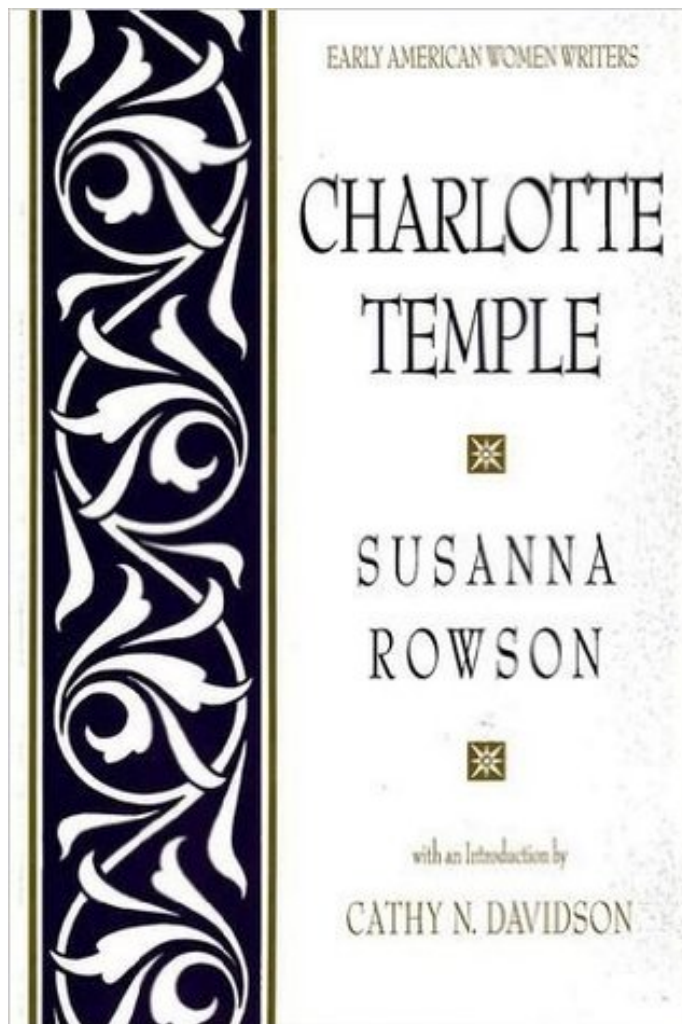

Susanna Rowson

Charlotte Temple



Title: Charlotte Temple

Author: Susanna Rowson

Format: Paperback

Language: English

Pages: 160

Publisher: , 0

ISBN: 0195042387

Format: PDF / Kindle / ePub

Size: 9.5 MB

Download: allowed

Description

Charlotte Temple, a "best seller" that went through more than 200 editions, was the most popular American novel until Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It tells of a beautiful English girl who at the age of 15 is courted by and runs away with a British lieutenant named Montraville. Once in America, Charlotte is abandoned by Montraville, who marries another woman and leaves to fight in the Revolutionary War. Desperate, evicted from her home, and pregnant with Montraville's child, Charlotte goes out in a terrible storm to find the French teacher who originally encouraged her alliance with the officer. Spurned by the corrupt teacher, she is taken in by her servant. Charlotte's father, the son of an English nobleman whose family name far exceeds his fortune, arrives in time to bury his unfortunate daughter and to claim her illegitimate child.

Though no historical evidence exists to confirm the facts of this story, Susanna Rowson insisted throughout her life that it was true, and it was as a "tale of truth" that it was read and loved. In the nineteenth century, someone even erected a tombstone bearing Charlotte's name in New York's Trinity Churchyard, where thousands of readers left flowers, locks of hair, and the ashes of love letters on the real grave of America's most famous fictional character.

In her introduction to *Charlotte Temple*, Cathy N. Davidson discusses the enormous popularity of the book and the life of Susanna Rowson, which was even more sensational than the lives of the characters in her book.

Insightful reviews

Sandra: I liked this book for several reasons. One, it was the first novel to become an American best-seller. Two, written by a woman who was also a writer of plays, music, textbooks. She was an actress and an educator. At one point, she was the main breadwinner in her family, which her husband approved of. We're talking in mid 1700's here.

The story of Charlotte begins in England. She's fifteen years old, the only child of two doting parents. A cute British soldier comes along and convinces her to elope with him to America. Steamy stuff! Then she comes to America, gets pregnant, gets dumped by the British soldier and dies. Why did all early heroine's die in desolation??? That's a whole other topic. What is interesting about Charlotte, from a writer's point of view, is the way she structured the novel.

It's written in third person, but along the way, the narrator/author interjects thoughts about the story, statements aimed directly at the reader. There are a few theories out there as to why Rowson did this. One, which is also very interesting, is that by doing so she was able to "preach" to her audience, which women couldn't do in Puritan society. In a way, she broke society's rules in a very sneaky way, which is another reason why I like this book.

Guy: I scanned some of the other reviews ... apparently, one is a "hater" when one has different

taste in literature?

I can appreciate that this novel has historic relevance, but as to the question, "Did you like this book?" my answer is, "No." I read it because of its place in history, but I did not enjoy the flowery, fussy, manipulative style of writing, the predictable plot, the heavier-than-heavy-handed moralisms, or the assumptions the author makes about her audience. This is the 18th century version of a soap opera. It was popular, it is old, but that doesn't make it good. (And my not liking it does not make me a "hater.")

Emily: Charlotte Temple (formerly subtitled A Tale of Truth) is the Go Ask Alice of the early nineteenth century, being a "true" story of a "real" person who, despite her good bearing was reduced to infamy, and then, of course, died. Like you do, if you listen to the silver-tongued badgerings of a man who's walking the tightrope of ill repute. Charlotte Temple herself is a naive schoolgirl with a good family and not a blemish on her except her blinding stupidity. Her school's French teacher, a lady of bad character, sneaks Charlotte out with her to meet some soldiers who are stationed nearby. Charlotte is overwhelmed by the lovemaking (old meaning) of the man whose father warned him that he must marry a girl with a good inheritance. He is confused, because he likes Charlotte, who has little inheritance, but she assumes he will marry her, so he acts as if he has good intentions, and Charlotte never presses the issue. The cunning French teacher, tired of teaching French, plans to travel with the soldiers to America, where they are soon embarking to... fight us. (Charlotte Temple is set in the 1770s and was published in 1794. It's a linguistic archeopteryx, as the book is perfectly readable but everyone says "prithee" often and without irony.) Charlotte prepares to meet the French teacher and the soldier boys as they are embarking and tell them a meek and comely "no," but she faints and is bundled into a carriage. At this point her honor is irreparably lost, and her pregnancy and death will come as no surprise. (Her parents raise the baby.) Despite being a meh book, Charlotte Temple was the bestselling novel in America until Harriet Beecher Stowe blew it out of the water with Uncle Tom's Cabin.

<http://surfeitofbooks.blogspot.com/20...>

Kristi: "Charlotte Temple" is a sentimental seduction novel through British-American author, Susanna Rowson. initially released in 1791, the 1st American version of the e-book got here out in 1794. it might be the most well-liked novel in America, till the e-book of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," greater than part a century later. As a seduction plot, the unconventional takes up a topic that may be principal to nineteenth century American literature and social reform: the fallen woman. Nature is linguistically sexualized in the novel, and the power and honesty of honor as a real advantage is questioned, as is the propriety of women's schooling outdoors of home, an occasion that ended in Charlotte's seduction and abduction. the nature Charlotte, will be learn as a remorseful victim. Indeed, the 2 major villains of the radical are Frenchmen, who lack the regret and difficulty for Charlotte's destiny healthiness that her seducer does. While, America, within the novel, is the location of dissolution and abused "liberty," a spot the place it really is attainable to lie an self sufficient lifetime of deception, which isn't attainable in the framework of group expectation and familial impacts in England. regardless of her power position as a victim, Charlotte as a fallen girl can't go back to England, yet needs to die and be buried in America. Rowson's Tory kinfolk suffered persecution as a result progressive War, that may have led her to determine it as a spot of treachery, vice, and illegitimacy. this is often a big novel when it

comes to literary history, yet no longer the main relaxing studying for contemporary audiences.

Keshena: i've got a true gentle spot for the novels of the eighteenth and early 19th centuries. similar to the cinema of the 19 seventies on the subject of the movie now, those books are the experimental and by accident anxious progenitors of the tropes and techniques that got here after them. Charlotte Temple is impressive since it is the 1st American bestseller. i discovered it amusing-especially the segments the place the writer breaks the fourth wall to deal with attainable detractors of her plot and style-but in truth it truly is what we'd name slut shaming today, in an immense way. Ok, so Charlotte lived with Montraville prior to marriage and had a baby out of wedlock? That used to be no longer as unusual an association again then as we think. However, this being a moralistic educational novel intended to guide virtuous (read, the idle top heart category ladies in great neighborhoods of enormous cities, the main most likely audience) ladies down the slim direction of modesty and female virtue. to demonstrate the ethical of her tale, Rowson has fortune conspire opposed to bad Charlotte Temple at each flip to punish her for her sin. Her good friend and lover flip opposed to her, she is placed out of her house, a kindly neighbour is going out of city while she wishes anyone to entice in her hour of need. Even the publish workplace is an agent of divine retribution-her letter to her mom and dad is added late, and in real sentimentalist model Charlotte's father does not arrive to rescue her from squalor until eventually she is actually on her loss of life bed. those novels have been the after tuition specials in their day. All these scenes of characters clasping their fingers and beseeching heaven are melodramatic and humourous to our extra limited smooth sensibilities, yet do not believe that comparable surprise strategies are not being performed to make women worry their very own sexuality and criminalize their very own sexuality. studying Charlotte Temple, I vividly bear in mind my very own teenager years within the the Bush period golden age of Christian evangelism. i used to be certainly not the one teenage lady to make a purity pledge in a Baptist Sunday university class, or to have it drilled in my head that abstinence used to be the alternative of women of ethical fiber, whereas intercourse sooner than marriage necessarily ended in undesirable pregnancy, STDs as much as and together with AIDS, and a social purgatory within which no guy may ever really recognize me and conversely i'd by no means admire myself. The phrases 'eternal damnation' have been by no means used-because in any case that they'd were redundant, and as the humans offering this message to us knew that they had planted a pernicious seed of self loathing that may do the paintings of a year's worthy of sermons. In Charlotte Temple, I famous an identical attitudes that inspire women to hate themselves for being sexual beings. i'd like to learn Charlotte's part of the story-why did she run away with Montraville? used to be she uninterested at her chi-chi girls' academy, and sought after a bit fun? used to be he only a instrument to satisfy her awakening longings, and a price ticket to an adventurous new lifestyles in a rugged new land? In condemning a woman's appetites, authors like Rowson additionally simplify them. i would not have learn this ebook if it hadn't been assigned within the girls Writer's type i'm at the moment taking, yet like different novels of this period i've got learn i locate it attention-grabbing how heavily the social attitudes, debates, and problems with our time so heavily align with these of the Napoleonic age.

Monica!: This publication is evidently ridiculous. it is preachy, and choked with catastrophe and doom and useless babies, and also you think that if it have been to have a musical accompaniment, it should essentially be wailing stringed instruments. But! there is something to be stated for a publication that not just writes, "Silly naive girls, do not run off with horny

infantrymen simply because they are going to knock you up and depart you to die," but additionally offers the reader with all of the genuine lust and knocking-up action, too. Charlotte may need allowed herself to be seduced, yet i am beautiful certain all of us could have, in her place. An epic conflict among good-girl morality and flippantly sizzling lovin', it truly is well worth the read, if for no different cause than to understand a section of vintage sentimental literature that, I believe, could have at one aspect been outselling the Bible. sturdy times.

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