In a first group of novels a basic element of plot and motivation is furnished by a frustrating clash of values in the main characters: a desirable love match is thwarted, at least temporarily, by idealistic conceptions. These, commendable enough in abstracto, urge some protagonists to an attitude of self-denial or impose such an attitude upon others not at all inclined to it. The self-denial may be encouraged by a more or less conscious wish for self-punishment; it may be conditioned by a conservative awareness of the social stratification, as in The Step-Mother or Precaution, novels with an English setting, or rather by individual views of duty and moral obligation, as in Clara Howard and Emily Hamilton.

The Step-Mother (1798) is the first of two novels known to have been written by Helena Wells (fl. 1798-1809). It is avowedly didactic fiction: its heroine Caroline Williams should be a model stepmother to the four daughters of the widower whom she marries and soon loses. The concept implies devotion and self-effacement. Inevitably the narrative focuses on the four girls and their suitors and lovers, while the “central” character, though retaining a unifying function, is reduced to a near-abstraction, something like a morality figure. The total effect of this part of the narrative is disappointing in at least two ways. For one thing, Miss Wells yielded to the temptation of using the mere surface arabesques of romantic storytelling: its righteousnesses and villainies, the motives of envy and greed causing treachery or seduction. The very number of personages introduced and the closeness of their mutual relationships suggest that the author had not planned her book beyond inventing an accumulation of crises and handicaps for the girls and their stepmother. Another reason for our disappointment with
the book is the fact that Caroline no longer grows and changes as she devotes herself to keeping her charges happy, or at least out of harm. She has reached a relative perfection of wisdom by the time she takes up her stepmotherly duties, and we cannot really expect her to develop any further so we lose interest in her; and since the alternative appeal of her girls' repetitive adventures is itself limited, the story becomes very dull indeed.

Now, before becoming Mrs. Wentworth, Caroline has shown signs of her willing acceptance of self-sacrifice, but she has also revealed a certain amount of independent thinking and acting. The didactic mission thrust upon her by Miss Wells quite smothers that part of her and the potential tension between the poles of her character. Caroline's businesslike determination to do her duty at the cost of her personal fulfillment is indicated by the fact that she never gives another thought to the crisis which conditioned her entire existence. By refusing Edward in spite of her love for him, she wished to avoid offending the aristocratic prejudices of her protectress, Lady Glanvile, Edward's mother. Her position later is such that marrying Wentworth is a highly prudent step, but then she could have given Edward a different answer, ensuring their mutual happiness, without for all that making Lady Glanvile miserable; this Caroline never chooses to consider, not even when, many years later, she reads Edward's parting letter.

*The Step-Mother* is a poor book. Its characterization is as unsatisfactory as its author's inventiveness. Its structure is weakened by the shift of focus mentioned before. Miss Wells's style, generally dull, deviates from its mediocrity only to become clumsy, periphrastic, and simply faulty.

Whereas everything about *The Step-Mother* breathes an air of imitation, another, later, novel with a related theme appears to embody some material derived from firsthand experience. *The Mother-in-Law* (1817), by Horatio Gates Spafford (1778-1832), has a stepmother for its title figure. She is named Glorvina, and her experiences derive almost exclusively from the consequences of her husband's unfortunate first marriage: she must repeatedly cope with intrigues involving her stepchildren. In this sense her situation is similar to that of Caroline Williams. But the latter.
being alone, must make her own decisions; she does so consistently and according to her upbringing, and thus emerges as a character more distinct than Glorvina is permitted to become. This is also due to the permanence of Caroline's involvement in the destinies of her stepdaughters: she never knows periods of respite such as Glorvina is favored with, in journeys on the Continent and through England.

The information and descriptions offered in these travel passages are curiously uneven. The itinerary of the trip from Keswick to London and York (pp. 165-69) sounds real enough, what with the stops mentioned and the relatives introduced; but the Continental scenes read rather like the heightened pictures of a writer who depends on secondhand sources—maps, literary models—and an awkward vocabulary of the sublime, to convey a sense of the unfamiliar (pp. 106-111). Yet Spafford devoted considerable space to these descriptions; otherwise his episodes are sketchy, like first notes that have been retouched just enough to give them a flavor of narrative style. Many places and a large number of characters are introduced and mentioned by name, but both the localities and the characters are afflicted with a painful two-dimensional effect. Since an appreciable slice of time is consumed within the 180 pages of The Mother-in-Law, the author apparently felt he could not afford to pause; he hurried on, breathlessly and jerkily, until after listing the names of the husbands and wives of all of Glorvina's stepchildren and children, he could report his model heroine's death.

James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) called Precaution (1820) a moral tale, a designation with which Miss Wells would no doubt have agreed. His first novel is also, like The Step-Mother, a book stiffly complex in the interrelatedness of its characters, especially in that part devoted to unraveling the mystery of Denbigh's identity. It has a comparable shift of focus too: where Miss Wells concentrated first on one central personage and then on many subsidiary ones, in Cooper's novel one setting serves for most of the first half, but there is a restless change of scene in the second.

George Denbigh, the hero of Precaution, may be said to be, like Caroline Williams, too acutely sensitive to the existence of
social classes. But whereas Caroline refuses a connection that is considered lowering for her lover and thus emphasizes the social barrier, Denbigh tries the experiment of tricking it out of existence—temporarily, that is, and in actual practice only to some slight extent. His Emily is no mere tradesman’s or farmer’s daughter, after all; nor is there anything about Denbigh to suggest that he does not take the aristocratic hierarchy for granted: he is a creation of the Cooper who thought the British social structure not without its merits. Nevertheless, when it comes to selecting a wife, Denbigh wants to be loved for his own sake, and not for his title, and therefore assumes the guise of a non-aristocratic person. In so doing he runs the risk that his mystification may boomerang on him. And indeed, Mrs. Wilson becomes suspicious of him. Her experience of mankind has taught her to expect duplicity rather than honesty as the motive for assuming a social mask, and she fails to see that Denbigh’s motives are different. This is, incidentally, a wry comment on the possibility of confusing appearance and reality; for the reality that is rejected in this case means not only the very suitor to be desired for Emily but also the identical Lord Pendennyss whom Mrs. Wilson so much admires. No wiser than Jane or Lady Moseley in this specific instance, the over-prudent Mrs. Wilson advises her protégée to dismiss Denbigh. It would be easy for the latter to write to Mrs. Wilson in his true identity and explain the apparent contradictions in his statements and half-statements; yet he makes no move to exculpate himself. Denbigh is aware that he has laid himself open to charges of dishonesty and evidently chooses to punish himself more severely than Mrs. Wilson and Emily have done through their implicit rebuke.

At this critical juncture Cooper introduces the confusion with the unfortunate lover’s namesake. In order that the reader may be more easily taken in by this trick, Emily’s Denbigh drops completely out of sight, the author contriving to keep both George Denbighs away from Bath while Emily meets the Denbigh ladies there. This tangling of identities achieved, mere hints are insufficient to point the way to the solution of the Denbigh mysteries; Cooper had to step forward himself and, probing back into two past generations and introducing char-
actors never heard of before, employ about one fourth of his second volume to account for the confusions puzzling his reader.\textsuperscript{13}

Emily, quite a conventional heroine,\textsuperscript{14} is throughout the story too much overshadowed by her mentor Mrs. Wilson to become a girl with a mind of her own. She does not seem to have any genuine affection for her family, perhaps because her parents have quite given her up into Mrs. Wilson's hands. This lady is so constantly employed in cautionary and defensive reflections and moves in Emily's behalf that one begins to doubt her capacity for gratitude and admiration, which is the basis of her attitude toward Pendennys. As for the latter, we may sympathize with the predicament he is in, even when we yet only guess at the nature of that predicament; but the very "split personality" that is his makes it hard to visualize him and to integrate him into the social scene depicted by Cooper.

Surprisingly enough, it is that English world, experienced at secondhand only,\textsuperscript{15} which now and again yields some pleasure and amusement to the reader. Witnessing the discomfiture of a Lady Moseley or Lady Chatterton and the deportment of the Jarvises may give the impression of \textit{déjà vu}; but all the same, these characters are entertaining because they truly belong to their setting and at the same time achieve sufficient individuality to be acceptable in their small comic excesses. On the other hand, the villain, Egerton, and a character like Mrs. Fitzgerald have an obviously mechanical plot function; and such oddities as Mr. Benfield and his steward make the reader uncomfortable (they are typical of Cooper's often heavyhanded attempts at humor).\textsuperscript{16} Nor are the more explicitly didactic passages any subtler; certain melodramatic or sentimental scenes, too, are handled with an awkward insistence.\textsuperscript{17} There is a passage somewhat akin to these on woman, which has the merit of shedding light on Cooper's conception of woman and female characters, and which illustrates his style in \textit{Precaution}, as well:

It is said that women are fertile in inventions to further their schemes of personal gratification, vanity, or even mischief; it may be—it is true—but the writer of these pages is a man—one who has seen much of the sex, and he is happy to have an opportunity of paying a tribute to female purity and female
truth; that there are hearts so disinterested as to lose the con­
siderations of self, in advancing the happiness of those they
love—that there are minds so pure, as to recoil with disgust
from the admission of deception, indelicacy, or management—he
knows, for he has seen it from long and close examination; he
regrets, that the very artlessness of those who are most pure
in the one sex, subjects them to the suspicions of the grosser
materials which compose the other. He believes that innocency,
singleness of heart, ardency of feeling, and unalloyed shrinking
delicacy, sometimes exist in the female bosom, to an extent
that but few men are happy enough to discover, and most men
believe incompatible with the frailties of human nature. (1:
153-54)

There is enough in Cooper's first book, and above all in its
opening chapters, to suggest that he knew Persuasion and Pride
and Prejudice quite well.18 But he lacked Miss Austen's elegant
incisiveness, which worked so effectively both as insight into her
characters and as irony in the comments, for instance, on their
fellow beings or our fashions that she had them utter.19 Inten­
tionally or not, Cooper produced a novel reminiscent of models
less worthy of imitation than Jane Austen's novels.

Cooper's praise of woman puts the reader in mind of another
writer in whose work the peculiar female sensitivity in matters
of morality and feeling is frequently asserted: Charles Brockden
Brown (1771-1810). His Alcuin20 sounds that note in 1798; it
rings on with persistence throughout the author's short period of
intense productivity in the field of the novel. But Brown's
heroines, with their claim to intellectual equality and their
determination, must be taken more seriously than Cooper's.
"whose combination of propriety and incapacity places them
at the farthest possible remove from the heroic."21 Clara Howard
(1801) has for its heroine a young lady of high principles, an
enthusiast of love22 who appears to distinguish between Love,
universal and self-sacrificing, and love, personal and selfish. Her
conceptions are acted out upon, and through, the person of Philip
Stanley.23 Though she loves him, Clara refuses to accept him as
her friend or her husband; according to her, Mary Wilmot, a girl
who may with some reason have expected Stanley to propose to
her, has claims superior to her own.24 However impatient Stanley
may feel with Clara's principles, and resenting the moral order "which makes our very virtues instrumental to our misery" (p. 28), he starts out in search of Mary, tracks her down, and persists in proposing to her though she wishes him to marry Clara. This he does with such self-willed conviction that Mary's rejection plunges him into a mood of self-pitying renunciation and drives him to impose exile from his true love upon himself; a journey—to quote his melodramatic announcement—"from which I neither wish nor expect to return. I at this moment anticipate the dawn of comfort, from the scenes of the wilderness and of savage life" (p. 208). In her effort to restrain him Clara happily manages to conciliate the demands of Love and love. She reminds Stanley that withdrawing from the world would make him guilty of a comprehensive sin of omission, since he would then fail to support those dependent on him (letter 29); at the same time, his return to Philadelphia would mean coming back to the guidance he needs from her:

My maturer age, and more cautious judgment, shall be counsellors and guides to thy inexperienced youth. While I love thee and cherish thee as a wife, I shall assume some of the prerogatives of an elder sister, and put my circumspection and forethought in the balance against thy headlong confidence.

I revere thy genius and thy knowledge. With the improvements of time, very far wilt thou surpass the humble Clara; but in moral discernment, much art thou still deficient. Here I claim to be more than equal... (p. 265)

This passage clearly suggests that Clara's is the dominating role given to many heroines in Brown's fiction. Clara Howard is the first book that Brown named after its heroine; she is essential to its plot in the way that headquarters are essential to the conduct of a campaign. The English publisher of the book chose to use the hero's name for a title, in the approved Brown manner up to that time, and of course it is Stanley who goes through the motions of the campaign. But we are never allowed to forget that the moves are mapped out for him by his high-principled fiancée, and that in all he does or tries to do he is prompted by Clara's conceptions and directions. His one inde-
pendent move to determine the course of their relationship is to renounce her and prepare for a journey across the American continent, and this move proves abortive. Immature and inclined to act upon impulses, Stanley indulges in self-pity and self-righteousness. His behavior toward Mary may indeed well have failed to be quite honest, in spite of his repeated assertions that he knew all the time he felt respect or pity, but not love, for the girl: "I was bound by every tie of honour, though not of affection, to Mary Wilmot" (p. 96). Clara insists that (social) reason must at all times keep the (selfish) feelings in check: it always promotes the sum total of happiness within a group of people. She therefore reproaches Stanley in no uncertain terms for his lack of discipline, and is consistently ready to prove her capacity for sacrifice: "I resign you to this good girl, as to one who deserves you more than I; whose happiness is more dependent on the affections of another than mine is" (p. 196). Clara never pretends that such control of the emotions is easy, but she stresses above all that her readiness to give up Stanley to Mary is in the best interests of the three of them. Only if logically convinced that she is wrong will she allow Stanley to return to her as her acknowledged suitor (p. 57); and logically, almost mathematically, convinced she finally is, for it turns out that she has given insufficient consideration to an imponderable quantity, the love of Sedley and Mary. Mary Wilmot's disinterested views are early expounded. She tries to ensure Stanley's happiness both by explicitly renouncing her claims and by taking herself out of his life. Her willingness to give up her lover, however, is matched by Clara's. The ensuing deadlock can be broken only by the introduction of Sedley in the guise of a genuine lover and disinterested human being: Mary falls in love with him, a possibility earlier as little taken into account by herself as by Clara. The reader has been rather unfairly kept in the dark concerning Sedley, who is rumored to be unreliable and disreputable, whereas he proves high-minded and generous, and undoubtedly a fit partner for Mary.

The artificial plot of Clara Howard might perhaps have been redeemed by a subtler shading of the psychological portraits.
and by a writer more skillful than Brockden Brown at establishing a sound structure to support his narrative. Brown's handling of the epistolary device is stiff and ungainly, and the individual letters, stylistically uniform, are no more than surface subdivisions of the tale—or rather debate—in progress. One recipient is obviously introduced merely to give Stanley a chance to tell his own story, in a letter which grows to a full quarter of the entire book. The elements of romantic mysteries and benevolence related there parallel those in the past of Mary's family, and none of them have any bearing on the moral discussion that is central to the novel. This discussion is prevented by its abstractness from achieving real urgency or a sense of fated inevitability such as derives from Wieland's meditations, or, to take the example of another writer, from the train of thought of Melville's Pierre. Brown's intensity in Clara Howard quickly lapses into monotony.

Whatever objections may be raised against Keep Cool (1817), by John Neal (1793-1876), the book can hardly be called monotonous. It is far more likely to be blamed for its haphazard structure and its incoherence. There is already in Neal's first novel the mixture of heterogeneous elements found in all his fiction. Following Neal as he slips from burlesque and parody into satire and eccentricity, and again into social criticism and romantic characterization, we find him unwilling to commit himself seriously to any one approach or theme. Keep Cool, though it does give some indication of its author's talents, above all has all the marks of improvisation about it, suggesting that Neal became interested in, or bored with, his characters as quickly as certain of his figures fall in and out of love. At first a comic novel of manners, with variations on the theme of love—infatuation, flirting, coquetry, vanity—in different settings, the novel later singles out four characters for more detailed treatment: wise Mrs. Granville, the eccentric and contradictory Echo, Laura, and the Byronic Sydney. The issue of dueling has at one time or another played an unpleasant part in their lives, and Sydney and his sister can be eloquently indignant about it. After his sensible refusal to fight Echo, Sydney yet suffers himself to be blackmailed into accepting Percy's challenge by the code of
gentlemanly society. The fight itself simply serves as a crisis to effect some dramatic changes in the various relationships; it only obliquely affects what is clearly the main theme of *Keep Cool*, the love of Laura and Sydney.

It may be called the main theme because it provides the nearest thing to a narrative backbone for the novel, yet it is presented sketchily and involves two characters fragmentarily realized, so that it fails to sustain its function quite adequately. Out of mistaken notions of love and the tendency to act the part of a coquette, Laura rejects Sydney's honest proposal; to punish her, Sydney perseveres until he in turn is in a position to jilt the girl. They part, but are doomed to carry the burden of their mutual love and guilt; and when they meet again, they still feel bound to refuse themselves a reconciliation. The meagre facts known about their past intrigue their New York friends; the air of mystery which surrounds them is however chiefly the result of a sense of their uneasy relationship. Seemingly in love with Percy and Louisa, in reality they merely try to escape from their common predicament and to make their self-denial final. Sydney's self-decreed banishment after Percy's death is just another attempt at ending the anguished tension of guilt, love, and scorn, though he conceivably also feels that he deserves punishment for having betrayed his convictions and accepted Percy's challenge; he might indeed even think he has done so in order to get rid of his rival in Laura's affections. The girl stresses her coquettishness on purpose when Sydney returns from his Indian exile; it proves a last effort, and a futile one, to resist the appeal of their love. Whereas Sydney's attitude is compounded of fiction's conventional chivalric heroism and some urge to purify himself by renunciation, Laura appears to have been intended as a more original and a psychologically finer piece of character drawing. Her main faults, a shallow flirtatiousness and sentimentally exaggerated expectations, blind her to Sydney's merits. But once her eyes have been opened, she tries to live up to such standards of excellence as truly exist, that is, the standards exemplified by Sydney before his disillusionment, including the faculty to refuse oneself pleasure and happiness. From then on Laura's coquetry is no longer a playful attitude
only but a mask shielding her from too close a contact with the world of admirers and suitors; in the final instance she even uses it to try and protect Sydney from her unworthiness.

This, no doubt, is making the workings of Laura's character a good deal more conscious and more precise than we find realized in *Keep Cool*. But there are at least hints of an ability in Neal to feel his way into his heroine's emotional ways which is superior to that of most of his American colleagues. This cannot be entirely obscured by Neal's uneven expression of his insights and conceptions, skirting the trite and the sentimental as it often does. The modern reader is likely to find these attempts at characterization more appealing and suggestive than the story of Elizabeth and Echo alias St. Pierre, lovers driven apart through mere circumstances and not through any effect of their own characters (chap. 21), or the hackneyed comedy of the hunting partners speaking English with their native French, Scotch, and Irish pronunciations. There are more felicitous satirical passages, though, as, for example, one which describes the repercussions of chauvinistic anger at some form of foreign arrogance through the provincial newspapers of America (1:121-22), or that ironical description lavishing praise on Laura and simultaneously mocking the pretty ways of feminine vanity:

Not once, during the whole evening, did she cross the room when all was hush, though she walked like a spirit; not once did she stretch out that lovely arm of hers to play with some distant book, or to hand some trinket to a person who had seen it fifty times before; to point at what nobody wanted to see, or to snuff a candle when a servant was standing by. She knew her voice was melody itself, yet was not once heard to hum an air carelessly to herself—in that genteel forgetfulness, that always betrays a favourite belle, even when she is among strangers; not once did she praise such a lady's voice, who sung such and such a song "so and so;" not once did she stretch out her fine throat to whisper half across the room, about the "uncommon mildness of the weather," or some equally mysterious affair; not once did she attempt the languid loll, though conscious that her form would have furnished a painter with the very image of *Volupté*; not once did she draw off her glove, or fasten her hair, or throw her arms behind her head and lean upon them. though
she knew that the snowy whiteness of the one never could be better opposed, than by the dark, glossy luxuriance of the other. She forgot herself, and remembered her visitors. (1:94)

By comparison with Neal's exuberant combination and treatment of various materials, *Emily Hamilton* (1803), by Sukey Vickery, is decidedly moderate, if not tedious; yet on the whole the reader is grateful for the writer's restraint. Although the lack of romantic coloring and a variety of tones may appear as weaknesses, they are more or less compensated by the relative straightforwardness of the plot and the consistency of the admittedly slight characterization of the three girls who function as correspondents and part-narrators. Miss Vickery dispensed with any over-intricate grounding of the action in the past experiences, long kept a secret, of some one or other of her characters; she offered no complex masking of identities, and only discreetly hinted at the many crimes of the blackguardly Lambert. In his case she did resort, however, to a stock-type villain: Lambert the seducer cannot bring himself to marry the girl who is pregnant by him and therefore tainted by scandal; he tries fortune-hunting, is jailed for debt, and is finally sentenced to death for some unspecified atrocity. Apart from this figure, there is another element of conventional fiction in *Emily Hamilton*: the marriage imposed for reasons of wealth upon young people whose affections run to someone other than their parents' choices. Belmont, the young man involved, accepts the parental decree, even though he falls in love with another girl, Emily herself, shortly before marrying Clara. But the latter, prevented from asking Belmont to refuse the match arranged by their parents, resolves upon having her cake and eating it: she marries the rich young man selected for her, but does not give up her lover.

She is evidently no believer in sacrifice or in personal and social discipline. Unlike Lambert's criminal wickedness, her refusal to submit to convention is passed lightly over and, indeed, treated with some measure of sympathy. Clara's behavior nonetheless does serve to set off that of her husband and especially of the heroine. Emily is shocked by the discovery that the unknown gentleman with whom she has fallen in love after he has
saved her life, and who has moved into her neighborhood, is a married man. When Mrs. Belmont is seriously ill, the girl is perhaps tempted to wish her rival dead, especially as she knows that Belmont does not love his wife; to keep herself from such thoughts, she turns to the subject of Mrs. Belmont’s chances of recovery (letter 57). The latter dies, yet now that there are no legal impediments any more to prevent his proposal, Emily raises moral obstacles and decides beforehand that she will not listen to Belmont. She means instead to keep her engagement to her longtime friend Charles Devas, though she does not love him, and has become engaged very much to protect herself against her passion for Belmont. Providence, grim and kind at the same time, interferes by drowning Devas and forbearing to further test Emily’s fidelity and firmness.

The timing of Devas’s accidental death is one instance of a happy coincidence; others are Emily’s meeting with Belmont and the opportune revelation of Lambert’s seduction of Betsey. Such features presumably reflect the author’s faith in the welfare of the good and the just meting out of rewards. Emily Hamilton, too, is very much a moral tale, like Precaution. It also makes deliberate use of the sentimental value of reflections on death, particularly during Sophia’s slow decline (in the course of which the girl is grieved chiefly by the sorrow of her relatives and friends over her fate), and again in the letter which Emily writes after Devas’s death—a letter that devotes twice as much space to general observations on religion and dying as to her former close friend and intended husband.

The styles of sensibility and sententiousness are frequently favored, though the general tone of the book is gossipy. Whether to recall memories, to provide fresh insights into a character yet hardly known, or to make for a deeper harmony of feelings and possibly encourage sensations of gratitude for the Creator, moonlit evenings are regularly called upon: they seem infallibly to furnish sympathetic settings which should catch the reader’s emotions just as they provoke response in the personages:

A walk by moonlight, you are sensible, was always highly gratifying to me. This evening, I walked for some time, and at my
return, seated myself a short distance from the house, beneath a venerable elm. The moon shone, with more than usual lustre, all was serene and beautiful, no sound was heard but the cherub of the cricket and the soft sighing of the breeze. The time and place was suited to contemplation, the beauty of the scene diffused a soft calmness over my mind; I retraced all the innocent, sportive scenes of our childhood... I was seated with you and Eliza Anderson on the sloping bank—I saw the willows waving over the stream which fell dashing from rock to rock with its usual murmuring sound... (p. 19)

Emily and Belmont appear extremely susceptible to such scenes; yet they fail to suggest the richness of feeling which they so loudly proclaim and seem to detect in others. All the listing of the heroine's qualities of morality and sensibility does less for her than is achieved for others by individual slight touches: one opportunistic gesture of a friend of Emily, or the sprightly refusal of another to be heart-broken over her fickle lover's desertion.

1. The phrases are borrowed from William Dean Howells's "A Possible Difference in English and American Fiction," NAR 173 (1901): 134-44, and apply to minor authors; the love story written by "the best American novelists" attempted to portray "what sort of man and maid their love found them out to be, and how, under its influence, the mutual chemistry of their natures interacted." Among early American novelists, such psychological probing was at best faintly sketched by Brockden Brown in Ormond and Jane Talbot, or by Mrs. Foster in The Coquette.


3. The tendencies noted by Roy Harvey Pearce, "Sterne and Sensibility in American Diaries," MLN 59 (1944): 403-7, for the period of 1777 to 1783, could certainly be substantiated among later letter-writers and diarists, e.g., Eliza Southgate Bowne, Theodosia Burr, Julia Cowles, and Nancy Maria Hyde.

4. How precarious any attempt at distinguishing between an author's motives and purposes, models and final effects, must be is exemplified by various labelings in Florence May Anna Hilblish, Charlotte Smith (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941), esp. pp. 330, 337, 345. We might apply to the average author of the fiction of the age a definition of Harold Robbins: "He is not so much a novelist in the traditional sense of the word as what might be called a story engineer" (review of The Carpetbaggers, Newsweek, June 5, 1961).

6. See her prefaces to the first and second editions of The Step-Mother; the former also presents the novel as the author's attempt at consoling herself. No copy of the first edition seems to be extant, but its preface is reprinted in The Step-Mother, . . . by Helena Wells of Charles Town, South Carolina (1799).

7. An instance of this independence is her decision to marry Wentworth when she is expected to jump at the chance of marrying Brummell.

8. Unlike Rebecca in Mrs. Rowson's The Fille de Chambre, who also refuses the advances of her protectress' son, Caroline thinks her wooer sincere and not merely another upper-class seducer of insufficiently protected girls.

9. This shift of focus is prepared by the deaths, in quick succession, of those closely connected with Caroline: Mrs. Belton, Edward, and Wentworth (chaps. 13-15).

10. See Julian P. Boyd, "Horatio Gates Spafford," PAAS 51(1941):279-350. Spafford states that the material for his book was brought over to America by a niece of a protégée of Glorvina, who used the latter's own notes; this might be a thin disguise, adapted from the convention of "novels founded in fact," in order to give a factual narrative the air of fiction. It may even be true. The consistent use of precise dates, as practiced in The Mother-in-Law, is rare in fiction. The Mother-in-Law: or Memoirs of Madam De Morville was published in Boston in 1817.

11. After a reference to the French emigration of 1685, the narrator makes a quick transition to the third generation of emigrants. In chapter 7 (p. 40), the year 1775 is reached. The following chapters are devoted to the Charlotte-like Nanette, who dies in childbirth in America early in 1777 (35 pp.). Chapter 20 (p. 139) reports De Morville's death, in 1801, and that of Glorvina is the subject of the concluding chapter; it takes place in 1814.


13. Precaution, Cooper's first novel, which was conceived as a short tale, was written very hastily, and "no plot was fix'd on until the first volume was half done" (Letters and Journals, 1:42, 66).

14. See Emily's portrait (1:126); the description of Denbigh is quite as conventional (1:102), and so is his moving reading aloud from Gertrude of Wyoming (1:172). Another stereotype is the girl (Jane Moseley) who fancies herself adored by a man whose perfections are all of her own imagining (1:70, 124-25).

15. Imitation must have been Cooper's first incitement, the aim "to impose on the public" a later rationalization; he may have been aware before starting on The Spy that "the task of making American Manners and American scenes interesting to an American reader is an arduous one" (Letters and Journals, 1:66, 44). Cf. his preface to the 1839 London edition, and Arvid Shulenberger, Cooper's Theory of Fiction: His Prefaces and Their Relation to His Novels (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1955), esp. p. 13. The English reviewers of the anonymous Precaution apparently did not doubt that its author was English (W. B. Cairns, British Criticisms, p. 112). Simms passed a devastating judgment on Cooper's imitative first novel (Views and Reviews in American Literature, History and Fiction, ed. C. Hugh Holman, p. 259). John Macy thought that it was Cooper's secondhand material that prevented Precaution from being a success like Cooper's American tales (The Spirit of American Literature [Doubleday Page, 1913], p. 35). Warren S. Walker calls
The Spy a countering weapon to objections to the English setting of Precaution (J. F. Cooper [Barnes & Noble, 1962], p. 12); this is acceptable if the objections came from his wife and the close friends who may have seen portions of the manuscript, for when critics read the published novel, Cooper had long been at work on The Spy (Letters and Journals, 1:44).

16. See the grotesquely exaggerated picture of old-fashioned Peter Johnson (1:220-21). Later humorous characters (e.g., David Gamut or Dr. Battins) have functions of their own within the new social patterns of America.

17. See Volume 1, chapter 11, on dancing and entertainments, and Volume 1, chapter 22, on reading; the scene of mad Francis Denbigh's death and his one final lucid moment on seeing Marian, the girl who broke his heart many years earlier (Volume 2, chapter 20); a passage on a poor gardener's family (1:159), and the long-delayed revelation of Pendennyss's identity (1:205-6).

18. See Horace H. Scudder, "What Mr. Cooper Read to His Wife," SR 36(1928):177-94; Marcel Clavel, Fenimore Cooper (Aix-en-Provence, 1938), pp. 52-62; and George E. Hastings, "How Cooper Became a Novelist," AL 12(1940):20-51. Cooper must have been familiar with the English fiction of the age, and this comprehensive knowledge influenced him when he began writing in the manner of the lady novelists, perhaps more especially in that of Persuasion. In the relevant passages of his letters and journals, only two titles are mentioned: Mrs. Brunton's Discipline and Hannah More's Coelebs. He ordered a copy of the former on July 17, 1820, and offered to compare Precaution with it. He declared Coelebs definitely superior to his first novel; but they share the same moral tone, which was also that of Maria Edgeworth and other popular lady novelists (see Letters and Journals, 1:49, 66; T.R. Lounsbury, J. F. Cooper [Boston, 1882], p. 21; H. W. Boynton, J. F. Cooper [Century, 1931], pp. 80-86).

19. But see the sketch of Lady Moseley at church: "...her cambric handkerchief concealed her face as she sunk composedly by the side of Sir Edward, in a style which showed, that while she remembered her Maker, she had not entirely forgotten herself" (1:43); and the picture of John Moseley, torn between love and stubbornness (1:186).

20. Alcuin is discussed above, in Chapter 4, section entitled "Mentoria."

21. Lounsbury, Cooper, p. 27, with particular reference to Emily and similar figures.

22. In the 1827 edition, Clara Howard has for an alternate title "the Enthusiasm of Love." References are to the first edition.

23. The protagonist was originally called Edward Hartley, but became Philip Stanley in the English edition of 1804, called after him. Edward Hartley may have been rejected as unsuitable for a title because of its resemblance to Edgar Huntly.

24. "You know what it is that reason prescribes to you with regard to Miss Wilmot. If you cannot ardently and sincerely seek her presence, and find, in the happiness which she will derive from a union with you, sufficient motives to make you zealously solicit that union, you are unworthy not merely of my love, but of my esteem" (p. 32). Cf. p. 130.

25. Cf. pp. 201-2 for a similar protest of Stanley.

26. For another related rebuke, see pp. 33-34.

27. Stanley owes his intellectual development to Mr. Howard, who has been a father to him (pp. 65, 68). There is a touch of the fairy tale about such protection, and something miraculous about the change in Stanley's situation, summarized in the opening letter (pp. iii-iv).
28. E.g., Mrs. Fielding, Mrs. Lorimer, Louisa, and Clelia. Other elements of *Clara Howard* are characteristic of Brown's fiction: the mystery of complex antecedents, including the love match and emigration; lofty motivation; argumentation that is involved, broody and repetitive. The narrative has distinct parallels with *Edgar Huntly* and less obviously, with the other novels of Brown.

29. Cf. also pp. 74, 127.

30. "Thou art fiery and impetuous, my friend. Thy spirit is not curbed by reason. There is no outrage on discretion; no crime against thyself, into which thy headlong spirit may not hurry thee" (p. 44).

31. To D. L. Clark, Clara is the realization of Brown's concept of woman, as expounded in *Alcuin*: intellectual and sensitive, determined and sympathetic (*Charles Brockden Brown: Pioneer Voice of America*, p. 181). Yet Clara lacks qualities that render Constantia Dudley and Clara Wieland more memorable and more attractive, while no less admirable, than herself.


33. Judgments on *Clara Howard* have tended to be unfavorable; see Dana, 2:327; Martin S. Vilas, *Charles Brockden Brown* (Burlington, Vt.: Free Press Association, 1904), pp. 42-43; W. B. Berthoff, "The Literary Career of Charles Brown" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1954), p. 221. Harry R. Warfel, in *Charles Brockden Brown, American Gothic Novelist*, concludes that "horror and terror, not love and romance, were Brown's proper precinct" (p. 193). Leslie A. Fiedler states (p. 74) that in *Clara Howard* Brown turned to "sentimental analysis in a domestic setting": the analysis itself is, however, less apparent than the testing of its results by the discrepancy dividing high principles from human imperfections and unpredictability.

34. O. S. Coad called Neal's stories "the wildest, most incoherent pieces of imagination in American literature" ("The Gothic Element," p. 85).

35. At times Neal appears to write for the medium of the stage. There are theatrical successions of entrances and exits (the very opening scene, and chapter 6), asides (1:118, Harriet and Echo), projections of scenes: "All had expected a 'dénouement', a catastrophe....All were prepared to throw themselves into different 'attitudes,' and form a 'group'...." (1:143). Neal's style of dialogue might have been effective on the stage too. For discussions of Neal's style, see Harold Martin's "The Colloquial Tradition in the Novel: John Neal," *NEQ* 32(1959):455-75 and "The Development of Style in 19th-Century American Fiction," *Style in Prose Fiction*, pp. 114-41; some of the observations made by Harold C. Martin in these essays were anticipated by Whittier's review of *Authorship*, reprinted in *Whittier*, pp. 42-46.

36. Burlesque conditions the "review" in 1:ix-xiv; there are parodies of manner and style (1:50, 131; the mock-serious mottoes), and of syllogisms and spurious causality, expressed through the use of "therefore" (1:146-47, 2:84-85). Satire touches upon novel-writing (chap. 1), a landlady (1:chap. 3, especially p. 36); and Laura's views of her lovers (1:169-70, 2:136). Eccentricity is represented by Echo. Themes for social criticism are furnished above all by dueling (1:209, 222-23, 231), and the fear of public opinion (chaps. 8 and 10). For examples of romantic characterization, see 1:58-59, 148; 2:30, and, with a strong dash of irony, 2:72: "He was so like the heroes of novels and romances, over whose miraculous disinterestedness and eccentricity she had so often wept; before whose fustian grandeur she had so often knelt in mingled admiration and suspicion; but here was *proof*—her suspicions vanished. Here was a mortal, a ready made hero, six foot high and fashioned like
a God; who shoots her own brother, and then blubbers over him; who begs one's pardon, wrings another's nose, kicks a third through a partition, and challenges a whole room full in a breath."

37. The reader had best beware of "precipitate judgments" (1:31), for Neal is inclined to conceive one role and development for some character only to abandon them when struck by a new idea. Since we are not shown the characters' behavior but only offered Neal's analysis of it, it is difficult to be aware, e.g., that Sydney is deceiving himself when he thinks that he loves Louisa (chap. 23), and therefore not to be shocked by a later counterassertion (2:166). Cf. Earnest's infatuation with Laura, Harriot's feigned love for Percy.

38. Echo is perhaps something of a self-justifying portrait of Neal: "... He had an unbounded and unlicensed imagination; ungovernable passions; he related a truth, as if it were a falsehood, and a falsehood as if it were a truth. He would even confess this propensity; admit that he told a lie like a fact, and a fact like a lie; because he was so accustomed to one, and so little familiar with the other. 'One,' he would say, 'is the language of the poet; the other of a dull, plodding, mechanical matter of fact rehearser.' He would even defend lying, for he could defend any thing." (1:192-93). Cf. I. T. Richards, "The Life and Works of John Neal" (Ph.D. diss., 1932), 1:317, 319. This thesis contains a thorough study of Neal's writings as well as a collection of letters by and to Neal; its bibliography at least was made available in H. J. Lang, ed., "Critical Essays and Stories by John Neal," JA 7 (1962):204-319.

39. Without the sinister implications of Brown's hero, Sydney is also reminiscent of Ormond.

40. Neal himself was later to be challenged to a duel; he refused to fight.

41. There is a parallel to this in Harriot's decision to win Percy's love and then to reject him, in order to punish him for his desertion of Elenore (chap. 6).

42. See Laura's second thoughts after she has rejected Sydney's proposal, 2:179; and cf. 1:71; 1:93; 2:135.

43. "Despite the conventional absurdity of hero and heroine, this novel of little plot is probably strongest in its characterization" (Richards, "The Life and Works of John Neal" (Ph.D. diss., 1932), 1:313.

44. The Portico reviewer must have had episodes other than this one, or Sydney's various adventures, in mind when he stated, "There is not so much variety of incident, as the modern novel-reader would expect to find" (4[1817]:169). Neal's close association with the Portico perhaps explains the friendly tone of the review (he conceivably had a hand in the inspiring if not the writing of it); see Marshall W. Fishwick, "The Portico and Literary Nationalism after the War of 1812," WMQ 3d. ser., 8 (1951):238-45.

45. The reviewer who spoke in cautiously encouraging terms of Emily Hamilton stated that the author was born about 1785 and was helping to support her family by her writing; this may have been a welcome publicity item, for it smacks of the romantically fictitious, while the novel is "founded on incidents in real life"; see the Monthly Anthology, 2 (1805):67-68.

46. When Lambert says, "I am half resolved to have her, yet my pride will not suffer me to stoop so low," Emily replies: "If your pride was not too great to prevent you from committing a crime, I should not think it ought to be too great to prevent you from making atonement for it" (p. 104). Cf. pp. 102, 123; and some remarks on reputation and seduction, pp. 44, 97-98, 107, 108.
The author pleaded for more tolerance for seduced girls (p. 107), as did Mrs. Rowson and Mrs. Foster.

47. This is the reversal of the situation which would-be seducers dream of (as does de Burling in *Margaretta*) and occasionally manage to realize (Sanford does so in *The Coquette*).

48. The situation is similar to Eliza Wharton's, in *The Coquette*, except that Sanford's move is part of a deliberate scheme to seduce her.

49. Selwyn is rewarded for his discretion during Eliza's unfortunate engagement with Cutler: when the latter deserts the girl, Selwyn has tacitly been promoted to the likeliest candidate for her hand. The moral aspect is confirmed by didactic digressions, e.g., general considerations on retirement and social pleasures, a letter (14) about a girl betrayed by her lover, and another (30) about an unfortunate woman married to a drunkard and atheist.

50. See also Belmont's moonlight complaint, p. 64. Another sentimental occasion is Emily's meeting with Belmont at the theater (p. 86). Though no distinctive features can be expected in letters conveying everyday news or extending invitations, the more emphatic passages that might sound personal tend to be tiresomely hackneyed; any genuine lyrical intent is warped into a sentimental effect.

51. See letters 21 and 34; and Quinn, *Fiction*, p. 20.