AYSE NAZ BULAMUR

The Dialogical Zone in Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette*

Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette* (1797) can be read as a sentimental novel with a traditional seduction plot. Rejecting the respectable suitor Reverend Boyer, Eliza Wharton has an affair with the charming, "reformed rake," Major Sanford and dies as she gives birth to her illegitimate baby at the end of the novel.[1] Based on this seduction narrative, *The Coquette* can be labelled as a moralistic novel that represents the downfall of a woman who fails to follow the ideals of virtue and reason in late eighteenth-century American society. However, as Cathy Davidson writes in "Flirting with Destiny," Foster's novel does not represent the one-sidedness of monologic discourse and "does not sustain this didactic summary."[2] In this paper, I will argue that the "dialogic" nature of the novel resists a didactic reading that merely justifies Eliza's tragic death. *The Coquette* is not a sugarcoated pill that encourages eighteenth-century women readers to follow the conventions of society but a dialogic novel that gives voice to multiple viewpoints of women from different status in Foster's society. Using the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin's argument that the unique characteristic of the novel genre is "heteroglossia" and that novels are "internally dialogized images—of the languages,

styles, world views of another,"[3] I will argue that Foster offers us a "panoply of voices" that represent both the patriarchal world view of her own times and the resistance to that dominant ideology.[4] As we witness the discourse of Eliza's friends—Julia Granby, Lucy Sumner, and Mrs. Richman—that justifies patriarchy and her struggle both to obey and resist the ideals of virtue and domesticity, we see how Foster provides differing perspectives on women's role in post-republican American Society.

Bakhtin in "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse" argues that the novel is a dynamic cultural production, which reflects the social forces within that specific culture. He describes the novel as "a dialogized system made up of the images of 'languages,' styles and consciousness" that "are inseparable from images of various world views and from the living beings who are their agents—people who think, talk, and act in a setting that is social and historically concrete."[5] Following Bakhtin's theory, we can argue that Foster's novel can be seen as a "dialogical contact" zone where letters are inseparable from the worldview of their writers. The letters in *The Coquette* do not signify "a single unitary language" and a single ideological standpoint but form an "intersecting plane" where different worldviews clash, oppose, and challenge one another.[6] Foster offers a "mix of varied and opposing voices developing and renewing itself" by constructing the novel in a sequence of letters that reflect a variety of beliefs and discourses in the eighteenth century.[7] The exchange of letters among the female circle in the novel give voice both to the spokeswomen of patriarchal ideology and to those who attempt to resist that dominant discourse of the era. As Bakhtin writes in "Discourse in the Novel," I would argue that *The Coquette* consists of "a diversity of

social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices."[8]

One of the "social speech types" in this dialogic novel speaks through the letters of Julia Granby, Lucy Sumner, Mrs. Wharton, and Mrs. Richman, which can be read as images of a republican, patriarchal worldview in the eighteenth century, that positions women in the domestic sphere and associates them with emotion, purity, and self-sacrifice. They adhere to the rules of femininity and lead respectable lives as single, widowed, or married women. In order to understand how these three women's discourse stands for the dominant worldview of the era, we should note the role of virtue and domesticity in the success of the republic in Foster's times. In "I can step out myself a little," John Paul Tassoni writes:

> Not ones to allow selfish ambitions to crumble their republic, middle-class Americans sought to ensure the survival of their country's moral integrity through feminine virtue[9]…. Because republican writers had visualized their citizens united by affection, by a selfless concern for fellow Americans, and because women were believed to be intrinsically the more emotional of the sexes, women were the "logical" choice to insure virtue both in the home and in the nation at large.[10]

As Tassoni points out, the "fate of the nation" in the late eighteenth century depended on the chastity of women and "ideas of virtue produced conditions" that limited women's domain to marriage, housework and children, with limited access to the socioeconomic sphere.[11]

Julia, Lucy, Mrs. Wharton, and Mrs. Richman act as the "agents" of republican ideals—women "who think, talk, and act" according to the principles of feminine virtue.[12] Their discourse, which can be taken as the image of republican ideals of femininity, encourages Eliza to submit to the society's expectations by remaining pure and moral within the institution of marriage. Mrs. Richman, the "epitome of republican

motherhood in the novel,"[13] for Davidson, has internalized the republican belief that for the future of the nation, women should "set standards of virtuous behavior for their husbands and children."[14] She becomes an agent that transmits patriarchy's power with her efforts to convince Eliza of "the glory of the marriage state." However, Eliza criticises matrimony as being a "selfish state," the "tomb of friendship" that weakens the "tenderest ties between friends" and in which "benevolence itself moves in a very limited sphere."[15] Acknowledging the fact that matrimony excludes women from their social sphere—their former associates and friends—she refuses to imprison herself in the limited sphere. As the representative of the republican ideal of marriage, Mrs. Richman justifies women's limited role in the domestic sphere as being indispensable for the interests of society. She writes, "but the little community which we superintend is quite as important an object; and certainly renders us more beneficial to the public."[16] She argues that in order to benefit the public, it is woman's duty in marriage to circumscribe her enjoyments—neglecting or forgetting her former associates and friends—and to devote herself to her family. She perpetuates the republican logic that limits woman within the "walls" of the marriage institution by accepting her "virtuous" role in the "little community" which she believes is essential for the success of the nation.

The "agents" of the republican ideology not only instruct Eliza about the "glory of the marriage state" but also about the rules of femininity which are defined by men. Lucy encourages Eliza to remain faithful to the codes of femininity and be dependent, virtuous, and sensible. She cautions Eliza that virginity is the "inestimable jewel" of a woman and that its loss will ultimately bring corruption "which can never be repaired."[17] Thus, she advises Eliza to be suspicious of Major Sanford, who declares that he got married not for

love but for his wife's great fortune and that Eliza is "the only object of his affections."[18] She wants Eliza to beware of his "flattering professions" and not let herself to be seduced by the rake.[19] As Tassoni would remark, Lucy and Julia's letters aim to ensure virtue both in the home and in society.

Despite her friends' warnings, Eliza loses her "inestimable jewel," her purity, by spending the night with Sanford in her mother's house. As Davidson writes, "eighteenth century moral tracts,… all share the governing assumption that lost virginity signifies, for a woman, lost worth; that the sexual fall proves the social one, so much so that in this case the signifier and its significance are one and the same."[20] Julia, who lives with Eliza and Mrs. Wharton, discovers Eliza's "guilt" when she sees Sanford leaving their house in the middle of the night. Witnessing their "infamous intrigue," Julia constructs a negative identity of her best friend as she unfolds the "tale" of seduction in her letter to Lucy. With the loss of her virginity, she emerges as the "ruined, lost Eliza!"—"wretched, deluded girl!"—in the correspondence between Lucy and Julia.[21] As Julia Stern in *The Plight of Feeling* writes, "the most dangerous wielders of words in the novel are her own female peers."[22] It is ironic that it is not men but women who label Eliza wretched and punish her for her "fall."

We see how women like Julia act as the guardians, the "voluntary actors" of the system that moulds them into a domestic, pure image by maintaining women's obedience and submission to patriarchy.[23] Discovering her secret, Julia decides to go to Eliza's chamber and "let her know that she was detected."[24] Julia acts as a "detector" who reveals Eliza's secret, condemns her for having an illegitimate affair, and exposes her

guilt to Lucy. In other words, it is not men but women who detect and punish Eliza for her fall from virtue. Julia writes to Lucy,

> I shudder, said I, at your confession! Wretched, deluded girl! Is this a return for your parents' love, and assiduous care; for your friends' solicitude and premonitory advice?[25]

Instead of supporting Eliza in her time of agony, Julia cruelly labels her as the ruined, wretched "other" in society who is doomed to live with her guilt of adultery. She is incapable of consoling and soothing Eliza as "tears flow abundantly" from her eyes. She finally exclaims to Julia, "With great emotion, add not to the upbraidings of a wounded spirit! Have pity upon me, Oh! My friend, have pity upon me."[26] She expects her friend to support and aid her in times of distress: "Julia, if your heart be not shut against mercy and compassion towards me, aid me through this trying scene!"[27]

However, instead of having pity on her best friend, Julia continues to act like the "agent" of republican virtue and condemns her for going "against knowledge and reason; against warning and counsel."[28] Out of "purest friendship" and "under the direction of charity," she offers her hand to Eliza, which is ironically the "hand" of patriarchy that is reluctant to forgive her sin. In "Sisterhood In A Separate Sphere," Claire Pettengill expresses the tension between ideology and friendship that threatens the female circle.

> The novel explores the limits of female friendship, dramatizing not only predictable tensions between ideology and practice of sisterhood, but also among the multiple, contradictory ideologies these women struggle by. Torn between loyalty to one another and to a patriarchal division of the world which simultaneously encourages and thwarts female friendship, Eliza and her friends face quandaries Foster never requires the protégées of Mrs. Williams to imagine.[29]

Foster dramatizes the limits of feminine bonding through Julia's and Lucy's letters that exemplify the dilemma of whether they should be the spokeswomen for republican virtue

and condemn Eliza for her sin, or aid her in her time of suffering. However, their loyalty to patriarchal ideology "thwarts" the female circle in Foster's novel. Instead of being a compassionate friend, who helps Eliza in her "trying scene," Julia contributes to the functioning of republican ideals by acting as a judge, who charges her with "becoming the prey of an insidious libertine."[30] From the letters of Lucy and Julia we see that instead of using the feminine bond to challenge the rules of patriarchy, they exercise power to maintain the obedience and subservience of their peers to the dominant ideology. Towards the end of Julia's letter to Lucy, we read how Eliza responds to "the patriarchal division of the world" that destroys their friendship: "I plead guilty, said she, to all your charges. From the general voice I expect no clemency."[31] For Eliza, Julia and Lucy's language signifies the "general voice" of the republican, patriarchal discourse that advocates moral integrity, purity, and virtue as the essential characteristics of women.

In order to maintain their peers' conformity to the republican ideals, Julia and Lucy equate morality with happiness and justify Eliza's tragic death with her relationship with a married man. Julia writes, "'But let no one reproach her memory. Her life has paid the forfeit of her folly. Let that suffice.'"[32] It seems as if Eliza deserves to be described in a Boston paper "as a stranger, who died at Danvers" while delivering her child, due to her folly.[33] Like Julia, Lucy, who has married "amiable and accomplished" George Sumner, associates purity with felicity and advises her peers to have an honorable and decent life:[34]

> but for the sake of my sex in general, I wish it engraved upon every heart, that virtue alone, independent of the trappings of wealth, the parade of equipage, and the adulation of gallantry, can secure lasting felicity. From the melancholy story of Eliza Wharton, let the American fair learn to reject with disdain every insinuation derogatory to their true dignity and honor.[35]

For the sake of her sex, Lucy cautions women not to fall from virtue and implies that "virtuous choices will be rewarded with personal happiness."[36] For Lucy, Eliza's ruin serves as a lesson for the "American fair," who should aim to live up to the ideals of dignity and honour in eighteenth-century society.

However, the "polyphony" of voices in the novel disrupts the "poetic justice" that Julia's and Lucy's letters seem to call for. Bakhtin writes,

> [The novel is] mercilessly critical, soberly mocking, reflecting in all its fullness the heteroglossia and multiple voices of a given culture, people and epoch. In this huge novel—in this mirror of constantly evolving heteroglossia—any direct word and especially that of the dominant discourse is reflected as something more or less bounded, typical and characteristic of a particular era, aging, dying, ripe for change and renewal.[37]

Foster problematizes the signification of morality with happiness as we witness how virtuous women such as Mrs. Richman and Mrs. Sanford do not live happily ever after marriage. "The general voice" that equates chastity with felicity also bears in itself the voice of grief, despair, and frustration that comes as a result of leading a righteous life. In other words, the general text of patriarchy and republican ideals that is represented in the letters of the "virtuous" women contains a subtext that is both "mercilessly critical" and "soberly mocking" of the dominant discourse.

Julia's and Lucy's lectures on virtue and dignity become questionable as we see how Nancy Sanford, who is honest, pure, and chaste, endures the consequences of marrying a "reformed rake." At the end of the novel, Sanford's lawfully wedded wife is as ruined as his mistress, Eliza. Both deliver dead babies to Sanford. Unable to stand her husband's infidelity, Nancy leaves Sanford, who married her for her money. He writes to his friend Mr. Deighton: "As we lived together without love, we parted without regret."[38] Nancy's virtue does not bring her felicity, as Lucy claims, but the agony of having an

unloving husband who is indifferent to her feelings. Not only Mrs. Sanford, but also Mrs. Richman, the model republican motherhood, "cannot be permanently happy within her familial sphere."[39] After the death of her newly born daughter, she writes, "All my happiness centered within the limits of my own walls; and I grudge every moment that calls me from the pleasing scenes of domestic life."[40] From the accounts of Mrs. Sanford and Mrs. Richman we see that virtue and marriage do not necessarily bring harmony, love, and happiness to women. As their despair and frustration within the limited "walls" of marriage coexist with Lucy's and Julia's moral lectures, we see how the novel represents a variety of women's voices in American culture. Foster both represents the republican ideals of virtue, marriage, and femininity prevalent in her times, and hints at the limitations of that ideology on women. The novel becomes a "constantly evolving heteroglossia" as the signification of virtue and happiness, constructed by the "general voice" of patriarchy, blends and clashes with the voices of married women who are as miserable as the "fallen woman," Eliza. The simultaneous construction of republican ideals of virtue and marriage, characteristic of late eighteenth-century American culture, and deconstruction of those ideals as necessarily advantageous and desirable for women, creates the dialogic zone in the novel.

Another "social speech type" is that of Eliza, who represents the resistance to the "general voice" in the eighteenth century that preaches virtue, domesticity, and reason. She resists the female circle's power to transmit patriarchal ideology in encouraging her to lead a virtuous life by marrying a respectable man like Mr. Haly or Mr. Boyer. From Eliza's point of view, we are presented with the limitations of the "aging" roles of femininity and of matrimony that need to be changed for women's freedom in Foster's

era. For example, in her discourse of marriage, not reason and proportion—which characterize eighteenth-century ideals—but "pleasure" and "sensation" come to the fore. In her first letter to Lucy, we read that she never wanted to marry her "future guardian" who is a "man of worth" and a "faithful friend" because she "never felt the passion of love for Mr. Haly."[41] For the same reason, she hesitates to marry Mr. Boyer who comes from a worthy family, has a good education, and "studied divinity with success."[42] Although the female circle in the novel believes that Boyer's polite manners and uncorrupted morals make him a perfect husband for Eliza, she refuses to "resign her freedom" in "the indissoluble knot."[43] She writes, "I do not intend to give my hand to any man at present. I have but lately entered society; and wish, for a while, to enjoy my freedom, in the participation of pleasures, suited to my age and sex."[44] However, post-republican American society does not suit freedom, and the "participation of pleasures" for her "age and sex." Her refusal to see herself as engaged to Boyer despite her coquettish behavior that encourages him to flirt with her, leads Mrs. Richman to conclude that Eliza has "wrong ideas of freedom, and matrimony."[45]

What might be wrong with her conception of marriage for eighteenth-century society is her want of passion and desire in matrimony. In "A Mob of Lusty Villagers," Elizabeth Dill informs us how "Enlightenment philosophers awkwardly characterize sexual desire as immoral, strictly forbidden, and an enemy to the state and to liberty.[46] As Dill quotes from Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* we see that even women writers in the 1790s equated coquetry with ignorance and irrationality: "Women then having necessarily some duty to fulfill, more noble than to adorn their persons, would not contentedly be the slaves of casual lust…."[47] Eliza deviates from

society by equating desire not with irrationality but with freedom and enjoyment. Her "delusive dream of sensual gratification" leads her to have an affair with a married but charming Sanford.[48] From her fondness for Sanford, Lucy concludes that not reason but fancy influences Eliza's judgment and behaviour. She tells her that pleasure is "unsatisfactory enjoyments; incapable of gratifying those immortal principles of reason and religion, which have been implanted in your mind by nature."[49] In line with the eighteenth-century ideals, she advises her friend to follow reason, "lay aside those coquettish airs," and marry Boyer who is a "man of sense and honor."[50] In other words, like Wollstonecraft, Lucy foregrounds the "noble" duties Eliza has to fulfil by marrying a man of worth and ensuring virtue in her family. Once again we see how Lucy's language is inseparable from the worldview of Foster's times that human beings should be guided by reason, regularity, and proportion, as opposed to fancy, imagination, and pleasure. However, the discourse of desire and temptation in Eliza's letters challenges the republican concept of woman as necessarily pure and virtuous. We might argue that Foster hints at the limitations of that worldview that encourages women to restrain themselves and follow their reason in the choice of a soul mate. Foster represents the voice of women who suffer because they cannot live up to society's expectations. With the tragic death of Eliza, we see how women who listen to their "heart" instead of the dictates of reason have no place in society. Foster's giving voice both to women who internalize the ideals of virtue and to those who refuse to act as the agents of dominant ideology also creates the dialogic zone where differing points of view blend and clash.

As the number of Eliza's letters decreases, she gradually ceases to exist both in the female circle and in the novel. She writes to Julia:

> I hope Mrs. Sumner and you will excuse my writing but one letter, in answer to the number I have received from you both. Writing is an employment, which suits me not at present. It was pleasing to me formerly, and therefore, by recalling the idea of circumstances and events which frequently occupied my pen in happier days, it now gives me pain.[51]

In the same letter, she explains that the female circle's constant "watch" on her and their regulation of her "girlish airs" has led her to stay aloof from that circle.[52] She writes, "having incurred so much censure by the indulgence of a gay disposition, I am now trying what a reclusive and solitary mode of life will produce."[53] Female bonding asserts its power to silence Eliza's desires and passion for Sanford and to regulate her coquettish behaviour. Her friends are successful in functioning as the agents of patriarchy; they perpetuate the functioning of that ideology by remaining indifferent to Eliza's feelings and lecturing her on conforming to society's expectations for women. As Stern writes, "As the likelihood of sympathetic understanding and exchange narrows down to near impossibility, the prospect of writing to a hostile audience loses all appeal."[54] As her friends take from her the right to express her emotions and sexual urges, which are not acceptable to society, Eliza chooses not to write. Confronting the general, dominant social ideology through her friends' letters, she finds herself powerless to give voice to her individual desires and needs. As her friends censure her discourse of passion and desire, she is incapable of narrating her tale of seduction to her mother as well. In her last letter to her mother, she writes: "In what words, in what language shall I address you? What shall I say on a subject which deprives me of the power of expression? Would to God I had been totally deprived of that power before so fatal a subject required its exertion!"[55] She acknowledges the fact that the society deprives her of the power to

express her temptation, sexual desire, and adultery. She remains invisible in written discourse as a "fallen woman."

Eliza's silence can be seen either as resistance or obedience to the republican ideals of femininity. On the one hand, we can interpret her giving up the pen as her refusal to speak phallogocentric language that identifies women with domesticity, virtue, and purity. From the letters of Julia and Lucy we see how they have become the spokeswomen of patriarchy by promoting moral integrity in the female circle. They speak the language of patriarchy that assigns a limited social status to women within the institution of marriage. These women's letters give no space for Eliza to express her individual desires. In other words, women have no voice in language to speak for their feelings and thoughts. Eliza's friends try to censure her discourse of desire in the letters by encouraging her to resist temptation. It is ironic that it is not men but women in Foster's novel who attempt to censure sexual desire and seduction in her language. Using Michel Foucault's definition of power, Tassoni points out how the discourse of Lucy, Julia, and Mrs. Richman perpetuates patriarchal ideology: "The singularity of their vision comes to represent an oppressive discourse, functioning panoptically to ensure the discipline of subjects in a patriarchal society."[56] Instead of internalizing patriarchal ideology and speaking the language of that ideology in the letters, Eliza chooses not to write. In this sense, her silence can be seen as her resistance to the moral lectures of the female circle and her refusal to act according to the principles of society.

On the other hand, Eliza's gradual disappearance from the letters and her refusal to narrate her feelings might also suggest her acceptance of the traditions of eighteenth-century society. She accepts the fact that she has no place in society as a single woman

having an affair with a married man. At the end of the novel we see that she cannot defend her feelings and actions that are contrary to the social rules. In her letter to Mrs. Wharton, she calls herself "polluted," "fallen," and a ruined child who is "no more worthy of her parentage."[57] As she chooses not to write her seduction, we see that she does not have enough power to challenge the signification of femininity with virtue and to break the chain of morality in the female circle. Thus, her silence can also be seen as her acceptance of being "fallen" and her inability to defend her tale of seduction in the letters. Unable to conform to her female circle's expectations, she chooses to silence her private desires in her letters. Whether her gradual disappearance signifies her resistance or conformity to social structure, her silence also contributes to the polarity of views—voices that represent the belief systems and worldviews of Foster's era. If *The Coquette* "speaks in all its voices, in all the languages and styles" of eighteenth-century American society, we can argue that Eliza's silence displays the language or style of women who struggled either to resist or to obey the codes of femininity in that era.[58] Her hesitation to write about her sexual desires or about the details of her relationship with Sanford might signify the inner struggles of those women who were labelled as "coquettes" in the eighteenth century.

We have seen that the multiplicity of voices and speech types in the novel resists the simple didactic, moralistic reading that perpetuates the signification of femininity with morality, and virtue with happiness. There is no unified message or unitary discourse that controls the novel. *The Coquette* "is a system of intersecting planes" where differing worldviews and discourses oppose, blend, and clash in the correspondence

between the characters.[59] The question is where does Foster stand in this dialogic zone? Bakhtin writes:

> The author (as creator of the novelistic whole) cannot be found at any one of the novel's language levels: he is to be found at the center of organization where all levels intersect. The different levels are to varying degrees distant from this authorial center.[60]

He argues that the "author is in a dialogical relationship" with the characters.[61] In other words, it is difficult to identify the author with one of the social speech types, languages, or points of view in the novel. We cannot identify a character as the spokesperson of the author's ideological standpoint. Instead the author can be "found at the center of" heteroglossia where different outlooks, ideologies, and voices about women's roles in society intersect. We can argue that it is impossible to associate Foster either with "the general voice" that encourages women to ensure virtue both in the home and in the nation or with Eliza's resistance to that voice. Through the "language zone" of the characters, Foster offers differing conceptions of marriage, virtue, and desire in the eighteenth century but refuses to be associated with one, unified, single worldview. In "An Assault on the Will," Kristie Hamilton also points out the lack of authoritarian author-figure in the novel:

> Because the form Foster chooses foregrounds the reactions of multiple voices in the community to events, it offers a dialectical analysis of Eliza's fall that refuses the tidy resolution possible when a third person narrator authoritatively pronounces judgment.[62]

As Hamilton points out, the letter format contributes to the "dialogy" in the novel. The omniscient authorial voice dissolves in the characters' correspondence that represents a polyphony of voices in Foster's era.

Ultimately, Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette* resists the simple reading of the novel as poetic justice that grants happiness to the virtuous, and punishes those who deviate from social expectations by breaking the chains of femininity. Although Julia, Lucy, and Mrs. Richman's letters can be taken as moral lectures on republican ideals that associate women with chastity, purity and domesticity, correspondence between the characters disrupts the one-sided, monological reading of the novel as a sugar-coated pill that instructs the women readers to conform to the society's expectations. From Bakhtin's point of view, *The Coquette* can be seen a "dialogical contact" zone where "a system of languages… mutually and ideologically interanimate each other."[63] The discourse of the spokeswomen of patriarchy is one among multiple social speech types in the novel. Their preaching on marriage and morality becomes problematic as we witness how virtuous women such as Nancy and Mrs. Richman also suffer due to loveless marriages or loss of babies. Julia's and Lucy's attempts to transmit patriarchal power, the limitations of that ideology seen through Nancy's and Mrs. Richman's unhappy domestic lives, and Eliza's resistance to that ideology, constitute the heteroglossia in the novel where differing worldviews coexist. As we witness the characters in communication with each other, we see how Foster displays multiple voices and points of view on women's position in eighteenth-century American society.

Notes

[1] Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957) 121. Subsequent references are to this edition. See also *The Coquette; or, the History of Eliza Wharton; a Novel; Founded on Fact. By a Lady of Massachusetts.[Hannah Webster Foster], Boston, 1797* at http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/foster/coquette/coquette.html

[2] Cathy N. Davidson, "Flirting with Destiny: Ambivalence and Form in the Early American Sentimental Novel" (*Studies in American Fiction* 10, 1982), 28.

[3] Mikhail Bakhtin, "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 46.

[4] Julia A. Stern, *The Plight of Feeling* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 151.
[5] Bakhtin, "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," 49.
[6] Ibid., 47-48.
[7] Ibid., 49.
[8] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 262.
[9] John Paul Tassoni, "'I can step out of myself a little:' Feminine Virtue and Female Friendship in Hannah Foster's *The Coquette*" in Janet Doubler Ward and Joanna Stephens Mink, eds., *Communication and Women's Friendships: Parallels and Intersections in Literature and Life* (Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1993), 50.
[10] Tassoni, 99.
[11] Ibid., 98.
[12] Bakhtin, "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," 49.
[13] Cathy Davidson, introduction to Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), xiii.
[14] Gareth Evans, "Rakes, Coquettes and Republican Patriarchs: Class, Gender, and Nation in Early American Sentimental Fiction" (*Canadian Review of American Studies* 25, 1995), 7.
[15] Foster, 24.
[16] Ibid., 25.
[17] Ibid., 133.
[18] Ibid., 132.
[19] Ibid., 133.
[20] Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 142.
[21] Foster, 141-142.
[22] Stern, 120.
[23] Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 174.
[24] Foster, 142.
[25] Ibid., 143.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Claire C. Pettengill, "Sisterhood In A Separate Sphere: Female Friendship in Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette* and *The Boarding School*" (*Early American Literature* 27, 1992), 193.
[30] Foster, 145.
[31] Ibid., 143.
[32] Ibid., 163.
[33] Ibid., 162.
[34] Ibid., 70.
[35] Ibid., 167-168.
[36] Davidson, introduction, xx.
[37] Bakhtin, "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," 60.
[38] Foster, 165.
[39] Davidson, introduction, xiii.
[40] Foster, 97.
[41] Ibid., 6.
[42] Ibid., 8.
[43] Ibid., 30.
[44] Ibid., 50.
[45] Ibid., 30.
[46] Elizabeth Dill, "A Mob of Lusty Villagers: Operations of Domestic Desires in Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette*" (*Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 15, 2003), 267.
[47] Dill, 267.
[48] Foster, 145.

[49] Ibid., 27.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid., 134.
[52] Ibid., 26.
[53] Ibid., 135.
[54] Ibid., 136.
[55] Ibid., 153.
[56] Tassoni, 109.
[57] Foster, 153.
[58] Bakhtin, "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," 49.
[59] Ibid., 48.
[60] Ibid., 48-49.
[61] Ibid., 46.
[62] Kristie Hamilton, "An Assault on the Will: Republican Virtue and the City in Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette*" (*Early American Literature* 24, 1989), 149.
[63] Bakhtin, "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," 47.