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Morals, Manners, and the Republican Mother

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ONE OF THE MOST PROVOCATIVE IDEAS TO EMERGE FROM THE RECENT historiography of the Revolutionary era is the concept of the “Republican Mother.” Originally articulated by contemporaries such as Benjamin Rush and Judith Sargent Murray, republican motherhood affirmed that women had a profound influence on the political values of the American Republic. As wives and mothers, women were seen to make an essential, though indirect, contribution to the body politic. According to Linda Kerber, the historian who coined the term, “the Republican Mother’s life was dedicated to the service of civic virtue: she educated her sons for it, she condemned and corrected her husband’s lapses from it.”¹ Republican motherhood preserved traditional gender roles at the same time that it carved out a new, political role for women.

Despite the brilliance of Kerber’s insight, no one has yet offered a completely satisfactory explanation for the intellectual origins of republican motherhood. Mary Beth Norton, Jan Lewis, and Ruth Bloch have all examined aspects of women’s experience in late eighteenth-century America, but have given relatively little attention to the question of intellectual antecedents.² Kerber has provided the most extended analysis. In her book, *Women of the Republic*, and in several articles,

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she searches western political theory for discussions of women's role in the polity. Her conclusions are mostly negative. "Western political theory, even during the Enlightenment," Kerber says, "had only occasionally contemplated the role of women in the civic culture. It had habitually considered women only in domestic relationships, only as wives and mothers. It had not devised any mode by which women might have a political impact on government or fulfill their obligations to it."³ Drawing on the "language of liberal individualism" and the "discourse of civic humanism," Americans, Kerber suggests, created the role of republican motherhood largely from scratch; it was, she says, a "revolutionary invention."⁴

Yet a reexamination of Enlightenment thought, especially of intellectual traditions that Kerber did not probe in detail,⁵ reveals that the origins of republican motherhood are not as obscure as once imagined; they are indeed recoverable. As Kerber claimed, few thinkers specifically considered women's contribution to the polity. However, many thinkers, particularly those from one school of the Scottish Enlightenment, did probe women's contribution to society—a development which prepared the way for understanding women's role in the polity. These writers articulated certain key concepts, such as a sociological understanding of the family, a four-stage theory of history, and a characterological concept of "manners," all of which provided critical links between European and American conceptualizations of womanhood. In addition, this reexamination of Enlightenment thought challenges both the essentially republican and specifically American character of intellectual developments regarding women's role in late eighteenth-century America. What has been called "republican motherhood" was actually part of a broad, long-term, transatlantic reformulation of the role and status of women.

* * *

One important source for the new ideas about women and the family came from a group of Scottish theorists that J. G. A. Pocock has labelled "the civil jurisprudential school."⁶ These thinkers, especially Adam Smith, David Hume, Henry Home (Lord Kames), William Robertson, and John Millar, promoted a theory of history and society in which women played a prominent role. The Scots maintained that the family represented a primary transmitter of customs, habits, morals,

and manners. Arguing that women acted as both the means and beneficiaries of social progress, they claimed that women softened men's brutal passions and rose in stature as society improved. In effect, the Scottish theorists broke down the conceptual barrier between public and private spheres and defined a social—though not political—role of importance for women. Building on this basis, Americans could then articulate the more revolutionary role for women that was embodied in the Republican Mother.

Thinkers in both the civil jurisprudential and the classical republican traditions grappled with the same central problems—the tension between virtue and commerce—but they reached very different conclusions. For classical republicans, commerce tended to undermine virtue. As Pocock explained it, the security of the Republic was believed to depend on the independence of its citizens. Each male citizen should own enough property to ensure that his political choices were not compromised by economic dependence, and he should possess sufficient martial spirit to defend his liberty and property. The growth of commerce threatened to destabilize a republican polity. Societies, as Drew McCoy has observed, were thought to follow an almost inevitable cycle of growth, corruption, and decay. As a society developed and grew more prosperous, its members increasingly sought to exchange the goods they produced for the goods they did not have. Beyond certain rudimentary levels, commerce was thought to encourage luxury, promote avarice, and spread vice. It threatened the economic independence upon which citizenship rested, subverted virtue, and sapped the martial spirit. Thinkers in this tradition, then, generally regarded commerce with suspicion and unease.⁷

The civil jurisprudential school of the Scottish Enlightenment self-consciously sought an alternative to this view. According to the historian Nicholas Phillipson, the tradition first emerged during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in reaction to the backwardness of the Scottish economy. Intellectuals and politicians pressured Parliament to lift the restrictions on Scottish trade and open up Scotland's ports to ships of all countries. In 1707, the Scots received a compromise in the form of the Act of Union. They were allowed to trade freely, but at the cost of their political autonomy. Henceforth Scots would send Members of Parliament to London, not to their own assembly. Grappling with this new situation, Scottish thinkers began to analyze the value of nonpolitical forms of association and to probe

in new detail the relationship between commerce and society. Using civil law to organize their thinking, they emphasized the importance of the legal protections of the individual and his property *from* the state, as opposed to the participation of the individual *in* the state.⁸

Ironically, although most of the thinkers associated with this school had grown up within the classical republican tradition, they eventually repudiated many of its conclusions, especially with regard to commerce. They emphasized the salubrious effects of trade, including its controlling and civilizing effects on morals and manners. Conceptualizing commerce in a new way, these philosophers sought, according to historian Michael Ignatieff, “to transpose the terms [of the debate] from a moralizing to a historical plane, changing the question from how people *ought* to behave in commercial society, to the question of how commercial society was making them behave, whether they willed it or not.”⁹ Cultural refinement, enlightened taste, and heightened standards of politeness and civility were thought to be among the many benefits of trade. Although their support of commerce was not without reservations (and some had rather serious doubts), Scots of the civil jurisprudential school saw no necessary conflict between a flourishing commercial economy and a flourishing commonwealth.

Unlike many other Enlightenment thinkers, civil jurisprudential thinkers saw women and the family as crucial to an understanding of the relationship between virtue and commerce. Kames and Millar devoted whole chapters to these subjects, while Hume, Smith, and Robertson gave them more than passing attention. Two themes regarding women and the family recur in their writings: The first involves the relationship of the family to society; the second expounds a four-stage theory of history in which women play a significant role. In the course of explaining this schema, these writers developed a concept of “manners” that portrayed women as pivotal to the civilizing process.

Beginning in 1725 with the great moral philosopher Francis Hutcheson, the Scots began to analyze the role of what modern social scientists would call nonlegal norms in shaping social and economic institutions and values. Hutcheson depicted the family as a key transmitter of customs, habits, morals, and manners, and hence, as the basic building block of larger society.¹⁰ Following him, Hume challenged accepted ideas about the origins and functions of the family. He emphasized the role of custom and habit, as opposed to blood or instinct, in creating family ties. The family was, he said, “the first and original principle

of human society.” Sexual attraction between men and women provided the primary social bond; offspring provided a further “principle of union” between couples. As they grew, children sought out relationships beyond the confines of their immediate family.¹¹ Building on these extrafamilial associations, individuals forged a variety of social institutions. The creation of government followed from the collective decision to live according to certain rules based on common interest, utility, and the preservation of the species.¹² Yet the family remained the basis for the entire social structure.

Adam Smith also stressed the fundamental importance of the family. In his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith argued that the force holding society together was what he called “sympathy,” the individual’s ability to identify with others and seek their approval.¹³ Sympathy was learned in the family. The affection family members felt for one another was, according to Smith, “in reality, nothing but habitual sympathy.”¹⁴ Sympathy was not instinctive or in any way inherent in blood relationships; rather, physical proximity and frequent contact promoted it. Thus, “the similarity of family characters, which we so frequently see transmitted through several successive generations, may, perhaps, be partly owing to this disposition, to assimilate ourselves to those whom we are obliged to live and converse a great deal with.”¹⁵ Through the family, Smith explained, individuals also learned patriotism—not the selfless emotion of legend, but the product of habituated attachments to existing social institutions, an appreciation of the interests extending beyond one’s self. “Every individual,” Smith wrote, “is naturally more attached to his own particular order or society, than to any other. His own interest, his own vanity, the interest and vanity of many of his friends and companions, are commonly a good deal connected with it. He is ambitious to extend its privileges and immunities. He is zealous to defend them against the encroachments of every other order or society.”¹⁶ Smith thus located the origins of political sentiment and political society in the family.

Neither Smith nor Hume can be said to have implicitly or explicitly addressed the nondomestic functions of women. It is unlikely that either of them ever considered the possibility of such a role in any detail. Nevertheless, these two thinkers laid important groundwork for the formulation of the concept of republican motherhood. In *Women of the Republic*, Kerber explains the assumptions behind republican motherhood. “The notion that a mother can perform a political

function,” she says, “represents the recognition that a citizen’s political socialization takes place at an early age, that the family is a basic part of the system of political communication, and that patterns of family authority influence the general political culture.”¹⁷ Viewing the family as an integral part of the political culture, the Scottish philosophers saw that the relationships and attitudes forged within the family directly shaped the public realm. The social theories of Smith and Hume thus helped erode what Kerber calls the “ancient separation” of the domestic world from politics.¹⁸

* * *

The second theme concerning women in the writings of the civil jurisprudential school emerged in the four-stage theory of history, a four-part analysis of the development of human civilization. This theory was not exclusively Scottish in either origins or development. It was first suggested by Montesquieu in his *Spirit of Laws*, published in 1748. By the 1750s, the theory had gained widespread acceptance among French and Scottish philosophers. Rousseau’s early works, particularly *The Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* and *The Essay on the Origin of Languages*, reflected his familiarity with the model. In the 1790s, Condorcet presented a ten-stage schema which was obviously based on the earlier four-stage theory. Yet it was among the Scots that the idea gained its fullest articulation and most sophisticated expression. A historian of the social sciences maintains that by the 1780s the four-stage theory, as formulated by the Scots, “was beginning to appear as something very like orthodoxy” for writers in “‘the history of rude nations.’”¹⁹ Americans then, received the idea through a variety of authors and sources, but found it expressed most coherently and systematically in the writings of the Scottish Enlightenment.

The four-stage theory postulated a progression from hunter to shepherd to farmer to merchant, with the merchant and mercantile society representing the culmination of history, the pinnacle of material comfort, social refinement, and intellectual achievement. Though the Scots recognized that commerce could produce deleterious excesses, they assumed a rough correlation between a society’s ability to satisfy its material needs and its degree of refinement and cultivation. Each society could be located along the spectrum from savagery to civilization. Yet history was not moving inexorably in one direction. Not all societies

progressed at the same pace. Some ancient societies were far more civilized than modern ones. Some societies declined after having achieved civilization. Nevertheless, consumption and production drove the civilizing process.²⁰

In each stage, social evolution both benefitted females, by increasing their status, and depended on them, because women softened and refined men's passions. In the first stage, the hunter phase, the savagery of physical existence degraded relations between the sexes. Because humans spent most of their time trying to satisfy their basic material wants, there was little time for reflection, leisure, or self-cultivation. In this period, women, according to Millar, were "the servants or slaves of the men."²¹ They managed the household, took care of the children and performed manual tasks, such as digging roots and carrying firewood. Men and women mingled freely, and sexual relationships were promiscuous. People did not marry out of affection or mutual admiration; rather, bonding was, as Kames put it, merely an act of "animal love."²² In general, according to Robertson, "the first institution of social life [was] perverted. That state of domestic union towards which nature leads the human species, in order to soften the heart to gentleness and humanity, [was] rendered so unequal, as to establish a cruel distinction between the sexes, which forms the one to be harsh and unfeeling, and humbles the other to servility and subjection."²³ At this stage, women held little or no influence over men.

Life in pastoral societies improved the status of women somewhat. The pasturing of cattle and sheep as the primary means of livelihood made physical existence less tenuous. Freed from the constant demands of physical survival, members had spare time for leisure and self-improvement. Men and women had fewer opportunities for casual interaction and found it more difficult to engage in purely physical relationships. The growing separation of the sexes, combined with the emergence of class distinctions, helped elevate women's status. Men now had to court women to prove their worthiness and suitability as mates. Love, according to Millar, became "a passion, instead of being a mere sensual appetite."²⁴

The movement into an agricultural society resulted in further improvements in the condition of women. An agrarian economy produced sufficient goods to ease considerably the burdens of subsistence. Individuals enjoyed greater wealth in the form of land and greater leisure for self-cultivation. Men and women came to inhabit completely sep-

arate worlds, with very little casual contact between the sexes. These developments benefitted—though not unambiguously—women. According to Robertson, “In countries where refinement has made some progress, women, when purchased, are excluded from society, shut up in sequestered apartments, and kept under the vigilant guard of their masters.”²⁵ The lack of contact between men and women heightened their desire for one another, and the warlike spirit of the age produced chivalry. Unable to indulge their merely sensual appetites, men were forced to compete for women, to sublimate and channel their passions. According to Millar, “the sincere and faithful passion, which commonly occupied the heart of every warrior, and which he professed on all occasions, was naturally productive of the utmost purity of manners, and of great respect and veneration for the female sex.”²⁶ Courtly love replaced animal love. Yet like Montesquieu in the *Persian Letters*, most Scots recognized that this stage represented a kind of “false dawn” for women, as the improvement in their status came at the expense of their living in society.²⁷

Only in the fourth stage with the appearance of mercantile society did women emerge, according to Kames, “out of slavery to possess the elevated state they are justly entitled to by nature.”²⁸ Having satisfied their basic material needs, individuals began to trade goods that they produced for items they did not have. Some turned from agriculture to manufacturing. With the purchase of luxury goods, people enhanced their physical comfort and security. As they became more affluent, males had more time to cultivate the pleasures of the mind: they engaged in art, science, and literature. Eventually, however, they became bored and idle. Seeking diversions, men began to value women who could amuse them with spirited conversation and beguile them with charming behavior. The rigid separation of the sexes began to break down. Women were encouraged to mix with men. Now, according to Millar, women came “to be more universally admired and courted upon account of the agreeable qualities which they possess[ed], and upon account of the amusement which their conversation afford[ed]. They [were] encouraged to quit that retirement which was formerly esteemed so suitable to their character, to enlarge the sphere of their acquaintance, and to appear in mixed company, and in public meetings of pleasure.”²⁹ Women were valued for their accomplishments rather than viewed as mere sex objects. They came to be seen, Kames wrote, “as faithful friends and agreeable companions.”³⁰

Theorists of the four-stage model recognized that in order for women

to fulfill their new role as men's friends and companions, they would need to be educated. Scottish thinkers advocated education for females primarily so that women could heighten their attractiveness to men rather than as an end in itself. Hume, for example, urged women to learn history. But in explaining why women should learn history, he commented that "a woman may behave herself with good manners, and have even some vivacity in her turn of wit; but where her mind is so unfurnished, it is impossible her conversation can afford any entertainment to men of sense and reflection."³¹ Although Kames did not believe that women who lived in republics should be educated, he insisted that women who lived in monarchies, where they must spend a great deal of time entertaining men, must be educated. "In an opulent monarchy where polygamy is prohibited, female education is of high importance, not singly with respect to private happiness, but with respect to the society in general."³² At the same time, Kames also recognized that educated women made better mothers. "Married women, in particular," he said, "destined by nature to take the lead in educating their children, would no longer be the greatest obstruction to good education, by their ignorance, frivolity, and disorderly manner of living. Even upon the breast, infants are susceptible of impressions; and the mother hath opportunities without end of instilling into them good principles, before they are fit for a male tutor."³³

On the face of it, the Scots seemed to portray women as strictly subordinate to men. In fact, the Scots maintained that commercial society raised women to a position of what they called "equality" with men. Hume spoke, for example, about "that nearness of rank, not to say equality, which nature has established between the sexes."³⁴ Kames insisted that human history could be seen in terms of "the gradual advance of the female sex to an equality with the male sex."³⁵ Millar insisted that in "refined and polished nations," women were "entitled to the same freedom [with men], upon account of those agreeable qualities which they possess, and the rank and dignity which they hold as members of society."³⁶ In the Scots' own terms, women in the fourth stage were regarded as the equals of men. Yet this was a very peculiar definition of equality, a social equality that did not admit the possibility of women's political, legal, or occupational equality with men. It was a kind of equality that seemed equitable only in a historical context in which women had either been ignored, treated as men's slaves, or idealized out of existence. Moreover, the Scots regarded women as

equal only because this status suited men's needs: they now needed them as friends and companions. Despite these limitations, the fact that the thinkers used the term at all with respect to women was highly significant and opened up the possibility for further expansions in the meaning of the concept.

The four-stage theory of history depicted women in a dual fashion: as an index to and an instrument of social advancement. The more civilized a society, the higher status its women enjoyed. In a savage age, women were treated like slaves; in an enlightened, commercial age, they were treated as equals. "That women are indebted to the refinements of polished manners for a happy change in their state," Robertson said, "is a point which can admit of no doubt."³⁷ At the same time, as a society developed, women advanced the civilizing process, especially in the later stages, by cultivating men's higher instincts and pleasures and helping them contain their more ungovernable passions. "The gentle and insinuating manners of the female sex," Kames said, "tend to soften the roughness of the other sex; and where-ever women are indulged with any degree of freedom, they polish sooner than men."³⁸ The primary contribution of women, then, was to improve and refine the manners of men.

For the Scots, as well as for other Enlightenment thinkers, "manners" carried important implications. "Manners" did not simply mean proper etiquette or correct social deportment; it connoted ideas of individual morality and personal character, suggesting a strong connection between private values and public behavior.³⁹ In the *Spirit of Laws*, Montesquieu defined his terms, differentiating laws from manners and manners from customs. "Manners and customs," he noted, "are those habits which are not established by the laws, either because they were not able, or were not willing to establish them." Laws, he said, regulate the behavior of the subject, while manners regulate the actions of the man. Customs regulate exterior conduct, while manners "relate to the interior conduct."⁴⁰ Even earlier, Englishmen Richard Steele and Joseph Addison had used "manners" in a similar fashion in their periodical the *Spectator*. One of the first publications explicitly aimed at a female audience, the *Spectator* ran many articles addressing the ways in which women could use their influence to help shape male behavior.⁴¹ Whenever it appeared in this sense, "manners" implied a belief that the socializing process both refined and cultivated the moral sense—and ultimately helped reconcile the individual with the duties of

citizenship.⁴² Manners thus implied something far more profound than the way a person held his or her teacup.

Picking up on this meaning, Scots of the civil jurisprudential school often used “manners” in this characterological sense of the term. “The laws of good manners,” Hume said, were “a kind of lesser morality calculated for the ease of company and conversation.”⁴³ “In general,” asserted Smith, “the style of manners which takes place in a nation, may commonly upon the whole be said to be that which is most suitable to its situation. Hardiness is the character most suitable to the circumstances of a savage; sensibility to those of one who lives in a very civilized society.”⁴⁴ Or as Kames put it in reference to women, “Women came to be regarded, in proportion as the national manners refined.”⁴⁵ “Manners,” then, referred to what we might call mores, or social norms. Thus when women influenced the manners of men, they helped shape the very fabric of society.

The four-stage theory of history, along with a sociological understanding of the family and a characterological notion of manners, helped forge the foundations of republican motherhood. It described women both as an integral part of the process of social development and as important contributors to it. The schema led thinkers to advocate the benefits of education for women, even if for somewhat limited purposes. And it proclaimed that women were the social equals of men, even if that equality carried with it no political privileges. With this basis, the leap from European to American conceptions of womanhood was not as great as previously believed.

Despite the lucidity of the Scottish sources it is important to recognize that the antecedents of republican motherhood do not lay exclusively in the civil jurisprudential tradition of the Scottish Enlightenment. Many other eighteenth-century authors expressed these or similar ideas. Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Condorcet, as previously mentioned, were influential purveyors of the four-stage theory of history. Steele and Addison’s *Spectator* has been called “the *locus classicus* of a new appreciation of the importance of women” in the early eighteenth century.⁴⁶ Moreover, Scots outside the civil jurisprudential school, such as Thomas Reid and James Fordyce, set forth important theories concerning the civic implications of “politeness” and the socializing functions of the family that undoubtedly contributed to the reevaluation of womanhood occurring in late eighteenth-century America.⁴⁷ Lockean liberalism, which emphasized the role of the individual, and classical

republicanism, which stressed the importance of civic virtue, must also be considered.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the civil jurisprudential school represents one major source of ideas that undergirded republican motherhood—a source that thoroughly and systematically expressed ideas found in more scattered and inchoate forms elsewhere in Enlightenment thinking.

* * *

Suggestive as the Scottish ideas are, it must be shown that they affected American thinking about the role of women in a Republic. The general influence of the Scottish Enlightenment is indisputable. It is well-known that educated Americans read the major treatises of the movement. By the time of the Revolution, Smith and Hume had become staples of the college curriculum. John Witherspoon of Princeton and William Small of William and Mary personally brought Scottish ideas to America. Political thinkers such as James Wilson and Benjamin Rush received their higher educations at Scottish universities. An eight-volume American edition of Kames's *Six Sketches on the History of Man* was published in 1776, along with a one-volume abridgement. In fact, a recent survey of early American libraries revealed that during the period from 1777 to 1790, Kames's *Sketches* appeared in a larger percentage of libraries (55 percent) than any other work except Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (62 percent). Other Scottish authors, especially Hume, Smith, and Hutcheson, were also well-represented in the libraries.⁴⁹

Some publishers even made a deliberate effort to popularize Scottish theories among women. The editor of the one-volume abridged version of Kames's *Sketches* noted that his "great object" was "to make this a popular work." Consequently, "chiefly with a view to the female sex," he had "subjoined an English translation of all the quotations from other languages."⁵⁰ Thus women who did not attend college, as well as men who did, had access to the theories of the civil jurisprudential school. In this light, it is more comprehensible why individuals as diverse as Benjamin Rush, a male Edinburgh-educated physician, and Judith Sargent Murray, a female author of numerous articles in ladies' magazines, were among the earliest proponents of republican motherhood.

Though it cannot be attributed solely to the influence of the Scottish

sources, the four-stage theory of history permeated American writings of the late eighteenth century on topics related to women, society, and social structure. The idea appeared in publications ranging from political speeches to ladies' magazines to occasional pamphlets and daily newspapers. Notably, these publications appealed not just to the elite, but to a broader middle-class audience as well. Many writers explicitly identified the progress of civilization with the progress of politeness. Writing in 1768, James Wilson and William White published a series of sixteen essays in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle* that discussed, among other things, "the four general periods" of human history and the advance toward politeness, which they defined as "*the natural and graceful expression of the social virtues.*"⁵¹ In 1792, Thomas Odiorne published a work called *The Progress of Refinement, A Poem in Three Books* that traced "the connexion between *nature, the fine arts, and virtue*" throughout history.⁵² An author writing in *The Gentlemen & Ladies' Town & Country Magazine* for October 1789 asserted, "In those countries which we call barbarous, where art and politeness are unknown, nature has this great advantage, that simplicity of manners often secure innocency of mind, and as virtue is not civilized, neither is vice refined."⁵³ *The Philadelphia Minerva* printed without attribution and without comment a section from Kames's *Six Sketches on the History of Man* called the "Slavery of Married Women, in South America."⁵⁴

The characterological notion of manners also surfaced repeatedly. Good manners were said to differentiate more advanced countries from less advanced ones. "Refinement of manners," said J. A. Neale, "was gradually introduced into the world, through the almost imperceptible gradation of literary knowledge. . . . Gothic Rudeness, and barbarity of manners, were disrobed of their disgusting appearance, before the beautiful sunshine of wisdom."⁵⁵ The polishing and refining of manners was thought to be an essential part of the civilizing process. *The Weekly Visitor* of Jan. 12, 1811, proclaimed, "We are peculiarly calculated for social intercourse; peculiarly fitted for rational enjoyment of civilized society. . . . The only effectual way by which we can polish the mind, harmonize the passions, smooth the rude, rough, uncultivated manners, [is] by rendering the person easy and graceful; and [to] display the whole excellence of your nature, by calling into action all the energies of the soul."⁵⁶

In these formulations, the concept of manners provided a critical

bridge between European and American ideas about women. American thinkers frequently used the term “manners” in the characterological sense that the Scots and others had employed it. In an Independence Day address to the Delaware Society of the Cincinnati, James Tilton commented: “In watching over the liberties and freedom of our country, it is not enough to guard against the encroachments of power, and the disorderly exercise of delegated authority in our rulers. Dissipation and corruption of manners, in the body of the people are equally to be avoided. Good laws cannot be executed without good manners.”⁵⁷ The Scottish-born and educated James Wilson asked, “What are laws without manners? How can manners be formed, but by a proper education?”⁵⁸ Manners, insisted the *American Museum* in 1789, “are the basis of government.”⁵⁹

Yet American authors did not simply echo the European sources. They took the ideas of the Scots and others and pushed them further than their originators had imagined. Unlike the Scots, Americans thought through the implications of manners to understand their effect on the status of women. If good government depended on good laws and good laws depended on good manners, then those who shaped the people’s manners also shaped the law and government. According to the four-stage theory, women were responsible for society’s manners. As the Americans saw it, women inevitably influenced government and politics. “The men possess the more ostensible powers of making and executing the laws,” James Tilton observed. “The women, in every free country, have an absolute control of manners: and it is confessed, that in a republic, manners are of equal importance with laws.”⁶⁰ Wilson made a similar point. In his lectures on the law, Wilson addressed the women in his audience, saying, “To protect and to improve social life, is, as we have seen, the end of government and law. If, therefore, you have no share in the formation, you have a most intimate connexion with the effects, of a good system of law and government.”⁶¹ Through their roles as wives and mothers, as shapers of morals and manners, women were seen to make a crucial, though indirect, contribution to the commonwealth. They had a political role to play.

More systematically than the Scots, American thinkers also pursued the implications of their ideas for women’s education. Hume, Millar, and Kames had argued that women should be educated primarily so that they could better amuse men in their leisure. Kames, however,

had seen no need to educate women in a republic because he believed the men there would be too busy attending to government business to need entertaining by women.⁶² Americans, however, turned this notion on its head. In a republic, more than in any other form of government, women should be educated. In a republic, the women must raise the future generations of male citizens and must support their husbands in the sacrifices they made for the government. Clearly influenced by Kames's comments on married women, Benjamin Rush put it this way:

[Women] should not only be instructed in the usual branches of female education, but they should be taught the principles of liberty and government; the obligations of patriotism should be inculcated upon them. The opinions and conduct of men are often regulated by the women in the most arduous enterprises of life; and their approbation is frequently the principal reward of the hero's dangers, and the patriot's toils. Besides, the first impressions upon the minds of children are generally derived from the women. Of how much consequence, therefore, is it in a republic, that they should think justly upon the great subjects of liberty and government!⁶³

Female education, in other words, would improve the quality of male citizenship. A few thinkers, especially women such as Judith Sargent Murray, urged that women's education be regarded as an end in itself, so that, in her words, women would be "qualified to administer by their *own efforts to their own wants*."⁶⁴ Most Americans, however, justified female education primarily in terms of women's relationship to men. Unlike the Scots, Americans perceived the profoundly political dimensions of women's role.

Americans also applied and extended the European ideas to their understanding of equality between the sexes. The public discourse of the post-Revolutionary era was filled with references to women's rights and their equality with men. According to one male author, women were to be considered "our equals by nature, as entitled to the same rights, capable of the same enjoyments, and expectants of the same immortality."⁶⁵ "The resolution I have taken," said James Tilton, "to give 'incessant attention to preserve inviolate the sacred rights of human nature,' lays me under the strongest obligation, to advocate [women's] just equality in political society."⁶⁶ "Our women," proclaimed Elijah Waterman in 1794, are "in possession of their genuine rights, exercising their talents in the happy sphere of domestic duty, and conferring many blessings upon their country, by the amiableness of their manners and the prudence of their conduct."⁶⁷ *The American Spectator*, an early

conduct book, confidently asserted, “THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN, as well as OF MEN, are acknowledged, and . . . [women] are caressed as the first and dearest friends of their partners.”⁶⁸

Such language seems anomalous given the fact that women at this time enjoyed no political rights and only limited legal rights.⁶⁹ Moreover, none of these authors advocated such rights for women. This discrepancy can be understood, however, by interpreting the term “equality” in the sense that the Scots employed it. Men and women, the Scots believed, were social equals, partners in the progress of humankind. Men were responsible for government; women, for society. At this stage in history, women enjoyed the right to be treated not as men’s slaves, but as their “equals”—their friends and companions. Though this notion did not allow for equality in the modern sense, it did raise the possibility of some equivalence between the sexes—a prospect that, with the exception of equality in the spiritual realm, had not previously been considered.⁷⁰

Elevating women to social equality with men, however, effectively negated the possibility of political equality. Political equality, when it was discussed at all, was said to distract women from their equally important role as the protectors of society’s morals and manners. Social equality affirmed traditional gender roles while it disparaged the desirability or necessity of a direct political role for women. Politics was thought to betray woman’s feminine nature and make her like men. In an essay attacking the British feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, Timothy Dwight insisted that women who wanted political rights “voluntarily relinquish the character and rights of women. Women, as such, have rights to tenderness, delicate treatment, and refined consideration. Men have no such rights. When women leave their character, and assume the character and rights of men, they relinquish their own rights, and are to be regarded and treated, as men.”⁷¹ Nothing a woman could do in the political sphere could compensate for the loss of femininity. In his lectures on law, James Wilson discussed the achievements of three outstanding women rulers: Semiramis of Nineveh; Zenobia, queen of the East; and Elizabeth of England. Although he praised their accomplishments and found them the equal of male rulers, he still disapproved of them. These women, he said, “had too much of the masculine in them.” Despite their successes, “in all of them, we feel and we regret the loss of the lovely and accomplished woman: and let me assure you, that, in the estimation of our sex, the loss of the lovely and accomplished

woman is irreparable, even when she is lost in the queen.”⁷² For Americans, equal rights did not mean identical rights for men and women; rather, it meant a slight shift of perspective in understanding women’s roles, which were, in fact, as constricted as ever.

This acceptance of social equality between men and women nevertheless led some Americans to claim that the United States represented the culmination of the historical process, at least in terms of the status of women. American men believed themselves to be far more enlightened than men in other countries. “How are those nations to be pitied and despised,” wrote an author in *The Universal Asylum, and Columbian Magazine*, “who consider the female part of the species as far inferior to the male, and in consequence, entirely disregard, and totally neglect to instruct, their daughters, considering them only as future slaves of some rightful lords and masters, who shall bid highest for them in their purchase.”⁷³ Far from being regarded as slaves, Americans esteemed women for their abilities and accomplishments. “Thrice blessed are we,” said Hannah Foster, “the happy daughters of this land of liberty, where the female mind is unshackled by the restraints of tyrannical custom, which in many other regions confines the exertions of genius to the usurped powers of lordly man! Here, virtue, merit, and abilities are properly estimated under whatever form they appear.”⁷⁴ Women should be grateful to live under these conditions. According to Samuel L. Mitchill, “under the mild influence of Christianity and the easy subsistence to be procured in our republican states, the condition of women is undoubtedly preferable to that of their sex in any part of the globe. They ought to know that Fredonia [the United States] is a woman’s terrestrial Paradise. Here they are the rational companions of men, not their playthings or slaves.”⁷⁵ How could American women want political rights when they lived in a “terrestrial Paradise”?

* * *

If this assessment of the origins of republican motherhood is correct, it raises further questions about the ideology of the postrevolutionary era. Women and the civil jurisprudential tradition must be taken into account in understanding Americans’ changing perception of the relationship between commerce and virtue. Pocock, for example, has noted that in the four-stage theory, the roles of women and commerce were functionally the same: both softened and refined men’s passions

and turned their minds to more civilized pleasures.⁷⁶ If, however, women and commerce occupied the same theoretical role, how might the ideology of a growing commercial society have affected attitudes toward women? To what extent did stereotypes about women shape expectations about commerce and consumption? What were the social and intellectual bases of the association between luxury, effeminacy, commerce, and corruption? How did the functional equivalence of women and commerce promote the role of women as the primary consumers of the family? Republican motherhood, it seems, was as much a socioeconomic construct as a political one.⁷⁷

In addition, this assessment of the origins of republican motherhood—along with recent articles by Jan Lewis and Ruth Bloch—raise other, even more basic questions about the concept. It may be argued that as provocative as the notion is, both key words—“republican” and “motherhood”—fall short of capturing the full reality of women’s role in the late eighteenth century: it was neither essentially republican nor specifically American in character. In “The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic,” Lewis persuasively argues that the literature of the post-Revolutionary period emphasized not so much the contribution of women as mothers, but their role as wives. As virtuous companions to the hearty male citizens of the young Republic, wives shaped men’s ideas and values in the service of the common good. The emphasis on motherhood, Lewis says, came somewhat later, primarily after 1830.⁷⁸ In the post-Revolutionary period, then, Americans were reconceiving the role of women in general, not just with respect to childrearing.

Moreover, the work of Bloch, along with the present analysis, calls into question the degree to which changes in attitudes toward women were distinctively American—or even “republican”—at all. In “The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America,” Bloch traces a shift in the connotations of virtue from its masculine emphasis in classical republican ideology to its more feminine allusions in the rhetoric of the early nineteenth century. She points to three sources for this change: American evangelical religion, Anglo-American literary sentimentalism, and Lockean psychology.⁷⁹ Like the civil jurisprudential school discussed in this article, all of the traditions discussed by Bloch antedated—or were contemporaneous with—the American Revolution, and thus did not emerge primarily out of revolutionary ideology. Many of the authors who articulated the new attitudes toward

women were English or Scottish, not American. Often they were not supporters of republican government at all.

The ideas, then, that generated a new conceptualization of women's role in the United States seem to have been part of a much broader Anglo-American reevaluation of attitudes toward women that was occurring in the last half of the eighteenth century—even before the American Revolution took place. The Revolution, it is true, prompted some Americans to glimpse a possibility that the British had not: that in their traditional roles as wives and mothers, women made an indirect contribution to the polity. Nevertheless, this insight extended an intellectual development that was already in process rather than represented a radical innovation.

To the already changing attitudes toward women, the American Revolution injected a further stimulus for change. During the Revolution, women demonstrated their centrality to the political process: they were critical to the success of the boycotts against British goods; instrumental in providing emotional and material support for the troops; and essential in assuming male roles as men left their farms and businesses to go to war.⁸⁰ Though these actions failed to produce a widespread movement for women's political rights, it did highlight the disparities between men's assertion of "rights" and "equality" with respect to Britain and the dispossessed status of women in America. In an effort to reconcile these contradictions, Americans turned to Enlightenment thinking, particularly to the theories that acknowledged a pivotal role for women in society and granted them a kind of equality. Admittedly, these theories made no provision for a political role for women—but that was all the better, since Americans sought no fundamental change in gender roles, but merely a rhetorical resolution to their intellectual conundrum.

The new conceptualization of womanhood straddled a boundary between tradition and innovation; it was, as Kerber says, "Janus-faced."⁸¹ It congratulated Americans for having moved farther along the road of social progress than any other nation, but did not require a basic alteration in the relations between the sexes. It extended a kind of equality to women, but at the same time justified the status quo. It acknowledged the importance of female education, but generally saw its function in terms of women's relationship to men. It recognized the political significance of the family, but did not give women the right to vote. It represented, in other words, an intellectual compromise

between the insights of the European Enlightenment and the rhetoric of the American Revolution. It created Anglo-American Womanhood.

NOTES

1. Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1980), 229.

2. Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750–1800* (Boston, 1980); Mary Beth Norton, "The Evolution of White Women's Experience in Early America," *American Historical Review* 89 (June 1984): 593–619; Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic," *The William & Mary Quarterly* 44 (Oct. 1987): 689–721; Ruth H. Bloch, "American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of the Moral Mother, 1785–1815," *Feminist Studies* 4 (June 1978): 101–26; Bloch, "The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America," *Signs* 13 (Autumn 1987): 37–58. Bloch is concerned with intellectual antecedents, though not specifically with reference to republican motherhood.

3. Linda K. Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment—An Historical Perspective," *American Quarterly* 28 (Summer 1976): 187–205, quotation on 202–203; Kerber, "'History Can Do It No Justice': Women and the Reinterpretation of the American Revolution," in *Women in the Age of the American Revolution*, ed. Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville, 1989), 3–42; *Women of the Republic*, 15–32. An early piece that expresses many of the ideas embodied in the "Republican Mother" article, but does not use the term is Kerber's "Daughters of Columbia: Educating Women for the Republic, 1787–1805," in *The Hofstadter Aegis: A Memorial*, ed. Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick (New York, 1974), 36–59.

4. Linda K. Kerber, "The Republican Ideology of the Revolutionary Generation," *American Quarterly* 37 (Fall 1985): 488; Kerber, "Republican Mother," 196, 199; *Women of the Republic*, 27, 235, 269, 284, quotation on 284.

5. In her treatment of the Enlightenment, Kerber scants the contributions of the Scots, devoting only one highly critical paragraph to Lord Kames. "Republican Mother," 196; *Women of the Republic*, 26–27, 27n., 29.

6. J. G. A. Pocock, "Cambridge Paradigms and Scotch Philosophers: a Study of the Relations Between the Civic Humanist and the Civil Jurisprudential Interpretation of Eighteenth-Century Social Thought," in *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (Cambridge, 1983), 235–52.

7. J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, 1975), 506–52; Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (New York, 1980), 13–104; Lance Banning, "Some Second Thoughts on Virtue and the Course of Revolutionary Thinking," in *Conceptual Change and the Constitution*, ed. Terence Bell and John Pocock (Lawrence, Kans., 1988), 194–212.

8. Nicholas Phillipson, "Towards a Definition of the Scottish Enlightenment," in *City & Society in the 18th Century*, ed. Paul Fritz and David Williams (Toronto,

1973), 125–47, esp. 128–30; John Robertson, “The Scottish Enlightenment at the limits of the civic tradition”; Nicholas Phillipson, “Adam Smith as Civic Moralism”; and Pocock, “Cambridge Paradigms and Scotch Philosophers,” in *Wealth and Virtue*, 137–78, 179–202, 235–52; J. G. A. Pocock, “The Mobility of Property and the Rise of Eighteenth-Century Sociology,” in *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge, 1985), 103–23.

9. Michael Ignatieff, “John Millar and Individualism,” in *Wealth and Virtue*, 335.

10. Francis Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1755; reprint, New York, 1968), Book 3, 149–99; Gladys Bryson, *Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton, 1945), 176–80.

11. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being An Attempt To Introduce The Experimental Method Of Reasoning Into Moral Subjects*, 4 vols. (1739; reprint, Edinburgh, 1826), 2:255. For other essays in which Hume discusses women and/or the family, see *Ibid.*, 2:144–47, 354–59; “Of Love and Marriage” (1741), and “Of the Study of History” (1741), in *The Philosophical Works of David Hume*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1826), 4:522–28, 528–33; “Of Polygamy and Divorces” (1742), and “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences” (1742), in *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1825), 1:104–30, 178–87; “Of Political Society,” in *Hume’s Political Discourses*, ed. William Bell Robertson (1752; reprint, London, 1908), 247–52. See also, Bryson, *Man and Society*, 155–59.

12. Hume, “Of Political Society,” 252.

13. Phillipson, “Adam Smith,” 183–87; Bryson, *Man and Society*, 160–61; Russell Nieli, “Spheres of Intimacy and the Adam Smith Problem,” *The Journal of the History of Ideas* 47 (Oct.-Dec. 1986): 611–24, esp. 613, 617; Donald Winch, *Adam Smith’s Politics: An Essay in Historiographic Revision* (Cambridge, 1978), 28–45.

14. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments; or, An Essay Towards an Analysis of the Principles by which Men Naturally Judge concerning Conduct and Character, First of their Neighbours, and then of Themselves* (1759; reprint, London, 1812), 385.

15. *Ibid.*, 393.

16. *Ibid.*, 405.

17. Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 283.

18. *Ibid.*, 284.

19. Ronald L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge, 1976), 31–36, 76–91, 99–209. Quotation is on 176. It is his use of the stages theory that leads Kerber to claim, “Condorcet came closest to inventing procedures as well as justifications for including women in politics.” Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 21; Kerber, “Republican Mother,” 191.

20. Meek, *Social Science*, 99–209; Duncan Forbes, “‘Scientific’ Whiggism: Adam Smith and John Millar,” *The Cambridge Journal* 7 (Aug. 1954): 643–70; Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton, 1977), 48–66; McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, 35–40; Pocock, “Cambridge Paradigms and Scotch Philosophers,” 240–43; Robertson, “The Scottish Enlightenment and the Civic Tradition,” 157; Pocock, “Mobility of Property,” 114–18.

21. John Millar, *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks; or, An Inquiry into the Circumstances which give Rise to Influence and Authority in the Different Members of Society in John Millar of Glasgow, 1735–1801*, ed. William C. Lehmann (1771; reprint, New York, 1979), 193. For other examples, see Lord Kames (Henry Home), *Six Sketches on the History of Man* (abridged version) (Philadelphia, 1776), 212–13; and William Robertson, *The History of America*, 2 vols. (1777; reprint, Albany, 1822), 1:255–56.

22. Kames, *Six Sketches* (abridged version), 220.
23. Robertson, *History of America*, 1:257.
24. Millar, *Origin of Ranks*, 204.
25. Robertson, *History of America*, 1:256.
26. Millar, *Origin of Ranks*, 214.
27. Charles Louis de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, trans. C. J. Betts (1721; reprint, Harmondsworth, Eng., 1973), 75–77, 206–08; Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727–1783* (Oxford, 1969), 605.
28. Kames, *Six Sketches* (abridged version), 224.
29. Millar, *Origin of Ranks*, 224.
30. Kames, *Six Sketches* (abridged version), 220.
31. David Hume, “Of the Study of History,” 4:531. See also Millar, *Origin of Ranks*, 219–20.
32. Kames, *Six Sketches* (abridged version), 255.
33. *Ibid.*, 252–53.
34. Hume, “Of Polygamy and Divorces,” 1:181.
35. Kames, *Six Sketches* (abridged version), 235.
36. Millar, *Origin of Ranks*, 225.
37. Robertson, *History of America*, 1:255.
38. Kames, *Six Sketches* (abridged version), 195.
39. *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “manners”; J. G. A. Pocock, “Virtues, Rights, and Manners,” in *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 37–50, esp. 48–50; Stephen A. Conrad, “Polite Foundation: Citizenship and Common Sense in James Wilson’s Republican Theory,” *The Supreme Court Review*, ed. Philip B. Kurland, Gerhard Casper, and Dennis J. Hutchinson (Chicago, 1984), 359–88. For a discussion of eighteenth-century manners in the more conventional sense, see Michael Curtin, “A Question of Manners: Status and Gender in Etiquette and Courtesy,” *Journal of Modern History* 57 (Sept. 1985): 395–423.
40. Charles Louis de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, ed. David Wallace Carrithers (1748; reprint, Berkeley, 1977), 294.
41. *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1965).
42. John Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: 1987), 117–40; Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, 604–607; Conrad, “Polite Foundation,” 364–65.
43. Hume, “Of Political Society,” 250.
44. Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 365.
45. Kames, *Six Sketches* (abridged version), 235.
46. Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse*, 117.
47. *Ibid.*, 97–104, 117–40; Conrad, “Polite Foundation,” 376–77.
48. Nathan Tarcov, *Locke’s Education for Liberty* (Chicago, 1984), 137–41, 184–98; Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority, 1750–1800* (Cambridge, 1982), 12–29; Lester H. Cohen, “Mercy Otis Warren: The Politics of Language and the Aesthetics of Self,” *American Quarterly* 35 (Winter 1983): 481–98; Bloch, “Gendered Meanings of Virtue,” 47–53; Kerber, “Republican Ideology,” 481–85.
49. Douglas Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal* (New York, 1971), 110–11, 190–91; Anna Haddow, *Political Science in American Colleges and Universities, 1636–1900* (New York, 1939), 44–49; Garry Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence* (New York, 1978), 175–80; D. H. Meyer, “The Uniqueness of the American Enlightenment,” *American Quarterly* 28 (Summer 1976): 168–70; Carl Binger, *Revolutionary Doctor: Benjamin*

Rush, 1746–1813 (New York, 1966), 32–48; John Clive and Bernard Bailyn, “England’s Cultural Provinces: Scotland and America,” *The William & Mary Quarterly* 11 (Apr. 1954): 200–13; Phillipson, “Definition of the Scottish Enlightenment,” 144–46; Eric T. Carlson, Jeffrey L. Wollock, and Patricia S. Noel, *Benjamin Rush’s Lectures on the Mind* (Philadelphia, 1981), 356, 370–75, 462; Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Six Sketches on the History of Man*, 8 vols. (Philadelphia, 1776) and *Six Sketches* (abridged version). For an invaluable guide to what Americans were reading in the late eighteenth century, see David Lundberg and Henry F. May, “The Enlightened Reader in America,” *American Quarterly* 28 (Summer 1976): 262–71. Percentages cited are in the appendix following the article. John Millar, though less well-known in the United States than the other thinkers, was known to important figures such as James Madison and James Wilson. See William C. Lehmann, *Scottish and Scotch-Irish Contributions to Early American Life and Culture* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1978), 163–64.

50. Kames, *Six Sketches* (abridged version), vi.

51. “The Visitant,” *Pennsylvania Chronicle, and Universal Advertiser* (Philadelphia), February 15–22, 1768; February 22–29, 1768.

52. Thomas Odiorne, *The Progress of Refinement, A Poem in Three Books* (Boston, 1792), v.

53. “Mentor,” “A Letter on Education,” *The Gentlemen & Ladies’ Town and Country Magazine* (Boston), Oct. 1789, 476.

54. “Slavery of Married Women, in South America,” *The Philadelphia Minerva*, Sept. 12, 1795.

55. J. A. Neale, “An Essay on the Genius and Education of the Fair Sex,” *The Philadelphia Minerva*, Mar. 14, 1795.

56. “Invisible Spectator—Number 2,” *The Weekly Visitor* (New York), Jan. 12, 1811, 150. For other examples of the penetration of the four-stage theory, see “On Manners,” *The Gentlemen & Ladies’ Town and Country Magazine* (Boston), Feb. 1789; Dr. Young, “Thoughts on Pleasure,” *American Moral and Sentimental Magazine*, Dec. 18, 1797; Mercy Otis Warren, *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution with Biographical, Political and Moral Observations*, 2 vols. (1805; reprint, Indianapolis, 1988), 1:86.

57. James Tilton, M.D., President of the Delaware Society of Cincinnati, “An Oration, pronounced on the 5th July, 1790,” *The Universal Asylum & Columbian Magazine* 5 (Dec. 1790), 371–72.

58. James Wilson, “Lecture on the Study of the Law in the United States” (1790), in *The Works of James Wilson*, ed. Robert Green McCloskey, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1967), 1:85.

59. “Remarks on the Manners, Government, Laws, and Domestic Debt of America,” *The American Museum; Or Repository of Ancient and Modern Fugitive Pieces &c.*, 5 (Philadelphia), Mar. 1789, 269. For other examples of this usage of the term “manners,” see “Agrippa,” *The Complete Anti-Federalist*, ed., Herbert J. Storing, with Murray Dry (Chicago, 1981), 4:93–94; Robert A. Rutland, ed., *The Papers of George Mason, 1725–1792*, 3 vols. (Chapel Hill, 1970), 2:862–63. Jan Lewis also gives examples of this sense of the term in “The Republican Wife,” 700. For a contemporary piece which viewed critically this notion of manners, see “On Manners.”

60. Tilton, “Oration,” 372.

61. Wilson, “Lecture on Law,” 1:88.

62. The exact quotation is: “Cultivation of the female mind is not of great importance in a republic, where men pass little of their time with women. Such cultivation where polygamy is indulged, would to them be a great misfortune, by opening their eyes to their miserable condition. But in an opulent monarchy where polygamy is prohibited,

female education is of high importance, not singly with respect to private happiness, but with respect to the society in general." Kames, *Six Sketches* (abridged version), 255.

63. Benjamin Rush, "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic" in *Essays, Literary, Moral and Philosophical* (Philadelphia, 1806), 19.

64. [Judith Sargent Murray], *The Gleaner: A Miscellaneous Production* (Boston, 1798), 1:168; Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 251–55.

65. "Letter on female education to a woman in Kings County, Maryland," *The Columbian Magazine*, Sept. 1787, 643.

66. Tilton, "Oration," 372.

67. Elijah Waterman, *An Oration Delivered before the Society of Cincinnati, Hartford, July 4, 1794* (Hartford, 1794), 19.

68. *The American Spectator, or Matrimonial Preceptor* (Boston, 1797), vi.

69. For a discussion of women's political and legal rights in the post-Revolutionary period, see Joan R. Gundersen, "Independence, Citizenship, and the American Revolution," *Signs* 13 (Autumn 1987): 59–77; Carole Shammas, Marylynn Salmon, Michel Dahlin, *Inheritance in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1987), 63–79; Nancy Cott, "Divorce and the Changing Status of Women in Massachusetts," *The William & Mary Quarterly* 33 (Oct. 1976): 586–614; Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 159–84.

70. It should be noted that by the late eighteenth century, more and more thinkers were acknowledging that men and women possessed equal intellectual abilities. Women's apparent inferiority was attributed to their lack of education. Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 190–99.

71. Timothy Dwight [pseud.], "Morpheus," *The [Massachusetts] Mercury & New England Palladium*, Mar. 2, 1802. For another virulent attack on Wollstonecraft, see Benjamin Silliman, *An Oration Delivered at Hartford on the 6th of July A.D. 1802 Before the Society of the Cincinnati for the State of Connecticut, Assembled to Celebrate the Anniversary of American Independence* (Hartford, 1802), 21–24.

72. Wilson, "Lecture on Law," 1:86.

73. "On the Happy Influence of the Female Sex in Society, and the Absurd Practice of Separating the Sexes Immediately After Dinner," *The Universal Asylum, & Columbian Magazine* (Philadelphia), Mar. 1791, 153.

74. Hannah Foster, *The Boarding School* (Boston, 1798), 31.

75. Samuel L. Mitchill, *Address to the Fredes, or People of the United States on the 28th Anniversary of their Independence* (New York, 1804), 7. For other remarks in this vein, see Elias Boudinot, *An Oration Delivered at Elizabeth-Town, New-Jersey, Agreeably to a Resolution of the State Society of Cincinnati on the Fourth of July, MDCCXCIII* (Elizabethtown, 1793), 23–24; Tilton, "Oration," 373.

76. Pocock, "Mobility of Property," 117–18.

77. A recent work that explores the economic side of republican motherhood is Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York, 1990), esp. 42–55.

78. Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife," 689–90, 720–21. In fact, Kerber uses the term "Republican Mother" to refer both to women's relationships with their husbands and with their children. See, for example, *Women of the Republic*, 229.

79. Bloch, "Gendered Meanings of Virtue," 47–53.

80. *Ibid.*, 73–113; Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 155–94.

81. Kerber, "Republican Ideology," 484.