

# Liberty, Corruption and Seduction in the Republican Imagination

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## I

In the fall of 1787, as the Constitutional Convention completed its work, Philadelphia's *Columbian Magazine* published a two-part "original novel, founded upon recent facts," as part of its editorial commitment to encourage "the advancement of knowledge and virtue" in the new nation. The political nature of this "original novel," *Amelia, or the Faithless Briton*, was first suggested by its placement in the magazine alongside domestic and foreign political commentary.<sup>1</sup> Lest anyone be surprised by the inclusion of a serialized tale of seduction, betrayal and revenge in a national magazine that had, a month earlier, published the first draft of the federal Constitution, it should be noted that the Constitution itself faced an anecdote entitled "Love and Constancy"—a parable insisting that "conjugal fidelity" was necessary for preserving liberty.<sup>2</sup> In any event, the opening paragraphs of *Amelia* explicitly announce the political intentions of the story:

The revolutions of government, and the subversions of empire, which have swelled the theme of national historians, have, likewise, in every age, furnished anecdote to the biographer, and incident to the novelist. The objects of policy or ambition are generally, indeed, accomplished at the expense of private ease and prosperity; while the triumph of arms . . . serves to announce some recent calamity—the waste of property, or the fall of families.

Thus the great events of the late war, which produced the separation of the British empire, and established the sovereignty of America, were chequered with scenes of private sorrow, and the success of the contending forces was alternately fatal to the peace and order of domestic life.<sup>3</sup>

The domestic tragedy that follows this preface is a fairly representative version of the seduction tales so popular among late eighteenth-century readers, though with certain significant variations that suggest the particular work this text sought to accomplish among republican American readers.<sup>4</sup> Widowed patriarch Horatio Blyfield, a successful New York merchant, finds himself forced by the Revolutionary conflict to retire from his commercial activities and take refuge on Long Island with his daughter Amelia, while his son Honorius goes off to join the patriot cause. Some months later, Horatio rescues Doliscus, a wounded British officer, and nurses him back to health with the assistance of young Amelia. Doliscus woos Amelia, asks if she will "consent to sacrifice a sentiment of delicacy, to ensure a life of happiness" (679), and convinces her to "marry" him in secret because, he claims, he is betrothed to a titled British woman and dares not publicly defy the wishes of his own noble British family. Only the death of his father will rescue him from these filial constraints and then, he promises, he will acknowledge Amelia as his true wife. The marriage, conveniently enough, is conducted not by an actual minister but by one of Doliscus' army comrades disguised as a minister. Soon thereafter—but not soon enough—Doliscus returns to the city and to the command of the British troops. Amelia quickly realizes that she has been deceived by this aristocratic British treachery and, just as quickly, realizes that she is pregnant with the child of her seducer. At this juncture of the story we find the first digression from the seduction formula inherited from Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748) and the novels that followed it.<sup>5</sup>

Rather than wasting away of heartache or pleading with Doliscus to return to her, American Amelia resolves "publicly to vindicate her honour and assert her rights" (680). She follows her seducer to the presumed font of corruption, London, and there confronts Doliscus, who admits that their marriage was "a rural masquerade," but refuses "to be thus duped or controlled. I have a sense of pity," he continues, "for your indiscretion, but none for your passion" (681). Realizing that Doliscus will not recognize her rights as his wife, Amelia permits herself to be removed to a servant's hotel, where she prematurely gives birth to a baby who dies, leaving Amelia to contemplate ending her own misery with a dose of laudanum. All the while, however, she rejects

any complicity in her own ruin; though she has been “deluded into error” she is “free from guilt; I have been solicitous to preserve my innocence and honour; but am exposed to infamy and shame” (682). Her seducer had at no point extracted her knowing consent; Doliscus had deceived her into making a contract by which he himself had never intended to abide.

The story’s denouement, published in a second installment, is quickly told. Horatio arrives in time to save his daughter from a sin perhaps worse than seduction—suicide—and assures her that “the errors of our conduct may expose us to the scandal of the world, but it is guilt alone which can violate the inward tranquility of the mind.”<sup>6</sup> Her brother Honorius appears, having just been paroled from the British jail where he has been held as a prisoner of war, and arranges a duel with Doliscus to avenge Amelia’s honor. Doliscus, now remorseful, permits Honorius to win the duel, but not before arranging the safe passage of the Blyfield family back to America. Doliscus’ dying words seem to confirm Thomas Paine’s prophecy in *Common Sense*: “Your country will afford you an asylum and protect you from the consequences of my [read: British] fate” (880). Despite the efforts of her father and brother, however, Amelia descends into madness and dies. Honorius returns to America only to sacrifice his own life in the battle for independence, leaving Horatio alone to console himself that “whatever may be the sufferings of virtue HERE, its portion must be happiness HEREAFTER” (880).

In *Amelia*, then, we find many of the elements of the eighteenth-century figure of virtue seduced and abandoned, complete with a motherless and guileless heroine, a treacherous aristocratic seducer, a brother who vies with the seducer for his sister’s honor, and a father who finally proves impotent to protect his children from deception and ruin.<sup>7</sup> But this familiar formula requires further scrutiny if we are to identify the particular political and philosophical implications it held for American readers in the 1780s. *Amelia* depicts the corrupt British officer first shamed and then vanquished by the ravished American and her family’s insistent assertion of her honor and her *rights*. Vindication comes, however, only at the cost of much American sacrifice—both of innocence (however unwittingly) and blood. *Amelia* closes with dual sacrifices, with the deaths of brother and sister in the name of family honor and moral

right. Honorius, as his name of course suggests, follows the classical republican model of manly sacrifice on the field of national honor. Amelia surrenders her reason and then life itself as the price of her innocent but imprudent fall into public infamy. Denied her *rights* as a wife, she has been deprived of her only means of restoring the legitimacy of her consent, not to seduction but, instead, to a republican marriage. Though Amelia's sphere of republican action remains confined to marriage, she refuses to assent to an Englishman's representation of her position. Amelia sacrifices her life rather than accede to the sacrifice of her liberty—figured here not as her independence but as her right to consent, to contract. In the terms of this story, at least, that right is equated with republican virtue for women as well as for men.<sup>8</sup>

With this example in mind, I wish to consider the particular resonance of the figure of seduction within the debates over the proper relations between liberty and authority that so consumed the new nation in the 1770s and 1780s. As several historians—among them Linda Kerber, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Cathy Davidson, and Ruth Bloch—have noted, the melodramatic novel of seduction served to dramatize the republican struggle between virtue and corruption in terms that were at once political and gendered.<sup>9</sup> Though classical republicanism had traditionally associated virtue with the manly exercise of political and martial action in the public realm, by the last decades of the eighteenth century, the virtue of women in their capacities as mothers and wives came to seem increasingly important to preserving the virtuous independence of America's citizens.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, representations of corruption, too, were both gendered and sexualized. Instead of classical republicanism's figure of the feminine principle of Fortuna ultimately corrupting the civic efforts of manly *virtu*, by the late eighteenth century, corruption was more often depicted through the Richardsonian convention of an innocent girl defiled and forsaken by a deceitful villain.<sup>11</sup> By choosing seduction as a prevailing metaphor for corruption, eighteenth-century writers not only *gendered* their images of virtue and corruption; they explicitly emphasized the *sexual* aspects of those images.<sup>12</sup>

## II

Even historians who have not been explicitly concerned with the gendered and sexualized nature of revolutionary rhetoric have noted the anxieties aroused by the republican specter of liberty seduced and corrupted by power, the charged sexual imagery with which political polemicists waged the struggle between virtue and corruption. In his classic discussion of the republican principles that inspired the American Revolution, Bernard Bailyn depicts the colonists' "compulsive" concerns regarding the antagonistic relations between power and liberty. Republican discourse portrayed power as aggressive, Bailyn argues; power was dangerous because of "its endlessly propulsive tendency to expand itself beyond legitimate boundaries." Surveying the rhetorical figures colonial writers deployed to represent power, Bailyn compiles a catalogue of highly charged images: Power has "an encroaching nature"; it is "restless, aspiring, and insatiable." "Everywhere it is threatening, pushing and grasping" its "natural prey, its necessary victim, . . . liberty." The sphere of power is "brutal, ceaselessly active, and heedless," while that of liberty is "delicate, passive, and sensitive." Finally, characterizing John Dickinson's description of Cromwell's abuses of power, Bailyn invokes the classic formula of eighteenth-century melodrama: "when [in Dickinson's words] 'brutal power' becomes 'an irresistible argument of boundless right,'" Bailyn concedes, "innocence and justice can only sigh and quietly submit."<sup>13</sup>

Though Bailyn does not amplify the relationship between such sexually charged language and the politics it supported, his own choice of descriptive metaphors is justified by the unmistakable—if largely unexamined—frequency with which radical propagandists in the Revolutionary period employed sexual imagery to represent political corruption.<sup>14</sup> For example, in 1764, Oxenbridge Thacher, a Bostonian lawyer and colleague of James Otis and John Adams, published *The Sentiments of a British American* to protest the enforcement provisions of the Sugar Act. Arguing that the duty on molasses would "destroy altogether the trade of the colonists," Thacher appealed to "the mere present self-interest of Great Britain" for repeal of the regulations. But it is his personification of Trade that will detain us here. "TRADE," Thacher wrote, "is a nice and delicate lady; she must be courted and

won by soft and fair addresses. She will not bear the rude hand of a ravisher. Penalties increased, heavy taxes laid on, the checks of oppression and violence removed; these things must drive her from her present abode."<sup>15</sup> Here, the ruin threatening the American colonies' economic and corporal integrity may be forestalled; indeed, Lady Trade is presented as capable of single-handedly fending off, or at least successfully fleeing, potential ravishers. Such confidence in the ability of feminine virtue (however metaphorically deployed) to withstand the mounting assaults directed against her would be less evident in the rhetoric of the 1770s and 1780s.

Of all the pamphleteers who were drawn to the image of seduction as the most resonant device for alerting the American public to the threats of British corruption, Thomas Paine was perhaps the most compulsive, to use Bailyn's term.<sup>16</sup> Seeking the most effective analogy with which to conclude his plea in *Common Sense* for the colonists' final separation from England, Paine asks, "can ye restore to us the time that is past? Can ye give to prostitution its former innocence?" Impossible, he replies: "As well can the lover forgive the ravisher of his mistress as the continent forgive the murders of Britain."<sup>17</sup> Though here it would appear that the damage has already been done, the maiden's innocence irreparably lost, Paine's simile did not deter him from asserting, in an appendix to *Common Sense*, that "the domestic tranquillity of a nation depends greatly on the *chastity* of what might properly be called NATIONAL MANNERS."<sup>18</sup>

In the *Crisis* papers (1776-1783), Paine continued to rely on the apparently irresistible image of the nation as an imperiled maiden besieged by a villainous British seducer. *Crisis I* (1776) appeals for an American Joan of Arc to lead the nation from oppression: "Would that heaven might inspire some Jersey maid to spirit up her countrymen, and save her fair fellow sufferers from ravage and ravishment."<sup>19</sup> Tories are likened to fallen women in *Crisis III* (1777), because only "*avarice, down-right villainy, and lust of personal power*" could explain the Loyalists' opposition to independence:

Some secret defect or other is interwoven in the character of all those, be they men or women, who can look with patience on the brutality, luxury and debauchery of the British court. . . . A woman's virtue must sit very lightly

on her who can even hint a favorable sentiment in their [British] behalf. It is remarkable that the whole race of prostitutes in New York were Tories; and the schemes for supporting the Tory cause in this city . . . were concerted and carried on in common bawdy-houses, assisted by those who kept them.<sup>20</sup>

In this instance, the evils associated with seduction are no longer merely metaphorical; the moral and sexual characters of actual participants in the Revolutionary struggle were determined, in Paine's formulation, by their complicity in or resistance to literal acts of seduction. American women who collaborated with the British were, moreover, not simply victims of seduction. Rather, they had abandoned both the morality and the sexual passivity associated with feminine virtue, and had themselves fallen into professional debauchery.

Paine's thinking about the nature of seduction and its increasingly tangible consequences for the patriot grew more complex in *Crisis XI* (1782), which responded to Britain's purported efforts to disrupt the alliance between France and the United States by offering terms of settlement. The states, he insists, "are no more to be seduced from their alliance than their allegiance." Indeed, for the British to offer to repeal the Parliamentary acts that had provoked the colonial rebellion, after seven years of waging war against those former colonies, was, Paine argues, "a personal offense": "It is calling us villains: for no man asks the other to act the villain unless he believes him inclined to be one. No man attempts to seduce the truly honest woman. It is the supposed looseness of her mind that starts the thoughts of seduction, and he who offers it calls her a prostitute."<sup>21</sup> Despite the apparent instabilities of Paine's moral analogy (is the woman's "looseness" true or "supposed"? and how closely associated, in this economy of vice, are "looseness of mind" and looseness of body?), this is a revealing passage, indicating Paine's increasing concern with the complicity of the supposed victim in the schemes of her seducer. If no man would ever *try* to seduce a "truly honest woman"—that is, if no truly honest woman's character could ever be misread, even by an evil-minded seducer—what did it mean that Americans needed to be warned against the seductive truce Britain was apparently proffering? If American character was sufficiently virtuous, should not the new nation have been able to withstand and

even avert the temptations of a renewed dalliance with the mother country?

As Paine anticipated, once the Americans were victorious, they could no longer so persuasively blame British treachery for enticing America from the paths of virtue. What happened, then, to the figure of seduction in the 1780s, when the external menace of British tyranny had been vanquished and when, instead, American writers began to examine the soul of the new nation itself to account for the deterioration of virtue? We may begin to address this question by considering the use of seduction as the central emblem of corruption and disorder in what is generally deemed the first American novel, William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789).<sup>22</sup>

### III

Appearing concurrently with the ratification of the new Constitution, *The Power of Sympathy* bears the subtitle, "The Triumph of Nature," and is dedicated to "the young ladies of Columbia." Brown announces the work as "Founded in Truth," and insists that it is "intended to represent the specious causes and to expose the fatal consequences of SEDUCTION, to inspire the female mind with a principle of self-complacency and to promote the economy of human life."<sup>23</sup> Circumscribing the central episodes of the novel, which is epistolary in form and fragmented in plot, are pleas for more adequate education of women's reason, so that they will not be captive to their illusions and desires. In a gesture that would become irresistible to sentimental novelists, otherwise incidental characters in *The Power of Sympathy* appear solely to debate the merits and dangers of women's novel-reading.<sup>24</sup> In one instance, an apparently authoritative patriarch concludes that:

A young lady who has imbibed her ideas of the world from desultory reading, and placed confidence in the virtue of others, will bring back disappointment when she expected gratitude. Unsuspicious of deceit, she is easily deceived—from the purity of her own thoughts, she trusts the faith of mankind until experience convinces her of error. She falls a sacrifice to her credulity, and her only consolation is the simplicity and goodness of her heart. (45)



Novels, then, do not corrupt the imagination of young women primarily by arousing their passions; rather, novels are dangerous because they deceive their readers about the true nature of society; most perilously, they provide a seductively idealized image of the true nature of men:

In books she finds recorded the faithfulness of friendship, the constancy of *true love*, and even that honesty is the best policy. . . . Thus she finds, when it is perhaps too late, that she has entertained wrong notions of human nature; that her friends are deceitful; that her lovers are false; and that men consult interest oftener than honesty. (45)

To the republican mind, all fiction relied on seduction: novels lured their credulous readers into a world of artifice, semblance, and pretense.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, despite the morally affecting occasions for sympathy such reading could provide, the private sentiments of pity, terror, and compassion aroused by even the most didactic fiction threatened to undermine the public spirit and civic virtue on which the republic relied, by inflaming the personal emotions and passions of the citizenry and distracting them from the public good.<sup>26</sup>

Asserting “the advantages of female education” as a defense against “the dangerous consequences of seduction” (29), Brown justifies the novel—generally associated with the heart and not the head—by rejecting the notion that women’s hearts can be sufficient guides to their conduct. Consistent with republican ideals of rational self-control, his novel’s initial emphasis on education and the dangers of its neglect seems to favor the conclusion that the reason, and not just the sympathies, had to be cultivated if young people—especially young women—were to learn to separate truth from illusion and so be capable of self-government.<sup>27</sup> Womanly sympathy alone, it appears, could not provide adequate protection against seductive reasoning; the power of sympathy, in fact, leads Brown’s characters away from prudence and, disastrously, toward the passions.<sup>28</sup>

But despite Brown’s avowedly didactic purposes in presenting his story, his plot acts to ironize and even subvert such conventional apologies for the novel. *The Power of Sympathy* is not mainly concerned with women’s education, nor is it clear that anyone’s better educated reason could have protected these characters from the fatal consequences

that the plot's myriad seductions unleash. In the main, this is a story about incest—or perhaps, about the consequences of trying *not* to commit incest. The central characters die not because they would rather perish than violate the taboo that forbids the marriage of siblings, but because their reason finally will not permit them to indulge the incestuous sympathies that draw them inexorably together.<sup>29</sup> In Brown's novel, authority and authenticity are the real concerns: the authority of fathers and their abandonment of its obligations; the authenticity not of treacherous seducers—as in the more formulaic *Amelia*—but of suitors who believe themselves possessed of republican and loving motives. This is a novel in which the laws of nature seem directly at odds with the conventions of society and, as Leslie Fiedler noted long ago, in which the whole eighteenth-century effort to wed the social and natural orders threatens to implode.<sup>30</sup>

The American Revolution, Jay Fliegelman and others have recently argued, was part of a larger attack on patriarchy, in which paternal authority in all its forms—familial, moral, religious, and political—was challenged and circumscribed, in the name of contractual agreements, self-government, and moral voluntarism.<sup>31</sup> *The Power of Sympathy* participates in anti-patriarchal politics by presenting a series of faithless fathers who are punished or abandoned by their offspring, but not before the fathers have committed an original and originating sin from which their children will never be liberated, except through death. The fatal effects of seduction in *The Power of Sympathy* are, as often as not, second-hand, ruining not just the woman who is seduced but the lives of her and her seducer's children. In the main plot of the novel, the suitor who turns out to be something other than he seems is not, after all, a treacherous villain but rather—and unbeknownst to himself—his beloved's brother. *The Power of Sympathy* requires a double unmasking: the father must be revealed as a seducer so that the lovers can be revealed to each other as brother and sister.

Brown clearly intends his sensational tale to convey a political lesson. At the outset of the novel, the hero and would-be seducer Harrington (a likely reference to the seventeenth-century political theorist James Harrington) discloses the reason he cannot marry his beloved, penniless Harriot: "I am not so much of a republican as formally to wed any

person of this [dependent] class. How laughable would my conduct appear . . . to be heard openly acknowledging for my bosom companion any daughter of the democratic empire of virtue" (34). Soon enough, however, Harriot's virtues deter Harrington from his treacherous course and he determines to marry her, despite her humble and orphaned origin. In a show of female independence comparable to Amelia's insistence on her conjugal rights, Harriot refuses to let "the crime of dependence . . . be expiated by the sacrifice of virtue" (36). Through his association with the virtuous Harriot, Harrington decides that he is an exponent of republican equality, an opponent of slavery, and an advocate of democratic institutions (58). In the manner that Jan Lewis has suggested was the ideal work of a republican wife, Harriot has "seduced her suitor" into accepting republican principles by employing, rather than denying, her sexual desirability—while withholding access to her body until a legitimate marriage may be contracted.<sup>32</sup> But in the complex moral universe imagined by Brown, the heroine's prudence is no match for the manifold and hidden powers of sympathy. The "fatal consequences of seduction" only seem to have been averted.

Though they championed moral equality, many American republicans worried about the social fluidity and instability implied by betrothals between lovers of such apparently disparate rank. As many commentators have noted, the seduction novel mirrored the crisis of character, station, and legitimacy posed by the commercial revolution that accompanied the eighteenth century's political revolutions. In the new world of credit and paper money, of manners and politeness, the possibilities for deception and disguise mounted, threatening the traditional republican values of virtuous authenticity and stable social relations.<sup>33</sup> Brown dramatizes this dilemma by exposing the source of the senior Harrington's misgivings about his son's attachment to a "daughter of the democratic empire of virtue."<sup>34</sup> The Hon. Mr. Harrington's objections trump the seduction novel's usual contrivance of paternal tyranny or class snobbery. "How shall we . . . account for the operation of sympathy?" Harrington, Sr. asks a confidant. "I fly to prevent incest" (102). To avert his son's wedding, the elder Harrington is forced to reveal his own youthful seduction of Maria, an impoverished woman who died leaving a daughter to be raised in the service of

relatives. It is, of course, this orphaned Harriot who has so attracted young Harrington's sympathy—but now the bonds of sympathy that mysteriously drew the two together are exposed for what they really are: the apparently natural affinity of siblings.<sup>35</sup>

The shock of this revelation fills Harrington and Harriot with "a horror of conflicting passions" (105). Harriot wrestles with the necessity of rejecting her lover simply because he is also her brother. She fears that she has criminally surrendered to passions that she should somehow have recognized as incestuous desire, but wonders, "shall we strive to oppose the *link of nature* that draws us together?" She pleads with her lover to return to her, to be "a friend, a protector, a brother . . . you shalt be unto me as a father" (112). In a "torment of fluctuating passion," Harriot concludes that prudence and virtue stand opposed to the demands of sympathy and "natural" desire: "The head and the heart are at variance; but when nature pleads, how feeble is the voice of reason? Yet, when reason is heard in her turn, how criminal appears every wish of my heart?" Finally, she urges Harrington "to arm yourself with every virtue which is capable of sustaining the heaviest calamity" (113), and dies of grief. Harrington ponders "the cause of my calamities. Why did my father love Maria—or rather, why did I love their Harriot? Curse on this tyrant custom that dooms such helpless children to oblivion or infamy!" (117). He asks to be buried alongside Harriot, under the epitaph, "Here lies Harrington and his Harriot—in their lives they loved, but were unhappy—in death they sleep undivided" (127), and shoots himself.

In this maelstrom of conflicting erotic and moral desires, the young couple's sense of "unmerited criminality" (111) is synecdochical for the effects of seduction throughout *The Power of Sympathy*. Seduction is an act for which women suffer not because of their actual desires but, instead, because of their passive vulnerability to the power of sympathy and the schemes of deceit. In this instance, however, *both* parties to the love affair have been deceived and it is their *father* who is really the seducer—because he is the deceiver—of both daughter and son. As the author of his children's ruin, Harrington, Sr. has trebled the possibilities of incestuous seduction: he has effectively seduced not just Maria but both their children. Finally, he is responsible for the deaths of Harriot

and Harrington, who decide that their love can never be consummated, except in "Heaven. There alone is happiness . . . there our love will not be a crime" (114). Seduction—the sin of the father, not the son—has rendered this republican marriage impossible.

The crime that *Amelia's* author could so readily—and so nostalgically, in 1789—consign to a now-vanquished British aristocrat had, in *The Power of Sympathy*, contaminated an American patriarch and ruined his family. Though Brown clearly represents the original sin of the father as a pre-revolutionary lapse (Harriot and Harrington are young adults in 1789), that act nonetheless spells the death of liberty for his post-revolutionary republican children, who are fatally entailed by his legacy of seduction. American virtue must fail if patriarchal ties to corruption can never be sundered—if corruption is both involuntary and hereditary.

In Brown's catalogue of vices, seduction is the most dangerous of all because it hides itself and "murders in the mask of love": "who knows / Where all thy consequences close? / With thee, SEDUCTION! are allied / HORROR, DESPAIR and SUICIDE" (70-71). More tellingly than the simpler tale of *Amelia*, *The Power of Sympathy* reveals the terrors seduction represented for the republican imagination. In Brown's "economy of human life," reason is deceived and virtue compromised not just as a *means* of seduction but as a *consequence* of seduction. Seduction is a vice that needs vigilant exposure not only because it is seductive in the expected sense, resting on flattery and false promises, but because it perpetrates and perpetuates even more dangerous deceptions. Confusing and confounding erotic and fraternal bonds, Brown's seductions direct a catastrophic blow to the very foundation of republican society: they falsely represent family relations. If the sexual order could be so easily—even unwittingly—undone, what fate awaited the social order it supported?

#### IV

If reason and the senses could be so readily misled—as sensationalist writers such as Charles Brockden Brown would demonstrate even more clearly than did William Hill Brown—then the epistemological foundations of a nation resting on the possibility of rational self-

government were at best, unstable; at worst, fraudulent.<sup>36</sup> But for William Hill Brown, even more crucial were the moral implications of the figure of seduction in his republican tragedy. As Gordon Wood has argued in his essay, "Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style," the eighteenth century's confidence that human agency had a direct hand in the workings of the universe meant that disastrous consequences could not be dismissed as the accidental effects of otherwise good intentions.<sup>37</sup> Rather, Wood demonstrates, republican moralists insisted on an identity between causes and effects. Where there were evil consequences there must be, however benign the appearance of things, a malignant intent: a conspirator, a traitor, a deceiver. Although Wood is not primarily concerned with popular literature, his argument may be extended to account for the republican insistence on the efficacy of endlessly repeated cautionary tales of seduction and betrayal.

By this interpretation, only when individual virtue and agency were imaginatively replaced with more complex social processes that could transmute vicious intentions to virtuous ends would the image of the seducer be a less resonant image for the dangers besetting republican America.<sup>38</sup> This is not to suggest that this transformation was either sudden or monolithic. John Adams, for instance, was one of the last to relinquish the republican metaphor of virtue in distress. In a letter to William Cunningham in 1804, Adams complained that, "the awful spirit of Democracy is in great progress. It is a young rake who thinks himself handsome and well-made, and who has little faith in virtue. . . . Democracy is Lovelace and the people are Clarissa. The artful villain will pursue the innocent lovely girl to her ruin and her death."<sup>39</sup> Though republican concerns and language did not vanish from the political scene in the nineteenth century, the image of seduction, so potent in the late eighteenth century, began to appear less frequently after the 1790s, as changing views of moral agency and political power came to substitute essentially liberal metaphors of the competitive marketplace for the gendered and sexual imagery that had so permeated republican discourse.

To cite only one famous illustration of this transition, we might compare Hamilton's metaphors for political corruption in *Federalist Papers* 6 and 71 with Madison's renowned promotion, in Numbers 10 and 51,

of mechanisms that would supply "by opposite and rival interests, the defect of better motives."<sup>40</sup> In Number 6, Hamilton attributes the historical cause of hostilities among nations to the jealousy and greed of leaders who have indulged their "private passions" (especially for women), and who, "assuming the pretext of some public motive, have not scrupled to sacrifice the national tranquility to personal advantage or personal gratification." Similarly, Hamilton blames private intrigue for public calamity in Number 71, in which the people's adherence to the public good is perpetually undermined by "the wiles of parasites and sycophants, by the snares of the ambitious, the avaricious, . . . by the artifices of men who possess their confidence more than they deserve it." Here are all the vices of the seducer: lust, avarice, cynicism and, centrally, deceit.<sup>41</sup>

For Madison, of course, it was not treacherous leaders so much as self-interested and divisive factions that threatened the fabric of republican society. Madison's solutions—geographical expansion, checks and balances, filters on popular sovereignty—are not directed at unmasking vice or attacking the *causes* of conflicting passions and interests. Rather, they seek to "control" the "effects" of these conflicts by "supplying, by opposite and rival interests, the defect of better motives."<sup>42</sup> While images of seduction still animated Hamilton's rhetorical imagination, they were no longer compelling figures in Madison's prescriptions, which deliberately set out to shatter the identity of cause and effect on which the republican fear of seduction rested.

In the sentimental novels that followed this shift away from the power of seduction and toward the thorough-going domestication of virtue, popular heroines would more often follow the model of Richardson's virtuous *Pamela* than of his ruined *Clarissa* by successfully resisting the blandishments of treacherous seducers. Sentimental rhetoric after the 1790s reinscribed virtue itself as a condition not of political vigilance but of feminine piety and self-restraint, effectively severing the correlation between private motives and public morality that had been so crucial to eighteenth-century republicanism.<sup>43</sup> As Nina Baym and Michael Denning have argued, the domestic novels that proliferated in America in the nineteenth century rejected the republican model of seduction and betrayal, substituting instead sentimental parables of

innocent girls who foil myriad efforts to compromise their chastity.<sup>44</sup> No longer fallen women, nineteenth-century heroines in popular works ranging from Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827) to Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) and Maria Susanna Cummins's *The Lamplighter* (1854), would win for their efforts the mixed blessings sentimentality accorded true women and angels of the house. Whatever the centrality of the domestic sphere for the cultivation of private morality in the nineteenth century, no longer would political liberty be figured as a virtuous maiden assailed by tyrannical power.

Popular fiction's retreat from the public arena, from the republican concern for civic action and the reciprocal obligations of public and private virtue, signaled a change that had far broader consequences than simply reconfiguring the sentimental plot. Tracing the transition from republicanism to liberalism, from the promotion of republican citizenship to the constitution of liberal nationalism, Michael Warner has identified the republican novel as one of the central agents responsible for changing the subject of American identity. Though novels like *The Power of Sympathy* sought to participate in political debate, their effectiveness as theaters of virtue relied on arousing the sympathies of readers engaged in the essentially private act of reading. Their readers' resulting identification with the novels' characters, Warner argues, produced an "imaginary participation in the public order," which, though a "precondition for modern nationalism . . . is anathema to pure republicanism." Thus, though women (as wives and mothers) would increasingly be included in the symbolic nationalism of the 1790s and afterward, the public of which they were now imaginatively members "no longer connoted civic action" in the republican sense.<sup>45</sup>

As we have seen, the republican reliance on the imagery of seduction and betrayal, the melodramatic representation of virtue assailed by corruption, extended beyond the novel and resonated throughout the political language of the Revolutionary period. This rhetoric produced more than an increasingly privatized and sentimental reading public. By both gendering and sexualizing virtue, and by so constantly invoking seduction as a metaphor for political corruption, republican advocates of civic action paradoxically encouraged an increasingly private, even personal, understanding of the nature of power and its abuses. Once



civic virtue was equated, however metaphorically, with sexual chastity, the transition from virtue as the public spiritedness of politically active citizens to virtue as a private, domestic, feminized, and largely apolitical concern became irresistible. In the end, one of the "fatal consequences of seduction" would be the nation's consignment of the "democratic empire of virtue" to the private domain of its daughters alone, while its sons established a republic in which empire, not virtue, would prevail.<sup>46</sup>

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For discussion of the *Columbian Magazine* and the genre of stories in which *Amelia* fits, see William J. Free, *The "Columbian Magazine" and American Literary Nationalism* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968) 77-113, esp. 91-92; and Mukhtar Ali Isani, "The 'Fragment' as Genre in Early American Literature," *SSF* 18 (1981): 17-26. Lillie D. Loshe long ago suggested that *Amelia* may be considered the earliest American novel, antedating William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* by two years; see *The Early American Novel, 1789-1830* (1907; New York: Frederick Ungar, 1966) 61. The title of this "Amelia" was no doubt inspired by Henry Fielding's last novel, *Amelia* (1751). Though the plots of the two stories bear few specific resemblances, they do both concern the plights of women imperiled by seductive corrupters, and American audiences in the 1780s would have been familiar with Fielding's novel. See Fielding, *Amelia* (1751; London: Penguin, 1987) esp. Book Seven, 299-300 and Book Ten, 419; and Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: OUP, 1986) 114-15.

<sup>2</sup>*The Columbian Magazine: Or Monthly Miscellany* (Sept. 1787): 664-65.

<sup>3</sup>*The Columbian Magazine* (Oct. 1787): 677. All future page references to *Amelia* will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>4</sup>Like so many other literary organs of the early republic, *The Columbian Magazine* alternated between condemning the dangers of novel-reading—especially for young women—and incessantly publishing just such stories, some of which contained warnings against their own consumption. See, for instance, "Honoraria: Or the Mourner Comforted," *The Universal Asylum and Columbian Magazine* (Dec. 1792): 363-64, where the heroine ascribes to novel-reading her vulnerability to seduction: "Hitherto I had been a stranger to love; for my mind had not been affected by novels" (363). For a sampling of the cautionary tales of seduction (or of narrow escapes) published by *The Columbian Magazine* between 1788 and 1792, see also, "Ela;

or the Delusions of the Heart" (Sept.-Dec. 1788): 525-35, 592-602, 648-57, 706-11; "The History of Arabella; or the Unfortunate Couple" (Jan. 1790): 45-47; "The History of Melidor and Clarinda; or the Progress of Infidelity" (Nov. 1791): 321-23. Similar contradictory tendencies are evident, of course, in the great bestseller of the 1790s, Susannah Rowson's *Charlotte Temple*, ed. Ann Douglas (1791; New York: Penguin, 1991).

<sup>5</sup>On the Richardsonian model of seduction and betrayal, see Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982) esp. 67-122; Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York: Stein and Day, 1966) esp. 23-104; and Terry Eagleton, *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality, and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1982). Though the story of Clarissa Harlowe's seduction and ruin provided a formula that republican writers endlessly reproduced, the Richardsonian inheritance included an alternative model, as I will show in the conclusion of this essay. Richardson's *Pamela, Or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) was at least as popular in America as was *Clarissa*. Unlike *Clarissa*, *Pamela* successfully resists her would-be seducer, ultimately reforming, marrying, and domesticating her aristocratic master, Mr. B. As we will see, this model became a more popular one for American authors in the nineteenth century, as the seduction melodrama was eclipsed by the sentimental, domestic novel. See Fliegelman 274n43 and, below, note 44.

<sup>6</sup>*Columbian Magazine* (supp., 1787): 877-78. Future references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>7</sup>On later adaptations of this formula, see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Misprisioning *Pamela*; Representations of Gender and Class in Nineteenth-Century America," *MQR* 26 (1987): 9-28, esp. 13-16, 21-26.

<sup>8</sup>On the possibilities and limitations of republican womanhood, see Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1980); Ruth H. Bloch, "The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America," *Signs* 13 (1987): 37-58; and Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic," *WMQ* 3rd ser. 44 (1987): 689-721.

<sup>9</sup>See Kerber 233-64; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Domesticating 'Virtue': Coquettes and Revolutionaries in Young America," *Literature and the Body: Essays on Populations and Persons*, ed. Elaine Scarry (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1988) 160-84; Davidson esp. 38-79, 110-50; and Bloch esp. 51-53.

<sup>10</sup>As men of the rising middle classes began to work outside the family household, and as new conceptions of the place of sentiment in moral education—drawn primarily from the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment—became popular in America, more importance was accorded to maternal influence and feminine sensibility. See Fliegelman esp. 9-35.

<sup>11</sup>On classical republican constructions of virtue, see J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975) and *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985) esp. 37-50, 91-123; also Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolo Machiavelli* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984). For its relation to the gendered constructions of virtue during the American Revolution, see Bloch 37-47.

<sup>12</sup>On the politics and rhetoric of seduction, more generally, see Anna Clark, "The Politics of Seduction in English Popular Culture, 1748-1848," *The Progress of Romance:*

*The Politics of Popular Fiction*, ed. Jean Radford (London: RKP, 1986) 47-70; Dianne Hunter, ed., *Seduction and Theory: Readings of Gender, Representation, and Rhetoric* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1989) esp. 73-85, 214-25.

<sup>13</sup>Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1967) 56-58. The Dickinson essay he cites is *An Essay on the Constitutional Power of Great-Britain over the Colonies in America* . . . (Philadelphia, 1774) 108. The conflation of images of forcible rape and persuasive seduction is a frequent rhetorical turn in eighteenth-century descriptions of seduction, at least from Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748) onwards. While the effects of the woman's "seduction" in these images are invariably presented as violent and tragic, the different degrees of persuasion, coercion, and submission that are commonly understood to distinguish a seduction from a rape tend to be erased in the figurative language I am examining here. See Clark 56-57; Ellen Rooney, "Criticism and the Subject of Sexual Violence," *MLN* (1983): 1269-78; Christine Froula, "The Daughter's Seduction: Sexual Violence and Literary History," *Signs* 11 (1986): 621-44, esp. 626.

<sup>14</sup>For a sampling of political pamphlets employing such imagery, one might begin with the list Bailyn cites in his discussion of power and liberty (see 57n3, 58n4); also Shirley Samuels, "Infidelity and Contagion: The Rhetoric of Revolution," *EAL* 22 (1987): 183-91. There has been considerably more scholarship examining the significance of sexual imagery in the rhetoric and iconography of the French Revolution; see Dorinda Outram, *The Body and the French Revolution: Sex, Class and Political Culture* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989) esp. 124-52; Vivian Cameron, "Political Exposures: Sexuality and Caricature in the French Revolution"; and Lynn Hunt, "The Many Bodies of Marie Antoinette: Political Pornography and the Problem of the Feminine in the French Revolution," in Lynn Hunt, ed., *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1991) 90-130.

<sup>15</sup>Oxenbridge Thacher, *The Sentiments of a British American* (Boston, 1764), rpt. in Bernard Bailyn, ed., *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750-1776*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1965) 484-98, esp. 496.

<sup>16</sup>On Paine's rhetoric, see Martin Roth, "Tom Paine and American Loneliness," *EAL* 22 (1987): 175-82.

<sup>17</sup>Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776), *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, ed. Philip S. Foner, vol. 1 (New York: Citadel, 1945) 30.

<sup>18</sup>Paine, Appendix to *Common Sense* (1776), *The Complete Writings* 1: 40. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>19</sup>Paine, *The American Crisis* I (Dec. 23, 1776), *The Complete Writings* 1: 51.

<sup>20</sup>Paine, *The American Crisis* III (April 19, 1777), *The Complete Writings* 1: 90. Emphasis and capitalization in the original.

<sup>21</sup>Paine, *The American Crisis* XI (May 22, 1782), *The Complete Writings* 1: 209, 214.

<sup>22</sup>In this essay, I will use the New College and University Press edition of *The Power of Sympathy or The Triumph of Nature, Founded in Truth*, ed. William S. Osborne (Albany: New College and UP, 1970). Page references will be provided parenthetically in the text. On the publication history of the novel, see Davidson 83-109; Philip Young, "'First American Novel': *The Power of Sympathy* in Place," *Coll* 11 (1984): 115-24; and Richard Walser, "Boston's Reception of the First American Novel," *EAL* 17 (1982): 65-74.

<sup>23</sup>Dedication to the first edition of the novel, Jan. 1789, reprinted in Davidson 94.

<sup>24</sup>See Kerber 233-64; Davidson 38-54; Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: OUP, 1987) 96-134; Terry Lovell, *Consuming Fiction* (London: Verso, 1987) 47-72.

<sup>25</sup>Considering similar issues in Diderot's *La Religieuse* (1760), David Marshall has written that the novel "raises the possibility that the effects of sympathy might be disturbingly similar to the effects of seduction—indeed, that the Richardsonian novel of sensibility designed to move and touch its reader might be dangerous as well as deceptive." See *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy* (Chicago: U of Chicago, 1988) 86; see 84-104.

<sup>26</sup>See Kerber 243-46; also Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1990) 150-76.

<sup>27</sup>See Fliegelman 12-35; Bloch 49-50. Though Brown tends here to emphasize the importance of reason and the dangers to which the sympathies may lead, his analysis of the proper balance between reason and the sympathies is both inconsistent and ambiguous. As Fliegelman and Bloch have noted, the opposition often posed between ethical "rationalists" and "sentimentalists" may overstate the distances between the two positions, since both relied on affective ties and familial nurture for the cultivation of children's reason or moral sense. In *The Power of Sympathy*, neither reason nor the sympathies protect Brown's most virtuous characters from ruin. Thus, the rational or sentimental faculties Brown thought necessary to avert such disaster seem all the more enigmatic. Accidents of inheritance and fate are more significant in these characters' histories than is their exercise of rational or moral agency which, at best, is called upon to respond to circumstances not of the characters' own making. Furthermore, the often sensationalistic, even voyeuristic tone of Brown's narrative leads one to suspect that he is not entirely repelled by the passionate chaos unleashed by the sympathies. See note 30.

<sup>28</sup>In a roughly contemporary work, Adam Smith defined "sympathy" as "our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever." *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759; 6th ed., n.d.) 4; and David Marshall, *The Figure of Theater* (New York: Columbia UP, 1986) 167-92.

<sup>29</sup>See *The Power of Sympathy* Letter L, 113.

<sup>30</sup>Fiedler 116-25. In a posthumously published work, Brown further undermines social convention in the name of "inclinations prompted by reason and nature"—inclinations that, in the words of the novel's "naturally" virtuous heroine, are now explicitly fused. In *Ira and Isabella: or The Natural Children. A Novel. Founded in Fiction* (Boston: Belcher and Armstrong, 1807), the protagonists are young lovers who are told, after they have married but before the marriage is consummated, that they are in fact brother and sister—illegitimate children of the same man. It turns out, finally, that Ira's father is, instead, the husband of the woman who has nursed both "fatherless" children; thus the two lovers are only husband and wife, not sympathetic siblings as well. In this instance, then, two wrongs do make a right—since both fathers philandered and then dissembled, the tragically incestuous consequences of *The Power of Sympathy* are avoided. As Ira's seduced and abandoned mother refuses to comply with the formulae of "novelists" who "presume it for the interest of morality to represent misfortune and death as the consequences of indiscretion," and instead, "notwithstanding her slip found the means to secure an honest,

industrious husband" (116-17), *Ira and Isabella* seems almost a parody of Brown's earlier novel.

<sup>31</sup>Fliegelman cites examples including the popularity of literary accounts of the "fortunate fall" in novels ranging from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) to Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748); the increasing emphasis on maternal persuasion over paternal coercion in the moral education of children; the emerging language of contract and self-sovereignty in law and politics; and even the shift from the patriarchal Jehovah of seventeenth-century Protestantism to the merciful, fraternal Christ of Unitarianism. See *Prodigals, passim*, and "Familial Politics, Seduction, and the Novel: The Anxious Agenda of an American Literary Culture," *The American Revolution: Its Character and Limits*, ed. Jack P. Greene (New York: New York UP, 1987) 331-54; also Philip Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Meridian, 1977) 335-61; Edwin G. Burrows and Michael Wallace, "The American Revolution: The Ideology and Psychology of National Liberation," *Perspectives in American History* 6 (1972): 167-306. There are intriguing parallels between Brown's eighteenth-century assignment to fathers of the originating sin of seduction and Freud's account of the origins of hysteria in female patients who either had been "seduced" (i.e., sexually abused) by their fathers or, in a later version, had fantasized about seducing their fathers. Freud famously argued that the repression of these experiences (or desires) led to hysterical symptoms in later life. On the changing meanings of seduction in Freud's accounts, see Martha Noel Evans, "Hysteria and the Seduction of Theory," *Seduction and Theory*, ed. Hunter, 73-85, esp. 82.

<sup>32</sup>Lewis 700-01.

<sup>33</sup>Pocock, "Virtues, Rights, and Manners," *Virtue, Commerce, and History* 37-50; Smith-Rosenberg, "Domesticating 'Virtue'" 164-72; Steven Watts, "Masks, Morals, and the Market: American Literature and Early Capitalist Culture, 1790-1820," *Journal of the Early Republic* 6 (1986): 127-49, esp. 140-42. Brown himself despairs of the rise of fashion and the decline of more virtuous sentiments in *The Power of Sympathy* Letter XII (50-53).

<sup>34</sup>The fact that father and son share the same name—no first names are provided—does more than complicate a recapitulation of the plot. When we are first introduced to the younger Harrington, he too is plotting a seduction. Though Harriot's republican virtues save him from following his father's path, neither lover will escape the consequences of Harrington, Sr.'s earlier transgression.

<sup>35</sup>On the theme of sibling incest in eighteenth-century literature, see W. Daniel Wilson, "Science, Natural Law, and Unwitting Sibling Incest," *SECC* 13 (1984): 249-70; Anne Dalke, "Original Vice: The Political Implications of Incest in the Early American Novel," *EAL* 23 (1988): 188-201.

<sup>36</sup>Concern about the moral, epistemological, and hence the political bases of the new nation were especially pronounced during the years of the French Revolution, when particularly those allied with the Federalist Party, such as John Adams and Timothy Dwight, worried about the potential consequences of what they saw as the dangers of popular unreason. See Linda K. Kerber, *Federalists in Dissent: Imagery and Ideology in Jeffersonian America* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1970) esp. 173-215; Patrice Higonnet, *Sister Republics: The Origins of French and American Republicanism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1988) esp. 171-280; Mitzi Myers, "Reform or Ruin: 'A Revolution in Female Manners,'" *SECC* 11 (1982): 199-216; Samuels esp. 189-90.

On Charles Brockden Brown's contributions to these debates, see, for instance, the wreckage wrought by sensory and moral deception in *Wieland; or, The Transformation* (1798; New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1926) and *Edgar Huntly; or Memoirs of a Sleepwalker* (1799; New York: Penguin, 1988); also Michael Davitt Bell, "The Double-Tongued Deceiver: Sincerity and Duplicity in the Novels of Charles Brockden Brown," *EAL* 9 (1974): 143-63.

<sup>37</sup>Gordon Wood, "Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century," *WMQ* 3rd ser. 39 (1982): 401-41. See also Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (Cambridge: CUP, 1986) 174-79.

<sup>38</sup>On this transition in political economy, see Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977) esp. 100-13; and Isaac Kramnick, *Republicanism and Bourgeois Radicalism: Political Ideology in Late Eighteenth-Century England and America* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990) 163-99, esp. 194-98.

<sup>39</sup>The Adams quotation is from *Correspondence between the Hon. John Adams and the Late William Cunningham, Esq.* (Boston, 1823) 19, quoted in Fliegelman, *Prodigals* 237.

<sup>40</sup>[James Madison], "Number 51," *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Clinton Rossiter (New York: Mentor, 1961) 322.

<sup>41</sup>[Alexander Hamilton], "Number 6" and "Number 71," *Federalist* 54, 432. In Hamilton's imagination, women were not the innocent victims of seduction but instead corrupt collaborators: "The influence which the bigotry of one female, the petulancies of another, and the cabals of a third, had in the contemporary policies, ferments, and pacifications of a considerable part of Europe, are topics that have been too often descanted upon not to be generally known" ("Number 6," 55). For a somewhat different reading of Hamilton's political language, see Judith N. Shklar, "Alexander Hamilton and the Language of Political Science," *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: CUP, 1987) 339-55. Shklar's comparison of Hamilton's interest in the behavior of voters—the "responses of individuals"—to Madison's concern with "the formation and interaction of interest groups" (345, 344) accords with my reading of the two, as does her emphasis on the importance of voting—deliberate individual participation in the political process—in Hamilton's political thought. Political failure was less a product of contending interests and forces than it was "the fault of the candidates and of those who misled or failed to present the issues properly to the voters" (347).

<sup>42</sup>[Madison], "Number 10" and "Number 51," *Federalist* 80, 322. Hirschman (29-30) notes the contrast between Hamilton's effort to set passion against passion "within the arena of a single soul" in Number 72 and Madison's concern, in Number 51, with opposing the ambition of one branch of government to that of another.

<sup>43</sup>Bloch 56-58. To the extent that, by the nineteenth century, virtue did not simply signify female chastity and instead was used to characterize masculine endeavor, it came to mean men's success in the marketplace, ideally as successful entrepreneurs or independent artisans. See Kramnick, "Republican Revisionism Revisited," in *Republicanism and Bourgeois Radicalism* 196; and Scan Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class* (New York: OUP, 1984) ch. 2.

<sup>44</sup>See Nina Baym, *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels By and About Women in America, 1820-1870* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1978) 25-30; Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime*

*Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (London: Verso, 1987) 94-97, 190-91; also Martha Vicinus, "'Helpless and Unfriended': Nineteenth-Century Domestic Melodrama," *NLH* 13 (1981): 127-43.

<sup>45</sup>Warner, *Letters of the Republic* 150, 172-74. Warner ascribes these changes to the evolving meanings of "publication" and the nature of the subject constituted by the developing culture of print in the early republic.

<sup>46</sup>I would like to thank Ruth Bloch, Thomas Ferraro, Linda Kerber, Joan Landes, David Myers, and Rosemarie Zagari for their advice and encouragement. Earlier versions of this essay were presented at the December 1990 meeting of the American Historical Association and at the Women's Studies colloquium at Sarah Lawrence College, and I am grateful to the audiences at both sessions for their suggestions.