

## Paper Bodies:

### Letters and Letter-Writing in the Early American Novel

#### *Introduction*

In *The Boarding School*, Hannah Webster Foster tells a cautionary tale of two friends named Celia and Cecilia. Foster's story, published in 1798, suggests several possibilities about writing, epistolarity, and gender construction in late eighteenth-century America that I will explore further in this essay:<sup>1</sup> First, women were expected to follow an epistolary code of ethics that men could violate or manipulate as they saw fit; next, the control of a paper body was connected to the control of a physical one; and, finally, women who failed (and some who tried) to abide by the rules of epistolarity risked ruin. When apart, Celia and Cecilia write each other letters openly and irreverently about Silvander, Celia's love interest. Silvander desperately wants to know Celia's true feelings for him, so he bribes her courier to bring him her missives. Upon receiving them, he is "astonished to find the lightness of mind exemplified in [Celia's letters]! Purity of sentiment, delicacy of thought, and refinement of taste were entirely laid aside; and illiberal wit, frothy jests, double entendres, and ridiculous love-tales were substituted in their place." "Mortified, disgusted, and chagrined, in the extreme," Silvander circulates her missives among his friends, which "fixed the stamp of ignominy on the correspondents," thereby ruining Celia and Cecilia's "names and characters." Foster brings the moral to a close by emphasizing that Celia "lived and died in melancholy, regret, and obscurity."<sup>2</sup>

Foster's story echoes many like it; most critics agree that late eighteenth-, early nineteenth-century American sentimental fiction concerned "issues of political alliance,

economic change, social status, and urbanization” that created “fears of chaos, rootlessness, and abandonment.”<sup>3</sup> In novels, these anxieties were typically projected onto the female body, which was a contested space particularly in the period shortly after the American Revolution, when many seduction novels were written. According to Clare A. Lyons in *Sex Among the Rabble*, “The post-Revolutionary increase in nonmarital sexual behavior, with its assertions of individual choice and personal liberties, took place within this larger debate over the proper place for women in the new Republic.”<sup>4</sup> Men and women began to wonder, “Would men wield the same power to control the sexual behavior of the women they bedded as they controlled their wives and daughters? Or would women who exercised their sexuality outside marriage be the stewards of their own sexuality?” (Lyons, p. 244). Thomas Beebee suggests that, in European novels, “model letters serve to delineate a fictional letter-writer, who becomes the locus of epistolary power and the unifier of its heterogeneous discourses”; in the American novel, however, that locus of epistolary power has been compromised.<sup>5</sup> The tension surrounding these questions and their resolutions plays out in American novels – not only via discussions about women’s education and political roles – but through the letter, which was both a medium for agency and a site of regulation. I suggest that in the early American novel, the letter served as a kind of paper body, a contested space where women writers and their readers vied for control over the female body, symbolizing the broader cultural struggle in which women were enmeshed during and shortly after the Revolution. Silvester sees Celia’s letters as an extension of her body, so her inability to regulate her paper self indicates an inability to regulate her physical self. Once Celia has let go of her correspondence, it becomes the public’s property, subject to search, seizure, and circulation. While Celia may have exhibited autonomy in freely writing her friend, she loses that autonomy when her lover intercepts her letters. He then claims authority of her paper body – and

by proxy her actually one – by interpreting it as he sees fit. Silvander refashions her friendly wordplay as “illiberal wit.” Homosocial intimacy transforms into “double entendres.” He believes the letter exposes Celia’s true self: impure, indelicate, unrefined. Because Celia writes the letter of a fallen woman, Silvander brands her as one, ensuring that his lover is no longer marriageable. Foster’s story suggests that women who could control outward representations of themselves – such as letters – could control their bodies, but it also says that male letter-readers could intercept and interpret those representations of self in a way that would null and void female agency.

This study of letter-writing and the early American novel is partially a response to two recent assessments of early American feminist studies. Via roundtables assembled to discuss the future of the field, Marion Rust, Sharon M. Harris, Lisa M. Logan, Mary Carruth, Jennifer J. Baker, Teresa Toulouse, and Ivy Schweitzer suggested that, while feminist studies of “gender’s subversiveness” or “uncomplicated white male coercion” have “had their day,”<sup>6</sup> there is still a dearth in scholarship about how “nontraditional literature” – namely letters and diaries – influenced both female writers and the construction of female characters in male-authored texts.<sup>7</sup> Harris in particular calls for more nuanced feminist studies that account for “sexualities, body politics, . . . [and] print, orality, and censorship,” a suggestion Weyler interprets to include more in-depth considerations of a book’s print culture, particularly how women’s literature was marketed, published, and distributed.<sup>8</sup> I would add that feminist approaches to early American literature would also benefit from paying close attention to the nontraditional writing forms that may have influenced, not only the novel’s publication, but also the novel’s inception. While Weyler suggests we ask questions about post-production, such as, “Where was a text advertised? Where was it reviewed? Is it listed in any published library catalogs?,” I suggest we also ask

questions about pre-production, such as, What nonfiction forms may have influenced the construction of the novel? How did the culture of epistolarity inform late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American writers? How did manuscript culture influence more traditionally published works?

### *Letter-Manuals and the Art of Epistolarity*

When Foster published *The Boarding School* in 1798, letters were ubiquitous and letter-writing culture had a long and rich tradition. Epistolary style was influenced by writing manuals that spanned the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, from America and abroad. The idea of the letter as a body in particular was nothing new, the concept dating at least to William Fulwood's *The Enimie of Idleness* (1568). Fulwood prefaces his manual by urging his readers to be careful with their letters because the letter is metonymic of its writer. "Employ nowe your wisdome," he advises, "seeing that . . . everie one (yea they that knowe you not) may see to appeare in your person the constancie and patience which you have tolde them to bee in you;" but even he admits that such advice can be traced to the Greek rhetoricians and to the Egyptians whose hieroglyphics, he claims, were not so dissimilar from sixteenth-century letters.<sup>9</sup> Likely his epistolary philosophy was influenced by Erasmus' *De Conscribendis Epistolis*, "the Renaissance authority on letter-writing," who also saw letters as an extension of the self.<sup>10</sup> Thomas Forde's bestselling letter-writing manual *Fenestra in Pectore* (1660), or "Window into the Breast," helped to perpetuate Fulwood and Erasmus' theory of the letter-as-body. Forde writes that letters are the "best Casements, whereby men disclose themselves," a virtual meeting space where "friends mingle souls, and make mutual discoveries of, and to one another."<sup>11</sup> H.W.

Dilworth's *Complete Letter-Writer* (1795), a letter-writing manual that sold well on both sides of the Atlantic, concurs with Forde's, describing an epistle as the "picture of your heart" and, as such, "the thoughts themselves should appear naked, and not dressed in the borrowed robes of rhetoric."<sup>12</sup> In *Women, Letters, and the Novel*, Ruth Perry takes the theory of the letter-as-body one step further and reasons that, if letters are metonymic of the body, then a violation of the letter is akin to the violation of its writer. "Because letters reveal the self," she says, "reading the letters written and intended for other eyes is the most reprehensible invasion of privacy and consciousness in epistolary fiction. These are overtones of sexual invasion – of mind-rape – in the intercepting or 'violating' of another's words."<sup>13</sup> Particularly in the eighteenth century, the letter formed a kind of paper body that had to be carefully crafted and regulated, since every part of it – from the handwriting, to the paper, to the content – involved a performance.

The notion of the letter-as-performance, what Janet Gurkin Altman calls "epistolarity," has a rich critical history where European letters are concerned.<sup>14</sup> A study of epistolarity for my purposes involves the letter-writer's performance and all that makes that performance possible, including the writer's education, language, style, and material space. A writer who has failed in epistolary etiquette has caused, wittingly or unwittingly, a breach in one or more of the aforementioned categories. The study of epistolary art – particularly in England, France, Italy, and Turkey – has proven that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers saw letters as both mimetic of the heart and a carefully constructed performance.<sup>15</sup> Many scholars of European epistolarity have recognized the pervasiveness of letters in British, French, and Italian fiction. Bernard Bray's *L'Art de la letter amoureuse* recognizes that letter-writing manuals helped to create epistolary fiction. Thomas Beebe in *Epistolary Fiction in Europe*, building partly from Elizabeth MacArthur's *Extravagant Narratives*, has explained that the "early modern period

preferred the epistolary form because its preoccupation with the creation of meaning and questioning the received order was best conveyed in pluralistic, fragmented textual forms, such as encyclopedias, dialogs, and letters.”<sup>16</sup> April Alliston, Katharine Ann Jensen, and Linda Kauffman have further explored the gendered implications of letter-writing in European novels.<sup>17</sup> All of these scholars recognize that letters were neither wholly public nor wholly private, existing in private-turned-public spaces where manuscripts circulate and are often made public by their readers.<sup>18</sup> Other commonplace epistolary occurrences in the eighteenth century, including the performance of letters for small groups of people or writing with the distinct possibility that a letter might be intercepted, further complicate our understanding of early letter-writing practices.<sup>19</sup> As these scholars make clear, then, any writer who lived during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would have been aware that a letter’s significance extended beyond the words written on the page.

This recognition of the early European novel’s complex relationship with epistolarity has not been transferred to fiction on this side of the Atlantic, which is where my project fills a void. Critics who study the early American novel primarily focus on how the authors fashioned sentimental novels as cautionary tales, conduct books, or political critiques.<sup>20</sup> Eve Tavor Bannet and Karen Weyler certainly recognize the importance of letter-writing manuals, but their projects do not spend a substantial amount of time showing significant intersection between manuals and the epistolary fiction they may have inspired. Some have notably discussed letters-in-fiction and letters-as-fiction but they have not recognized that correspondence did more than just create the novel’s tension. Letters did more than just lend the novel “culture-wide appeal.”<sup>21</sup> In short, American critics have underestimated the complex relationship between letter writing and fiction writing: The epistles in these novels are less like scenery and more like characters in their own

right, with rules of propriety governing their construction, delivery, reception, and response. Letters were more than just part of the plot; they stood for the female body itself, traveling where and saying what women could or would not. Just as women in person should appear demure and humble, so their letters must open with a profession of humility (which Angela Vietto calls “ingrati”).<sup>22</sup> Just as women must dress according to their station, so letters should adopt a tone and style that fits their situation. Just as women must protect their bodies from seduction, so missives must carefully regulate what they say to a suitor. And while a letter offered a certain amount of agency to women, as a kind of paper body that could travel long distances unaccompanied into the private rooms of men, it was also a tool they could not control once it circulated. Men and women could intercept, change, misinterpret, redirect, and generally manipulate the paper body as they saw fit. The same writer who used the letter for agency could be exploited by her own missive, as Celia’s letters to Silvander confirm. Letters play an important role in the drama of many eighteenth-century novels precisely because many of these works were concerned with the regulation of the female body (an anxiety that parallels the construction and regulation of the eighteenth century woman).

### *Letters and Early American Fiction*

In many early American novels, control of the female form is often discussed (or contested) when a woman chooses (or is forced to take) a suitor; however, as Cathy Davidson points out in *Revolution and the Word*, the early American novel rarely involved a plot as simple as forcing a heroine to choose between good sex and a proper marriage. “[I]nstead of positing clear-cut moral choices between virtue, on the one hand, and vice, on the other, a number of early novels present heroines with more complicated and, consequently, more believable moral

dilemmas,” she explains.<sup>23</sup> Most of these dilemmas are played out through decisions young people make about whom they will and will not address, and what they will and will not say. In many of these early novels, seduction is made possible because women accept improper correspondence from devious men. To explore this reading of the early American novel, I will discuss Susanna Rowson’s *Charlotte Temple*, Hannah Webster Foster’s *The Coquette*, William Hill Brown’s *The Power of Sympathy*, and Tabitha Tenney’s *Female Quixotism*. Though some sold more widely than others, all four texts use letters to explore the eighteenth-century concern with virtue, motherhood, wifedom, and the role of the family in the burgeoning republic. At the most important moments for the characters in these novels, a letter is misdirected, lost, miswritten, or misconstrued. Though *The Coquette* and *The Power of Sympathy* are epistolary novels and *Charlotte Temple* and *Female Quixotism* merely involve misguided missives, all consistently return to the importance of the eighteenth-century epistolary performance.

Susanna Rowson’s *Charlotte Temple*, the canonical text concerning the seduction, impregnation, and death of the title character by a soldier named Montraville, is a prime example of this epistolary breach of etiquette. Temple’s first failure to carefully construct her epistolary self comes when she responds to Montraville’s first letter, which the audience never gets to read. Rowson does not include it, writing instead that “[a]ny reader who has the least knowledge of the world will easily imagine the letter was made up of encomiums on her beauty, and vows of everlasting love and constancy; nor will he be surprised that a heart open to every gentle, generous sentiment, should feel itself warmed by gratitude for a man who professed to feel so much for her.”<sup>24</sup> According to letter-writing etiquette, though, it would not have mattered if this letter were blank; Temple should never have read it without first giving it to her mother, which she admits: “[M]y mother has often told me I should never read a letter given me by a young



man without first giving it to her” (Rowson, p. 24). Her mother would not have been Temple’s only source of advice; the secretaries and *Complete Letter-Writers* that would have been part of her curriculum would have told her the same thing.<sup>25</sup>

H.W. Dilworth’s *The Complete Letter Writer* (Glasgow 1783 and New York 1793), a widely read, transnational manual, printed two letters that would have advised Temple (and her readers) just what to do in that situation: “From a young Tradesman to a Lady he had seen in Public” and “From a Relation of the Lady, in answer to the last.” In the former letter, the writer professes a fondness for a girl he has only glimpsed at a play. He keeps shop on Henrietta Street, he claims, and he wishes to spend time with her. The object of the shopkeeper’s admiration does not reply, however; the model letter that follows comes from “a relation:”

There has come into my hands a letter which you wrote to Miss Maria Stebbing: she is a relation of mine, and is a very good girl; and I dare say you will not think the worse of her for consulting her friends in such an affair as that you wrote about. Besides, a woman could not well answer such a letter herself, unless it was with a full refusal, and that she would have been wrong to have done until she knew something of the person who wrote it; as wrong as to have encouraged him.<sup>26</sup>

The relative closes the letter by saying she investigated the suitor and found him reputable, so she approves of his pursuits. Likewise, other manuals, such as the anonymous *Classical English Letter-Writer* and the *Fashionable Letter Writer*, as well as James Waldo’s *The Model Letter Writer*, publish similar model letters. Whenever a young man writes a potential wife – for that is usually the only reason manuals acknowledge a man would write a woman unrelated to him – letter-writing models suggest that a woman should not reply; almost every example given shows

a return letter only from a father, mother, or guardian, usually reprimanding the suitor for his forwardness.<sup>27</sup> In *Intricate Relations*, Karen Weyler identifies this intermediary as a “moral preceptor,” someone who can teach discipline and self-control.<sup>28</sup> Those who are too young or too inexperienced to read their suitors’ character must turn to their parents or guardians to teach them to interpret intent and subtext. Weyler recognizes that much of the tension in epistolary novels – and, I would add, novels that involve letters – occurs when the moral preceptor goes missing or refuses to intervene on the protagonist’s behalf.<sup>29</sup> But while Weyler sees these novels as “illustrating the simultaneously constraining and liberalizing tendencies of fiction,” since they both “encouraged literacy as well as writing skills,” I read these texts much less optimistically. Time and again, when a woman tries to assert herself without an intercessor, she suffers and/or dies. While I agree that these books suggest that “learning to read texts . . . is but preparing for . . . the importance of reading character,” I disagree that they suggest young women possess the ability to be good judges of character, or that being a good judge of character is capable of saving a woman from an unhappy demise.<sup>30</sup> Those who possess powers of discernment more advanced than their literary sisters rarely reap any benefit from such virtues, since they are so often manipulated by forces beyond their control.

Despite the admonition to avoid writing suitors without an intermediary, most women in early American novels give in to that temptation. Dorcasina Sheldon of Tabitha Tenney’s *Female Quixotism* also commits Charlotte Temple’s folly. Besotted by love stories she has read in romance novels, she disregards all caution when Patrick O’Connor, an Irish criminal, decides to seduce her. She bypasses her father as a censor, opting instead to exchange letters with O’Connor by posting them in a grove, despite that she is unaware of his social status, background, or intentions. By putting her letters on display, she is putting herself on display, and

her epistolary intimacies lead to a love affair. Her most intimate feelings and vulnerabilities are staked to a tree to for any passerby exploit, which is exactly what happens when O'Connor exploits Sheldon for her inheritance.

Younger women were supposed to let their parents read suitors' correspondence because it was assumed that they had trouble discerning which men had intentions of marrying their lovers and which did not. Engaging in direct correspondence with a potential lover means removing the parental filter that would prevent sex, pregnancy, and shame, should the writer decide to engage in a premarital relationship with her seducer. In the early novel, correspondence often leads to an illicit affair, making writing and seduction intertwined. Sheldon's lovers seduce her, for example, because she is unable to recognize the performance of a wily letter-writer. O'Connor's letters of introduction and intentions of marriage are both forged, flaws Sheldon also overlooks in the schoolteacher "Philander," who initiates a farce when he comes across a letter Dorcasina had written O'Connor (now long gone) in the grove:

If the supreme lord of my affections, my dearest O'Connor, should again visit this consecrated spot, this will inform him that the heart of Dorcasina still remains unchanged and inviolably his; that she sickens at the daylight, and has no other pleasure than thinking of him. It will, likewise, inform him that she will be here again to-morrow, precisely at three o'Clock.<sup>31</sup>

Sheldon (again) attaches the note to a tree, displaying her available (epistolary) body where Philander spies it on his daily walk through the grove. He takes the opportunity to make mischief with the lovesick letter-writer. Mocking her effusive sentimentality, he leaves this note in the former's place:

Not the high-born and superlatively happy O'Connor has visited this blessed spot:

but a youth, of birth obscure, and humble fortune, wanders here, that he may enjoy the supreme felicity of treading in the same steps, and of sitting in the same seat, with the beauteous, the all accomplished, the too charming Miss Sheldon.

Without knowing it, she has robbed me of my repose. (Tenney, p. 107)

Despite that Philander steals letters, a testament to his corrupt nature, Dorcasina still entertains him as a suitor. *The New Art of Letter Writing* suggests that a man's style, like a man's character, must always be carefully considered; it advises, "Let us not forget to examine exactly the Matter we are to treat of: It may have different Faces, it may appear in different Lights; all should be carefully inspected, and that which suits best our Design must be chiefly attended to."<sup>32</sup> Just as readers must be wary of the letter's "different Faces," so they must be cautious of men's many duplicities. We know Sheldon is well-read – novels, the author told us, initiated her downfall – but she has forsaken her epistolary education, unable to see the letter's different faces.

Throughout the novel, seductive letters written under false pretenses continue to plague her, causing her to fall for James, a servant; Mr. Cumberland, a merchant widower; John Brown, another servant; Scipio, a black slave; Captain Montague, her cross-dressing friend Harriot; and Seymore, a schoolteacher.

Eliza Wharton of Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette* suffers the same epistolary shortcomings as her literary sisters. Caught between two suitors – the Reverend J. Boyer, who proposes marriage, and the rake Peter Sanford, who offers excitement and passion – Wharton, unlike many other female characters in the early American novel, seeks her mother's advice. Eliza's mother approves of Boyer, who enters into direct correspondence with Eliza only after asking permission. Eliza ignores her mother's suggestion, however; she considers marriage a tomb and seeks out correspondence, instead, with Sanford, who hints that he might marry her to

disrupt her relationship with Boyer.<sup>33</sup> Sanford's epistolary exchanges with Temple turn from flirtation to consummation once Mrs. Wharton's literal and paper body no longer stand in the way. The paper seduction precedes the bodily one; only once Sanford convinces Eliza to write him is he able to convince her to entertain him as a lover.

Rowson, Tenney, and Foster almost certainly would have written with letter-writing manuals or others like them in mind, in part because letter-writing manuals were very popular in America and abroad. "John Cooke's *The Universal Letter-Writers; or New Art of Polite Correspondence* was reprinted eleven times in the British Isles before 1798," Eve Tavor Bannet explains in *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence*; Cooke's manual was then reprinted in the Americas as *The New and Complete Letter-Writer*, circulated widely until the 1820s (pp. 194-95). The most popular English manuals were reprinted "twenty or thirty times" and then "exported to America and adapted by local printers there" where they "usually went through several editions in American adaptations as well" (p. 22). Manuals in New England were considered "steady sellers," which were books that went through five or more editions over 50 years. Subscription libraries also kept a wide variety of letter writing manuals in stock, which would have provided writers and readers with another means of studying letter-writing practices (p. 35).

It also is of little consequence which manual early American authors may have read, since most of the secretaries and *Complete Letter-Writers* published in America and England recycled the same letters over and over again, adding some and subtracting others as the publishers saw necessary. Bannet identifies this technique as "gathering" and "framing" (pp. 6-7). No matter which model epistles editors extracted, they always included letters warning women of epistolary seduction. And yet, heroines in eighteenth-century fiction often violate

multiple epistolary laws, not only reading letters that have bypassed the parental filter but also responding to suitors directly, without the aid of a relative. Such behavior signals a separation with good breeding. These women's physical seduction comes as a direct violation of proper letter-writing conduct, which demands young women avoid seduction by asking family members to advise them about tone, style, and wording before corresponding with men.

Another epistolary error that plagues most early American heroines is the decision to either cut off or put off communication with family and friends. The isolation of the paper body typically precedes the isolation of the physical one, and once a woman is alone without her circle of friends, she may fall to any number of seductions. Charlotte Temple's ruin lies, in part, in her neglect to return correspondence in a timely manner. Before going with Montraville from England to America, Temple has ample opportunities to contact her parents, especially since she had previously received a missive from home permitting her to leave school for her birthday, a letter she should have answered immediately. She waits to write her family, instead, until she has crossed the Atlantic, sobbing "incessantly while she was writing, . . . frequently obliged to lay down her pen" (Rowson, p. 42). Notably, as with Montraville's seduction letter, Temple's missive is also omitted from the text. Rowson, instead, opts to paraphrase its contents:

[S]he . . . [wrote] . . . in the most affecting, artless manner, entreating their pardon and blessing, and describing the dreadful situation of her mind, the conflict she suffered in endeavouring to conquer this unfortunate attachment, and concluded with saying her only hope of future comfort consisted in the (perhaps delusive) idea she indulged of being once more folded in their protecting arms, and hearing the words of peace and pardon from their lips. (p. 42)

Blythe Forcey suggests that Rowson excluded Montraville's letter from the book because she

feared including it would undermine her efforts to warn girls away from seducers; just introducing them to vice could make it appealing to young women (pp. 232-33). But why would the author deny her readers a model of repentance?

That Temple should never have let correspondence with her mother lapse provides one possible explanation. One error she commits is waiting too long to respond to her parents, which appears to have been common enough to warrant editors including model apology letters for lax correspondence in many British and American letter manuals, such as “From a Daughter to her Mother, by Way of Excuse for having neglected to write her” in *The Complete Letter-Writer; or Polite English Secretary*.<sup>34</sup> Such a mistake goes beyond what constitutes good behavior. Letters secured Temple’s lifeline to her family, and her parents serve as guardians to her virtue. When she stops writing, she loses the protective family network.

That Rowson did not want to provide readers with a model for a breach with class provides another explanation. Model letters for upper- and lower-class women varied concerning courtship behavior. While servants were given models for arranging their own marriages while working away from their parents, Ladies were not.<sup>35</sup> In the courting section of most epistolary manuals, Ladies were provided with letters that rejected a suitor that their fathers arranged for them, either on the basis of no affection or a wide age gap, but they were not provided models for arranging their own partnerships.<sup>36</sup> Ironically, the servant, according to epistolary manuals, was more independent than the woman of means because she could choose whom she pleased, since her social status was not at stake.

By writing a letter informing her parents saying that she has run away with a man without marrying him, Temple has literally gone off the grid. She has physically removed herself from her parents’ influence by boarding a ship to America, and she has metaphorically abandoned all

models of acceptable behavior for either upper or lower class women. Unlike the servant, she has not married and then informed her parents that she has done so, and unlike the Lady, she has not entertained her father's suitor and then rejected him. Instead, she has fashioned her own alliance on her own terms. On one hand, then, Rowson may have chosen not to print Temple's letter because it would have given young readers a model excuse for engaging in the protagonist's deviant behavior. On the other hand, if we read Temple's body as a kind of model letter itself, then Rowson has not elided the model after all; Temple is, herself, the missing model of repentance, doomed to die tragically at the story's end, a cautionary tale for any young woman who follows her example.

Montraville does not deliver his lover's elided letters but tosses them to the "care of Neptune, who might or might not, as it suited his convenience, convey them on shore" (Rowson, p. 42). He may as well have thrown Temple overboard as well; following this nautical burial of the letters, Temple is lost to her family. Her relationship with Montraville consummated, Temple becomes pregnant, and, rejected, meets her demise. In a reflection on this passage, Blythe Forcey writes that Temple could never have suspected that her parents would not receive that letter: "In the world she has been educated to believe in, the destruction or misdirection of letters would be unthinkable. Letters were treated as nearly sacred objects" (p. 239). In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. As Konstantin Dierks points out in *In My Power*, during the late eighteenth century, letter interception was a common battle strategy: "[T]he interception of embarrassing letters . . . foment[ed] dissension in the Continental Congress and the Continental Army" (p. 206). Captains carrying letters, particularly on boats bound to America, frequently tossed bags of mail into the sea if they thought someone wanted to board the ship to raid it for intelligence. Since letters changed hands from one carrier to the next as they made



their transatlantic journeys, missives often got lost along the wayside; if not opened and read by someone else, they were edited and published by the newspapers (Bannet, *Empire of Letters*, p. 272). Particularly after the Postal Act of 1711, which gave the British government permission to open the mail of its citizens, people went to great lengths to avoid the postal system, opting instead to use personal couriers or to deliver missives themselves, hiding them in pens, shoes, or, “most famously, in a hollow silver bullet” (Dierks, pp. 195-96, 209). Temple’s character may well have been naive, but she would have known, as all eighteenth-century letter-writers did, that letters go astray. Her delay in writing her family increased the likelihood that news would reach her parents only when Temple had become pregnant and death was imminent.

Although Eliza Wharton of *The Coquette* is not separated from her parents by an ocean, as Temple is, she does solidify her isolation from her family by neglecting to write them. After Wharton consummates her relationship with Peter Sanford, she also stops regularly communicating with her friends, writing only briefly to say, “Writing is an employment, which suits me not at present” (Foster, *The Coquette*, p. 213). The audience hears of Wharton’s plight from Julia Granby and not from Wharton herself, a testament to how far removed Wharton has become. “I had much difficulty to persuade her to write,” Granby explained, a sentiment she repeated until the end of the novel, when Wharton could not eat for furiously penning her confessions (p. 211). Wharton isolates her paper body and then her physical one, breaking all ties with her sororal and familial network. This isolation allows her to be seduced, since her loved ones cannot prevent what they cannot see.

Epistolary silence is destructive both when a child breaks correspondence with her family and friends and when those family and friends shirk their own epistolary duties. In the epistolary novel, *The Power of Sympathy*, letter-writing silence on the part of friends and fathers, rather

than the hero and heroine, is partly to blame for the lovers' tragic ending. In the beginning of the novel, Harriot Fawcett writes to her friend, Myra Harrington, to confess that she has fallen in love with a young man whom she does not name. The man is Myra's brother, Thomas, though neither Myra nor Harriot make this connection in the beginning. Thomas's plan to make Harriot his mistress looms large over the first half of the novel. Harriot believes she is an orphan, so she turns to her close friend Myra as a substitute voice of reason, but Myra refuses to warn Harriot against an illicit affair. Upon hearing of Harriot's feelings for this unnamed man, Myra lightly teases her friend, asking if she would not rather go to a "Ball, a Concert, or Serenade" than become involved with a lover.<sup>37</sup> As Harriot's relationship grows more serious, Myra misses one opportunity after another to warn against seduction's dangers. In fact, in a strange role-reversal, the tragic heroine delivers the typical seduction sermon to her protector-sister, rather than the other way around. After hearing that a mutual friend, Ophelia, poisoned herself upon bringing shame to her family by giving birth to her brother-in-law's illegitimate child, Harriot writes Myra to say what *Myra* should learn from the tragedy: "[I]t certainly becomes us, my dear friend . . . to draw such morals and lessons of instruction from each side of the question, as will be a mirror [sic] by which we may regulate our conduct and amend our lives. . . . A prudent pilot will shun those rocks upon which others have been dashed to pieces, and take example from the conduct of others less fortunate than himself" (Brown, *Power of Sympathy*, p. 42). Myra's only response to Ophelia's suicide is to send Harriot an odd poem about vice, leaving Harriot to interpret the moral as she sees fit. Myra fails as Harriot's surrogate family in that she does not make the connection between Ophelia's fate and her friend's.

One could easily argue that Myra does not have enough information to forestall Harriot's ruin, since she neither knows that Harriot loves Myra's brother Thomas, nor does she know that

Thomas toys with the idea of making her his mistress. But when Mrs. Holmes writes Myra to inform her that Harriot is Thomas's sister – and therefore Myra's – she did have pertinent information she could have written to Harriot that might have helped her avoid marrying her own kin. In another strange episode of epistolary silence, Myra never writes Harriot to tell her of the incest she is about to commit. In fact, following Mrs. Holmes' revelation, *no one* – related or otherwise – writes to Harriot, either to advise, admonish, or warn. The novel lacks letters from loved ones just as Harriot lacks a mother; the letters' ellipses echo her mother's absence. The novel ends with Harriot completely isolated from the other letter-writers in the book and, once isolated, she dies.

Mr. Harrington, Thomas Harrington's father, does not fare much better in *The Power of Sympathy*. Even though he knows Thomas is courting his own sister, Mr. Harrington refuses to divulge the secrets about his past. When he finally manages to tell the truth about his illicit affair, he writes, not his son, but his friend, Mr. Holmes. This epistolary delay means the news reaches Thomas almost on his wedding day; the groom is overcome by grief and kills himself. Thomas's friends and family members could have prevented the tragedy with more consistent and honest communication. Partly, their refusal to engage in responsible epistolarity led to the family's dissolution.

One of the more complicated tropes concerning failed epistolarity involves characters who are unwilling or unable to recognize letter-writing frauds. The complication derives from the fact that the villain's letter-writing performance is often very convincing, or the protagonist very naïve, which makes it difficult to assign blame for epistolary failure. Eliza Wharton of *The Coquette* appears unable, or unwilling, to recognize a trusted friend's performance as a rake. Wharton's friends warn her about Peter Sanford, who will bring about her ruin, but Wharton

justifies her pursuit of the libertine by arguing, “But is it not an adage generally received, that ‘*a reformed rake makes the best husband?*’” (Foster, *The Coquette*, p. 146). Lucy, her friend and correspondent, does not buy this argument. “‘A reformed rake,’” Lucy writes, “‘makes the best husband;’ a trite, but a very erroneous maxim, as the fatal experiences of thousands of our sex can testify” (Foster, *The Coquette*, p. 149). Wharton’s argument is unconvincing because her actions do not indicate that she wants to reform Sanford for marriage. Wharton did not want to marry anyone, by her admission.

That Wharton’s letters fail to convince both Boyer and her friends of her intentions marks the beginning of her downfall. Epistolary performance, like a person’s character, must be carefully constructed, as the manuals and letterbooks of the era attest. The eighteenth-century letterbook – a collection of letters that a writer recorded (usually) before sending out the missive – was born from the unstable notion of the post. People began keeping letter-copies because letters often went astray. To maintain some semblance of order, some writers used pagination, while others inscribed tables of content or prefaces. Mercy Otis Warren grouped her letterbook according to the addressee; Martha Amory, who kept a book of travel letters, ordered hers chronologically and addressed them all to one woman (her mother). The prolific letter-writer Judith Sargent Murray copied each letter – and she wrote about 2500 – twice. And even though the reasons people maintained copies of their letters varied, all of them wanted to remember – and likely wanted us to remember – what they had written to other people, in part because they wanted to keep up with their letter-writing performance, to hone and perfect it, to make it believable. Wharton, unlike her historical counterparts, does not appear to be concerned with the verisimilitude of her performance, which Boyer recognizes. He rejects that Wharton merely needs time to consider his marriage proposal and demands that she accept or deny him. She

refuses and continues to entertain Sanford, causing Boyer to retract his proposal, leading Wharton into Sanford's arms. Wharton's inability or refusal to regulate her epistolary body by creating a convincing letter-writing performance allows Boyer to see through her thin façade. Epistolary coquetry reflects bodily coquetry – she is unfaithful on paper and in person, suggesting her inability to regulate her letters leads to an inability to regulate herself.

### *Conclusion*

Eighteenth-century American fiction's concern with self-regulation reflects a larger national conversation about the establishment of the new republic. The American Revolution inspired national anxiety, or, rather, since nationhood as a construction is constantly in a state of anxiety, it inspired people to articulate their unease. Much of the literature of this era reflects the concern over the nation's stability, now that the monarchy was overthrown. Since the family served as a microcosm for the state, the role of father, husband, mother, and wife was also being redefined, which explains the early novel's obsession with the family. Not only gender roles but “sexual activity itself . . . became more narrowly defined as penetrative intercourse between a man and a woman rather than the broader menu of sexual interactions previously considered ordinary behavior.”<sup>38</sup> The late 1700s saw the “domestication of female sexuality” and “[a]s women's sexuality became less threatening (or perhaps as masculinity became less threatened), women's roles as mothers became the subject of greater cultural concern than in the seventeenth century.”<sup>39</sup> Pamphlets about motherhood became wildly popular among the colonies as the mother's role began overshadowing that of “helpmeet” or business associate.<sup>40</sup>

This anxiety about how men and women should function in a family manifested itself in illustrations of a sick, unnatural, or broken body. Paintings and engravings during this period

depict “images of monstrous maternity, women nursing dead children or consuming their own offspring” as representative of a diseased body politic.<sup>41</sup> Literature, too, reflected the nation’s “unruly body, its needs, desires, hungers, and excess;” eighteenth-century art was “often marked by scenes of bodiliness, corporeality, passion, and blood.”<sup>42</sup> In short, the body – particularly the female body – was the site onto which many of the nation’s concerns were projected. Such an understanding of the early American novel’s historical moment both contextualizes and complicates its concern with self-regulation. On one hand, these novels seem to suggest that a woman who controls her letters, controls her body, but what she might do with that body is then constricted; as Bruce Burgett argues in *Sentimental Bodies*, novels like *Charlotte Temple* suggest a “reduction of a republican citizenship to republican womanhood.”<sup>43</sup> A woman who willfully violates epistolary practices so that she might use her body as she pleases is, these same novels suggest, a threat to the nation and so must be eliminated. These novels also suggest that men with ulterior motives may usurp the agency of any women who follow the rules of etiquette. “Sentimental seduction narratives like *The Coquette*,” Burgett explains, “consequently mark a tension within republican letters: they promise to wed the sentimental and the social through literary publication, but consistently fail to produce this virtuous conclusion.”<sup>44</sup> Eliza Wharton appeals to her mother before writing her lover, yet she still dies in the end. Myra Harrington, seeks the advice of her preceptor but is denied moral guidance, and her story ends in tragedy. These novels, then, may have been influenced by epistolary manuals but they do not hold up as advice books, since they suggest that, no matter what choice the woman makes – write or avoid writing, read or avoid reading – her agency is as easily destroyed as the paper on which her words were printed.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> For more, see Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1982).

<sup>2</sup> Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette and The Boarding School* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2011), 195.

<sup>3</sup> Blythe Forcey, "Charlotte Temple and the End of Epistolarity," *American Literature*, 63, No. 2 (1993), 226-27. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

Claire Pettengill, "Sisterhood in a Separate Sphere: Female Friendship in Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette and The Boarding School*," *Early American Literature*, 27, No. 3 (1992), 186.

<sup>4</sup> Clare A. Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender and Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2006), 238. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Beebee, *Epistolary Fictions in Europe 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 21.

<sup>6</sup> Teresa Toulouse, "Where Do We Go from Here?: Early American Women and the End(s) of Feminist Critique," *Early American Literature*, 44, No. 1 (2009), 211.

<sup>7</sup> Ivy Schweitzer, "My body / not to either state inclined," *Early American Literature*, 44, No. 1 (2009), 405-406.

<sup>8</sup> Sharon M. Harris, "Feminist Theories in Early American Studies," in *Feminist Interventions in Early American Studies*, ed. Mary Carruth (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006),

3. Karen A. Weyler, "A Different Feminist Scholarship: Research Challenges in Eighteenth-Century America," *Early American Literature*, 44, No. 2 (2009), 418. For more on early American feminist studies and the state of the field, see: Mary Carruth, ed., *Feminist Interventions in Early American Studies* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006); Lisa M. Logan, "The Importance of Women to Early American Study," *Early American Literature*, 44, No. 3 (2009), 641-648; Marion Rust, "Of Documents and Texts," *Early American Literature*, 44, No. 2 (2009), 401-04; Sharon M. Harris, "Transnational Paradigms as Feminist Lenses," *Early American Literature*, 44, No. 3 (2009), 649-651; and Jennifer J. Baker, "Economic Criticism as Feminist Intervention," *Early American Literature*, 44, No. 3 (2009), 653-656.

<sup>9</sup> William Fullwood, *The Enimie of Idlenesse: Teaching a Perfect Platforme how to Indite Epistles and Letters of All Sortes: as Well by Answere as Otherwise: No Lesse Profitable Then Pleasaunt* (Fleet Street: Henrie Midletonn, 1586), 102.

<sup>10</sup> Gary Schneider, 2005. *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular letters and letter writing in early modern England, 1500-1700* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 29.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Forde, *Fenestra in Pectore. Or, Familiar Letters* (London: R. and W. Leybourn, 1660), n.p.

<sup>12</sup> H.W. Dilworth, "From a Young Tradesman to a Lady He had Seen in Public," in *British and American Letter Manuals, 1680 – 1810*, ed. Eve Tavor Bannet, Vol. 3 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008), 179.



<sup>13</sup> Ruth Perry, *Women, Letters, and the Novel* (New York: AMS Press, 1980), 130-31.

<sup>14</sup> Altman, *Epistolarity*, 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> Amanda Gilroy and W.M. Verhoeven, *Epistolary Histories: Letters, Fiction, Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 3; Elizabeth C. Goldsmith, ed., *Writing the Female Voice: Essays in Epistolary Literature* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989), vii, x; Howard Anderson, Philip B. Daghlion and Irvin Ehrenpreis, eds., *The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1966), 280.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas O. Beebee, *Epistolary Fiction in Europe 1500-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>17</sup> April Alliston, *Virtue's Faults* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Katharine Anne Jensen, *Writing Love: Letters, Women, and the Novel in France, 1605-1776* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995); Linda S. Kauffman, *Discourses of Desire: Gender, Genre, and Epistolary Fictions* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986).

<sup>18</sup> Caroline Wigginton calls these spaces “epistolary neighborhoods” in “A Late Night Vindication: Annis Boudinot Stockton's Reading of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*,” *Legacy*, 25, No. 2 (2008), 225-238. I call this space “the epistolary salon” in “The Epistolary Salon: Examining Eighteenth-Century American Letter-Writing as a Vehicle for Female Political Engagement,” *Literature of the Early American Republic*, 3 (2011), 62 – 80. Wigginton and I both discuss in detail the letter's balancing act between publicity and privacy; for more on this subject, see Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005) and James How's *Epistolary Spaces: English Letter-Writing from the Foundation of the Post Office to Richardson's Clarissa* (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 1988).

<sup>19</sup> For more on the transatlantic nature of eighteenth-century letters and the dangers of letter interception, see Eve Tavor Bannet, *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1688-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Sarah Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Theresa Strouth Gaul and Sharon M. Harris, *Letters and Cultural Transformations in the United States, 1760 – 1860* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009.) For letters as speech acts, see Susan M. Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter in Early Modern English* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002), 20; Bruce Redford, *The Converse of the Pen: Acts of Intimacy in the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Wendy Martin, for example, writes “[T]he American sentimental novel reflects the Puritan heritage of the spirit warring with the flesh and, like the sermon, it attempts to instruct an audience in the ways of virtue and to illustrate the wages of sin” in “Profile: Susanna Rowson, Early American Novelist,” *Women’s Studies*, 2 (1974), 4. For scholarship about the political subtexts of sentimental novels, see Julia A. Stern, *The Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) and Sharon M. Harris, *Redefining the Political Novel: American Women Writers, 1797 – 1901* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995). Stern recognizes sentimental novels as a vehicle of agency for marginalized female writers while Harris reads them as works concerning “the social consequences of political processes and the political consequences of social processes,” xvi. Karen A. Weyler, *Intricate Relations: Sexual and Economic Desire in American Fiction, 1789-*

1814 (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004), 16; Marion Rust, *Prodigal Daughters: Susanna Rowson's Early American Women* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 204.

Weyler explains that sentimental fiction, particularly, appealed to women who wanted to write about anxieties of nationhood because “there is no distinct demarcation in the novel between the private and the public sphere, between the domestic and the outside world; family affairs affect the larger community and the state, just as national events inevitably impact the family,” 16. Like Weyler, Rust agrees that women turned to the novel to engage in political discussions because the public sphere was sexualized as masculine, a “useful mechanism for denying women political agency within the young nation,” 204.

<sup>21</sup> Weyler, *Intricate Relations*, 31.

<sup>22</sup> Angela Vietto, *Women and Authorship in Revolutionary America* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 53.

<sup>23</sup> Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 139.

<sup>24</sup> Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* and *Lucy Temple* (New York: Penguin, 1991), 21. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>25</sup> Eve Tavor Bannet explains the difference between the two types of manuals: “Letter-Writers generally dealt with Secretaries by swallowing them up. They confined the household, family, business, and beyond-the-sea letters that Secretaries typically offered to one or two sections within their collections, and expanded the scope of letter manuals to include other things – letters of courtship and marriage, moral and philosophical letters, aristocratic letters, letters of news or travel, and/or letters ‘for the improvement of style.’” *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals*

*and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1688 – 1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), viii. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

Some scholars have noticed the connection between letter-manuals and the epistolary novel but few have elaborated on the connection. Godfrey Frank Singer's *The Epistolary Novel* claims that vade mecums "gave a definite impulse and direction to the creation of the familiar letter as a form of literature," but his discussion is limited primarily to Samuel Richardson's transition from manual- to fiction-writer. *The Epistolary Novel: Its Origin, Development, Decline, and Residuary Influence* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), 25. Natascha Würzbach's *The Novel in Letters: Epistolary Fiction in the Early English Novel 1678 – 1740* (Florida: University of Miami Press, 1969) also notes that eighteenth century's letter-manuals encouraged the development of the novel, but she does not elaborate on this claim.

<sup>26</sup> Dilworth, "From a Young Tradesman to a Lady He had Seen in Public," 219.

<sup>27</sup> For specific letters concerning women either refusing to answer a man's pursuits or deflecting any response to a parent or guardian, see: "From a Young Gentleman to a Lady, with Whom He is in Love" and "The Lady's Answer" in *Classical English Letter-Writer: or, Epistolary Selections; Designed to Improve Young Persons In the Art of Letter-Writing, and in the Principles of Virtue and Piety. With Introductory Rules and Observations on Epistolary Composition; and Biographical Notices of the Writers from Whom the Letters are Selected* (Philadelphia: Caleb Richardson, 1816); "A Lady on Receiving a Letter from a Gentleman, in Which He Proposes a Meeting" and "A Lady on Accepting a Proposal to the Extent of Referring to Her Father" in *The American Lady's Every Day Hand-Book of Modern Letter-Writing: Language and Sentiment of Flowers: Dreams, Their Origin, Interpretation and History Domestic Cookery* (Philadelphia: Henry F. Anners, 1847). Although these were printed after *The Coquette*

and *Charlotte Temple*, they are similar to the letters included in earlier manuals, such as Dilworth's and Richardson's, to which the authors would have been exposed.

<sup>28</sup> Weyler, *Intricate Relations*, 41, 52.

<sup>29</sup> Weyler, *Intricate Relations*, 51 – 74.

<sup>30</sup> Weyler, *Intricate Relations*, 69.

<sup>31</sup> Tabitha Tenney, *Female Quixotism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 107.

Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>32</sup> A Gentleman of Fortune, *The New Art of Letter-Writing*, in *British and American Letter Manuals, 1680 – 1810*, ed. Eve Tavor Bannet, Vol. 3 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008), 8.

<sup>33</sup> Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette*, (New York: Penguin, 1996), 177, 178, 219.

Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>34</sup> “From a Daughter to her Mother, by Way of Excuse for Having Neglected to Write Her,” in *British and American Letter Manuals, 1680 – 1810*, ed. Eve Tavor Bannet, Vol. 3 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008), 78.

<sup>35</sup> Samuel Richardson, “From a Maid-servant in Town, acquainting her Father and Mother in the Country, with a Proposal of Marriage, and asking their Consent” in *British and American Letter Manuals, 1680-1810*, ed. Eve Tavor Bannet, Vol. 3 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008), 20-21.

<sup>36</sup> Samuel Richardson, “From a young Lady to a Gentleman that courted her, whom she could not like, but was forced by her Parents to receive his Visits, and think of none else for her Husband,” in *British and American Letter Manuals, 1680-1810*, ed. Eve Tavor Bannet, Vol. 3 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008), 112.

<sup>37</sup> William Hill Brown, *Power of Sympathy*, (New York: Penguin, 1996), 13. Subsequent

references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>38</sup> Mary E. Fissell, “Hairy Women and Naked Truths: Gender and the Politics of Knowledge in Aristotle’s Masterpiece,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 60, No. 1 (2003), 71.

<sup>39</sup> Fissell, “Hairy Women and Naked Truths,” 71.

<sup>40</sup> Ruth H. Bloch, “American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of the Moral Mother, 1785-1815,” *Feminist Studies*, 4, No. 2 (1978), 102.

<sup>41</sup> Kate Davies, *Catharine Macaulay and Mercy Otis Warren : The Revolutionary Atlantic and the Politics of Gender* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>42</sup> Betsy Erkkila, “Does the Republic of Letters Have a Body?” *Early American Literature*, 36, No. 1 (2001), 116.

<sup>43</sup> Bruce Burgett, *Sentimental Bodies: Sex, Gender, and Citizenship in the Early Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 87.

<sup>44</sup> Burgett, *Sentimental Bodies*, 89.