorian authoress: the Brontës, Mrs. Gaskell, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Martineau, and George Eliot. The members of this group, whose coevals were Florence Nightingale, Mary Carpenter, Angela Burdett, and other pioneer professionals, were what sociologists call "female role innovators"; they were breaking new ground and creating new possibilities. The second generation, born between 1820 and 1840, included Charlotte Yonge, Dinah Mulock Craik, Margaret Oliphant, and Elizabeth Lynn Linton; these women followed in the footsteps of the great, consolidating their gains, but were less dedicated and original. The third generation, born between 1840 and 1860, included sensation novelists and children's book writers. They seemed to cope effortlessly with the double roles of woman and professional, and to enjoy sexual fulfillment as well as literary success. Businesslike, unconventional, efficient, and productive, they moved into editorial and publishing positions as well as writing.

By the time the women of the first generation had entered upon their careers, there was already a sense of what the "feminine" novel meant in terms of genres. By the 1840s women writers had adopted a variety of popular genres, and were specializing in novels of fashionable life, education, religion, and community, which Vineta Colby subsumes under the heading "domestic realism." In all these novels, according to Inga-Stina Ewbank, "the central preoccupation ... is with the woman as an influence on others within her domestic and social circle. It was in this preoccupation that the typical woman novelist of the 1840s found her proper sphere: in using the novel to demonstrate (by assumption rather than exploration of standards of





womanliness) woman's proper sphere."<sup>38</sup> A double standard of literary criticism had also developed with a special set of terms and requirements for fiction by women.

There was a place for such fiction, but even the most conservative and devout women novelists, such as Charlotte Yonge and Dinah Craik, were aware that the "feminine" novel also stood for feebleness, ignorance, prudery, refinement, propriety, and sentimentality, while the feminine novelist was portrayed as vain, publicity-seeking, and self-assertive. At the same time that Victorian reviewers assumed that women readers and women writers were dictating the content of fiction, they deplored the pettiness and narrowness implied by a feminine value system. "Surely it is very questionable," wrote Fitzjames Stephen, "whether it is desirable that no novels should be written except those fit for young ladies to read."<sup>39</sup>

Victorian feminine novelists thus found themselves in a double bind. They felt humiliated by the condescension of male critics and spoke intensely of their desire to avoid special treatment and achieve genuine excellence, but they were deeply anxious about the possibility of appearing unwomanly. Part of the conflict came from the fact that, rather than confronting the values of their society, these women novelists were competing for its rewards. For women, as for other subcultures, literature became a symbol of achievement.

In the face of this dilemma, women novelists developed several strategies, both personal and artistic. Among the personal reactions was a persistent self-deprecation of themselves as women, sometimes expressed as humility, sometimes as coy assurance-seeking, and sometimes as the purest self-hatred. In a letter to John Black-wood, Mrs. Oliphant expressed doubt about "whether in your most manly and masculine of magazines a womanish story-teller like myself may not become wearisome."<sup>40</sup> The novelists publicly proclaimed, and sincerely believed, their antifeminism. By working in the home, by preaching submission and self-sacrifice, and by denouncing female self-assertiveness, they worked to atone for their own will to write.

Vocation—the will to write—nonetheless required a genuine transcendence of female identity. Victorian women were not accustomed to choosing a vocation; womanhood was a vocation in itself. The evangelically inspired creed of work did affect women, even though it had not been primarily directed toward them. Like men, women were urged to "bear their part in the work of life."<sup>41</sup> Yet for men, the gospel of work satisfied both self-interest and the public interest. In pursuing their ambitions, they fulfilled social expectations.

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

For women, however, work meant labor for others. Work, in the sense of self-development, was in direct conflict with the subordination and repression inherent in the feminine ideal. The self-centeredness implicit in the act of writing made this career an especially threatening one; it required an engagement with feeling and a cultivation of the ego rather than its negation. The widely circulated treatises of Hannah More and Sarah Ellis translated the abstractions of "women's mission" into concrete programs of activity, which made writing appear selfish, unwomanly, and unchristian. "What shall I do to gratify myself—to be admired—or to vary the tenor of my existence?" are not, according to Mrs. Ellis, "questions which a woman of right feelings asks on first awakening to the avocations of the day." Instead she recommends visiting the sick, fixing breakfast for anyone setting on a journey in order to spare the servant, or general "devotion to the good of the whole family." "Who can believe," she asks fervently, "that days, months, and years spent in a continual course of thought and action similar to this, will not produce a powerful effect upon the character?"<sup>42</sup> Of course it did; one notices first of all that feminine writers like Elizabeth Barrett, "Charlotte Elizabeth," Elizabeth M. Sewell, and Mrs. Ellis herself had to overcome deep-seated guilt about authorship. Many found it necessary to justify their work by recourse to some external stimulus or ideology. In their novels, the heroine's aspirations for a full, independent life are undermined, punished, or replaced by marriage.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1857) is one of the few autobiographical discussions of feminine role conflict. Aurora's struggle to become an artist is complicated by the self-hatred in which she has been educated, by her internalized convictions of her weakness and narcissism, and by the gentle scorn of her suitor Romney. She defies him, however, and invokes divine authority to reject his proposal that she become his helpmeet:



You misconceive the question like a man  
Who sees the woman as the complement  
Of his sex merely. You forget too much  
That every creature, female as the male,  
Stands single in responsible act and thought ...  
I too have my vocation,—work to do,  
The heavens and earth have set me.

(Book >II>, 460-466)

Aurora succeeds as a poet. But she marries Romney in the end, having learned that as a woman she cannot cope with the guilt of self-centered ambition. It is significant that Romney has been blinded in an accident before she marries him, not only because he has thereby received firsthand knowledge of being handicapped and can empathize with her, but also because he then needs her help and can provide her with suitably feminine work. When Aurora tells Romney that "No perfect artist is developed here / From any imperfect woman" (Book >IX>, 648-649) she means more than the perfection of love and motherhood; she means also the perfection of self-sacrifice. This conflict remains a significant one for English novelists up to the present; it is a major theme for women novelists from Charlotte Brontë to Penelope Mortimer. Male novelists like Thackeray, who came from an elite class, also felt uncomfortable with the aggressive self-promotion of the novelist's career. As Donald Stone points out:

The dilemma is stated by George Eliot in *Romola* as the question of where "the duty of obedience ends and the duty of resistance begins."<sup>44</sup> Yet this was the question any Victorian woman with the will to write would have had to ask herself: what did God intend her to do with her life? Where did obedience to her father and husband end, and the responsibility of self-fulfillment become paramount? The problem of obedience and resistance that women had to solve in their own lives before they could begin to write crops up in their novels as the heroine's moral crisis. The forms that the crisis takes in feminine fiction are realistically mundane—should Margaret, in Mrs. Gaskell's *North and South*, lie to protect her brother? should Ethel May, in Charlotte Yonge's *Daisy Chain*, give up studying Greek to nurse her father?—but the sources were profound, and were connected to the women novelists' sense of epic life. At the same time that they recognized the modesty of their own struggles, women writers recognized their heroism. "A new Theresa will hardly have the opportunity of reforming a conventual life," wrote George Eliot in *Middlemarch*, "any more than a new Antigone will spend her heroic piety in daring all for a brother's burial: the medium in which their ardent deeds took shape is forever gone. But we insignificant people with our daily words and acts are preparing the lives of many Dorotheas, some of which may present a far sadder sacrifice than that of the Dorothea whose story we know."<sup>45</sup>

The training of Victorian girls in repression, concealment, and self-censorship was deeply inhibiting, especially for those who wanted to write. As one novelist commented in 1860, "Women are greater dissemblers than men when they wish to conceal their own emotions. By habit, moral training, and modern education, they are obliged to do so. The very first lessons of infancy teach them to repress their feelings, control their very thoughts."<sup>46</sup> The verbal range permitted to English gentlewomen amounted almost to a special language. The verbal inhibitions that were part of the upbringing of a lady were reinforced by the critics' vigilance. "It is an immense loss," lamented Alice James, "to have all robust and sustaining expletives refined away from one."<sup>47</sup> "Coarseness" was the term Victorian readers used to rebuke unconventional language in women's literature. It could refer to the "damns" in *Jane Eyre*, the dialect in *Wuthering Heights*, the slang of Rhoda Broughton's heroines, the colloquialisms in *Aurora Leigh*, or more generally to the moral tone of a work, such as the "vein of perilous voluptuousness" one alert critic detected in *Adam Bede*.<sup>48</sup> John Keble censored Charlotte Yonge's fiction, taking the greatest care "that no hint of 'coarseness' should sully the purity of Charlotte's writings. Thus he would not allow *Theodora* in *Heartsease* to say that 'really she had a heart, though some people thought it was only a machine for pumping blood.' He also transformed the 'circle' of the setting sun into an 'orb' and a 'coxcomb' into a 'jackanapes'."<sup>49</sup> While verbal force, wit, and originality in women was criticized, a bland and gelatinous prose won applause. "She writes as an English gentlewoman should write," the *North British Review* complimented Anne Marsh in 1849; "her pages are absolutely like green pastures."<sup>50</sup> Reduced to a pastoral flatness, deprived of a language in which to describe their bodies or the events of their bodies, denied the expression of pain as well as the expression of pleasure, women writers appeared deficient in passion.



It is easy to understand why many readers took the absence of expression for the absence of feeling. In "The False Morality of Lady Novelists," W. R. Greg argued that woman's sexual innocence would prevent her ever writing a great novel.

The results of restrictive education and intensive conditioning were taken as innate evidence of natural preference. In an ironic twist, many reviewers who had paternally barred the way to the sombre valleys, the darker chasms, and the more rugged tracts also blamed women for the emasculation of male prose, finding, like the *Prospective Review*, that the "writing of men is in danger of being marked" by "the delicacy and even fastidiousness of expression which is natural to educated women" [my italics].<sup>52</sup> When G. H. Lewes complained in 1852 that the literature of women was "too much a literature of imitation" and demanded that women should express "what they have really known, felt and suffered,"<sup>53</sup> he was asking for something that Victorian society had made impossible. Feminine novelists had been deprived of the language and the consciousness for such an enterprise, and obviously their deprivation extended beyond Victoria's reign and into the twentieth century. The delicacy and verbal fastidiousness of Virginia Woolf is an extension of this feminized language.

Florence Nightingale thought the effort of repression itself drained off women's creative energy. "Give us back our suffering," she demanded in *Cassandra* (1852), "for out of nothing comes nothing. But out of suffering may come the cure. Better have pain than paralysis."<sup>54</sup> It does sometimes seem as if feminine writers are metaphorically paralyzed, as Alice James was literally paralyzed, by refinement and restraint, but the repression in which the feminine novel was situated also forced women to find innovative and covert ways to dramatize the inner life, and led to a fiction that was intense, compact, symbolic, and profound. There is Charlotte Brontë's extraordinary subversion of the Gothic in *Jane Eyre*, in which the mad wife locked in the attic symbolizes the passionate and sexual side of Jane's personality, an alter ego that her upbringing, her religion, and her society have commanded her to incarcerate. There is the crippled artist heroine of Dinah Craik's *Olive* (1850), who identifies with Byron, and whose deformity represents her very womanhood. There are the murderous little wives of Mary Braddon's sensation novels, golden-haired killers whose actions are a sardonic commentary on the real feelings of the Angel in the House.

Many of the fantasies of feminine novels are related to money, mobility, and power. Although feminine novelists punished assertive heroines, they dealt with personal ambition by projecting the ideology of success onto male characters, whose initiative, thrift, industry, and perseverance came straight from the woman author's experience. The "woman's man," discussed in Chapter iv, was often a more effective outlet for the "deviant" aspects of the author's personality than were her heroines, and thus male role-playing extended beyond the pseudonym to imaginative content.

Protest fiction represented another projection of female experience onto another group; it translated the felt pain and oppression of women into the championship of mill-workers, child laborers, prostitutes, and slaves. Women were aware that protest fiction converted anger and frustration into an acceptable form of feminine and Christian expression. In the social novels of the 1840s and 1850s, and the problem novels of the 1860s and 1870s, women writers were pushing back the boundaries of their sphere, and presenting their profession as one that required not only freedom of language and thought, but also mobility and activity in the world. The sensation novelists of the 1870s, including Mary Braddon, Rhoda Broughton, and Florence Marryat, used this new freedom in a transitional literature that explored genuinely radical female protest against marriage and women's economic oppression, although still in the framework of feminine conventions that demanded the erring heroine's destruction.

From Jane Austen to George Eliot, the woman's novel had moved, despite its restrictions, in the direction of an all-inclusive female realism, a broad, socially informed exploration of the daily lives and values of women within the family and the community. By 1880, the three-decker had become flexible enough to accommodate many of the formerly unprintable aspects of female experience. Yet with the death of George Eliot and the appearance of a new generation of writers, the woman's novel moved into a Feminist phase, a confrontation with male society that elevated Victorian sexual stereotypes into a cult. The feminists challenged many of the restrictions on women's self-expression, denounced the gospel of self-sacrifice, attacked patriarchal religion, and constructed a theoretical model of female oppression, but their anger with society and their need for self-justification often led them away from realism into oversimplification, emotionalism, and fantasy. Making their fiction the vehicle for a dramatization of wronged womanhood, they



demanding changes in the social and political systems that would grant women male privileges and require chastity and fidelity from men. The profound sense of injustice that the feminine novelists had represented as class struggle in their novels of factory life becomes an all-out war of the sexes in the novels of the feminists. Even their pseudonyms show their sense of feminist pride and of matriarchal mission to their sisters; one representative feminist called herself "Sarah Grand." In its extreme form, feminist literature advocated the sexual separatism of Amazon utopias and suffragette sisterhoods.

In the lives of the feminists, the bonds of the female subculture were particularly strong. The feminists were intensely devoted to each other and needed the support of close, emotional friendships with other women as well as the loving adulation of a female audience. In this generation, which mainly comprises women born between 1860 and 1880, one finds sympathetically attuned women writing in teams; Edith Somerville and Violet Martin were even said to have continued the collaboration beyond the grave.<sup>55</sup> Although they preached individualism, their need for association led to a staggering number of clubs, activities, and causes, culminating in the militant groups and the almost terrifying collectivity of the suffrage movement. They glorified and idealized the womanly values of chastity and maternal love, and believed that those values must be forced upon a degenerate male society.

In their lives and in their books, most feminist writers expressed both an awareness of, and a revulsion from, sexuality. Like the feminine novelists, they projected many of their own experiences onto male characters, creating, for example, the Scarlet Pimpernel, "effeminate" fops by day and fearless heroes by night, semi-androgynous symbols of a generation in uneasy transition. To some degree these tactics were typical of the period in which they wrote; male novelists were creating "masculine" independent women who, as Donald Stone puts it, "could be used as a cover for those men who, for one reason or another, were anxious to proclaim their own standards and follow their own instincts."<sup>56</sup>

As the feminists themselves often seem neurotic and divided in their roles, less productive than earlier generations, and subject to paralyzing psychosomatic illnesses, so their fiction seems to break down in its form. In the 1890s the three-decker novel abruptly disappeared due to changes in its marketability, and women turned to short stories and fragments, which they called "dreams," "keynotes," and "fantasias." At the turn of the century came the purest examples of feminist literature, the novels, poems, and plays written as suffragette propaganda and distributed by the efficient and well-financed suffrage presses.

The feminist writers were not important artists. Yet in their insistence on exploring and defining womanhood, in their rejection of self-sacrifice, and even in their outspoken hostility to men, the feminist writers represented an important stage, a declaration of independence, in the female tradition. They did produce some interesting and original work, and they opened new subjects for other novelists. Sarah Grand's powerful studies of female psychology, George Egerton's bitter short stories, and Olive Schreiner's existential socialism were all best-sellers in their own day and still hold attention. Through political campaigns for prostitutes and working women, and in the suffrage crusades, the feminists insisted on their right to use the male sexual vocabulary, and to use it forcefully and openly. The feminists also challenged the monopoly of male publishers and rebelled against the dictatorship of the male establishment. Men—John Chapman, John Blackwood, Henry Blackett, George Smith—had published the works of feminine novelists and had exerted direct and enormous power over their contents. Sarah Grand parodied the masculine critical hegemony by describing a literary journal she called the Patriarch, and feminist journalists, writing in their own magazines, argued against the judgments of the men of letters. In the 1860s the sensation novelists had begun to retain their copyrights, work with printers on a commission basis, and edit their own magazines. The feminists continued to expand this economic control of publishing outlets. Virginia Woolf, printing her own novels at the Hogarth Press, owed much of her independence to the feminists' insistence on the need for women writers to be free of patriarchal commercialism.

... Feminine, feminist, or female, the woman's novel has always had to struggle against the cultural and historical forces that relegated women's experience to the second rank. In trying to outline the female tradition, I have looked beyond the famous novelists who have been found worthy, to the lives and works of many women who have long been excluded from literary history. I have tried to discover how they felt about themselves and their books, what choices and sacrifices they made, and how their relationship to their profession and their tradition evolved. "What is commonly called literary history," writes Louise Bernikow, "is actually a record of choices. Which writers have survived their time and which have not depends upon



who noticed them and chose to record the notice.<sup>57</sup> If some of the writers I notice seem to us to be Teresas and Antigones, struggling with their overwhelming sense of vocation and repression, many more will seem only Dorotheas, prim, mistaken, irreparably minor. And yet it is only by considering them all—Millicent Grogan as well as Virginia Woolf—that we can begin to record new choices in a new literary history, and to understand why, despite prejudice, despite guilt, despite inhibition, women began to write.

## REFERENCES

1. "The Subjection of Women," in John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill, *Essays on Sex Equality*, ed. Alice S. Rossi, Chicago, 1970, ch. >III>, p. 207.
2. "Some Women Novelists," *History of the English Novel*, >X>, London, 1939, p. 194.
3. G. H. Lewes, "The Lady Novelists," *Westminster Review*, n.s. >II> (1852): 137; W. L. Courtney, *The Feminine Note in Fiction*, London, 1904, p. xiii; Bernard Bergonzi, *New York Review of Books*, June 3, 1965. In a review of Beryl Bainbridge's *The Bottle Factory Outing*, Anatole Broyard comments "that quite a few extremely attractive women write rather despairing books" (*New York Times*, May 26, 1975, p. 13).
4. "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," *Westminster Review* >LXVI> (1856); reprinted in *Essays of George Eliot*, ed. Thomas Pinney, London, 1963, p. 324.
5. "Ruth," *North British Review* >XIX> (1853): 90-91; and "Ko-Ko's Song" in *The Mikado*. The stereotype of the woman novelist that emerges in the early nineteenth century conflates the popular images of the old maid and the bluestocking; see Vineta Colby, *Yesterday's Woman: Domestic Realism in the English Novel*, Princeton, 1974, pp. 115-116, and Katharine M. Rogers, *The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature*, London, 1966, pp. 201-207.
6. Introduction to *May Sarton, Mrs. Stevens Hears the Mermaids Singing*, New York, 1974, p. xvi.
7. "This Woman's Movement" in *Adrienne Rich's Poetry*, ed. Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi and Albert Gelpi, New York, 1975, p. 189.
8. *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters*, London, 1969, p. 304.
9. Cynthia Ozick, "Women and Creativity," in *Woman in Sexist Society*, ed. Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran, New York, 1971, p. 436.
10. Letter of November 1849, in *Clement Shorter, The Brontës: Life and Letters*, >II>, London, 1908, p. 80.
11. Mary Ellmann, *Thinking About Women*, London, 1979, pp. 28-54; and Ozick, "Women and Creativity," p. 436.
12. Patricia Meyer Spacks, *The Female Imagination*, London, 1976, p. 3.
13. "Women and Fiction," *Collected Essays*, London 1976, p. 142.
14. See, for example, Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History*, London, 1973; Martha Vicinus, ed., *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age*, London 1980; Mary S. Hartman and Lois N. Banner, eds., *Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women*, New York, 1974, and Françoise Basch, *Relative Creatures: Victorian Women in Society and the Novel*, London, 1974.
15. Linda Nochlin, "Why Are There No Great Women Artists?" in *Woman in Sexist Society*; Lise Vogel, "Fine Arts and Feminism: The Awakening Consciousness," *Feminist Studies* >II> (1974): 3-37; Helene Roberts, "The Inside, the Surface, the Mass: Some Recurring Images of Women," *Women's Studies* >II> (1974): 289-308.
16. *The Making of the English Working Class*, London, 1968, p. 13.
17. Vineta Colby, *The Singular Anomaly: Women Novelists of the Nineteenth Century*, New York, 1970, p. 11.
18. "Women's Lit: Profession and Tradition," *Columbia Forum* >I> (Fall 1972): 27.
19. Spacks, p. 7.
20. Moers, "Women's Lit," p. 28.
21. "Flying Pigs and Double Standards," *Times Literary Supplement*, (July 26, 1974): 784.
22. For helpful studies of literary subcultures, see Robert A. Bone, *The Negro Novel in America*, New York, 1958; and Northrop Frye, "Conclusion to A Literary History of Canada," in *The Stubborn Structure: Essays on Criticism and Society*, London, 1970, pp. 278-312.
23. "Women and Creativity," p. 442.
24. Nancy F. Cott, introduction to *Root of Bitterness*, New York, 1972, pp. 3-4.
25. For the best discussions of the Victorian feminine ideal, see Françoise Basch, "Contemporary Ideologies," in *Relative Creatures*, pp. 3-15; Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, London, 1957, pp. 341-343; and Alexander Welsh's theory of the Angel in the House in *The City of Dickens*, London, 1971, pp. 164-195.



26. Christine Stansell and Johnny Faragher, "Women and Their Families on the Overland Trail, 1842-1867," *Feminist Studies* >II> (1975): 152-153. For an overview of recent historical scholarship on the "two cultures," see Barbara Sicherman, "Review: American History," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* >I> (Winter 1975): 470-484.
27. For a sociological account of patterns of behavior for Victorian women, see Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles: Society, Etiquette and the Season*, London, 1973, esp. pp. 48-58, 85-100.
28. Sarah Ellis, *The Daughters of England*, London, 1845, ch. >IX>, p. 338.
29. Dinah M. Craik, "Literary Ghouls," *Studies from Life*, New York, 1861, p. 13.
30. Letter of October 6, 1851, in *Letters of E. Jewsbury to Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. Mrs. Alex Ireland, London, 1892, p. 426. For Fanny Fern, see Ann Douglas Wood, "The 'Scribbling Women' and Fanny Fern: Why Women Wrote," *American Quarterly* >XXIII> (Spring 1971): 1-24.
31. J. M. S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800*, London, 1932, pp. 119-121; Dorothy Blakey, *The Minerva Press 1790-1820*, London, 1939; and Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, London, 1963, pp. 298-299.
32. Myra Reynolds, *The Learned Lady in England 1650-1760*, New York, 1920, pp. 89-91.
33. William McKee, *Elizabeth Inchbald, Novelist*, Washington, D.C., 1935, p. 20.
34. "Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Mary Brunton by Her Husband," preface to *Emmeline*, Edinburgh, 1819, p. xxxvi.
35. Kathleen Tillotson, *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties*, London, 1956, pp. 142-145.
36. For a refutation of Leavis's view of Austen and Eliot, see Gross, *Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters*, pp. 302-303.
37. Quoted in S. C. Hall, *A Book of Memories of Great Men and Women of the Age*, London, 1877, p. 266.
38. Inga-Stina Ewbank, *Their Proper Sphere: A Study of the Brontë Sisters as Early-Victorian Female Novelists*, London, 1966, p. 41.
39. *Saturday Review* >IV> (July 11, 1857): 40-41. See also David Masson, *British Novelists and Their Styles*, Cambridge, 1859, p. 134.
40. *Autobiography and Letters of Mrs. M.O.W. Oliphant*, ed., Mrs. Harry Coghill, London, 1899, p. 160.
41. "An Enquiry into the State of Girls' Fashionable Schools," *Fraser's* >XXXI> (1845): 703.
42. Sarah Ellis, *The Women of England*, London, 1838, ch. >U>, p.35.
43. "Victorian Feminism and the Nineteenth-Century Novel," *Women's Studies* >I> (1972): 69.
44. *Romola*, London, 1863, >II>, ch. >XXIII>.
45. *Middlemarch*, ed., W. J. Harvey, London, 1965, "Finale," p. 896.
46. *Tacita Tacit*, >II>, p. 276; quoted in Myron Brightfield, *Victorian England in Its Novels*, >IV>, Los Angeles, 1968, p. 27.
47. *The Diary of Alice James*, ed. Leon Edel, London, 1965, p. 66.
48. *British Quarterly Review* >XLV> (1867): 164. On the term "coarseness," see Ewbank, *Their Proper Sphere*, pp. 46-47.
49. Margaret Mare and Alicia C. Percival, *Victorian Best-Seller: The World of Charlotte Yonge*, London, 1947, p. 133.
50. James Lorimer, "Noteworthy Novels," >XI> (1849): 257.
51. "The False Morality of Lady Novelists," *National Review* >VII>, (1859): 149.
52. "Puseyite Novels," >VI> (1850): 498.
53. "The Lady Novelists," p. 132.
54. "Cassandra," in *The Cause*, ed. Ray Strachey, London, 1978, p. 398.
55. See Maurice Collis, *Somerville and Ross*, London, 1968, for an account of the careers of Edith Somerville and Violet Martin. After Martin's death in 1915, the "collaboration" continued through psychic communications. Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper wrote under the name of "Michael Field"; the sisters Emily and Dorothea Gerard used the name "E. D. Gerard" for such joint efforts as *Beggar My Neighbor* (1882).
56. "Victorian Feminism and the Nineteenth-Century Novel," p. 79.
57. *The World Split Open: Four Centuries of Women Poets in England and America, 1552-1950*, New York, 1979, p. 3.



INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA



# International Journal of Advanced Research in Arts, Science, Engineering & Management (IJARASEM)

| Mobile No: +91-9940572462 | Whatsapp: +91-9940572462 | [ijarasem@gmail.com](mailto:ijarasem@gmail.com) |

[www.ijarasem.com](http://www.ijarasem.com)