

Home Fronts



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Unlike studies of nineteenth-century culture that perpetuate a dichotomy of a public, male world set against a private, female world, Lora Romero's "Home Fronts" shows the many, nuanced, and sometimes contradictory cultural planes on which struggles for authority unfolded in antebellum America. Romero remaps the literary landscape of the last century, by looking at the operations of domesticity on the frontier, as well as within the middle-class home and by reconsidering such crucial (if sometimes unexpected) sites for the workings of domesticity as social reform movements, African-American activism, and homo-social high culture. In the process, she indicts theories of the nineteenth century based on binarisms and rigidity while challenging models of power and resistance based on the idea that 'culture' has the capacity to either free or enslave. Through readings of James Fenimore Cooper, Catherine Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Maria Stewart, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, Romero shows how the politics of culture reside in local formulations rather than in essential and ineluctable political structures. "Home Fronts" revises the terms of debate on nineteenth-century literature, history, and gender studies.

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