

## ***The Coquette: The Plight of an American Woman***

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The examination of early American writings requires that we understand their political contexts; partly because politics is the primary concern for the early American writers; partly because the people of this era are so involved in making a new “Republic.” Moreover, we observe many women who wrote their own experiences within America’s rhetoric of the Republic. Women’s writings, however, have a tendency toward didacticism. In many ways, women’s writings of this time are stimulated by the social upheaval of the American Revolution; the American Revolution contained within its rational political discourse the element of patriarchal subversion. As critics suggest, women at this time are positioned on the boundary of the private world reserved for women and the public world in which they are supposed to be only virtuous mothers and respected wives. As Cathy Davidson has argued, the novel emerges at this moment, either as a vehicle for expressing the subversive emotions, or as a vehicle for expressing and then expunging them, that is, of making the private subversions and emotions public as a mechanism for controlling them.<sup>1</sup> While reading Hannah Foster’s *The Coquette*, we might be fed up with the vocabulary of the “Republic” which establishes the place of this novel in a political or feministic context. However, we may expect some meat of critical practice by examining Foster’s interest in women’s society behind didacticism. When Foster is interested in a certain historical incident about a woman and tries to depict the woman, the world which the woman evokes is no longer tactile in nature, which the contemporaneous male writers wish to depict, but an elusive social world. In other words, for Foster, the woman is not a metaphor for nature but a metaphor for culture.

The lack of interest in nature in Foster’s novel reflects the narrowness or the minuteness of the society which Foster depicts in this novel.<sup>2</sup> When we compare Foster’s writing with men’s writings, we notice the difference in representing politics; In men’s writings nature is a metaphor for politics and in Foster’s writing society is a metaphor for politics. When Timothy Dwight praises America as a virtuous country in his “Greenfield Hill,” the greatness of nature reflects the virtuous country:

Cold is thy clime, but every western blast  
Brings health, and life, and vigour on his wings;  
Innerves the steely frame, and firms the soul

With strength and hardihood; wakes each bold  
 And manly purpose; bears above the ills,  
 That stretch, upon the rack, the languid heart  
 Of summer's maiden sons, in pleasure's lap,  
 dandled to dull repose. Exertion strong  
 Marks their whole life. Mountains before them sink  
 To mole-hills; oceans bar their course in vain. ( Part I: Prospect 92-101)

The depiction of nature is an echo of masculine discourse. John Barlow's "The Hasty Pudding" shows the same usage of nature:

To boil the Hasty-Pudding; here we shine  
 Superior far to tenants of the pine;  
 This envied boon to man shall still belong,  
 Unshar'd by them in substance or in song  
     At last the closing season browns the plain,  
 And ripe October gathers in the grain;  
 Deep loaded carts the spacious corn-house fill,  
 The sack distended marches to the mill;  
 The lab'ring mill beneath the burden groans,  
 And show'rs the future pudding from the stones;  
 Till the glad house-wife greets the powder'd gold,  
 And the new crop exterminates the old. (Canto II 250-61)

Barlow observes how corn grows and praises the Hasty-Pudding, although he is in the middle of a political upheaval. He compares political change to a natural cycle. In the case of Foster, her heroine Eliza's depiction of her home town is full of social incidents:

The retirement of my native home is not so gloomy, since my return from Boston, as I expected, from the contrast between them.

Indeed, the customs and amusements of this place are materially altered, since the residence of Major Sanford among us. The dull, old fashioned sobriety which formerly prevailed, is nearly banished; and cheerfulness, vivacity, and enjoyment are substituted in its stead. Pleasure is now diffused through all ranks of the people, especially the rich; and surely it ought to be cultivated, since the wisest of men informs us, that "a merry heart doth good like a medicine." (85-6)<sup>3</sup>

While Dwight and Barlow use nature as a representation of political discourse, Foster avoids

depicting natural surroundings. Foster's depiction focuses on social concerns. We conceive Foster's strong interest in the structure of society. Using the social relationship between women and society instead of nature in representing the world, Foster delineates plights of women by pulling the thread of politics in the background. To explicate the plight, this novel shows the opposition between personal (private) narrative and national (or public) narrative.

This story could have been read as a roman à clef among the readers of Foster's time. The interest in the model characters, however, provides Foster with an insight into the psychological and social plights of women. Foster's characters tell us a simple fact that a woman goes through a change when they marry. Some women are willing to change and others are not. Foster's primary character Eliza, who tries to be an individual, derails from the code of her society: Eliza has an affair with a married man and becomes pregnant, which costs her life. This story does not attempt to expose woman's desire, or sexuality. Instead, Foster transforms the story of the fallen woman into that of the sacrificial woman. The transformation reveals Foster's interest in how the women's discourse works in her society between a private narrative of being an individual and a national narrative of making a nation. The mechanism of the transformation in this novel is the main key in representing the opposition between the private narrative and the national narrative, the mechanism of the transformation which gives voices to the hidden woman and eventually ossifies her as a moral icon.

The epistolary form which this novel uses, is suggestive in considering the opposition between the public and the private. The epistolary form invites the reader to fill in the gap between the act of writing a letter as an private intercourse and the act of reading a novel as it offers a public interpretation of a woman's behavior. Eliza expresses herself, and many people write about Eliza in this novel. The difference between how Eliza confesses her feelings and how other people reflect upon Eliza opens up a space in which we can observe the transformation of the self. On the one hand, Eliza is an object of male desire and, on the other hand, Eliza is an object of female observation. Eliza represents the woman who is constructed by her human relationship. The exchange of letters among women, in particular, shows the process by which female virtue was constructed during the late eighteenth century, and it offers one of the first sympathetic representations of the fallen woman. The zeal for writing letters is the zeal for inscribing virtue, a uniquely American virtue in accordance with the needs of creating a new Republic.<sup>4</sup> The letters which are exchanged among the women's community inscribe American virtue by expelling its opposite; coquette.

Almost all of Eliza's letters are addressed to Lucy. The act of exchanging letters establishes a woman's community in which women exchange their feelings and thoughts about private matters. However, they need to modify or manipulate their sentiments in order to maintain their group membership or friendship. The act of writing the letter necessarily calls for the transformation of the writer's self from the introverted self into the extroverted self which the

receiver of the letter can understand. Here, the boundary of the private and the public becomes elusive. When Eliza writes a letter, to what degree is she transforming herself into an "Eliza" whom the community can understand and accept? The crucible for Eliza should be the moment in which she has to proclaim her marriage. Eliza's friends advise her to choose Boyer. Eliza tells her dilemmas about her choice to Lucy.

My reason and judgment, as I have observed before, declare for a connection with him, as a state of tranquility and rational happiness. But the idea of relinquishing those delightful amusements and flattering attentions, which wealth and equipage bestow, is painful. Why were not the virtues of the one, and the graces and affluence of the other combined? (53)

Eliza makes it clear to Lucy that she knows the demerits and merits of both of her suitors. In so doing, she tries to make herself understandable to Lucy. Moreover, Eliza ends her letter by declaring her reliance on her friend Lucy: "pray write me impartially; let me know your real sentiments, for I rely greatly upon your opinion" (53). On the one hand, Eliza inscribes her private sentiments in her letters like a journal; on the other hand, she constructs her communicable self in her letter.

Trying to be honest to both others and herself, Eliza invites the contradicted situation. This situation makes her indecisive. Letter #41(85) shows Eliza's intentional obfuscation of her real desire. This letter tells Lucy about the crucial incident which leads to the end of Eliza's relationship with Boyer. Eliza, who is accused of indecisiveness by Boyer, decides to choose Boyer rather than Sanford as her partner. Nevertheless, her feelings are not so settled; she reveals ambivalent feelings to Sanford. Eliza cannot break her promise to Sanford in spite of her resolution to keep away from him. Therefore Eliza does not see Boyer in order to keep her word. When Boyer comes to see her, she excuses herself by saying that she had lain down, and she justifies herself by adding the phrase, "which was a fact."

The firmness of Eliza's decision to choose Boyer is dubious, although she repeats it in her letters. Eliza is indecisive about her marriage. She chooses Boyer because she is forced to do so by Boyer and her female friends. Although she makes the right decision, ill fortune brings about a disastrous confrontation when she is caught in the garden with Sanford. She does not want to take responsibility for having invited Sanford. Eliza's concern about the society around her shows her need to justify herself; "reflection on my own misconduct, with the censure of my friends, and the ill-natured remarks of my enemies, excited the most painful anxiety in my mind"(93). Eliza lives in the network of sisterhood. Her sentiments are manufactured because she knows what her female friends wish to hear.

Foster reassures the meaning of writing letters in a public context by transforming the posture of letters from exposure into concealment. As Eliza follows the downward spiral of a

fallen woman, she loses her words. Eliza's physical consumption caused by the affair with Sanford, deprives her of the energy to write to Lucy; because, for Eliza, writing to Lucy means justifying herself and she no longer considers her actions capable of justification. We perceive here the shift of the novel's framework. Instead of recounting events through Eliza's epistles, Foster allows Julia to tell the story of a fallen woman. Unlike Eliza, Julia seems to be a reliable correspondent. Although Julia is single, she anticipates her future entrance into a married life. Julia, on the one hand, enjoys premarital freedom; on the other hand, she shares the virtues of a republican mother among women, like Lucy and Mrs. Richman. With the gaze of the social commentator, Julia recounts Eliza's downfall in a public context. The content of letters transforms itself from the expression of private feelings into the explanation of a public context.

Foster depicts both a fallen woman and a republican mother in representing womanhood. The shadow of republican motherhood hovers over this novel, giving Foster a means of representing republican virtue in a female form. Yet, women in this era also awaken to their own needs for identity in the republic and manipulate the rhetoric of Republican motherhood in order to enter the public sphere. There is, therefore, the potential for subversion embedded within this rhetoric of republican motherhood. According to Nancy Armstrong, in the later Victorian era women portray themselves as lacking in sexual passion.<sup>5</sup> She argues that this stems from women's sexual and political awareness. They accept the idea of passionlessness in order to create sexual solidarity among women. We can assume that the same mechanism operates to define the ideology of republican motherhood. As Linda Kerber suggests, the rhetoric of the republic needs to feminize the notion of virtue which associates nation and domesticity. In the new Republic women become the symbol of domesticity. The Republic needs mother who would raise virtuous male citizens. Women synthesize their new political authority and traditional domesticity within the rhetoric of republican motherhood. They negotiate their new consciousness of womanhood in the Republic by transforming it into a virtuous motherhood in order to claim a new political identity. This transformation requires the strong support of women who are aware of their virtuous duties. In particular, women learn to control their sexuality by claiming instead a modest chastity in sanctifying their positions as truly worthy daughters and mothers of the Republic.

Women may succeed in negotiating their sexuality in a political context and get reasonable identities. Women as well as men, however, witness the emotional aspect of historical incidents through the Revolution: "reason, no matter how reasonable, gives way to emotion in crucial moments."<sup>6</sup> The more women perceive the power of emotion, the more they need to control their sexuality. Emotion, within the female sphere, becomes refigured as excessive sexuality or passion, an excess that must be controlled by the socially prescriptive virtues of republican motherhood. Foster depicts uncontrollable emotion through Eliza's sexuality. In doing so, she examines the newness of Eliza's way of thinking in terms of sexuality. Eliza is

endangered by the loss of Republican virtue and, in turn, embodies the dangers to the Republic and its virtuous Republican mothers, because she sexually transgresses the boundary of a rational modesty. Thus, Eliza's change from a fanciful daughter into a fallen woman means a danger in a political context.

In locating the influence of the public gaze, the importance of sisterhood becomes elevated in relation to the role of Eliza's mother and that of other surrogate mother. In this novel, the authority of mothers slightly diminished in contrast to that of circle of the female friends. After the disaster of her daughter's broken engagement with Boyer, Eliza's mother merely watched how things are going; "watching and attending me with the most anxious concern; without one reproachful word, without one accusing look" (93). Mrs. Wharton's posture of affectionate, rather than authoritative, mother reflects this era's social and cultural changes within the family. The new family is created through affective bonds, in part as a result of the spreading influence of individualism.<sup>7</sup> Instead of a mother's exercise of watchful discipline, the extended sisterhood is the main avenue for creating identity in the society. In this context, exchanging letters affirms Eliza's identity as a member of the sisterhood. To Eliza, writing is an agreeable thing to do as long as she is an acknowledged member of the sisterly community.

The women's community seems to decide the position of the fallen woman in the public context.<sup>8</sup> Eliza's sisterhood does not prevent her from succumbing to Sanford's seduction, but her friends sense an urgent need to save her from society's censure. Eliza's downfall holds different meanings and messages for each of her loyal friends: For Lucy, Eliza's downfall is a threat to marriage itself, and for Julia it is a threat to women's virginity. Eliza's downfall is no more a Eliza's private matter, but instead becomes a public matter discussed and decried among the sorority. They try to moralize Eliza's experience. Eliza's reentry into their sisterhood is actuated by this process of moralization. Unable to reclaim her presence among them, because she suffers a justified death, nonetheless, the women can consecrate her memory and make Eliza into a moral exemplar for other young women. Foster makes Eliza give a moral lesson to Sanford, addressed, however, not to Sanford to the American fair:

May my unhappy story serve as a beacon to warn the American fair of the dangerous tendency and destructive consequence of association with men of your character, of destroying their time, and risking their reputation by the practice of coquetry and its attendant follies! (159)

Eliza generalizes her experience and transforms it into the public discourse, becoming, in the process, more than merely a victim of desire. Eliza is aware of how her coquetry is opposed to matrimony: "You have broken the bonds of conjugal love, which ought ever to be kept

sacred and inviolate! . . . and I, wretch that I am, have been your accomplice!" (159). The collusion between the rake and the coquette destroys matrimony by replacing virtue and domesticity with unleashed sexual desire, by substituting an illicit and unsanctified relationship for the sacred of marriage. Matrimony is, however, depicted as so sacred and so inviolate among women's society that the violators are punished. Although childbirth within wedlock does not cause the death of the women (Mrs. Richman and Mrs. Sanford), childbirth out of wedlock causes the death of Eliza. Foster displays, therefore, the overwhelming prestige of matrimony in the Republic from a woman's standpoint. Despite its obvious restraints on female choice and freedom, which seem to run counter to the dictates of a democratic society, marriage becomes the cornerstone of a federated republic in which women sacrifice personal freedom for the public good, domestic as well as political. After a long silence, Lucy reappears in order to rescue women's virtue. Although Lucy initially abandons Eliza to the danger of seduction, she returns in the final scene to take on an important role as a moral commentator who persuades the reader of the importance of virtuous chastity:

[B]ut for the sake of my sex in general, I wish it engraved upon every heart, that virtue alone, independent of the trapping of wealth, the parade of equipage, and the adulation of gallantry, can secure lasting felicity. From the melancholy story of Eliza Wharton, let the American fair learn to reject with disdain every insinuation derogatory to their true dignity and honor. (167-8)

Lucy transforms Eliza's story into an antidote to infamy. In so doing, Lucy carves out a place for Eliza in the Republic, even if it is the place of the anti-heroine. She gives orders to erect a tombstone for Eliza. In stead of gazing at Eliza's body, we gaze at the tombstone in which her virtue rather than her frailty is inscribed. On the one hand, Eliza is consumed by Sanford as an object of sexual desire; on the other hand, her friends transform her into a subject of a moral tale. Foster changes Eliza's body which was once full of passion into the stone which symbolizes coldness or passionlessness. Moralization deprives Eliza of her body and petrifies her, as much as a republican culture sought to control and deny the vital passions, the sexuality, and the imagination of women. The solid image of the stone evokes Eliza's unfulfilled liberty and her sisterhood's zeal for creating a concretized American virtue.

The contrast between Eliza and Lucy, in particular, highlights the plight of the woman of this era. Lucy criticizes Eliza's thought and eventually mitigates the feeling of the reader toward Eliza. Lucy mitigates the opposition between public discourse and private discourse in representing a moralistic way. Lucy mentions most often Eliza's fancy. Foster tries to find a way to express her idea of the new woman who indulges in fancy. For Eliza fancy is crucial to woman's liberty: "Let me then enjoy that freedom which I so highly prize. Let me

have opportunity, unbiased by opinion, to gratify my natural disposition in a participation of those pleasure which youth and innocence afford" (13). Therefore, Lucy keeps criticizing Eliza's fancy by equating it with aspirations to rise in society, perhaps beyond her situation: "I know your ambition is to make a distinguished figure in the first class of polished society; to shine in the gay circle of fashionable amusements, and to bear off the palm amidst the votaries of pleasure" (27). Eliza admires a world of pleasure. Her connection with pleasure and liberty leads Eliza to have a fanciful notion of a woman's life. To put it differently, Eliza's desire for liberty leads her to a desire to "shine," to "bear off the palm," to triumph in society. On the contrary, Lucy cautions against the dangerous linking of liberty and pleasure by separating fancy from imagination. For Lucy, fancy means a trap in which women fall through their delusions. On the other hand, Lucy values imagination guided by reason. In Lucy, Eliza's fancy is just an illusion, unlike imagination: "Indeed, my friend, your own happiness and honor, require you to dissipate the cloud which hangs over your imagination" (112). In Lucy's notion of fancy and imagination, we may see the literary distinction between fantasy, or fancy, and imagination. Lucy values a sophisticated combination of reason and imagination which women should exert so as not to fall in the trap of licentiousness stemming from a delusive fancy. Lucy encourages Eliza, who is devastated by Boyer's rejection, and addresses what is important to the woman in the Republic: "but now they rejoice at the returning empire of reason" (107). Lucy's rejection of fancy stems from her notion of marriage; the marriage based on reason and affection makes the domestic life delightful. Lucy delineates a happy domestic life threatened by the rakes:

They (rakes) are steeled against the tender affection, which render domestic life delightful; strangers to the kind, the endearing sympathies of husband, father, and friend! The thousand nameless attentions which soften the rugged path of life, are neglected. (58)

We can hear the echo of republican virtue in Lucy's discourse. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Lucy conceives the rakes as "strangers" in the Republic. For Lucy, a fanciful woman as well as a rake is incongruous with the picture of her rational world

In contrast to Lucy, with her idyllic notion of marriage, Eliza cannot imagine her own married life as a successful one. However, she does not reject marriage itself. She gives a favorable view of good marriage by observing Lucy's and Mrs. Richman's married lives. Of Mr. and Mrs. Richman, she observes: "The purist and most ardent affection, the lovely couple" (14). As for Lucy's marriage, she admires the affinity between Lucy and her husband: "The consonance of their dispositions, the similarity of their tastes, and the equality of their ages are a sure pledge of happiness" (70). These comments show that she thinks a similarity of tastes a necessary condition of marriage. Since she knows that her taste is for



pleasure, she fears that her personal desires and marriage are contradictory. Are there any options for a woman outside of marriage? Eliza struggles to find her way, neither fully committed to a life of endless frivolity, nor persuaded that marriage offers sufficient freedom from contained domesticity. On the one hand, she feels an affinity for Sanford's notions of entertainment and laughter. Sanford's economic situation, however, does not allow him to marry Eliza. On the other hand, the reason tells her to choose a stable and sedate cleric, such as Boyer who will provide a comfortable living but little pleasure.

Eliza's dilemma shows the contradiction inherent within the options for women's liberty. In the case of Lucy, she succeeds in negotiating between her liberty and the married life by using reason and imagination which can create happiness from domestic tranquillity: here, the notion of republican mother gives women a meaningful life in the Republic. By contrast, Eliza cannot satisfy her desire for liberty through the rational choice of marriage. She is not convinced of the possibility of negotiation between liberty and marriage.

Eliza is uneasy about changing herself. However, the body limits the possibility of the change. Woman's body is supposed to be a signal of morality in terms of sexual desire. While Eliza hesitates to take a further step toward marriage and fails in the realization of her fancy to "shine in the gay circle," she degenerates into depending on Sanford's desire. Concurrent with this corruption, her fancy is changed from a volatile ambition into sexual licentiousness. Foster writes of Sanford's desire plainly and overtly although she silences Eliza's thought about her carnal degradation. Sanford's eloquence with its overt manifestation of carnal pleasure contrasts to Eliza's silence. Eliza is forced to confront her body because of her pregnancy. Sanford's excess of desire results in Eliza's physical transformation from virginity to maternity. Even if Sanford and Eliza share and indulge in feminized sentimentality, they have to confront a biological trap: women are the sex which becomes pregnant. A tragedy about a pregnant woman shows a juncture between the body and morality.

A chiasmatic contrast between Eliza and Lucy in the final scene dwells us on the system of exchange in this novel: Eliza tries to live in an active way outside marriage but in vain; Lucy, who accepts marriage and draws behind the scene once, is revitalized again by taking an active role in moralizing Eliza's story. The sympathetic view of Eliza as a fallen woman is possible only when Eliza represents the sacrificial spirit of the woman through the purification by Lucy. The change of Eliza's image, from an erring woman (body) to a sacrificial woman (stone), registers a transaction in finding the place for morality. Marriage secures women a place where they will have both an affective family and a public role through husbands and children. However, as Lucy's marriage shows, women have to change themselves at the time of marriage; symbolically Lucy changes her name from Lucy Freeman to Lucy Sumner. Eliza is reluctant to change her state of daughterhood. Without any alternatives, Eliza is forced to abandon her self-assertiveness by her eventual transformation from a female subject into an object of male desire. As her letters show, Eliza tries to negotiate and make allowance

for her individualistic way; against the imposed expectation, Eliza wants to enjoy liberty without marrying—without changing. This transformation, however, is inevitable for the women of this era. Eliza's excess of emotion forces her to change from a visible and chaste woman to a hidden fallen woman. The trajectory of Eliza in this novel shows an interesting, classic though, transformation of a woman: A liberal woman turns into a pregnant mistress, and eventually she becomes a tombstone for a moral tale. The story about the fallen woman requires both justification and transformation.

Eliza's final silence is distinguished by the contrast with Lucy's eloquence. Eliza's emotion leads her into disaster and Lucy's reason transforms Eliza into a moral icon. The reader, however, identifies with Eliza and are relieved by Lucy's absolution of Eliza's social immoralities. The way in which the contemporaneous reader both indulges herself in Eliza's tragedy and cultivates a superior didacticism illustrates the novel serving both of private desire and public good. In order to serve the public, Foster silences Eliza and animates Lucy who proclaims the triumph of virtues. However, the silenced Eliza cannot be completely eradicated from the reader's mind. The residual influence of the silenced and petrified Eliza circumvents the eloquent and reasonable Lucy. The opposition between the communal aim of serving the public and the representation of private emotion makes Eliza's story an impetus to a search for the self as distinguished from the role imposed by the public. Eliza appeals to the reader's private desire which runs counter to the (Re)public of virtue, and her desire itself distinguishes her as "the other woman." The place for Eliza as "the other woman," however, foreshadows the provocative path that the novel as rising genre will follow. In the nineteenth century, Nathaniel Hawthorne, will use the novel to resurrect the fallen woman, making her into Hester Prynne, the survivor rather than a memorialized icon of "Republic" of national virtue.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Cathy Davidson's *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* is, needless to say, a groundbreaking study in positioning minor writers, especially women writers, in the early American literary history. She reconstructs the reading public or interpretive community of the Revolutionary era which reflects literature itself. She points out the characters of the early American novels in which novelists were forced to confront "their nation's residual Colonial mentality." Since she defines the Revolutionary era as the unique instance of cultural formation and transformation, she can parallel the rise of novel to the rise of the nation. However, as Mikhail M. Bakhtin argues, "prose fiction has been perceived as a subversive literary form." She examines how the novel as a new genre functions in the early American society in terms of cultural context. She brilliantly elucidates the contradiction between the moral which sentimental novel articulates and the sentiment which sentimental novels evoke in readers in order to argue for the subversiveness of the novel. *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*, (New

- York: Oxford UP, 1986).
- <sup>2</sup> John Seelye comments that the world of *The coquette* is closed. "Brown and Early American fictions," in *Columbia Literary History of the United States*, ed., Emory Elliot, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
- <sup>3</sup> Hannah Foster, *The Coquette*. 1797. Intro. by Cathy Davidson, (New York: Oxford UP, 1986). All subsequent parenthetical page references are to this edition.
- <sup>4</sup> I refer to Linda Kerber in getting the idea of the relation between the woman and the republic. Kerber argues that republican ideology is a gender issue. She explains the movement toward republicanism and individualism among women. In the case of Mercy Otis Warren, Warren succeeded in finding her space in republicanism, although "Warren was prepared to sacrifice her autonomy to republicanism at the moment." Moreover, Kerber argues that "Republican mothers played a conservative, stabilizing role, deflecting the radical potential of the revolutionary experience." Although the virtue that republican mother reinforced is nostalgic, simply because the civic virtue which republicanism required has faded in the post-Revolutionary generation, Kerber elucidates that republican is as "a major step in the direction of a liberal individualism which recognized the political potential of women." Linda Kerber, "The Republican Ideology of the Revolutionary Generation," *American Quarterly*, 37 (1985): 474-95; "The Republican Mother-Woman and the Enlightenment: An American Perspective," *American Quarterly*, 28 (1976): *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina, 1980).
- <sup>5</sup> Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, (New York: Oxford UP, 1986).
- <sup>6</sup> Robert Ferguson's argument about the Enlightenment is suggestive in terms of the relation of reason and emotion. Ferguson uses the visual image of the Enlightenment as light. By making a contrast between light and darkness, he explicates the ambivalence of the Enlightenment. Moreover, Ferguson stresses the emotional aspect of the Enlightenment: The notion of emergency stimulates emotion over reason, particularly in the revolutionary era. Robert Ferguson, "What Is Enlightenment? Some American Answers," in *The Cambridge History of American Literature, Volume I; 1590-1820*, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch, (New York: Cambridge UP, 1994).
- <sup>7</sup> Lawrence Stone examines the family in England from 1500-1800. He argues about the tendency to value personal emotions and clarifies the notion of affective family. Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*, abr. ed. (New York: Harper Torchbook by Harper & Row, 1979). Also see Ruth Block, "American Feminine Ideas in Transition: The Rise of the Moral Mother, 1785-1815," *Feminist Studies* 4:2 (1978): 100-26.
- <sup>8</sup> Claire Pettengill argues for the role of sisterhood in Foster's writings. Claire Pettengill, "Sisterhood in a Separate Sphere: Female Friendship in Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette* and *The Boarding School*," *Early American Literature* 27.3 (1992):186-204.