

Eighteenth Century

Settlement and Religion
A Sheaf of Eighteenth-Century Anglo-American
Poetry
Voices of Revolution and Nationalism
Patriot and Loyalist Songs and Ballads
Contested Visions, American Voices

Although affected by work in multicultural U.S. history, the dominant popular conception of the American eighteenth century remains a consensus model focused on the triumph of a united band of Patriot revolutionaries against the forces of British imperialism. The categories used to group the entries in the fourth edition of *The Heath Anthology*, however, work to restore a sense of the flux, dynamism, and contingency of that period, a social, political, and rhetorical struggle captured in the phrase, “Contested Visions.” These contests took place both within Anglo-American communities and across the wide, diverse range of American society. “Voices of Revolution and Nationalism” as well as the section on “Patriot and Loyalist Songs and Ballads” challenge the common belief that Anglo-Americans were of one mind about the revolution. Texts by women writers, by adherents of different religious communities, and by members of different social classes show that whatever Thomas Jefferson may have claimed about the truths he articulated in *The Declaration of Independence*, they were anything but “self-evident” at the time. Indeed, by placing the so-called Founding Fathers in their cultural contexts, we can read a text like the *Declaration* not simply as an enumeration of timeless truths, but as an argument designed to achieve specific and complex political and social ends. Such a view in the classroom provides a sense of the very real stakes involved in “literary” questions of form, style, and structure.

Just as important, the inclusion of other revolutionary voices, from Handsome Lake to Toussaint L’Ouverture, raises questions about the complexity and diversity of the revolutionary energies at play in eighteenth-century America.

100 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*

The idea of the “Founding Fathers” as national myth is further complicated by Fray Francisco Palou’s biography of Junipero Serra, an example of mythmaking involving a different “Founding Father.” For students who have never done so, considering “American” cultural history from the perspective of the Spanish colonial experience can open discussion about the meaning of cultural and historical center and margins, of frontier and wilderness, and about the traditional view of American history as a movement to the west from the east coast.

Settlement and Religion

Sarah Kemble Knight (1666–1727)

Contributing Editor: Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Because Knight uses humor and fiction in her journal, students find it more accessible than many other early American texts. They respond positively to the journal as travelogue and can relate to Knight's role as a savvy observer and recorder of cultural norms. Moreover, they are fascinated that this is an early woman's text that does not show stereotypical female qualities of victimization and passivity and that contradicts the still prevalent notion of Puritans as dour and doom-laden. However, teachers should encourage students to analyze Knight's self-fashioning and go beyond her endearing surface qualities as author and subject to find evidence of more negative qualities, including rampant racism and classism. The *Journal* is not a politically naive text.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

102 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*

1. Gender issues: the position of women—especially women writers—in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century New England. In theory, Puritans used the topological significance of Eve’s creation from Adam’s rib to emphasize women’s dependence and domesticity. Women were expected to marry and to serve God, their father (while unmarried), and their husband. Sermons, for example, frequently stressed the ideal female qualities of modesty, piety, humility, patience, charity, and so on. But in practice, of course, women were often far from this ideal (Knight certainly seems to revel in her independence), and in a frontier society they sometimes had to take on men’s work. Thus, evidence shows that women became printers, stationers, and innkeepers, for example—usually on the death of their father or spouse. Sarah Kemble Knight is a case in point, and instructors might ask students to find textual evidence of Knight’s refusal to play the stereotypically passive female role Puritan culture assigned to her. Moreover, compared to the contemporaneously published works of such other well-known Puritan women writers as Anne Bradstreet and Mary Rowlandson, Knight’s unpublished (until 1825) narrative is more private and secular in nature.
2. Views of the frontier and the wilderness. This text makes a particularly useful contrast to Mary Rowlandson’s captivity narrative in terms of the authors’ presentation of the frontier. Whereas Rowlandson sees her enforced journey as taking her into what she calls “the vast and howling Wilderness,” Knight voluntarily undertakes her journey and overcomes the natural obstacles in her way (bad weather, swamps, high rivers, and so on) despite unconvincing protestations that she is only a feeble woman.
3. Class, race, regional, and cultural issues: particularly Knight’s views of blacks, American Indians, and white settlers at all social levels in Massachusetts and in the other colonies she travels through from Boston to New York. In this regard, I particularly commend Julia

Stern's article "To Relish and to Spew: Disgust as Cultural Critique in the *Journal of Madam Knight*," *Legacy* 14 (1997): 1–12, which extends the argument of Scott Michaelsen's earlier article, "Narrative and Class in a Culture of Consumption: The Significance of Stories in Sarah Kemble Knight's *Journal*," *College Literature* 21 (1994): 33–46. Stern points out that the journal "provides an extraordinary anatomy of early eighteenth-century America as a multi-racial, multi-cultural body" and that it functions as a "meditation on the complexity of class" (1). This is effected by Knight's emphasis on, and judgment of, things oral, specifically, what people say and eat and how they speak and eat. Students and instructors alike cannot miss the many textual references to bad food and bad manners. While Knight often presents her disapproval and disgust humorously, in fact they indicate that she is "a fervent believer in hierarchy" (Stern 6). Knight's determination to maintain social distinctions makes her a snob and a racist. Although Knight is, perhaps, the most scathing about whites who allow their slaves to eat at the table with them, her scorn also descends on others who do not keep their allotted social position.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Discuss the traditions of various life writings including diaries, journals, and spiritual and secular autobiographies and also explain how the *Journal* fits the fictional genre of the picaresque (look up a definition in any literary handbook). Also, don't overlook the fact that the journal contains quite a few poems written by Knight, some of them no more than doggerel (as in the wonderful "I ask thy Aid, O Potent Rum!"), but other more lyrical and accomplished pieces as well. Compare the popular, colloquial quality of this work with more academic texts to understand its place in early American literary activity and to help students understand generic distinctions as well as generic interrelationships. While

instructors should be flexible about enforcing overly rigid generic divisions, it is helpful to define some of the following differences for students and then invite them to consider texts they have read that might be placed in certain categories:

- Personal letter: relatively short; writer may deliberately fashion an epistolary self and voice; reader is clearly designated; function is probably private; and the text is not likely to have been revised. Examples include Richard Frethorne's three letters home.
- Diary: focuses on externals or on highly personal internal matters; tends to be unrevised, immediate, and fragmentary; may extend for many years; and usually has no audience beyond the writer (indeed, some writers—such as William Byrd in his coded diaries—went to great lengths to stop others from being able to read their private diaries). Examples include William Byrd and Samuel Sewall.
- Journal: may focus more on internal, though not necessarily highly personal, matters; may be somewhat revised; may be written shortly after the fact and thus may reinterpret and reflect on events; may extend over a relatively short and designated time period and may memorialize a specific event such as a journey or a courtship; appears to be relatively coherent; and may have been written for a specific small audience of family and friends, though not usually with an eye to publication. Knight's journal fits this definition well.
- Autobiography and spiritual autobiography: often considered the most "literary" of the genres because they are more carefully structured and composed. The autobiography, of course, charts an individual's personal and sometimes public life (Franklin's *Autobiography* is a prime example); the spiritual autobiography charts an individual's spiritual development and is often written for publication to encourage backsliders or attract converts. Rowlandson's narrative is a good example of a Puritan spiritual autobiography and those by Elizabeth Ashbridge and John Woolman are excellent examples of

Quaker spiritual autobiographies (the latter two texts published posthumously).

Original Audience

Knight's work was not written with publication in mind, and indeed although composed during her journey from Boston to New York in 1704–1705, it was not published until 1825. Certainly the journal seems to have had therapeutic value in allowing Knight to vent her spleen over various difficulties in her trip (usually bad food and bad accommodation). But she probably took such care to record details so she could read it to family and friends or circulate it among them. When first published, the journal was thought to be fictional, but doubts about its authenticity have long since vanished.

In his edition of the *Journal* in *Journeys in New Worlds* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), Sargent Bush also discusses the circumstances that led to its publication in 1825. It was published, and perhaps edited, by Theodore Dwight, Jr., of New York, son of Theodore Dwight, Sr. (who was one of the so-called Connecticut Wits intent on producing a native American literature after the Revolution). In recovering and publishing Knight's document, Dwight, Jr., was providing one more example "of this growing sense of the validity of American expression" (Bush 79) as opposed to outmoded European models. The 1820s also saw the publication of such American texts as "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and early works by James Fenimore Cooper and William Cullen Bryant.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Knight as heroine or picara (the protagonist in a female picaresque).
2. Presentations of the wilderness. Indeed, this would be a good early American text for applying eco-critical approaches.

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

106 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*

3. The document as a secular manifestation of Puritanism.
4. Knight's classism and racism.
5. Knight's middle-class consumer values and her desire for upward mobility.
6. Knight as a storyteller, as a spinner of yarns (note that there are many stories within stories in the *Journal*).

Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce,
Baron de Lahontan (1666–1715)

Teaching material for Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan, is available on *The Heath Anthology* web site. (To access the site, please go to the Houghton Mifflin college home page at <http://college.hmco.com>. Select *English*, then select *The Heath Anthology* textbook site.)

William Byrd II (1674–1744)

Contributing Editor: Susan Scott Parrish

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Byrd offers students a number of things: an antidote to the deep gravity and eschatological passion of Puritan texts, a representation of the wilderness and of Native Americans they could productively compare with Mary Rowlandson's, Cabeza de Vaca's, and other works, the opportunity to read his two histories comparatively and think about the different rhetorical devices Byrd used for a familiar versus a public audience, and an example of an Augustan colonial's competing allegiances to both wit and science.

In a 1736 letter to the London naturalist Peter Collinson

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

that accompanied a copy of his longhand journal of the dividing line expedition, Byrd apologized: “This is only the skeleton and ground-work of what I intend, which may some time or other come to be filled up with vessels, and flesh, & have a decent skin drawn over all to keep things tight in their places, and prevent their looking frightful.” A year later, Byrd wrote again: “It was as you may easily see, compos’d in the rough woods, and partakes of the place that gave it birth.” These remarks raise a number of questions: What was “frightful” during Byrd’s expedition, the scandalous acts of rape, theft, and aggression that took place on the line, or merely his uncouth assimilation to the wild? Which parts of his two *Histories* represent the “vessels and flesh” and which parts the “decent skin”? Does Byrd see language as a source of creation or containment or dissimulation? How does a place give birth to a text? How do Byrd’s transatlantic allegiances affect his representation of the “rough woods”? Is this text regional or transatlantic?

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

The “secret history” was a popular genre in Byrd’s time and one that was well-represented in Byrd’s library with titles like *Royal Mistresses of France: Or, the Secret History of the Amours of the French King*. An insider’s account of scandal, it was usually associated with court intrigue and was meant to produce smirks and titillation through its public exposure and even social critique of the private dealings of powerful people. That Byrd employed such a genre for a wilderness expedition suggests that he wanted to show his readers his knowledge of both settings (court and woods) and his witty ability to translate each world to the other. To be funny but not seditious, the language of the genre’s curiosity needed to imply more than it said. In Byrd’s *Secret History*, he favored the double-entendre for it could simultaneously suggest scandal while ameliorating its tangible ugliness by a retreat into linguistic play. For example, when Byrd uses the words “curiosity” and “examined,” and the phrase “ranging over her

sweet person” in describing an instance when a number of the commissioners are sexually assaulting a female servant, he turns this tawdry scene into a palimpsest of lechery, medical and scientific inquiry, and territorial exploration.

His *History* belonged to the genre of the New Scientific travel narrative. Typical of this genre was a catalog and description of natural rarities and aboriginal peoples, leavened at times by the author’s relation of his own physical peril. Thus, when composing his *History*, Byrd needed to improve the linear plodding of the longhand journal with intriguing excursions of action and information and needed to retreat from the *Secret History*’s concept of curiosity as lechery. As a once quite active member of the Royal Society and a reader of its manifestoes, Byrd knew that the New Science defined curiosity as a learned, disinterested, and gentlemanly attribute, and that it eschewed rhetorical figures like the double entendre in its pursuit of referential purity. To show that he could see and know the world in this authoritative way, Byrd included numerous references drawn from his extensive library, particularly to other histories and travel narratives such as those of Herodotus and John Smith. While Mary Rowlandson sustained herself with biblical passages on her further “removes” from the English habitations, Byrd made sense of the Virginia back woods through comparative ethnography and historiography.

In the end though, Byrd was too much of a “wit” to drain all satirical undercurrents out of his narrative as he “drew a tight skin over” the disturbing scenes of the journey. Thus what Byrd does carry over from the *Secret History* and what amounts to his major innovation to the British natural history travel genre is his exhibition of language’s referential waywardness. Byrd questions the ability of both imperial words and of his expedition’s system of signs to refer naturally to the land they seek to describe. In the opening pages, for example, Byrd shows the decomposition of the title and place “Virginia” as he relates how later colonies were cut, hacked, and dismembered from the original New World English territory. Not only the temporal but also the geographical “place of beginning” is likewise fraught by disputes about

language: no one can agree on what point of land “the North Shore of Corautck Inlet” signifies. Byrd’s *History* sets in relief, in a number of crucial moments, the unnatural or discursively constructed nature of the commission’s work of binding signs to places. Though his *Histories* are about settlement—about settling a controversy so that British colonials could settle in a frontier territory, Byrd *unsettles* royal assumptions about linguistic acts of possession, and he *unsettles* the New Scientific assumptions about the purity of language in its reference to nature. In this sense, Byrd’s texts are both possessive and dispossessive.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Along these lines, Douglas Anderson, in “Plotting William Byrd” (*William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, LVI, 1999: 701–22), performs an excellent reading of the abiding narrative paradigm Byrd developed through both his diaries and his *Histories*, namely a constant alternation—rather than division—between plots, voices, and meanings. He argues that Byrd, “drawing upon the fertility and mutability of language,” shows “how boundaries can frequently cloud distinctions that they pretend to clarify” (702–03). Distinctions, for example, between secrecy and disclosure, containment and resistance, principle and appetite are established only to be jumbled up, crossed, shifted, or entangled much as different meats are jumbled in the expedition’s stewpot, felled trees are crossed in the Dismal Swamp, borders of land shift with the tides, and briars entangle the trailblazers as they attempt to hack a straight westward line. In particular, the temporal and moral containment implicit in the late seventeenth-century journal form, the preponderance of didactic Christian texts in the Westover library, the confluence of Lent with the spring portion of the expedition, and Byrd’s frequent allusion to the Israelites in the Wilderness evince Byrd’s strong tendency toward a Judeo-Christian discipline and interpretive frame. Yet Byrd constantly reveals how events (and men’s passions) disorder such a management of experience, making the

Histories complex polyphonic records of life in a colonial border territory.

Kenneth Lockridge, in *The Diary, and Life, of William Byrd II of Virginia, 1674–1744* (1987), especially 127–43, offers us help with the *Histories* through his analysis of Byrd's literary processes of colonial self-fashioning. He argues that Byrd's early life, characterized by exile from his place of birth and his family (especially the example of a present father) and by isolation from the wealthy English he lived among, forced Byrd to construct an image of the English gentleman wholly from conduct books; this early textual borrowing of Englishness encouraged Byrd's translation of his own life into a compulsively kept text—the ongoing diaries—in which he daily reviewed for himself his performance (or slips in performance) of the various offices of patriarchal gentility, namely, classical learning, physical discipline, mastery of “his people,” and of his passions. Byrd's colonial insecurity, also manifested in highly conventional prose attempts (love letters, character portraits, satires), gave way, after his final return home to Virginia, his acceptance of the social burden and opportunities of his elite colonial status, and the running of the line in 1728, to a maturity of outlook and of prose. Byrd recognized that the “humble” form of the journal, one that he had long been practicing, was the most suitable genre to narrate his country's struggle toward civilization.

Roderick Nash, in chapter three of *Wilderness and the American Mind* (1982), provides an environmentalist background to Byrd. Nash records the translation of a European appreciation for wilderness, begun by naturalists like John Ray and William Durham in the late seventeenth century and continued by Deists and promoters of “the Sublime” in the eighteenth, to the colonies. Nash cites Byrd and John Bartram as somewhat lonely colonial exemplars of an early “Romantic primitivism.” Rather than viewing the wilderness as a reviled place of trial that the Christian passes through to earn heavenly salvation as many Puritans had, or as a dark chaotic void that needed to be “vanquished,” or, in gentler language, “improved” into a pastoral or agrarian state as many pioneers did through the nineteenth century, Byrd, at least in part, saw

wilderness as a “natural laboratory” where the mind of the observer could be improved by discovering God’s playfully hidden secrets.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Out of these various analytical frames, we can generate some ideas for placing Byrd in tension with other authors in the anthology and some useful questions for the classroom. One could teach Byrd within a unit on the wilderness with authors such as Rowlandson, Cabeza de Vaca, Jefferson, Hawthorne, and Thoreau. What is Byrd’s attitude toward the wilderness: Does he appreciate it, want to vanquish or improve it, see it topologically or for its material details, or all of the above? One could place Byrd alongside other colonial satirists like Morton, Cook, and Sarah Knight, and focus on the tensions between the metropolis and the provinces: Is Byrd promoting his newfound Eden or strengthening his metropolitan allegiances by making fun of the “backward” frontier? One could teach him with Franklin: How are their confessions of moral slippings and stagings of exemplary selves similar? In general, one could ask: What divisions does Byrd set up in these texts and do these divisions hold?

Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758)

Contributing Editor: Carol M. Bensick

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Assuming that most users of *The Heath Anthology* will be instructors of the American Literature survey course, and that most survey courses using Volume 1 will not overlap its terminus, the teacher of these selections will probably have a

week on Edwards. By the time you reach Edwards the students will be accustomed to reading nonfiction “as literature.”

The two “Narratives” probably will be found the most entertaining. Start with “A Faithful Narrative,” the simpler and more direct of the two. A brief description of the work itself and an explanation of the occasion for its composition (noting that Benjamin Colman is a minister of a rival branch of post-Puritanism, one skeptical of evangelicalism) is enough to permit the students to follow the story with interest on their own. Inevitably, the “Personal Narrative,” a more private piece of writing, is harder for a student reader to follow. There are some options, however. Having taught “A Faithful Narrative,” the instructor can portray Edwards as spurred by the events chronicled in that text, including his own part in hearing the validity of the would-be new church members’ narratives to try to recall his own exemplary experience, hoping to guide himself thereby in the assessment of the applicants’ testimonies and to stimulate empathy with what they are undergoing. Here the teacher might draw a parallel with Edward Taylor’s “Preparatory Meditations,” in which a pastor similarly performs on himself the same activity he intends to perform publicly on his congregation—namely, evangelical preaching—in order to produce the same effect of activated piety. Such activities might be compared with the self-analysis conducted in modern days by classical Freudian psychotherapists, or with the imaginable activities of scientists who perform physical experiments on themselves (particularly William James’s experimentation with nitrous oxide).

With “Sinners,” the requirement for the intelligibility that is the pre-requisite for enjoyment is conversance with the Bible. Looking up the individual citations is more likely to distract and antagonize the biblically illiterate, and I suggest advising the students to skip or skim the citations and attempt to read the sermon “for the story.” Beginning with the title, the teacher can ask the following questions: Who is the protagonist with whom the reader identifies? (the sinner); Who, from his point of view, is the antagonist? (God); What is the situation? (God is holding you up, but any minute now, God will drop you into hell). With this much established, the

teacher could challenge the students to make these abstractions real to themselves. The idea would be to get them to see that Edwards is interpreting the natural fact of the occurrence of sudden deaths as a providential sign, which he then goes on to use as an argument to motivate a certain class of the individuals in the audience to adopt a certain behavior.

The class should understand that in “Sinners,” a minister is trying to get new members to join his particular sect’s churches. The teacher might invoke a parallel with a salesman; what Edwards is selling is church membership. They should be able to see from “A Faithful Narrative” that the “terror” ceases with the cessation of God’s “anger.” Once inside the church, the convert will enjoy good times. (Here the teacher might suggest a comparison with Taylor’s “Gods Determinations.”) By the end of the class, students minimally ought to be able to tell you that this sermon will only be scary to a subgroup of the audience and that the members of that subgroup have it (as far as the sermon lets on) entirely within their own power to exempt themselves from the terror.

The instructor should remind students of how long young Edwards himself went before conversion; how scared he was at the threat of sudden death in his fit of illness; and how delighted he was to get onto God’s right side. Students should understand that Edwards’s God is not always angry and not angry at everyone, and that such fits of anger have a cause. Under original sin, you can explain, no single human being deserves being spared from hell; Christ has promised that an unknown parcel of humans nevertheless shall enjoy just this reprieve; all they have to do is join the churches; and a group of individuals are actually hesitating to take advantage of this limited-time-only, never-to-be-repeated offer! What’s a God to do?

Finally, one would like the students to surmount, as definitely as possible, certain historical solecisms and biographical stereotypes that older anthologies have long inculcated. Whatever they think, the students should be embarrassed to be caught ever again saying that Edwards is “a Puritan” (have them compute how long after the *Mayflower* Edwards was born); gloomy (have them tally up the forms of

114 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
the words “pleasure,” “sweet,” “joy,” “delight” in “A Personal Narrative”); or sadistic. On the latter point, referring back to “Sinners,” you can show them that the path of cruelty for Edwards, who has the power to admit you to the fellowship of salvation, would have been to leave you in your unconverted state till you suddenly dropped dead.

Elizabeth Ashbridge (1713–1755)

Contributing Editor: Liahna Babener

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Most students are unfamiliar with the doctrinal differences between the Anglican and Quaker faiths, upon which Ashbridge’s *Account* hinges. They tend to be uncomfortable with early Quaker preaching practices, doctrinal assumptions, and social customs. This discomfort sometimes alienates students or prevents them from empathizing with Ashbridge’s dilemma. Such anxieties, however, are almost always overcome by the power and poignancy of the text itself.

Providing background about religious and doctrinal tensions in the Great Awakening and gender patterns in colonial America is crucial, and the adoption of a feminist strategy of reading is particularly important. Comparing other accounts of those who have been impelled by spiritual conviction to act against convention and law is illuminating, as is reading personal narratives of women of the period who use the autobiographical text as a private means of self-vindication in a patriarchal culture.

Students enjoy discussing whether Ashbridge is heroic or perverse. They often identify with her independent spirit and even her proto-feminist rebellion, but they lament her increasingly dour tone and her failed marriage. Some wonder whether she gave up too much for conscience’s sake. Some

students see the husband as abusive or imperious but cannot help sympathizing with his distress over losing a mirthful wife. Students also wonder if Quakers courted their social estrangement, contributing to their own victimization, and ask whether Quakers should be blamed or censured for their martyrdom.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

1. The expressly female dilemma of having to choose between conscience and husband, as well as the social stresses upon a woman who defies traditional and prescribed sex roles, thereby threatening the stability of the patriarchal order.
2. The doctrinal and social conflicts between Anglicans and Quakers in early America; more broadly, the pressures from a predominantly Anglican, increasingly secularized culture to tame or compartmentalize religious fervor.
3. Ways in which women autobiographers use personal narrative for self-vindicating purposes, or for private rebellion against patriarchal norms.
4. The degree to which autobiography may be read as factual truth as opposed to an invention or reconstruction of reality; the reliability of the personal narrator as witness to and interpreter of events; the fictional elements of the genre.
5. Making a living (as a woman) in colonial America.
6. Marriage, husbands' prerogatives, men's and women's ways of coping with marital estrangement.
7. The nature of religious conviction; Quaker doctrine, patterns of worship, and social customs.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Study the document as an example of the genre of spiritual autobiography, of personal narrative, of female and feminist assertion, of social history, of eighteenth-century rationalism, and at the same time of revivalist ardor. Explore to what degree the document is confessional and to what degree it may be understood as contrivance or fiction. How is the author “inventing” herself as she writes? How does she turn her experience into a didactic instrument for the edification of her readers?

Original Audience

Social, historical, religious, and political contexts are primary issues. The composition and publication history of the text—penned just before Ashbridge’s death—are also illuminating, especially considering that no version of the document in Ashbridge’s own hand survives, and scholars are not in consensus about which extant version of the autobiography may be considered authoritative or closest to the original. Consider the Great Awakening audience who may have read this account of religious conversion. Does the document create a sense of feminine solidarity? Can one theorize about the kind of audience to whom Ashbridge directed the *Account*?

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Compare other Great Awakening spiritual autobiographies, such as Jonathan Edwards’s “Personal Narrative.” Puritan introspective literature and conversion stories, particularly by women, are instructive (such as those by Elizabeth Mixer and Elizabeth White); chronicles of Quaker experience or persecution in colonial America (such as Jane Hoskin’s Quaker autobiography or Hawthorne’s tale, “The Gentle Boy”)

are revealing. Diaries, journals, and letters of early American women documenting romantic, religious, and social experiences (compare Sarah Kemble Knight, Jarena Lee, Sarah Osborne, Abigail Adams, and so forth) are useful. Franklin's more cunning and more secular *Autobiography* makes an apt parallel.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. (a) Characterize Ashbridge's spiritual struggles and marital dilemmas. Does she resolve the former at the expense of the latter?
 - (b) In what ways do you empathize with Ashbridge in her conflict with her husband? Why or why not? How might you act differently from either or both of them in this situation?
 - (c) Does the community treat Ashbridge fairly following her conversion?
 - (d) What implicit moral and spiritual advice does the piece contain?
2. How does Ashbridge structure the narrative and construct herself as a character in her own story to win sympathy and intellectual support from readers? Is she successful?
3. (a) Write a counterpart narrative (or defense) from the husband's point of view.
 - (b) Write an Anglican's critique of or commentary upon Ashbridge's behavior.
 - (c) Invent an imaginative dialogue between Ashbridge and Jonathan Edwards (or any of the following) concerning religious or gender issues: Anne Hutchinson, Mary Rowlandson, Anne Bradstreet, Samuel Sewall, Sarah Kemble Knight, Benjamin Franklin, Abigail Adams, and so forth.

Bibliography

Two recent studies have provided important new information on Elizabeth Ashbridge. The most significant published source is Daniel Shea's edition of Ashbridge's *Some Account of the Fore Part of the Life of Elizabeth Ashbridge*, available with his detailed introduction and textual notes, in *Journeys in New Worlds: Early American Narratives*, edited by William L. Andrews et al. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), from which this excerpt is drawn. Christine Levenduski's dissertation, "Elizabeth Ashbridge's 'Remarkable Experiences': Creating the Self in a Quaker Personal Narrative" (University of Minnesota, 1989), is an invaluable book-length discussion of the text and its author. Carol Edkins's "Quest for Community: Spiritual Autobiographies of Eighteenth-Century Quaker and Puritan Women in America," in *Women's Autobiography: Essays in Criticism*, edited by Estelle C. Jelinek (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), pp. 39–52, also discusses Ashbridge substantively. Shea and Levenduski contain useful bibliographies of further materials providing background to Ashbridge's life and narrative.

John Woolman (1720–1772)

Contributing Editor: James A. Levernier

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Students often have a difficult time reading eighteenth-century nonfiction prose. The issues it reveals seem dated and unexciting to them. A writer like Woolman comes across as a moral “antique” to students who would much prefer to skip over the entire period and move on to Melville, Hawthorne, and Poe in the next century.

I try to point out to students that Woolman is, in many ways, very contemporary. He almost single-handedly defied many of the conventional views of his day and was willing to stand up and take the heat for things that he believed in. I also point out that the principles that Woolman uses to deal with the evils he perceives in society are by no means dated. Many of the issues he brings up still exist today but in different, more subtle, forms, and it is our responsibility to deal with those issues. Social injustices, bigotry, and poverty are, unfortunately, still very much with us today. Woolman offers us an example and guidance in such matters.

Students are often quite interested in Quakers and their culture. Most of them have heard something about Quakers, but they don't really understand them. They are usually quite moved by the conviction behind Woolman's writings and can identify with it. They want to know if he was typical of Quaker thinking and why they haven't been taught more about the effect of Quaker ideas on American culture.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Woolman writes about many themes that should be

120 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
emphasized:

1. Slavery as a historical issue.
2. Racism and prejudice as issues that are still very much alive today.
3. The responsibility of the individual for social injustices.
4. The need for conviction and passion in our moral and social lives.
5. The potential of any one person for bringing about true reform.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

In discussing Woolman, one needs to discuss the practice of keeping journals among Quakers and early Americans generally. Why did Quakers keep journals? Why did they publish them? An analysis of Woolman's simple and direct style is very useful for seeing the "art" in the *Journal*, since his style of writing very effectively underscores and enhances the power of his convictions. I also draw connections between journals written by Quakers and journals written by Puritans to the north. Quaker journals have an inner peace that Puritan journals often lack.

Original Audience

Woolman wrote the *Journal* and his *Plea for the Poor* for future generations. He certainly knew that the *Journal* at least would not be published in his lifetime. There is a rhetorical strategy behind the *Journal* that revisions within the work reveal. Clearly, Woolman wanted us to see the effects of the workings of the "Inner Light" in his own life so that we could perhaps begin to cultivate with equal effect the "Inner Light" he felt was within each of us. *Considerations* (I and II) were more immediate in their audience concerns; they are persuasive tracts, meant to bring about immediate action

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

through a direct appeal to the consciences of those who read them.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Woolman can be tied to nineteenth-century American autobiographers, especially Henry David Thoreau and Henry Adams. The Quaker influence can also be connected to John Greenleaf Whittier, Emerson, and Whitman. The connections between the Quaker “Inner Light” and the type of transcendentalism expressed in Emerson’s works, particularly in *Nature*, should be emphasized. Woolman also should be compared and contrasted to the journal writers and autobiographers of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England. John Winthrop, for instance, kept a journal for far different reasons and with far different results than did Woolman.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. (a) Would Woolman feel that his life and ministry made a difference to the world of today?
(b) How would he feel about today’s world? About social injustice in third world countries? About our response as individuals and as Americans to poverty and social injustice in other lands?
2. Comparison/contrast papers are very useful ways to develop insights into Woolman. He can be compared, for example, to Bradford, to Emerson, to Adams, and to Whitman. Sometimes I ask students to envision three or more writers together in a room today discussing an issue. What would each writer say about the issue? Feminism, for example, or the atomic bomb. This device often helps students to enter the writer’s world and better understand the imaginative process.

Francisco Palou (1723–1789)

Contributing Editor: Juan Bruce-Novoa

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Students may think that the text is an anachronism, coming late in history. While the East Coast is in the midst of its independence struggle, Serra and Palou are still founding missions. Students have been taught to think of Spain as finished internationally after the Great Armada.

The eighteenth century was one of expansion and renewed vitality for Spain. Its missionaries and soldiers were moving on all fronts, founding new cities in Texas and northern New Mexico, moving into the Mississippi and Ohio valleys, solidifying their position in the Caribbean basin, and spreading north along the Pacific Coast to counter the southern movement of the Russians from Alaska. Missionaries were the Spanish equivalent of frontiersmen, but they prove how much better organized the Spanish expansion system was. Also, students should be told that the treaty between France and England in 1763 acknowledged Spain's traditional claim to the Mississippi Valley, which was disputed by the French.

Students often question the purpose of the missionary project. It has become fashionable to denounce Serra as an exploiter of Native Americans, so instructors may find it necessary to prepare for a discussion of the moral issues involved in the activities of Christian missionaries anywhere in the world. More useful, however, is to turn the discussion toward a consideration of how models are always ideologically based and serve the purpose of social indoctrination.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Consider the following: the theme of personal sacrifice and determination in the face of great odds; the theme of the traditional moving of borders farther into the territory of the non-Christian that comes from Spain's reconquest of their own territory from the Moors (700–1492).

There is also the literary motif of creating models of cultural behavior in texts that will be used to teach the young.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

The form is biography. Students should consider the task of depicting the life of another, the choices made to emphasize certain traits, the strategies used to convince the reader of the author's objectivity and reliability.

There is also the similarity to the writing on the lives of the saints. Students might consider which virtues are held up for imitation in different settings and times.

Original Audience

Readers then were much closer to the ideals expressed by Palou, probably coming from the novices of religious orders. They were much more willing to believe in the values reflected in the life of Serra. Now there is little sense of divine mission in life nor of the virtue of extreme sacrifice for the common good. Students must be urged to comprehend the energy of societies in expansion.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Compare this to Cotton Mather, as the headnote mentions. Both writers attempt to create models for new generations who have forgotten their founding fathers. One could also pick a favorite section from John F. Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage* to compare with Serra.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

Pose the question of role models in society in different periods. Ask students to consider where the models come from and what purpose they fulfill. How do they differ then and now? They can be asked to write an essay about someone they would want to be the role model for their generation.

A Sheaf of Eighteenth-Century Anglo-American Poetry

Contributing Editors: Pattie Cowell and Ivy Schweitzer

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Beginning students struggle with these materials, partly because they arise from a time and aesthetic unfamiliar to them and partly because poetry as a genre seems more difficult to many of them. I find it most effective to try two contradictory strategies simultaneously: I ask students to stretch their historical imaginations with a bit of time-travel (“Dr. Who” comes to mind), and I try to highlight the ways in which the themes and concerns of these poets are still with us.

Though the time-travel is more fun at first for me than for the students, most of them get the idea soon enough. I take them back to a time when there was no United States, when poetry was the primary literary genre (and changes were in store), when midwives outnumbered physicians, when western Pennsylvania seemed like the outer edge of white civilization, when manuscript culture flourished alongside a fledgling printing industry, when individualism was not a cultural value (or even a part of the English language), when periodicals were a new phenomenon, when literacy rates were changing dramatically. The more concrete the context becomes, the more accessible the poetry. Some of this can be structured around a fairly accessible piece—Turell’s “Lines on Childbirth,” for example—if we try to reassemble as much as one can of Turell’s world as we read: her literary aesthetic, her educational opportunities, health care, family life, and so forth.

Finding issues relevant to contemporary concerns in these poems is deceptively easy. While it is important not to construct eighteenth-century poets in our own image, they wrote about many of the things that concern us still: the

126 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
stresses of war, the joys and struggles of family life, health and its absence, nature and human nature, travels, gender roles, religion, race and racism, the human comedy.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

The eighteenth-century poets represented here concern themselves with issues of class, race, and gender. Ebenezer Cook's "Sot-weed Factor," for example, is a freewheeling satire that takes class consciousness as a given for commenting on the conditions of life in colonial Maryland. Much of the humor derives from the pitiful way colonial subjects—farmers, yeomen, businesspeople, laborers—measure up to their English counterparts. Sarah Morton's "The African Chief" is a prominent example of colonial concern over slavery. The anonymous "Lady's Complaint" attacks gender-based inequalities. And many other examples in this selection touch these issues as well.

From a historical perspective, eighteenth-century poets struggled with the cultural devaluation of poetry as a genre. As prose became more popular and socially influential, poetry lost much of its audience. Poets wrote implicit defenses of poetry, perhaps as counterweights to the shared cultural assumptions that produced de Tocqueville's (later) disparaging comment: "I readily admit that the Americans have no poets; I cannot allow that they have no poetic ideas." Thus poetry itself becomes an important theme.

In addition, the perennial question of geography may be significant here. Is this poetry English or American? Is the tradition that produced it a continuation of Old World traditions or evidence of New World exceptionalism? Or both? Poets continued to invent the New World, and in the later part of the century, the New Republic. What shape did these inventions take? How did they change over time? How did expectations clash with reality? How did authority mediate experience?

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

The selections here vary tremendously in form, but students will find a background in neoclassical aesthetics useful for most of them.

Original Audience

The original audience for eighteenth-century American poetry depended on the vehicle for distribution. Of course it was restricted to the literate, making it a mostly white audience. But beyond that given, audiences would vary. Periodical poetry would have wide regional circulation, especially in urban areas. Books and chapbooks might circulate in both England and the colonies. Manuscript verse would circulate largely among family and friends of the writer, perhaps in a club or salon setting, groups more frequently found among well-to-do readers.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Comparisons with contemporary English poets can be instructive. Geographical or regional contrasts among the colonial selections illustrate the lack of a national voice until very late in the century.

Bibliography

Cowell, Pattie. *Women Poets in Pre-Revolutionary America*. Troy, NY: Whitston, 1981. Entries grouped by individual poets, so access to relevant material is relatively easy.

128 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
Davis, Richard Beale. *Intellectual Life in the Colonial South*,
Vol. III. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978.
On William Dawson.

Individual entries in *American Writers Before 1800*, edited by
James A. Levernier and Douglas R. Wilmes. Westport,
Conn.: Greenwood, 1983.

Lemay, J. A. Leo. "Ebenezer Cooke." In *Men of Letters in
Colonial Maryland*. Knoxville: University of
Tennessee Press, 1972: 77–110.

———. "Richard Lewis and Augustan American Poetry."
PMLA 83 (March 1968): 80–101.

Silverman, Kenneth, ed. *Colonial American Poetry*. New
York: Hafner, 1976. Anthology.

Watts, Emily Stipes. *The Poetry of American Women from
1632 to 1945*. Austin: University of Texas Press,
1977: 9–61.

Voices of Revolution and Nationalism

Handsome Lake (Seneca)

Please consult the headnote in the text as well as the
Instructor's Guide material on Native American Oral
Literatures (p. 4) for complete information.

Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790)

Contributing Editor: David M. Larson

Classroom Issues and Strategies

The primary problem involved in teaching Benjamin Franklin in an American literature course is persuading students to view Franklin as a writer. The myth surrounding Franklin and the fact that he writes in genres many students view as informational rather than literary keep students from viewing Franklin's works as literature. In order to persuade students to treat Franklin as a writer, it is useful to demonstrate through literary analysis that issues of personae, organization, irony, style, and so forth are as applicable to writing that deals with factual information as they are to poetry, fiction, or drama. In teaching the *Autobiography*, instructors should keep in mind that it is helpful to have students approach it as though it were a picaresque novel; they can then bring to bear upon the work the techniques that they have developed for analyzing fiction.

Students usually respond to and are rather disturbed by the protean quality of Franklin's personality and the variety of his achievements. They want the "real" Franklin to stand up and make himself known, and they want to know how he accomplished so much.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Franklin's contribution to the creation of an American national identity is perhaps the most important theme that needs to be emphasized. In connection with this, the students can discuss his role in the shift of the American consciousness from an otherworldly to a this-worldly viewpoint. Franklin's abandonment of Puritanism in favor of enlightenment

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

rationalism reflects a central shift in American society in the eighteenth century. In addition, his works reflect the growing awareness of America as a country with values and interests distinct from those of England—a movement which, of course, finds its climax in the Revolution. Franklin’s participation in the growing confidence of the eighteenth century that humanity could, through personal effort and social reform, analyze and deal with social problems reveals the optimism and self-confidence of his age, as do his scientific achievements. His belief that theory should be tested primarily by experience, not logic, also reflects his era’s belief that reason should be tested pragmatically. Perhaps most important, in the *Autobiography* Franklin creates not only the classic story of the self-made man but also attempts to re-create himself and his career as the archetypal American success story. Since such varied writers as Herman Melville (*Israel Potter*, “Bartleby, the Scrivener,” and *Benito Cereno*), Mark Twain, Thoreau (the “Economy” chapter of *Walden*), William Dean Howells (*The Rise of Silas Lapham*), and F. Scott Fitzgerald (*The Great Gatsby*) respond to the myth Franklin creates, the *Autobiography* can be used as a basis for examining the question of what it means to be an American and what the dominant American values are. Given the current debate over multiculturalism, a discussion of Franklin’s career as statesman and writer as an attempt to create a unified American identity—and thus to suppress the multicultural elements in the emerging nation—should prove provocative. When placed in context with the works of Crèvecoeur and Jefferson, Franklin’s writings should help students understand why, in the later eighteenth century, the shedding of ethnic and religious tradition and the embracing in their place of a national identity based on shared ideas are seen by many progressive intellectuals as ways to free the individual from the constricting hand of the repressive past.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Franklin must be viewed as an eighteenth-century writer. The

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

132 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*

eighteenth century's didacticism, its refusal to limit literature to *belles lettres*, its ideal of the *philosophe* or universal genius, and its emphasis on the rhetoric of persuasion all need emphasis. In this connection, students need to become familiar with the use of personae in eighteenth-century writing, with both straightforward and satiric means of rhetorical persuasion, and with the ideal of the middle style in English prose. In addition, students studying Franklin need to become familiar with the conventions of political and other persuasive writing, with those of scientific writing, with those of the letter, and, especially, with the conventions of satire and autobiography in the period. Since for most students the eighteenth century is foreign territory and since the study of eighteenth-century writers has been neglected in American literature, students need to learn the ways in which the ideals and practice of literature in Franklin's age differ from the Romantic and post-Romantic works with which many of them are more familiar.

Original Audience

Since almost all of Franklin's writing is occasional, prompted by a specific situation and written for a particular audience, a consideration of situation and audience is crucial for understanding his work. Each of the satires, for example, is designed for a particular audience and situation. Also, *Poor Richard's Almanac* can only be appreciated when it is viewed as a popular publication for a group of nonliterary farmers and mechanics. In contrast, Franklin's French *bagatelles* are written for a very sophisticated audience who would savor their complex personae and ambiguously ironic tone. The *Autobiography* is designed not merely for Franklin's contemporaries but for posterity as well. Consequently, one of the most interesting features of the study of Franklin as a writer is an examination of the ways in which he adapts his style, tone, organization, and personae to a variety of audiences and situations.

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Franklin can usefully be compared to a host of different writers. The traditional comparison between Franklin and his Puritan predecessors remains useful. For example, while Puritan spiritual autobiographies emphasize their authors' dependence upon God for grace and salvation and their inability to achieve virtue without grace, Franklin's *Autobiography* focuses on his own efforts to learn what is virtuous in this world and to put his discoveries to use in his life. Franklin retains the Puritan concern for self-improvement but removes its otherworldly orientation. Similarly, Cotton Mather's and Franklin's views of the importance of benevolence can usefully be compared and contrasted. And Edwards's thought, with its attempt to understand this world in the light of Puritan assumptions about God and His divine scheme for humanity, can be contrasted with Franklin's, which focuses on this world, largely ignores the next, and sees morality and experience as more important than faith. Franklin's works also can be compared to those of the great eighteenth-century English prose writers. In his preference for reasonableness, common sense, and experience over emotion or speculation, Franklin shows his indebtedness to the English writers of the early eighteenth century and to the new scientific spirit promoted by the Royal Society. Franklin's style owes much to the example of Defoe, Addison, and Steele; his satiric practice—especially his mastery of the creation of diverse personae and, at times, his use of irony—reflects his familiarity with Swift's satire, even though Franklin's effects are very different. And Franklin's ideas, persuasive methods, assumptions, and empirical bent can be compared to and contrasted with those of his great British contemporary and pamphlet opponent, Samuel Johnson. Also, Franklin's achievements in such diverse fields as science, literature, politics, and diplomacy can be compared to the achievements of the eighteenth-century philosophes, such as Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot, with whom he was classed in his own age. Finally, examine Franklin's stylistic and persuasive

methods and his intellectual assumptions in relation to his younger contemporary, Thomas Jefferson.

It is useful at some point to discuss the ways in which contemporary assumptions about literature differ from those of Franklin and affect our response to his works and the reasons Franklin has not traditionally been given the same degree of attention in American literature courses that such figures as Swift and Johnson have in British literature courses. Such topics can lead to a discussion of the formation of canon.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

The study questions that help students before they read Franklin depend entirely on the works that have been read previously. Since students in a historical survey of American literature usually approach Franklin after reading heavily in Puritan literature, ask questions that force students to confront the similarities and the differences between Franklin and his Puritan predecessors. If most students have had a British literature survey, ask questions that encourage them to pinpoint some of the similarities and differences between Franklin and such eighteenth-century writers as Swift, Defoe, and Samuel Johnson.

With Franklin, topics can be historical (focusing on Franklin's contribution to any number of events or ideas), comparative (comparing Franklin's words to those of American, British, or European writers), cultural (focusing on Franklin's pertinence to American culture at any stage past the eighteenth century), or narrowly literary (focusing on any number of facets of Franklin's artistry as a writer). The success of the topic depends largely on the extent to which it ties in with the approach taken by the teacher of the course.

Bibliography

The headnote contains a list of useful books. In addition, the following works might be helpful.

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

References

Buxbaum, Melvin. *Benjamin Franklin: 1721–1983: A Reference Guide*, 2 vols. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1983, 1988.

Lemay, J. A. Leo. *The Canon of Benjamin Franklin, 1722–1776: New Attributions and Reconsiderations*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1986.

Other Secondary Material

Buxbaum, Melvin. *Critical Essays on Benjamin Franklin*. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1987.

Larson, David M. “Benjamin Franklin’s Youth, His Biographers, and the *Autobiography*.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 119 (July 1995): 203–23.

Lemay, J. A. Leo. “Benjamin Franklin.” In *Major Writers of Early American Literature*, edited by Everett Emerson. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Levin, David. “The *Autobiography* of Benjamin Franklin: Puritan Experimenter in Life and Art.” *Yale Review* 53 (December 1963): 258–75.

Lynen, John F. “Benjamin Franklin and the Choice of a Single Point of View.” In *The American Puritan Imagination: Essays in Reevaluation*, edited by Sacvan Bercovitch. London: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

Sayre, Robert F. *The Examined Self: Benjamin Franklin, Henry Adams, Henry James*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Wright, Esmond. *Benjamin Franklin: His Life as He Wrote It*.

Mercy Otis Warren (1728–1814)

Contributing Editor: Ivy Schweitzer

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Mercy Otis Warren is one of only two women writers included in the selections on Revolutionary and nationalist writing. The other is Abigail Adams who, like Warren, was a voluminous correspondent, but did not write polemical works for publication. Both women moved in the highest circles of patriotic activity and observed developments firsthand, and both made claims for the inclusion of women's perspectives in the fight for freedom and in the new nation being formed. Both had educations far inferior to the men around them. Only because Warren's older brother decided not to prepare for college was she allowed to take his place and study with her brother, James. When James, an idealist and gifted rhetorician, suffered severe injuries from a beating at the hands of angry Tories, Warren was asked by the men in her circle to step in and use her "God given gifts" in the service of the great cause of freedom. She went on to write some of the most potent and widely read propaganda of the Revolution, as well as a multivolume history of the period, a wide range of poetry, and historical plays that explore on a more philosophical level, the role of women in revolutionary societies. One strategy to pursue in the classroom is to look at the circumstances under which earlier women wrote: Did they have fathers or husbands who encouraged them? Did they have access to education and books? Look also at the genres in which they wrote (religious poetry, love lyrics, translations, captivity narratives, didactic works), and compare these to Warren's circumstances and the various genres in which she chose to write. Important, also, is to elucidate the attitudes during this period toward women who

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

spoke and acted publicly. You can ask students to think about the relationship of gender and genre, and how periods of crisis like the American Revolution momentarily relaxed those conventions to allow women, and other subordinated groups, access to the literary territory of the dominant groups.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

The selections represent a wide range of writing from Warren's canon, including poetry, satiric and propagandistic drama, excerpts from her historical plays, and prose passages from her *History*. Some major themes include:

1. The political and moral argument for separation from England.
2. The connection between reason and passion in personal relationships and public issues; the centrality of "virtue" in the pantheon of the republican values.
3. The importance of liberty to "domestic" happiness in the several senses of that word, and the role of both men and women in achieving and maintaining it.
4. The obligations of public intellectuals and civic leaders, their relationship to authority, power, and ambition.
5. The circumstances surrounding the "Boston Tea Party," which inspired Warren's satiric drama *The Group*, her scathing representation of Tories, American-born loyalists who betrayed the country of their birth, and the mandamus council installed after the Boston protest. The corruption of the powerful due to greed and personal ambition are important themes in her satires and dramas.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

A reading of *The Group* provides the occasion for a discussion of literary forms prominent during this period, the role of propaganda, the status of drama in the colonial period, when it was illegal to stage plays in public in Puritan Boston, and the function of satire. Why does Warren choose satire as the vehicle for her critique, and why does she choose not to portray patriots or debates between Whigs and Tories in her drama? What is the effect of giving the entire drama over to the villains, as it were? The power of this satire comes across best when you discuss who these characters were, how they were related to Warren or her circle, and how their actions and speeches contribute to the picture Warren paints of their greed and corruption. A discussion of Warren's choice of inflated idiom and allusions to ancient Greece and Rome will also help students understand her critique. These plays were not meant to be staged, but were printed in newspapers and pamphlets. How does that contribute to their effect?

Original Audience

In her satiric dramas, Warren aimed for a wide and diverse audience of readers, Americans and patriots, working, middle, and upper classes, and she strove for a particular effect. Her poetry and her historical dramas use historical situations analogous to the crisis in America to raise the controversial issue of women, and specifically mothers, as leaders and revolutionaries, and were aimed at a more select audience, a circle of literate and educated readers in a position to shape cultural norms. Warren's *History of the Revolution* was written for the younger generations who, Warren felt, needed to know about the momentous events that created the republic in order to honor and preserve it.

Comparisons, Contrasts, and Connections

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Warren can be read in the company of her contemporary patriotic writers, like John Adams, a close friend, Tom Paine, and Thomas Jefferson. She can be compared to other women writers in the *Heath Anthology* to measure how far women had come by 1776 in their struggle to emerge from the anonymity of the domestic realm. Her poetry can be read in relation to other women writing poetry in her day: Annis Boudinot Stockton, Elizabeth Graeme, and Sarah Wentworth Morton, whose husband was also a Boston patriot. Her politics can be compared to other women writers like Judith Sargent Murray, who championed women's rights to equal education. Warren was the first American woman to write drama, and *The Group* can be compared to early plays and satires like Royall Tyler's *The Contrast*, or Susanna Rowson's *Slaves in Algiers*. Finally, Warren can be considered as a historian, a conventionally masculine preserve. What did it mean for her to describe, not only the characters of the principal actors, but battles, military strategy, social theory, and political intrigue during the new nation's most critical period? How does her extraordinary contribution to colonial letters counter her contemporaries' disdain of the capabilities and rights of women?

Bibliography

Anthony, Susan. *First Lady of the Revolution: The Life of Mercy Otis Warren*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1958.

Baym, Nina. "Between Enlightenment and Victorian: Towards a Narrative of American Women Writing History." *Critical Inquiry*, Autumn 18(1) 1991: 22–41.

Oreovicz, Cherly. "Heroic Drama for Uncertain Age: The Plays of Mercy Otis Warren." In *Early American Literature and Culture: Essays Honoring Harrison T. Meserole*, ed. Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola. Newark: University of Delaware, 1992, 192–210.

140 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
Richards, Jeffrey. *Mercy Otis Warren*. New York: Twayne
Publishers, 1995.

J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur (1735–1813)

Contributing Editor: Doreen Alvarez Saar

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Letters is a very accessible text; the greatest difficulty in teaching it is establishing the cultural context that makes structural sense of the whole.

Generally, students read the text as the simple story of a farmer and as “truth” rather than as fiction. The teaching challenge is to get students to see how political ideas structure the text. One way into the text is to have students read Letter II and count the references, both direct and indirect, to the way society should be organized. In the opening section of the letter, James compares his situation to the state of other farmers in other nations. Later in Letter II, note how the supposedly neutral descriptions of animals are used to talk about the conduct of humans in society.

Students are generally intrigued by the idea that members of the colonies were actually against the Revolution.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

In the course of *Letters*, through the character of James, Crèvecoeur describes how social principles laid out by the new American society operate in the life of an individual American. There are many interesting themes that can be pointed out in the text: the nature of the American character; the work ethic, the responsibility of the individual, anti-

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

intellectualism; the farmer as a prototype of the American character; the treatment of slaves; the view of new immigrants and their ethnicity; literary resonances such as the escape from civilization in Letter XII and stereotypical American characters. One theme that is frequently overlooked is James's desire not to participate in the Revolution. Students believe that all colonists accepted the righteousness of the Revolutionary cause. A discussion of James's feelings helps students recognize the constancy of division in society and is useful for later discussions of the social and literary reactions to the Civil War and the Vietnam War.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Eighteenth-century Americans did not share our modern idea that politics and art must be kept separate. Thus, some forms of eighteenth-century writing do not conform to common notions about genres and form. For an interesting discussion of the social form of the American novel, see Jane Tompkins's discussion of Charles Brockden Brown's novels in *Sensational Designs*. Further, the form of *Letters* is related to other less common genres like the philosophical travel book, which was often epistolary in form (Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* is a good example).

Original Audience

When students read *Letters*, they find its substance very familiar because much of this material has become part of the mythology of America. Students need to be reminded that *Letters* was one of the first works describing the character of the average American. Also, its American readers were a society of colonials who had just overturned centuries of tradition and were attempting to define themselves as something new, in order to distinguish themselves from those who were exactly like them but born under monarchical

142 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
governments in Europe. European readers were trying to make sense of this “new man.”

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Letters is a good literary expression of the political principles in the Declaration of Independence and Paine’s *Common Sense*. It is very useful to read *Letters* in tandem with Book II of Timothy Dwight’s *Greenfield Hill*, which is another imaginative creation of the “ideal” average American.

Bibliography

For a quick introduction to the political rhetoric of the period, instructors might read: pp. 82–86 in *A Cultural History of the American Revolution* by Kenneth Silverman (excerpted in *Early American Literature*, edited by Michael Gilmore); Chapters 1 and 2 of Gordon S. Wood’s *The Creation of the American Republic*; and Doreen Alvarez Saar’s “Crèvecoeur’s ‘Thoughts on Slavery’: Letters from an American Farmer and the Rhetoric of Whig Thought” in *Early American Literature* (Fall 1987): 192–203.

Thomas Paine (1737–1809)

Contributing Editor: Martin Roth

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Nature and Reason are not abstract principles for Paine. They are not categories through which it is useful to think about things, but dynamic principles that Paine almost literally sees at work in the world. Reason in *Common Sense* is masculine, a most concrete actor pleading with us to separate from England

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

or forbidding us to have faith in our enemies. Nature is feminine; “she” weeps, and she is unforgiving as part of her deepest nature. Should these agencies be regarded as philosophical principles? As deities? Are they coherent characters? Can they be identified by collecting all their behaviors and their metaphoric qualifications?

How do we think about Paine as an author, a writing “I”? One of his works is presented as having been written by an embodied principle of “common sense,” and another piece, *The Age of Reason*, a work on the general truth of religion, opens in an extremely private, confessional mode. But he writes in this way to prove that he could have no private motives for misleading others. What kind of stakes are being waged by writing a work on religious truth just before you die? Is there any distinction for Paine between the private and the public I, the private and the public life? Notice how many statements fold back upon the self: “it is necessary to the happiness of man that he be mentally faithful to himself ” and “my own mind is my own church.”

Paine evokes the splendor of the visible world to close a unit opened by the notion of a privileged book, a “revealed” book, a Bible. How are the book and the world opposed to each other? One of these ways is as writing and speech; although, actually, the world transcends the distinction between writing and speech: it “speaketh a universal language” which “every man can read.” Could Paine’s distrust and rejection of the Bible be applied to those other “revealed” and “privileged” pieces of writing, literary “masterpieces”? Much of Paine can be read as an attack on the book, a motif that connects him with Mark Twain at the end of the next century.

In *The Rights of Man*, Paine assumes that the right to engage in revolution is inalienable. How does he understand this? Can time and complexity alter this characteristic of the nature of things? What is a government for Paine? The metaphors that he uses should again remind us of Twain, images of stealth and deceit, images of theatricality used for purposes of fraud.

Family is crucial here, too, as Paine examines the

144 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
absurdity of hereditary aristocracy. In this as in almost everything he does, the later writer that Paine most evokes is Mark Twain, here the Mark Twain of *A Connecticut Yankee* and *The American Claimant*. Among the resemblances to Twain that should not be overlooked is a vein of extremely cunning black humor in much of *The Age of Reason*.

John Adams (1735–1826)
Abigail Adams (1744–1818)

Contributing Editors: Albert Furtwangler and Frank Shuffelton

Classroom Issues and Strategies

The formality and elevated decorum of John Adams's language challenge many students, but the opening anecdotes and the witty exchanges between John and Abigail encourage readers to see the personalities behind the mannered language. John Adams (and to a lesser extent Abigail as well) is also somewhat difficult because he has been mythicized as a Founding Father, a figure of national piety who no longer commands a ready allegiance. Additionally, the interests of the Adams in politics and morality do not strike all students as "literature." On the other hand, the questions raised in this material about the political relationships between men and women and by the exchange between Adams and Jefferson over the meaning and impact of "talent" continue to be crucial in our own time. The formal language, the learned references, if brought into play in discussions about the contemporary power of the issues debated by the Adamses and their friends, can set limits on the tendency toward "presentism," and the urge to see the significance of the past only in terms of present meanings. The Adamses talk about questions we care about, but their language, their style, remind us that they did not

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

necessarily see these questions as we do.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Major themes in the writing of the Adamses and their friends relate to the discourse of republicanism that dominated the political and social thinking of enlightened people in the eighteenth century. Adams and many others of his time feared the corruption that he thought inevitably followed upon the increasing sophistication of a developing civilization. His letter to his friend Mercy Otis Warren offers a synopsis of this attitude, including the fear of social laxity that will unleash self-indulgent passion, the unnatural tastes fostered by a burgeoning commercial society, and the disruption by faction of the social harmony needed to sustain a republic. Abigail's desire to return to her farm, described at the end of her journal entry on her return from Europe, links this republican attitude with the pastoralism found in the work of writers like Crèvecoeur, Jefferson, and James Fenimore Cooper, perhaps even with Huckleberry Finn's famous "lighting out."

Abigail Adams's prodding of her husband to "Remember the Ladies" has become a classic benchmark of an emerging feminism, but she is surely no feminist. Nonetheless, she figures as a splendid example of that new sort of woman that Linda Kerber has referred to as the "republican mother" (*Women of the Republic*, 1980). Women like Adams and Mercy Otis Warren took a direct interest in the outcome of the American Revolution, and they spoke their thoughts in private and public, opening the way, perhaps, for more forthright arguments on the behalf of women, such as those by Judith Sargeant Murray and, in a later period, Margaret Fuller.

After the ratification of the Constitution and the creation of the federal government, Adams feared anarchic excesses, encouraged by the French Revolution, among the ill-educated and easily misled populace. Jefferson and the leaders of the emerging Republican party castigated Adams and the Federalists as "monocrats" who wished to seat political power in the hands of a few men of property and family. Adams's

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

belief in a government of laws, however, as well as his suspicion of power that was exerted only by privileged groups, earned him the distrust of Hamilton and the more extreme Federalists. The controversies among these people were not merely over a share of political power, but over the much more crucial question of whether the nation could continue to exist as such. The genuine fear of disorder and social collapse that motivated Adams appears in a different guise in the fiction of Charles Brockden Brown. Jefferson's comments regarding his trust in the good sense of the common people reveal an attitude different from that of Adams, but even he, especially at the end of his life, expressed his fear for the survival of the American experiment. In his correspondence with Jefferson, however, Adams seems rather to have enjoyed playing the cynical foil to his friend's optimism.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

All of the Adams materials included here are drawn from the personal, private genres of the journal and letters. They were intended to be read by trusted family and friends, but they were also expected to be shared among a circle of such readers. Jefferson expected that Abigail Adams would read his letters to John, and similarly John Adams would have expected Mercy Otis Warren to have shared her letter with her husband, James, a political leader in Massachusetts. Such correspondence was one aspect of the eighteenth-century republic of letters, the public sphere of discussion about social, political, and learned questions that occurred independently of the narrow limits of the family as well as of the overview of the state. Considered in this way, the letters between John and Abigail, for instance, are both the intimate exchange of husband and wife and the communication between a constituent and her delegate to the revolutionary Congress of 1776.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

These selections make a lively contrast to the impersonal rationality of the Federalist essays or the Declaration of Independence. The journal selections can be used in the context of earlier and later traditions of journal-keeping in New England and are interesting for their moral introspection and regulation as well as for their attention to the way human beings live in the world. They take an interesting position between Winthrop, Sewall, Sarah Kemble Knight, and Emerson and Thoreau. Similarly, Adams's concern for a virtuous republic can be framed against Winthrop's discussion of the city on a hill and Thoreau's "Resistance to Civil Government."

Bibliography

Adams's grandson, Charles Francis Adams, edited his *Works* (1850–56) in ten volumes, still a useful source for those who wish to read more. Albert Furtwangler discusses Adams's newspaper debate with a loyalist in *American Silhouettes* (1987); this book also contains a discussion of Adams and Jefferson. Peter Shaw's *The Character of John Adams* (1976) is a significant discussion, as is Joseph J. Ellis, *Passionate Sage: John Adams and America's Original Intentions* (1993). Edith Gelles, *Portia: The World of Abigail Adams* (1992), is particularly illuminating on the role of letters in Abigail Adams's life.

Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)

Contributing Editor: Frank Shuffelton

Classroom Issues and Strategies

148 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*

Jefferson does not write in traditionally conceived literary genres, that is, fiction, poetry, etc., but his best writing is in the form of public addresses, letters, and a political and scientific account of his home state. One can persuade students to see the cultural significance of these forms and then lead them to see the artful construction of image and idea to move readers and to recognize that the texts work (perform) as literature.

Students are particularly interested in discussing the notion of equality, and most people in general want to talk about Sally Hemings. The contradiction between Jefferson's egalitarianism and his racism (real or apparent) also provokes discussion.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

For Jefferson, the values of political and moral equality, the scientific interest in variety and complexity in nature and culture, and a kind of skepticism, a doubt that absolute truth can be unequivocally attained in any generation, put him in the line of Ralph Waldo Emerson and William James. At the same time, the fact that he seems to represent the voiceless and the marginal as a political leader even while his own interests and social position put him among the white male elite of his time points to certain tensions in his positions, of which he was not himself always aware.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Jefferson published only one full-length book, his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, but the Declaration of Independence and his letters are also significant literary achievements. The Declaration matters because of its significance for our national culture, the letters because of their frequent power to express Jefferson's public ideals and commitments, the importance of the many ideas and issues that fall under his consideration, and

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

the clarity of his consideration. We should remember that Jefferson's sense of the historical moment conditioned practically everything he wrote.

Original Audience

The distinction between private audience, as for personal letters, and public audience, as for the Declaration, is interesting to pursue because Jefferson blurred them in interesting ways. Some of his letters were published, usually against his will but not without his recognition that personal letters could always become public, and yet he was somewhat reluctant to publish *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Comparisons are effective; for example, the Declaration to Puritan sermons, or *Notes on the State of Virginia* to Crèvecoeur's *Letters*. It is also helpful to get students to think about the importance of history and politics as central matrices for eighteenth-century thought, the move toward science and natural history as the nineteenth century approached, and the different ways we in the late twentieth century have for ordering our knowledge of the world.

The Declaration is a kind of jeremiad in Sacvan Bercovitch's sense of the term, which involves an ironically affirmative catalog of catastrophes, an admission of sins to cast them out. *Notes on the State of Virginia* and Crèvecoeur's *Letters* can be seen as different ways of defining the American landscape, as well as the place of America.

Bibliography

Useful essays on a variety of topics appear in *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson

150 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
(New York: Scribner's, 1986). See also its bibliographical
essay.

Cunningham, Noble E. Jr. *In Pursuit of Reason: The Life of
Thomas Jefferson*. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1987.
A convenient one-volume biography.

Ellis, Joseph J. *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas
Jefferson*. New York: Knopf, 1997. Suggestive study
by an eminent biographer of John Adams, who
influences the author's perspective.

Miller, John C. *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and
Slavery*. New York: Free Press, 1977. A thorough
and balanced view of Jefferson's changing
views on race and slavery.

Onuf, Peter, ed. *Jeffersonian Legacies*. Charlottesville:
University Press of Virginia, 1993. Informed
essays by younger scholars on most aspects of
Jefferson's life and thought. Particularly interesting is Lucia
Stanton's essay on the slave community at Monticello.

Federalist and Anti-Federalist Contentions

Contributing Editor: Nicholas D. Rombes

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Students generally respond with more enthusiasm to the
Federalist/Anti-Federalist debate once they realize that the
issues raised by the debate were very real. It often helps,
initially, to have students think of "current event" issues of
contention today, such as the "pro-life"/"pro-choice" abortion
debates. This helps students to see that debates over the

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Constitution were not merely abstract exercises in rhetorical showmanship, but real debates about issues that mattered.

Students also seem to identify with one of the three “voices” of *The Federalist Papers*, as well. Some students, for instance, wish that Jay had contributed more essays, finding his voice more democratic and populist than Hamilton’s or Madison’s. This can lead to fruitful discussions about the rhetorical strategies employed by all three authors as well as the audience they were addressing.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Many students assume that once the Revolutionary War was over, the country was solidified and unified. Therefore, it is helpful to review certain key issues such as states’ rights, fear of a standing army, and fear of factions. Anti-Federalists argued again and again that a national government was merely a prelude to the establishment of an aristocratic class. Indeed, many Anti-Federalists drew upon the rhetoric of the Revolution to argue against a strong national government.

The Federalist conception of human nature as essentially selfish and depraved is also important to note, since Federalists relied on such conceptions to justify their call for a mildly interventionist national government. Students are often shocked to learn that the word “democracy” was not held in high regard as it is today, and are interested in the distinctions between democracy, monarchy, and republicanism.

For years, many scholars have contended that the Federalists were basically conservative upper-class supporters of the status quo, and that the Anti-Federalists were more “populist.” Scholars such as Herbert J. Storing have recently suggested, however, that, if anything, Anti-Federalists were more conservative than their Federalist counterparts, as evidenced in the fact that many Anti-Federalists feared the very idea of change and experimentation that would result from the new form of government proposed by the Federalists.

It is also helpful to introduce students to some of the

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

152 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
basic ideas of writers such as Hobbes, Locke, and Montesquieu, all of whose writings influenced the Constitution to varying degrees.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Students are interested in the different “voices” of Hamilton, Madison, and Jay. Note also how the authors of *The Federalist Papers* allude to classical regimes and civilizations not only to help their arguments but also to show their learning. Finally, note how many of the letters begin with references to “objections” to the proposed Constitution—instructors may want to use this to show that these debates were very real.

Original Audience

The Federalist Papers originally appeared as a series of essays in New York newspapers between October and August 1787. Based on the language and tone of the essays, ask students to try to construct an audience for them; would this audience be literate? Educated? What economic class might constitute the majority of the audience? What race? Gender?

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Ask students to perform a rhetorical analysis of *The Federalist Papers*, paying special attention to how the authors construct their arguments (logos), how they bolster their authority and credibility (ethos), and how they use the beliefs, fears, and assumptions of their audience (pathos) to help their arguments.
2. Ask students to try to reconstruct the Federalist conception of the relationship between “the people” and government. From where does authority ultimately derive? If students have spent time studying the

Puritans, ask them to consider the ultimate sources of authority in Puritan writings as compared to Federalist and Anti-Federalist writings. Has the source of authority shifted from God to humans and civil institutions?

3. Ask students to read carefully Federalist No. 54. How does Madison handle the topic of slavery? Have students summarize his arguments.

Bibliography

Cary, George W. *The Federalist: Design for a Constitutional Republic*, 1989.

Epstein, David F. *The Political Theory of The Federalist*, 1984.

Furtwangler, Albert. *The Authority of Publius: A Reading of the Federalist Papers*, 1984.

Main, Jackson Turner. *The Anti-Federalists: Critics of the Constitution, 1781–1788*, 1961.

Toussaint L'Ouverture (1744?–1803)

Contributing Editor: Danielle Hinrichs

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Teaching Toussaint L'Ouverture within the context of an American Literature survey course will necessitate some delving into the history of Saint Domingue (now Haiti) and colonization. What will certainly be unfamiliar intellectual terrain for many students, however, will raise thought-provoking questions that have a bearing on many other

154 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*

readings in the *Heath Anthology*. Toussaint's work presents an opportunity to discuss processes of colonization and practices of slavery in an America that clearly extends beyond the present U.S. borders. When discussing the historical context of Toussaint's writings, connections can be made between the maroon colonies that formed the impetus and power of the slave revolt in Saint Domingue and communities of escaped slaves in other parts of the Americas. The maroon revolt might also be discussed in the context of other forms of slave resistance, including more subtle forms of resistance, evident in American fiction and nonfiction. Toussaint and Saint Domingue served as a tremendous example of the efficacy of slave resistance for the entire world. As George F. Tyson explains, "The creation of a 'Black Republic' generated shock waves of alarm throughout the plantation sphere, raising the possibility of other successful uprisings of the oppressed black masses and an end to white supremacy in the hemisphere" (1). Toussaint's writings convey the political maneuvering of imperial interests, making Saint Domingue an apt demonstration of the competing cultures that battled for power throughout the Americas. The revolution in Saint Domingue is also complexly intertwined with the historical events of the French revolution, and Toussaint's writings can raise interesting questions relevant to political revolution throughout the old world and the new. Students will gain more from reading Toussaint's *L'Ouverture* if they are introduced to Saint Domingue's historical context and relevant issues before they read Toussaint's writings. It would also be very helpful to read Toussaint's proclamations and letters after other works on colonization or slavery, works by Prince Hall or Lemuel Haynes, for example, so that students have been introduced to these major themes and issues before they encounter the sometimes complex historical references of Toussaint's writings.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Saint Domingue was a prized and valuable colony in the eighteenth century. Its sugar and coffee industries generated immense profits, but its enormous plantations depended on a slave economy that instituted brutally violent practices in order to produce more abundant crops. Several imperial interests attempted to control the island's wealth, including England, Spain, and France. Toussaint was born on the Western portion of the Island, controlled by the French, but he also served the Spanish when he believed that they might abolish slavery on the island, and he fought against England in order to garner support from the other colonial powers. The French revolution further complicated these alliances. Toussaint first sided with the Royalists, believing that only a King could abolish slavery, but he shifted his allegiance when the French Republic declared slavery illegal. Toussaint not only had to negotiate between these competing imperial powers, but also had to mediate between competing class and race factions at home. Students in the United States are often accustomed to thinking of race and power in binary terms. It will be important, therefore, to establish the complex hierarchical structure of the island in which the *Grand Blancs* (white plantation owners and French officials) asserted power over the *Petit Blancs* (white overseers, artisans, shopkeepers, and soldiers), who asserted power over free blacks (mainly mulattoes), who had more power and privileges than slaves. All of these groups were trying to maintain or gain power in the community. Toussaint's background as a slave meant that his goals and initiatives often collided with those of the mulattoes, who not only struggled to increase their power in society, but also continually fought to maintain the privileges they already enjoyed. Toussaint's writing must be considered at this nexus of competing powers and factions. Understanding the stakes and complexities of the social climate will allow students to more easily recognize Toussaint's often simultaneous attempts to defend himself, attack his enemies, and unify the population of Saint Domingue.

Toussaint's personal history also helps to demonstrate some important themes in his writing. His life as a slave was unusual in Saint Domingue in that he received liberal

treatment from his master, he read widely, and he gained a very deep sense of religion from his godfather, a priest. When Toussaint achieved power in Saint Domingue, he made Catholicism the state religion. One of the most important and interesting themes to consider, then, is how Toussaint uses religious language to put forth political objectives.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Toussaint's letters and proclamations are characterized by careful and convincing logic and persuasive and eloquent language. He often uses questions and exclamatory statements to create a stirring and rousing tone that attacks his enemies and calls his audience to action. His letters and proclamations are, in essence, public addresses to large political bodies and Toussaint continually defines himself on a public stage.

Original Audience

Both genre and historical context contribute to making the question of audience crucial and potentially fruitful for students reading the work of Toussaint L'Ouverture. On a fundamental level, students should think about the generic qualities of letters and political declarations, their audiences and functions. Toussaint's proclamations are formal political declarations meant to be heard or read by the entire population of Saint Domingue, their goal as large and encompassing as their intended audience. Through these proclamations, Toussaint attempts to gain widespread public support for his goals and to defend himself on the political stage. The language is thus persuasive, inclusive, and powerful, attempting to unite his public behind a certain cause.

Toussaint's "Letter to the Directory" specifically addresses a governing body in France. The uniqueness of the epistolary genre lies in its exchange between a clearly defined reader and a writer and in its expectation of reply. Toussaint's letter, however, is an unusual epistolary example in that it addresses

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

a political body and thus is exceedingly public and political. Because a member of the directory had recently made disparaging remarks against Toussaint, he approaches his audience as a somewhat hostile one and vigorously defends his political reputation. His tone is argumentative and his evidence is detailed. In the very complex cultural climate of Saint Domingue, one in which alliances and allegiances were continually in flux, the intended audience of a document has an enormous influence over its language and content.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

A comparison of Prince Hall and Toussaint L'Ouverture is very effective because Hall refers to the Saint Domingue revolution, underscoring the significance of this movement throughout the Americas, and because the two politically active authors take up similar themes and confront similar audiences. Both write directly to political bodies and both employ extensive references to religion and the language of equality. Both are also persuasive and eloquent writers who seek to rouse their audiences to political action. Lemuel Haynes provides a very interesting counterpart to Toussaint in terms of exploring revolution and the use of enlightenment thinking throughout the Americas. Haynes uses the language of the American revolution to argue against slavery and to defend the rights of freedom for all. All three writers, Hall, Toussaint, and Haynes, make religion an important part of their persuasive writings.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Consider the relationship between politics and religion in Toussaint's writing. How does Toussaint employ religious language for political purposes in his proclamations and/or in his letter?
2. Discuss the differences and similarities between Toussaint's proclamations and his letter. Does the

- 158 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
intended audience change the tone of his writing and the content of his argument? Which techniques and allusions are similar in his proclamations and his letter? How are his goals similar and how are they different?
3. The French imperialists both enabled and obstructed Toussaint's rise to power in Saint Domingue. Toussaint existed, therefore, in a politically unstable position and sought to both rally the island behind his own cause and woo the support of the powerful French government. How does Toussaint portray his relationship with the French government?
 4. In which contexts and for what purposes does Toussaint invoke the language of the French revolution?
 5. Throughout Toussaint's political maneuverings, he sought a permanent end to slavery. How does Toussaint convey this goal in the excerpted writings? Pay particular attention to the language and tone of his discussions of slavery.
 6. What is the rhetorical effect of Toussaint's frequent use of questions and exclamatory statements? Examine moments in the texts when he includes questions and exclamations and discuss the purpose of these strategies within the context of his argument.
 7. Toussaint's writings address large public audiences and serve to place and define Toussaint L'Ouverture within the political realm. How does Toussaint define himself for his audience? How does Toussaint strive to shape public perception of himself and his political goals?

Bibliography

James, C. L. R. *Black Jacobins*. New York: Vintage Books, 1963.

Langley, Lester D. "The Haitian Revolution." *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750–1850*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, 122–144.

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Ros, Martin. *Night of Fire: The Black Napoleon and the Battle for Haiti*. New York: Sarpedon, 1994.

Stein, Robert Louis. *Leger Felicite Sonthonax: The Lost Sentinel of the Republic*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1985.

Tyson, George F., Jr. "Introduction." *Toussaint L'Ouverture*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973, 1–22.

Patriot and Loyalist Songs and Ballads

Contributing Editor: Rosalie Murphy Baum

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Most students enjoy Patriot songs and ballads but approach Loyalist works with shyness and curiosity. Their studies in elementary, middle, and high school have led them to think of the Revolutionary War as a completely justified and glorious chapter in American history; they tend not to be aware of the Loyalist (Tory) view of the conflict. At the same time, however, their consciousness of recent American history and international events (e.g., the Vietnam War, the Iran-Iraqi conflict, the Persian Gulf War, the Israeli-Palestinian struggles) have made them increasingly aware of the complexity of historical events and of the need to understand both sides of issues. The fact that the songs and ballads reflect and articulate two conflicting *American* views about a momentous period can be of great interest to students once they overcome their qualms about literature that questions or criticizes national decisions and actions.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Reading the Patriot and Loyalist songs and ballads provides a glimpse of the popular sentiments being expressed in newspapers, periodicals, ballad-sheets, and broadsides during the Revolutionary period. The selections in the text represent various forms: the song and the ballad, the selection addressed to the public at large and the selection addressed to the child, the work expressing the Patriot or Loyalist position and the work commemorating the life of a particular hero. The usual themes of the Patriot and the Loyalist writers are summarized in the introduction to the selections.

A good glossary of literary terms can offer students information about the usual form and conventions of the song and ballad. Students should anticipate uneven work in popular songs and ballads, written in haste and for immediate practical purposes. At the same time, however, they may wish to examine what in these works accounted for their great popularity during the period and their survival through the years. Of particular interest might be an imaginative reconstruction of the response of both Patriot and Loyalist to either a Patriot or a Loyalist song.

Probably the most important facts students need to consider before reading Patriot and Loyalist songs and ballads are (a) at the time of the Revolutionary War, the Loyalists were Americans just as much as were the Patriots (Rebels or Whigs); (b) the Loyalist group included some of the leading figures in the country at the time (e.g., Chief Justice William Allen, the Rev. Mather Byles, Samuel Curwen, Joseph Galloway, Governor Thomas Hutchinson, the Rev. Jonathan Odell, Chief Justice Peter Oliver, the Rev. Samuel Seabury, Attorney General Jonathan Sewall), figures whom students tend not to recognize because of the usual emphasis in the classroom upon only Patriot figures; (c) whatever knowledge the students have of Loyalists probably comes from the remarks and writings of Patriots and thus is heavily slanted. The classroom emphasis on Patriot leaders and Patriot

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

arguments, of course, distorts the political complexion of the time and does not help the student to appreciate the complex issues and emotional turmoil of a period in which it is believed that about one-third of the people were Patriots, one-third Loyalists, and one-third neutrals, with Loyalists being especially strong in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

The sentiments of these works, both Patriot and Loyalist, can be compared very successfully with the ideas expressed by prose writers like John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine, Patriots who are frequently anthologized. Students, however, may also be interested in reading a few of the Loyalist prose writers, such as the Rev. Samuel Seabury (“A View of the Controversy Between Great Britain and Her Colonies”) and Joseph Galloway (“Plan of a Proposed Union Between Great Britain and the Colonies” or “A Candid Examination of the Mutual Claims of Great Britain and the Colonies”). Students interested in popular culture may wish to pursue the difficult question of what characteristics distinguish popular literature, like these songs and ballads, from serious literature, like the poems of William Cullen Bryant, Walt Whitman, or Emily Dickinson. There could be considerable controversy about where the poetry of Philip Freneau should fit in such a comparison.

Approaches to Writing

Some students may simply wish to report on additional Patriot and Loyalist songs and ballads and can consult Frank Moore’s *Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution* (1855, 1964) for the most complete collection. Other students may wish to consider the degree to which the Revolutionary War was very much a civil war. They might compare such a struggle to the

162 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
conflict between the disparate cultures of the whites and
Indians reflected in Puritan literature, or draw parallels
between the civil conflict in America and similar hostilities in
countries throughout the world today.

Bibliography

Two kinds of information can be particularly useful for students or instructors in studying the Patriot and Loyalist songs and ballads. The introductions to *Prose and Poetry of the Revolution* (1925, 1969), edited by Frederick C. Prescott and John H. Nelson, and to *The World Turned Upside Down* (1975), edited by James H. Pickering, give excellent, brief overviews of the period and of the literature.

William H. Nelson's *The American Tory* (1961) offers an excellent discussion of Loyalist views.

Wallace Brown's *The King's Friends* (1965) attempts to identify who the Loyalists were and to determine their motives for remaining loyal to the king.

Contested Visions, American Voices

Jupiter Hammon (1711–1806?)

*Contributing Editors: William H. Robinson and Phillip M.
Richards*

Classroom Issues and Strategies

African-American literature emerges at an auspicious time in the settlement of North America. The number of blacks

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

entering the colonies increased markedly at the middle of the eighteenth century. Settled blacks in the New World may have acquired a new self-consciousness as they encountered large numbers of newly arrived Africans. Their consciousness as a separate group was defined by laws restricting racial intermarriage, by racist portrayals in the press, and by their increased involvement in the evangelical religion that emerged in the aftermath of the Great Awakening.

Jupiter Hammon, whose life roughly covers the span of the eighteenth century, was in an excellent position to see these trends. His writing reflects his efforts to evangelize his black brethren at a time when most African Americans were not Christians. He is a traditional Calvinist. He is aware of Africa and the experience of the middle passage. Not surprisingly, his use of traditional evangelical rhetoric is deeply suggestive of the political implications that this discourse might have in the work of future writers.

Students should be aware that we read Hammon as we might read any American Calvinist writing in the last half of the eighteenth century. We look for the rhetoric that underlies his evangelical strategies; we try to establish the speaker's relationship to his white and black audiences; and we assess the way in which the religious language of his discourse begins to acquire a political resonance, particularly in its use of words such as "king," "nation," "salvation," and "victory."

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Psalms is the most quoted biblical book in the poem addressed to Phillis Wheatley. Why would Psalms be such an important book to a black preacher-poet such as Hammon? What importance do you think the broad sweep of Old Testament history might have had to Hammon? What importance did this history have to evangelicals and political revolutionaries in late eighteenth-century New England? At what points do you think that Hammon and his white evangelical peers' understanding of scripture might have diverged?

164 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*

What poem by Phillis Wheatley has Hammon obviously read? Why do you think that he seized upon this verse in his own longer poem? What stance does the speaker of this poem assume toward his ostensible reader, Wheatley? Does this stance resemble the speaker's stance in Hammon's other work?

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Examine the formal impact of the literary structure of the Psalms on Hammon's poems. What literary influence do hymn stanza form and sermon form have on his writing? In what social context do hymns and sermons occur? Why would Hammon be attempting to evoke that context in his writing?

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

In what way does the rhetoric of Christian salvation, both personal and national, imply a historical construct? Compare Hammon's and Wheatley's use of that construct. Why would such a construct be important to early American black writers?

Think of other early American writers who treat the subject of salvation in radically different ways. Would Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin respond to Hammon in the same ways? How would the two white writers differ, if they differed at all?

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

Describe the way in which Christian thought and rhetoric structured Hammon's racial consciousness. Why is it significant that America's first black writers are Puritans? In what sense could a shared religious belief be important for racial relations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century?

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

James Grainger (1721?–1766)

Contributing Editor: Thomas W. Krise

Classroom Issues and Strategies

James Grainger's *The Sugar Cane* (1764) offers one of the best descriptions of a staple crop plantation in the eighteenth century, as well as a good example of the adaptation of classical forms to the American experience. The fourth and final book of the poem offered in *The Heath Anthology* presents Grainger's advice to the planter on how to manage the slave population.

Students will require some orientation to classical poetics, both in their original Greek and Roman patterns and in their English varieties in the eighteenth century. Grainger's georgic (from the Greek for "farmer") poem varies from the standard georgic in that the poet is advising not a hands-on farmer, but rather a manager of a large-scale plantation and factory system. It also replaces the standard closing paean to the ideal farm with an uncomfortable (both for us and the poet) *vade mecum* to the purchase and management of slaves. Descriptions of slavery are also likely to draw most students' attention.

Considerations of the tradition of neoclassical poetry and *The Sugar Cane's* place in both American and British literature will help broaden students' appreciation of this poem.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Students will need some orientation to the British West Indies, which, before the American Revolution severed them from their fellow colonists on the North American continent, were part of the same unitary “British Empire in America.” It is important to emphasize that the West Indies were the destination of many more enslaved Africans than North America was. More than three times as many were transported to the sugar plantations of Barbados, Jamaica, the Leeward Islands (including Grainger’s St. Christopher), and others. By the 1770s, the wealth generated by these relatively small island colonies exceeded the combined wealth of all thirteen continental colonies.

Tropical diseases (Grainger’s medical specialty), extreme weather, and hard conditions resulted in a much higher death rate for the enslaved populations in the islands than on the continent. As a result, the vast majority of the slaves working on sugar plantations were African-born, hence Grainger’s heavy emphasis on the choice and “seasoning” of new slaves rather than the management of native-born or long-accustomed slaves.

It is also important to note that Grainger writes at the moment of Britain’s stupendous victory over France in the Seven Years War (America’s French and Indian War). Besides conquering Canada, much of India, and other posts throughout the world, Britain added more than a dozen valuable Caribbean sugar islands to its empire. Within a dozen years, London’s high-handedness in dealing with its newly expanded empire would lead to the American Revolution, but in the early 1760s, the future looked bright and peaceful. As Virgil’s *Georgics* celebrates the peace brought by Augustus’s victories, Grainger’s poem celebrates the happy conclusion of decades of Anglo-French warfare.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Perhaps better than any other eighteenth-century English poem in the neoclassical vein, *The Sugar Cane* marries the dream of social order represented by the steady march of iambic

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

pentameter within the formal conventions of the Augustan poetic heritage with the anxious need to maintain social order within a violent and volatile slave society by all means necessary. Grainger is innovative in introducing many new places, terms, flora, and fauna to English poetry. He also tries to dignify the slave owner by conflating him with the noble farmers to whom georgics are addressed from Hesiod and Virgil onward. Grainger's planter shares in the glories of labor without performing any of the ennobling work.

Original Audience

Samuel Johnson wrote a review of *The Sugar Cane* as soon as it was published in London, describing it as the best poem to arise to date from British America. James Boswell discusses Grainger and his georgic in *The Life of Johnson*, reporting that the poem was read in manuscript to a group of wits at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, a friend of Grainger's. Clearly, then, Grainger's chief literary audience was intellectual London. The fact, however, that Grainger addresses his fellow colonists and that several West Indian editions of the poem were published suggest an interest in an American audience.

Grainger's poem inspired at least three other works: John Singleton's *A General Description of the West Indies* (1767), the anonymous *Jamaica, A Poem, In Three Parts* (1777), and portions of John Gabriel Stedman's *Narrative of the Surinam slave revolt* (1796).

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Descriptions of slavery by opponents of the system, especially those written by slaves themselves, can help balance and contextualize the presentation of *The Sugar Cane*. Olaudah Equiano's autobiography is by far the most sophisticated and influential. Other useful sources include Stedman's *Narrative*, Vincent Carretta's *Unchained Voices* anthology, and *Caribbeana: An Anthology of English Literature of the West Indies, 1657–1777*.

As a georgic, *The Sugar Cane* is indebted especially to Virgil's *Georgics* and James Thomson's *Seasons* (1726–30). Its digressions on Caribbean plants and animals echo the many prose and verse descriptions of the natural history of the region from 1492 onward, especially Edmund Hickeringill's *Jamaica Viewed* (1661), Richard Ligon's *A True and Exact History of Barbados* (1657), and Sir Hans Sloane's *A Voyage to the Islands* (1707–25). Its topographical, imperial, and commercial aspects continue the tradition of Sir John Denham's "Cooper's Hill" (1642) and Alexander Pope's "Windsor Forest" (1713).

The Sugar Cane's most direct imitation can be found in John Singleton's *A General Description of the West Indies* (1767), which shifts the emphasis from georgic to topographical poem, providing more detailed descriptions of the islands, people, and customs of the West Indies. The anonymous author of another long topographical poem, *Jamaica, A Poem, In Three Parts* (1777), takes issue with Grainger's poetical support for the inhumanity of slavery. In his *Narrative* (1796), Stedman follows the *Jamaica* poet in lamenting Grainger's attempt to dignify the system.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. How does the poem's form (georgic in blank verse) relate to its didactic purpose (teaching the management of a slave plantation)? How would other forms and genres change the character of Grainger's message?

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

2. What effect do Grainger's learned footnotes have on the experience of reading the poem? Do the scientific digressions enhance or detract from the poem?
3. How does Grainger represent the living conditions of plantation slaves? How does he justify British involvement in slavery?
4. How does the narrator handle the apparent conflict between his aim of teaching planters how to grow sugar cane using slave labor and his dismay over the "heart debasing" nature of slavery?
5. Which aspects of the poem are distinctly American? Which British?
6. How does *The Sugar Cane* relate to other American poems of the eighteenth century?

Bibliography

In his study of commercial and imperial poetry, David S. Shields provides the most extensive discussion of *The Sugar Cane* published to date.

Olaudah Equiano's narrative offers the best description of slavery in the eighteenth century from the point of view of a former slave. Vincent Carretta's anthology includes a number of accounts of West Indian and North American slavery written by Africans.

Addison, Joseph. "Essay on the Georgic." 1697.

Anonymous. *Jamaica, a poem, in three parts. Written in that Island, in the Year MDCCLXXVI. To which is annexed, A Poetical Epistle From the Author in that Island to a Friend in England.* London, 1777.

Boswell, James. *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* Ed. G. B. Hill, rev. ed. L. F. Powell. 6 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934–1964.

Carretta, Vincent, ed. *Unchained Voices: An Anthology of*

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

170 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
Black Authors in the English-Speaking World of the
18th Century. Lexington: University Press of
Kentucky, 1996.

Equiano, Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of*
Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African.
Written by Himself. London (1789); new ed.
Vincent Carretta. New York: Penguin USA, 1995.

Johnson, Samuel. Review of Grainger's *The Sugar Cane*.
Critical Review (October 1764): 170.

Krise, Thomas W. *Caribbeana: An Anthology of English*
Literature of the West Indies, 1657–1777.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Shields, David S. *Oracles of Empire: Poetry, Politics, and*
Commerce in British America, 1690–1750. Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Singleton, John. *A General Description of the West-Indian*
Islands, As far as relates to the British, Dutch, and
Danish Governments, From Barbados to Saint
Croix. Attempted in Blank Verse. Barbados, 1767.

Stedman, John Gabriel. *Narrative, of a five years expedition,*
against the revolted Negroes of Surinam. London, 1796;
new ed. of 1790 manuscript, ed. Richard Price and
Sally Price. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University
Press, 1988.

Samson Occom (Mohegan) (1723–1792)

Contributing Editor: A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Classroom Issues and Strategies

“A Short Narrative of My Life” (dated September 17, 1768) is one of the earliest life histories written by an American Indian. Shortly after he returned from England in the spring of 1768, Occom began his “Short, Plain, and Honest Account of my Self” in order to refute false reports that he was a Mohawk, that Wheelock received large sums for his support, and that he had been converted just before the English tour in order to become a special exhibit (Blodgett 27). An important topic both in his narrative and sermon, as well as in the selection from Apess and Copway, is religious conversion. Students, who generally cannot understand why Indians became devout Christian converts, need to know that for Indians and for slaves, Christianity offered the possibility of being regarded by whites as equals under God. Indian authors, like slave narrators, frequently contrasted whites’ professed Christianity with their mistreatment of minorities. Students also need to understand that until at least the late nineteenth century, most Indian education was conducted under the auspices of religious organizations. In the twentieth century, many reservation schools were still run by churches; even the Indian schools controlled by the government had a strong religious orientation.

Occom’s narrative offers the opportunity to follow the stages of his movement from traditional Mohegan life to conversion and acculturation, his methods of teaching his Indian students and conducting church services, and resentment of being paid far less than white preachers because he was Indian.

In discussing “A Sermon Preached by Samson Occom,” students should be given information about the structure and general content of execution sermons. All this is included in the text headnote and in the following section.

There are a number of issues that can help them see the significance of this sermon. I have had good discussions of why execution sermons were so popular during this period. I often relate these sermons and the confessions they contain to modern-day confessional talk shows.

Another issue is the delicate political task Occom faced in addressing both a white and Indian audience. See the discussion of style below.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

1. Identify the Mohegans as a tribe and give some sense of their background. A member of the Algonkian language family, the Mohegans originally were the northernmost branch of the Pequots, the fiercest of the New England tribes. During the 1637 war with the English, the Pequots were massacred near what is now Stonington, Connecticut. Led by their chief Uncas, the Mohegans, who sided with the English in the war, joined in the massacre. After the war, they remained at peace with the English but resumed hostilities with their old enemies, the Narragansetts. For a brief period, the Mohegans, then numbering 2,000, greatly expanded their territory. However, this had shrunk drastically by the end of the seventeenth century. English settlers, who regarded the nomadic Mohegans as idle thieves, issued orders to remove them from the towns. Uncas and his sons further decreased Mohegan territory by making large land transfers to the whites. By the end of the century, the Mohegans were no longer independent. The first successful attempt to gather them into Indian villages was made in 1717. Eight years later, the Mohegans numbered only 351 and were split into two opposing camps, located one-half mile apart on the west side of the Mohegan river between New London and Norwich, Connecticut.
2. “A Short Narrative of My Life.” Issues for discussion include the status of New England Indians in 1768, the relationship of the document to the spiritual confessions so popular in this period, and Occom’s concept of self as expressed in his narrative.
3. “A Sermon Preached by Samson Occom.”

- a. Why were execution sermons so popular in this period? (See below.)
- b. Structure and general content of the execution sermons.

All this is included in the text headnote and in the following section.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

In “A Short Narrative of My Life,” which was not written for publication, Occom uses a much more conversational style than he does in “A Sermon.” Why?

The latter is a typical example of the popular genre of the execution sermon. The first publication in New England to combine the offender’s “True Confession” with the “Dying Warning” was Increase Mather’s *The Wicked mans Portion [sic]* (1675). His *A Sermon Occasioned by the Execution of a Man found Guilty of Murder [sic]* (1686) expanded the literary form by including the murderer’s complete confession as allegedly taken down in shorthand. The 1687 second edition added a discourse between the prisoner and minister, designed to introduce realism. Lawrence Towner argues that the genre demonstrated that New Englanders committed crimes and were led to contrition. Because the listeners to the sermons and readers of the “True Confessions” and “Dying Warnings” were at worst minor sinners, it was necessary to trace the criminal’s career back to its origins and to generalize about the nature of crime. As criminals increasingly became outsiders (blacks, Indians, Irishmen, or foreign pirates), the tone of the True Confessions and Dying Warnings changed from moral suasion to titillation. So popular became the genre that in 1773, the year after the publication of Occom’s sermon, eleven separate publications dealing with the condemned prisoner Levi Ames were printed. Wayne C. Minnick suggests that the authors of execution sermons ranked among the “best educated, most influential men of their society” (78).

A particularly important issue is the rhetorical strategies Occom uses to appeal to the church fathers, a generally white audience, Moses Paul, and Indian listeners. Having students pick out the phrases and comments that Occom makes to each person or group will help them see how skillful he was. Students need to realize what a politically delicate position Occom was in—he needed to educate his white audience without alienating them and to balance his presentations to the three groups that constituted the total audience. Another point

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

to discuss is how Occom presents himself in the sermon.

Original Audience

It is important to get students to understand the religious milieu of the period, which responded to execution sermons as a form of spiritual confession. This can be compared with the confessions of contemporary born-again fundamentalists. The sermon was sometimes delivered in church on the Sunday or Thursday before the execution, but most frequently just before the time appointed for the hanging. Audiences numbered between 550 and 850.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

“A Short Narrative”—The descriptions of Indian life can be compared with those by George Copway. Comparisons can also be made to the accounts of Indians in the “Colonial Period to 1700” section, the accounts of Indian relations in selections by John Smith and Thomas Morton, and the descriptions of Indian life in the captivity narratives of Mary Rowlandson and John Williams.

Increase and Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards—the structure and general themes of their execution and other sermons—can be compared. These preachers emphasized dramatic conversion, which Edwards described as a three-stage process: (1) Fear, anxiety, and distress at one’s sinfulness; (2) absolute dependence on the “sovereign mercy of God in Jesus Christ”; and (3) relief from distress under conviction of sin and joy at being accepted by God (Goen 14). This process, reflected in Occom’s sermon, became the norm in the Great Awakening and in subsequent revivalism. Evangelists also used emotional extravagance in their sermons.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

“A Sermon.” Call attention to the structure and the concept of redemption through confession of sin. I do not assign a paper on this work. If I did, two possible topics would be Occom’s use of distinct rhetorical strategies to appeal to the various groups in his audience and to Moses Paul; and the extent to which Occom follows the standard structure and basic content for such sermons (see text headnote).

Bibliography

Conkey, Laura E., Ethel Bolissevain, and Ives Goddard. “Indians of Southern New England and Long Island: Late Period.” In *The Northeast*, edited by Bruce G. Trigger. *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1978. 177–89. Valuable introduction to these tribes.

Goen, C. C. *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740–1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962.

Heimert, Alan. *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966.

Jennings, Francis. *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest*. New York: Norton, 1976. Standard work on the subject, with lengthy bibliography.

Minnick, Wayne C. “The New England Execution Sermon, 1639–1800.” *Speech Monographs* 35 (1968): 77–89.

Salwen, Bert. “Indians of Southern New England and Long Island: Early Period.” In *The Northeast*, edited by Bruce G. Trigger. *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1978. 177–89. Valuable introduction to these tribes.

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

1978, 160–76. Informative introduction to these tribes.

Sturtevant, William C., ed. *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1978.

Towner, Lawrence L. “True Confessions and Dying Warnings in Colonial New England.” In *Sibley’s Heir. A Volume in Memory of Clifford Kenyon Shipton*, 523–39. Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts and University Press of Virginia, 1982. The articles on the execution sermon by Minnick and Towner are especially good.

Trigger, Bruce G., ed. *The Northeast*, vol. 15. *Handbook of North American Indians*, edited by William C. Sturtevant. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1978.

Washburn, Wilcomb E. “Seventeenth-Century Indian Wars.” In *The Northeast*, edited by Bruce G. Trigger, 89–100. *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1978. Good overview of these wars.

Briton Hammon (fl. 1760)

Contributing Editors: John Alberti and Amy E. Winans

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Students will understand Hammon’s narrative better if they are aware of its connections to the traditions of the captivity narrative, slave narrative, and eighteenth-century autobiography. They might also consider how the status of

178 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*

Hammon's text as the first African-American prose text published in North America may have influenced Hammon as a writer and literary pioneer and how our own cultural/historical position affects our expectations of and reactions to this landmark text.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Nothing is known about Hammon other than what is contained in his narrative, but the text does raise issues about the relation of social class to slave status in early-eighteenth-century America (Hammon's lack of specificity about his employment status, the common use of the term "master" by slaves and hired servants alike) as well as the complex relations among British and Spanish colonials, native peoples, and African Americans. Students might discuss how they make sense of Hammon's description of Indians attacking English colonists while negotiating and bartering with the Spanish and then later of his attempts to "escape" from Spanish captivity to England. Students may also wonder why Hammon makes no explicit reference to his racial identity.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

The style and form of the captivity narrative is particularly relevant to Hammon's text, especially in terms of its narrative structure. Drawing in part from narratives of Christian spiritual salvation, captivity narratives typically tell of a fall from an Eden of unappreciated security and safety, a trial by "devilish" savages, and an eventual redemption marked by a return to "civilization." That most of Hammon's captivity is spent among the Spanish complicates the basic "civilized/savage" dichotomy that structures the conventional captivity narrative. John Williams's *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion*, describing his own captivity by French Catholics in Canada, is

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

a good reference on this point.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

In addition to Williams's narrative, Hammon's text can be compared to other captivity narratives, most famously that of Mary Rowlandson. Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* provides an example of a strategic inversion of the Euro-American captivity narrative by casting Europeans in the role of "savage" captors; it is a key document in the emerging literature of abolition and an early exploration of the complex questions of identity in African-American culture. By comparing Hammon's text with Equiano's and those of other eighteenth-century African-American writers, such as Phillis Wheatley, Prince Hall, and Jupiter Hammon, students can explore the question of the rhetorical construction of racial identity as a way of thinking about how race functions in our understanding of Hammon's text.

Bibliography

Andrews, William L. *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760–1865*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Winans, Amy E. "Diversity and Difference in African American Writings." In *Teaching the Literatures of Early America*, ed. Carla J. Mulford. New York: MLA, 1999, 27–47.

Prince Hall (1735?–1807)

Contributing Editor: William H. Robinson

Classroom Issues and Strategies

I have encountered no insurmountable problems in teaching Hall except to point out to students the differences (which may well have been “diplomatic”) between Hall’s almost illiterate manuscripts that were designed to be published and several of his other more acceptably normal manuscripts.

Although Hall wrote and published correspondence and wrote and co-signed almost a dozen petitions, I include him among examples of early American oratory.

Frequently asked student questions: In the two known Masonic “charges” that Hall published (1792 and 1797), where did he find the courage to be so outspoken? Could he find a presumably white Boston printer to publish the pieces?

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Hall was concerned with many aspects of racial uplift for black America and wrote about them all.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

As mentioned above, in class I note how Hall's nearly illiterate petitions, requiring an editor's "corrective" attention, may have been deliberately deferential. Hall was aware that not many white printers or publishers would readily publish manuscripts written by obviously literate blacks.

Original Audience

I point out the real differences in tone and general deference between Hall's petitions designed for white Boston legislators and other prominent whites, and the tone and racial outspokenness of his "charges," formal annual addresses to his fellow black Masons.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Although no black writer contemporary with Hall was so widely concerned with racial uplift, his work might be compared with Phillis Wheatley's letters, which are also concerned with black uplift and even "proper" Bostonian antislavery protest.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

I have asked students to compare the differences in tone and understanding of biblical injunctions between Jupiter Hammon and Prince Hall.

Bibliography

Crawford, Charles. *Prince Hall and His Followers*. New York: Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

182 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
The Crisis, 1914, 33.

Kaplan, Sidney. *The Black Presence in the Era of the
American Revolution*. Washington, D.C.:
Smithsonian, 1973, 181–92.

Walker, Joseph. *Black Squares and Compass*. Richmond, Va.:
Macon, 1979, *passim*.

Olaudah Equiano (1745–1797)

Contributing Editor: Angelo Costanzo

Classroom Issues and Strategies

I use Equiano as an introduction to American slave narrative literature and demonstrate the important influence of autobiographical form and style on the whole range of African-American literature up to the present day, including its impact on such writers as Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Alice Walker, and Toni Morrison.

Students are particularly interested in the way the whites conducted the slave trade in Africa by using the Africans themselves to kidnap their enemies and sell them into slavery. Equiano was sold this way. Also their interest is aroused by Equiano's fascinating descriptions of Africa as a self-sufficient culture and society before the incursions of the whites. Students are moved by the graphic scenes of slavery, the Middle Passage experience described by Equiano, and his persistent desire for freedom. Most of all, they enjoy reading the first-person account of a well-educated and resourceful former slave whose life story is filled with remarkable adventures and great achievements.

Since students have no prior knowledge of Equiano's life and work, I give background information on the history and commerce of the eighteenth-century slave trade, placing in this context Equiano's life story—his kidnapping, Middle Passage journey, slavery in the Western world, education, religion, and seafaring adventures. I also describe his abolitionist efforts in Great Britain, and I say something about his use of neoclassical prose in the autobiography.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

The students need to know about the slave trade and the condition of slavery on the Caribbean islands. As for the literary aspect of Equiano's work, the students should be instructed about the genre of spiritual autobiography, its structure, methods, and styles. In particular, information should be given on how spiritual autobiography was used in the formation of the new genre of slave narrative literature, mainly the three-part structure of slavery, escape, and freedom that corresponds to the spiritual autobiography's three parts that describe the life of sin, conversion, and spiritual rebirth.

Equiano's great autobiography illustrates influences from several popular schools of personal writing current in the eighteenth-century Western world. Among these are the spiritual autobiographical writings of St. Augustine and John Bunyan, the descriptive travel literary works of Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift, and the secular stories that display a hardworking youth's rise from rags-to-riches in the commercial world. The latter pattern can be seen quite well in Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, a work that shares some interesting parallels with Equiano's narrative. Equiano, like Franklin, is an enterprising young man rising up in life and playing numerous roles that help to develop his character in a free world of possibility. Both Equiano and Franklin use self-ironic humor to depict their adventures, and frequently they see themselves acting the role of the picaro figure—a stragem used many times for survival purposes.

Another eighteenth-century mode of writing observed in Equiano's work is the primitivistic style that is related to the noble savage ideal. Equiano was aware of this type of writing, especially in the books on Africa by Anthony Benezet, the Quaker antislavery writer; when Equiano recalled his early days in Africa, he relied heavily on his reading in the primitivistic literature. However, Equiano's autobiography is remarkable in the account he gives of his African days because his recreation is a mix of primitivistic idealism and realistic detail, in which he never expresses shame or inferiority regarding his African heritage. Africa is an Eden where its inhabitants follow their own cultural traditions, religious

practices, and pastoral pursuits. But although Africa is a happy childhood land for Equiano, he is not blind to the evil events that lately have befallen his people.

The Europeans have entered to plunder, enslave, and introduce the despicable inventions of modern technological warfare. Equiano himself is a victim of that situation when he is kidnapped and sold into slavery. His early experiences in the American colonies are re-created with a sense of awe and wonder as the young picaro slave observes the Western world's marvels. He is saved from a life of plantation slavery, but his seafaring service gives him the opportunity to witness firsthand the brutal practices of slavery in several areas of the world. Equiano's life story is a journey of education in which he goes from innocence in the African Eden to the cruel experience of slavery in the West.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

I always discuss Equiano's work in conjunction with the whole genre of spiritual autobiography. I show how Equiano adapted the autobiographical form to his invention of the slave narrative. I also explain the primitivistic elements in his work and say something about the eighteenth-century neoclassical style of writing.

In accordance with the pattern of spiritual autobiography, Equiano's narrative follows the three-part structure of spiritual and physical enslavement, conversion and escape from slavery, and subsequent rebirth in a life of spiritual and physical freedom. Not until he gains his physical liberty is Equiano able to build his character along personal, religious, and humanitarian lines of development. This is the reason he places his manumission paper in the center of his narrative and records his jubilation on attaining his freedom. From that point on in the autobiography, Equiano uses a confident, exuberant, and crusading tone and style as he relates his immersion in the honorable aspects of Western society while he denounces the West's inhumane practices of slavery.

Original Audience

I emphasize the fact that Equiano's reading audience was mostly composed of American and European abolitionists. His immediate purpose was to influence the British political leaders who were debating the slave trade issue in Parliament in the late 1780s. However, Equiano's work was read and discussed by numerous religious and humanitarian readers on both sides of the Atlantic. His work went through many editions and was translated into several languages. It appeared in print well into the middle of the nineteenth century, and its influence on the whole range of slave narrative literature was strong.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

The best comparison is with Frederick Douglass's *Narrative* (1845), which follows the three-part pattern of spiritual and slave autobiographical work. Douglass's work depicts the same search for identity involving the attainment of manhood, education, especially the ability to read, and the securing of physical and spiritual liberations. Other connections concentrating on the spiritual conversion account in Chapter 10 of Equiano's work may be made with the *Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* and Jonathan Edwards's *Personal Narrative*.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Questions may deal with definitions of primitivism, form of autobiography (spiritual and secular), history of slave trade and slavery, and eighteenth-century writing styles.
2. (a) Why does Equiano stress that the Africans are "a nation of dancers, musicians, and poets"?

- (b) Chapter 1 contains a mix of borrowed information and personal recollections by Equiano on traditions, familial practices, and religious observances of the Africans. Do you find this technique assists Equiano's aim to erase Western readers' misconceptions about Africa?
3. (a) Describe the primitivistic elements in Equiano's description of his stay in Timmah.
- (b) What kind of picture does Equiano paint of his African slave experiences as opposed to his later encounters with slavery in the Western world?
- (c) What signs of European influence does Equiano observe during his slave journey to the coast?
- (d) Discuss the reversal situation of the cannibalistic theme demonstrated by Equiano's initial meeting with the white slave traders on the African coast.
- (e) What are some of the white world's magical arts Equiano observes with a sense of awe and wonder?
- (f) Equiano's account of the talking book is a commonly described experience in early slave works. What significant traits of the young enslaved person does the story reveal?
4. How does Equiano's conversion account compare with the spiritual narratives by Jonathan Edwards and Mary Rowlandson?

Bibliography

Andrews, William L. *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760–1865*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986. (See especially Chapter 2.)

Costanzo, Angelo. *Surprising Narrative: Olaudah Equiano and the Beginnings of Black Autobiography*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1987. (See especially Chapter 4.)

188 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
Davis, Charles T. and Henry Louis Gates Jr., eds. *The Slave's Narrative*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
(See Paul Edwards's essay, "Three West African Writers of the 1780's.")

Equiano, Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself*. London (1789; 1st ed.); ed. Angelo Costanzo. Peterborough, Canada: Broadview Press, 2000.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr., and William L. Andrews, ed. *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic: Five Slave Narratives from the Enlightenment, 1772–1815*. Washington, DC: Counterpoint Press, 1998.

Judith Sargent Murray (1751–1820)

Contributing Editor: Amy M. Yerkes

Classroom Issues and Strategies

The central issue that emerges in a first reading of Murray's writings is the apparent contradiction between her conservative Federalist agenda and her more liberal platform for feminist reform. Murray maintained that society must be based on a strict adherence to order—political, social, family, and personal order—while promoting a change of women's place within that order. This hierarchical Federalist platform is also in conflict with Murray's Universalist religious beliefs, which argue for each individual's ability to establish a direct link with God. By placing her writings within their historical framework, however, some of this tension can be resolved.

An awareness of the central debates of the early Republic—debates on the structure and role of government, on the role of women in the new Republic, on the proper education for the new citizenry—will allow students to

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

appreciate why Murray's responses to these debates were so complex. Reading the selections from *The Federalist* and *Anti-Federalist Papers*, as well as the writings of John Adams, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Jefferson (all included in the anthology) will help students to understand the historical framework for Murray's work.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

In addition to those themes just outlined, Murray was engaged in a struggle to define and create a truly "American" literature. Students might therefore examine her choice of subject matter in the essays, her epilogue to Tyler's play *The Contrast*, and her novel *The Story of Margaretta*. While the latter work has not been included in the anthology, it is available both on microfilm in the Evans series and in Nina Baym's edition of *The Gleaner* (Union College Press, 1992). Murray's novel continues her exploration of the role and education of women in the new nation.

Murray was also engaged in a reevaluation of history and subscribed to the belief that history was fundamentally progressive. By her own commitment to bettering the education of women and by reevaluating past women's history, Murray hoped to usher in a "new era in female history."

As with many of her contemporaries, Murray drew heavily from the Enlightenment philosophy of such writers as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Her emphasis on reason as the central governing principle of human beings and her educational beliefs might be fruitfully compared to those of her European predecessors.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Murray's most successful literary work is her *Gleaner* essay

series; while the topics of these essays are progressive, the form is rather conventional, following such famous prototypes as the essays of Addison and Steele. The development of Murray's persona, Mr. Vigilius, however, is more innovative; his interaction with the audience, his reporting style, and his personality allow for interesting discussion.

Other considerations of interest are those of poetic style and her voice as an essayist. While students may find Murray's poetry and essays stylistically constrained, she herself insisted that she was primarily interested in developing a new content for American literature rather than establishing new literary forms.

Original Audience

Since much of Murray's work was originally printed in journals, any consideration of audience should address the readers of these periodicals and the serial nature of the presentation. Furthermore, she was appealing to a very diverse audience: readers who would adhere to her conservative Federalist agenda as well as those liberals who were interested in women's issues. Certainly this wide audience consideration brings with it beliefs about how to appeal to "male" versus "female" readers (as defined in the late eighteenth century). The ways in which Murray was trying to subvert the traditional assumptions that linked masculinity with reason and femininity with passion (the less desirable of the two traits) would allow for an interesting consideration of audience.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Murray's writings beg comparison with many of her better-known contemporaries, and it is astonishing to realize that she preceded many of these contemporaries in addressing certain issues. For example, her essay *On the Equality of the Sexes*

offers an argument very similar to that found in Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Discussion might also focus on a comparison between Murray's feminist essays and those of her nineteenth-century American counterparts Sarah M. Grimké and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Fruitful comparisons can be made between *The Story of Margaretta* and contemporary sentimental novels such as Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette* and Susannah Rowson's *Charlotte Temple*. Murray's two plays (included in her 1798 collected edition of *The Gleaner*) exhibit an interest in rendering the American experience—an interest shared by her contemporary Royall Tyler, whose play, *The Contrast*, also appears in the anthology.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Of particular interest in Murray's essays on the equality and education of women are the strategies she adopts to prove this equality. Students might be asked to analyze these strategies and to speculate on why she adopted them, given the time when Murray was writing and her Federalist/Universalist beliefs.
2. Students could explore Murray's guidelines for developing and promoting American literature (in this case drama) by focusing on the prologues and epilogues she wrote for well-known American plays.

Note: The questions mentioned above would also serve as helpful writing assignments and research paper topics.

Bibliography

The only biography of Murray is entitled *Constantia: A Study of the Life and Works of Judith Sargent Murray, 1751–1820*, by Vena Bernadette Field (Orono, Maine: University Press, 1931).

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

192 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*

A brief but helpful critical evaluation of Murray's essay series is by Bruce Granger in *American Essay Serials from Franklin to Irving*, Chapter VIII (1978). See also the references to Murray in *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women 1750–1800* (Mary Beth Norton, 1980), and *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (Cathy Davidson, 1986).

Pattie Cowell offers an insightful overview of Murray's poems in *Women Poets in Revolutionary America 1650–1775* (1981).

Finally, Nina Baym's introduction to *The Gleaner* (Union College Press, 1992) is of great interest.

Ann Eliza Bleecker (1752–1783)

Contributing Editor: Allison Giffen

Classroom Issues and Strategies

The History of Maria Kittle is one of the earliest fictionalized captivity narratives, and Bleecker writes in the mannered and hyperbolic language of feeling typical of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century novels. Because the text illustrates an interesting transition between two distinct genres, an action story of Indian attack and captivity and the more introspective novel of sensibility, I like to begin discussion by having students think about the text specifically in terms of literary history. A productive line of inquiry is to have students begin by looking at the differences between Bleecker's narrative and Mary Rowlandson's. Since the excerpt focuses on the last third of Bleecker's text, a particularly useful angle is to have students consider the different ways in which redemption plays out in both texts. What happened to religion in Bleecker's text and what qualities does she value in her heroine? What role does maternal loss play in the two texts? How might these differences relate to the different historical moment of each writer? Such questions can lead students to think about the ways in which genres change and develop in relation to a writer's particular historical and cultural concerns.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

There are a number of interesting tensions in this text. Along with the tensions between competing genres, there are some interesting tensions related to Bleecker's treatment of race and gender. Building on the issue of redemption, I like to have students think about who are the heroes and who is doing the

194 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
redeeming in Bleeker's narrative. There are no white men acting as saviors to the women, and the text emphasizes the redemptive effects of female friendship. Yet at what cost? Who are the women being saved from, and how does Bleeker represent the Native Americans? Such questions can lead into some interesting discussion of some of the underlying racist structures of the Indian captivity narrative. It is also useful for later discussion of nineteenth-century debates about race and "the woman question."

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Another useful strategy is to have students compare and contrast Bleecker's "Retreat from Burgoyne," an autobiographical poem which describes the death of her daughter Abella, with *The History of Maria Kittle*. The two texts share some striking similarities in content, including a concern with grief and maternal loss. Study of these similarities can lead to interesting discussion about the uses (and abuses) of biography in literary criticism. While treating similar subject matter, these texts are, of course, quite different genres, and focusing on their distinctions permits students to think about the differences between poetry and prose.

Original Audience

Bleecker never published in her lifetime. Instead, she created her own private audience by including her poems and narratives inside letters sent to a close community of female friends and family members. As a young woman, Bleecker moved from her home in New York City to a small town north of Albany, where she felt cut off from family and friends. Consequently, letters were important to her, and she relied on a strong and supportive community of sympathetic women friends to whom she wrote regularly. The significance of both the letter form and female friendship is evident in *The History of Maria Kittle*, which not only thematizes female friendship in its plot line but is also shaped as a letter to her half-sister Susan Ten Eyck. This work, then, offers students a wonderful opportunity to think about the relationship between gender and genre and the role of female friendship for Early American women writers.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

As noted above, it is useful to compare Bleecker's narrative to

196 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
other Indian captivity narratives, especially Mary Rowlandson's. Another interesting angle is to compare *The History of Maria Kittle* to the work of both Hannah Webster Foster and Susannah Rowson. The work of all three writers has a similar didactic intent, and together, they contribute to a tradition of women writers writing to women readers.

Bibliography

Christopher Castiglia's *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patty Hearst* (1996) is very helpful for teaching *The History of Maria Kittle*, especially chapter four "The Wilderness of Fiction: From Captivity Narrative to Captivity Romance." For a perceptive discussion of the role of sentiment in the construction of national identity, see Michelle Burnham, *Captivity and Sentiment: Cultural Exchange in American Literature, 1682–1861* (1997).

Philip Freneau (1752–1832)

Contributing Editor: David S. Shields

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Some of Philip Freneau's poems require an explanation of the changing political context of the 1770s through 1790s so that their arguments may be understood. Freneau's religious poetry, with its striking absence of scriptural allusion and Christian doctrine, may prove rather alien to students of traditional Christian background.

Discriminations between the beliefs of Patriots and Loyalists, Whigs and Tories, must be supplied for the poems of the 1770s. Discussion of the split of the American

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Eighteenth Century • 197

revolutionaries into Federalist and Jeffersonian factions during the 1790s is also helpful. “To Sir Toby” is an excellent poem with which to examine the legal justifications of slavery employed during the late 1700s.

I find that early American political cartoons provide a useful way of introducing students to the context of Freneau’s politics. (Michael Wynn Jones’s *The Cartoon History of the American Revolution* is a good source.) Sometimes I get a reproduction of one of the newspapers in which a Freneau poem first appeared to show how closely his worldview was tied to the journalism of the era.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Freneau was a radical advocate of political democracy. As the chief literary spokesman for the Jeffersonian program, he is an original expositor of certain powerful American political myths: of universal liberty, of the reasonability of the common man, of the superior morality of the life of the farmer to that of the commercial enterpriser. These myths still inform political discourse.

As a nature poet, Freneau presents little difficulty to the student, for his arguments are simple and his language straightforward.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Freneau cultivated a variety of styles, most of which were suited to the newspaper readership of common Americans he envisioned as his audience. As a political poet, he employed the usual neoclassical devices of parody, burlesque, and mock confession in his satires; in his political admonitions he practiced “Whig sentimentalism” in his anti-slavery verse and the “progress piece” in his historical ruminations. In general, Freneau was an eighteenth-century neoclassicist in his political verse. His nature studies and theological speculations, however, looked forward to Romanticism, particularly in its

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

198 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
representation of a natural world suffused with divine vitality.

Original Audience

Revolutionary and post-revolutionary Americans were immersed in political rhetoric. The common reader knew a surprising amount of political theory. An interesting exercise is to isolate the imagery in the poems connected with various political systems—monarchy, aristocracy, republicanism, democracy—and construct the mental picture that Freneau projected for his readers.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Freneau's nature poems work well with those of William Cullen Bryant. The closest analogue to his political poetry is found in Francis Hopkinson (not frequently anthologized) and Joel Barlow.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. I usually suggest that a student pay particular attention to the adjectives Freneau employs.
2. I take a poem from a Federalist Connecticut wit (Richard Alsop, Timothy Dwight, or Lemuel Hopkins) and ask the students to contrast the ideals of government, citizenship, and policy found in it with those expressed in a political poem by Freneau.

Timothy Dwight (1752–1817)

Contributing Editor: Susan Clair Imbarrato

Classroom Issues and Strategies

An overview of the pastoral form helps students to understand Dwight's intentions in *Greenfield Hill* to offer a vision of an ideal world amid natural beauty. Discussion of the poem's utopian image of America in the New Republic is valuable. Students who struggle with the didactic vein and stilted style might be reminded that Dwight's models include Augustan writers and poets, such as Pope and Dryden.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

1. Federalist views of the New Republic
2. Millennial view of America
3. Connecticut wits and literature as social criticism
4. Enlightenment idealism, creating the perfect world

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

1. Dwight's adoption of the Pastoral to evoke an idyllic America
2. Application of Greek and Roman myth to the founding of America
3. Didactic poetry of the eighteenth century

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

1. John Denham's *Cooper's Hill* (1642); Alexander Pope's
- Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

- 200 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
Windsor Forest (1713); James Thomson's *The Seasons*
(1726–30); Oliver Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village*
(1770)

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Discuss the structure and plan of the excerpts from *Greenfield Hill*. Is there an overall, coherent portrait, or are there contradictions, and if so are they resolved? How does form complement content?
2. Compare *Greenfield Hill* to Dwight's collaboration on *The Anarchiad*.
3. Examine the speaker's attitudes toward Native Americans as pre-sented in Book Four. Compare these attitudes to those expressed in the writings of Christopher Columbus, Cabeza de Vaca, Benjamin Franklin, Samson Occom, or Crèvecoeur.

Bibliography

Biographical Information

Fitzmier, John R., *New England's Moral Legislator: A Life of Timothy Dwight, 1752–1817*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

Freimarck, Vincent. "Timothy Dwight." In *DLB: American Writers of the Early Republic, Volume 37*, ed. E. Elliott, 127–46. Detroit: Gale, 1985.

Howard, Leon. *The Connecticut Wits*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943.

Silverman, Kenneth. *Timothy Dwight*. New York: Twayne, 1969.

Historical and Critical Contexts

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Dowling, William C. *Poetry and Ideology in Revolutionary Connecticut*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990.

Elliott, Emory. *Revolutionary Writers: Literature and Authority in the New Republic 1725–1810*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Hatch, Nathan O. *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.

Kafer, Peter K. "The Making of Timothy Dwight: A Connecticut Morality Tale." *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 47 (1990): 189–210.

Kamensky, Jane. " 'In These Contrasted Climes, How Chang'd the Scene': Progress, Declension, and Balance in the Landscapes of Timothy Dwight." *The New England Quarterly* 63 (1990): 80–109.

Shields, David S. "British-American Belles Lettres." In *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, Vol. 1, 1590–1820, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch, 307–43. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Steele, Timothy. *All the Fun's in How You Say a Thing: An Explanation of Meter and Versification*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1999.

Tichi, Cecelia. *New World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans through Whitman*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.

Internet Links

1. *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*. Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

- 202 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature Literature in 18 Volumes (1907–21). Vol. XV. Colonial and Revolutionary Literature; Early National Literature, Part I. IX. The Beginnings of Verse, 1610–1808: § 11. Timothy Dwight.* By Samuel Marion Tucker, Ph.D., Professor of English in the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute.
<<http://www.bartleby.com/225/0911.html>>.
2. *PAL: Perspectives in American Literature: A Research and Reference Guide: An Ongoing Online Project* © Paul P. Reuben: Chapter 2: Early American Literature 1700–1800—The Connecticut Wits.
<<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap2/connwits.html>>.

Phillis Wheatley (1753–1784)

Contributing Editor: William H. Robinson

Classroom Issues and Strategies

One of the difficulties in teaching Wheatley comes in trying to illustrate that she certainly was much more racially aware, and anti-slavery, in her letters (which were intended to be private) than in her more widely known verses (written for a general white public).

I show how, in spite of her fame and the special indulgence of the Wheatley family who owned her, Phillis was necessarily aware of her blackness; for example, in racially segregated church pews, in the widespread menial work (street sweeping and the like) that blacks were forced to do, and in the general lack of educational facilities for Boston blacks.

Students (and even scholars) are sometimes wary of the authenticity of Phillis Wheatley's poetic abilities and, accordingly, ask germane questions. Such students and scholars are disabused of their doubts when confronted with

copies of extant manuscripts of verses and letters written when Phillis was known to have not been in the company of whites.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

It is important to note that Phillis was very much aware of herself as a *rara avis*, who worked hard to show that, given the training and opportunity, blacks could write verse as well as any comparably educated and advantaged Bostonian.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Familiar with rhetorical devices of classical prosody (especially as practiced by the English masters, Alexander Pope, John Milton, and so on), Phillis preferred a predominant usage of the Neoclassical couplet, which, on occasion, constrained her seemingly natural tendencies toward Romanticism.

Original Audience

Most of her verse was written for prominent white figures of her day—e.g., General Washington, several prominent Boston divines—but in several of her elegies and her “Nature pieces” she wrote some lines that have continuing value to audiences of today. Her work was published largely at the behest of the whites for whom she wrote.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

No other colonial black versifier wrote with Phillis’s obviously superior sophistication, and comparison of her work with that of black contemporaries is usually done at the expense of the other writers.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

I have asked students to examine Phillis's verse and letters for instances of her acquired Boston gentility and of her racial awareness and of herself as "the Colonial Boston poet laureate."

Bibliography

Mason, Julian. *Poems of Phillis Wheatley, Revised and Enlarged*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1989, 1–39.

Robinson, William H. *Critical Essays on Phillis Wheatley*. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1982, passim.

———. *Phillis Wheatley and Her Writings*. New York and London: Garland, 1984, 3–69, 87–126.

Lemuel Haynes (1753–1833)

Contributing Editor: Phillip M. Richards

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Lemuel Haynes represents the most complicated African-American response to the strands of evangelical culture and Revolutionary politics of the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. In many respects his work should be read in the context of theological writers such as Jonathan Edwards and political thinkers such as Thomas Jefferson. If America was, at this time, defining itself as a Christian Republican nation, then how did such a definition affect a

figure such as Haynes?

Haynes, like Equiano, is a committed Calvinist. He firmly rejects theological innovations, such as Universalism, that were part of the liberalization of Protestant thought in the nineteenth century. What might such a radical Calvinism mean in the hands of a black thinker in the late eighteenth century? How might Revolutionary conceptions of liberty in the period have been informed by Calvinist notions of spiritual liberty?

Haynes's political writing significantly comes before his longer theological efforts. His tract on Revolutionary politics was written before his entrance into the ministry. How might the political ideologies of the Revolution have affected Haynes's later development as a minister?

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

We tend to think of the late eighteenth century as an age of politicization and secularization embodied in a figure such as Benjamin Franklin. Religion and theological formulations, however, remained very important for literate blacks such as Phillis Wheatley, Jupiter Hammon, and Haynes. Why is this so? What does their intensely religious emphasis mean for these writers' larger relationship with an emerging American culture?

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Discuss the importance of the sermon form to Haynes. What was the social, political, and even economic function of the sermon during the Great Awakening and Revolutionary periods? How does Haynes draw upon these functions in his own work?

Original Audience

For whom is Haynes's work written? How do his discourse, his language, his themes, and his ideas reflect his chosen audience? What advantages does the sermon form give to a black addressing this audience?

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Haynes grew up in a literary context similar to Wheatley's and Hammon's. Haynes's literary development was shaped by the presence of evangelical groups, patrons, revivalist religion, and Revolutionary politics. All of these themes inscribe themselves in his writing. One might compare Haynes's consciousness of the conditions of his work with that of Wheatley or Hammon.

Bibliography

The best introduction to Haynes is *Black Preacher to White America: The Collected Writings of Lemuel Haynes, 1774–1883*, edited by Richard Newman. Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1990.

Joel Barlow (1754–1812)

Contributing Editor: Susan Clair Imbarrato

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Discussion of poetry as a commemorative genre in the Homeric tradition of epic poetry provides a helpful context for Barlow's "The Prospect of Peace," *Vision of Columbus*, or *The Columbiad*. Other general themes include Barlow's millennial

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

vision of a national genius rising up from American culture and its connection to the federalism of the New Republic. A brief definition of the mock-heroic form introduces Barlow's "The Hasty Pudding." Ask students to identify the object of Barlow's satire. Discuss the tone and subject matter of "Advice to a Raven." Students may be surprised by Barlow's range of tone and subject matter as exemplified in these poems.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

1. America as the site of the New Millennium
2. Reason, faith, and sciences coexist harmoniously in "The Prospect of Peace" and represent an Enlightenment ideal
3. Celebration of the domestic, rural life of Barlow's Connecticut childhood
4. Barlow composed this nostalgic poem while running for public office in France. How does this context influence the poem?

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

1. Combines the narrative poem with the heroic couplet to elevate tone and meaning.
2. Incorporates classical allusions, biblical imagery, and American figures.
3. Barlow adopts classical styles to American topics, the epic and the mock heroic, and frequently uses the heroic couplet, rhyming iambic pentameter, to underscore an elevated meter and style.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Alexander Pope's "Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate

208 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
Lady” (1717); *Rape of the Lock* (1712); Dwight’s *Greenfield Hill* (1794); William Cullen Bryant “The Prairies” (1832);
Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* (1855)

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Analyze nature’s role in “The Prospect of Peace.” How is this representation an eighteenth-century construct? How do form and content together emphasize Barlow’s poetic meaning?
2. Discuss Science’s role in “The Prospect of Peace.” Why is Franklin evoked?
3. How does corn pudding function as a metaphor or unifying symbol in “Hasty Pudding”? How does this multicultural symbolism contrast with the European culture of privilege?
4. Research Barlow’s political career and his shift from conservative Federalist to supporter of the French revolution and friend of Jefferson.

Bibliography

Biographical Information

Elliott, Emory. *Revolutionary Writers: Literature and Authority in the New Republic 1725–1810*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Miller, Victor C. *Joel Barlow: Revolutionist, London, 1791–1792*. Hamburg: de Gruyter, 1932.

Tichi, Cecelia. "Joel Barlow." In *DLB: American Writers of the Early Republic, Vol. 37*, 985: 18–30.

Woodress, James. *A Yankee's Odyssey: The Life of Joel Barlow*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1958.

Historical and Critical Contexts

Arner, Robert. "The Smooth and Emblematic Song: Joel Barlow's *The Hasty Pudding*." *Early American Literature* 7 (1972): 76–91.

Dowling, William C. *Poetry and Ideology in Revolutionary Connecticut*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990.

Howard, Leon. *The Connecticut Wits*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943.

Lemay, J. A. Leo. "The Contexts and Themes of 'The Hasty-Pudding,' " *Early American Literature*. 31 (1982): 3–23.

Mulford, Carla. "Joel Barlow's Radicalism in *The Conspiracy of Kings*." In *Deism, Masonry, and the Enlightenment: Essays Honoring Alfred Owen Aldridge*, ed. J. A. Leo Lemay, 1987, 137–57.

Steele, Timothy. *All the Fun's in How You Say a Thing: An*
Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

210 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
Explanation of Meter and Versification. Athens: Ohio
University Press, 1999.

Internet Links

1. *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature in 18 Volumes (1907–21)*. Vol. XV. *Colonial and Revolutionary Literature; Early National Literature, Part I*. IX. *The Beginnings of Verse, 1610–1808*. § 14. *Joel Barlow*. By Samuel Marion Tucker, Ph.D., Professor of English in the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute.
<<http://www.bartleby.com/225/0914.html>>.
2. *PAL: Perspectives in American Literature: A Research and Reference Guide: An Ongoing Online Project* © Paul P. Reuben. Chapter 2: Early American Literature 1700–1800—The Connecticut Wits.
<<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap2/connwits.html>>.
3. “This Day in Diplomacy: Anniversary of the Release of the Algiers Hostages.” Statement by Nicholas Burns, Spokesman, Department of State, July 10, 1996.
<<http://www.afsa.org/diplmcy/didhostages.html>>.

Royall Tyler (1757–1826)

Contributing Editor: Susan Clair Imbarrato

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Initiate general discussion and explanation of the sentimental drama or comedy of errors to orient Tyler’s style and anticipate questions about the dialogue, which might seem a bit contrived. Explain stock characters in these genres: the

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

rake, the coquette, the rustic, the fop, the gentleman and lady. A brief synopsis of Richard Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* is also helpful in setting the context for the plot and pivotal screen scene. Students might enjoy reading *The Contrast* aloud and hearing the language to catch the humor more easily.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

1. The Restoration comedy and critique of social class.
2. The notion that high culture cannot only be taught but that it is desired, even though unattainable materially; the ways that Tyler represents these differences through language and material acquisition.
3. The relationships expressed between culture and gender; how gender is defined through dress, speech, reading materials, and mannerism. The relationship between masculinity and patriotism.
4. The adaptation of British styles to an American context, and how this adaptation is used to underscore the contrast between British-European decadence and American virtue.
5. Introduction of American types: the Yankee, the rustic, the gentleman, the coquette.
6. The various contrasts as represented by characters and their relationships.
7. The significance of the wedding between Manly and Maria.
8. The details and politics of Shays Rebellion, with which Tyler himself was involved.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

1. Tyler's adaptations of British comedy to American subject matter.
 2. The contrast lies not only in class issues but also in distinctive sensibilities between the British and
- Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

- 212 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
American character as Tyler portrays them.
3. These contrasts were particularly delightful to his New Republic audience.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Dr. Alexander Hamilton's *The Itinerarium* (1744); Richard Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* (1777); Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette* (1797); Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1791); Breckenridge's *Modern Chivalry* (1792).

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Identify the central "contrasts" in this play. What do they reveal about Tyler's view of American culture?
2. Discuss how romantic love is favored over marriage of convenience. How is this perspective supported? Which characters are sympathetic? Why?
3. Discuss the popularity of this play and its appeal to Tyler's contemporary audience.
4. Research contemporary reactions, different theatrical performances, and longevity.
5. Analyze Judith Sargent Murray's comments on the play.

Bibliography

Biographical Information

Carson, Ada Lou, and Herbert L. Carson. *Royall Tyler*. Boston: Twayne, 1979.

Gatson, James C. "Royall Tyler." In *DLB: American Writers of the Early Republic Volume 37*, ed. E. Elliott. 279–89. Detroit: Gale, 1985.

Tanselle, Thomas G. *Royall Tyler*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Historical and Critical Contexts

Bushman, Richard L. *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*. New York: Knopf, 1992.

Evelev, John. "The Contrast: The Problem of Theatricality and Political and Social Crisis in Post-revolutionary America." *Early American Literature* 31 (1996): 74–98.

Richards, Jeffrey H. *Theatre Enough: American Culture and the Metaphor of the World Stage, 1607–1789*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.

Shields, David S. "British-American Belles Lettres." In *The Cambridge History of American Literature*. Vol. 1, 1590–1820, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 307–43.

Internet Links

1. *Authors in Early American Fiction*. University of Virginia.
<<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/eaf/authors/rt.html>>.
Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

- 214 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
2. *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature in 18 Volumes (1907–21). II. The Early Drama, 1756–1860. § 5. Tyler’s Contrast; § 22. The Periods in the Development of the American Drama.* Arthur Hobson Quinn, Ph.D., Dean of the College, University of Pennsylvania.
<<http://www.bartleby.com/225/1105.html>; <http://www.bartleby.com/225/1122.html>>.
 3. *PAL: Perspectives in American Literature: A Research and Reference Guide: An Ongoing Online Project* © Paul P. Reuben: Chapter 2: Early American Literature: 1700–1800—Royall Tyler (1757– 1826).
<<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap2/tyler.html>>.

Hendrick Aupaumut (Mahican) (1757–1830)

Contributing Editor: Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr.

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Some students may be concerned about the deviations from “standards” in matters of syntax and grammar, so you might ask them to examine these deviations in such writers as Sarah Kemble Knight. Have them consider the Southwestern humorists of the nineteenth century, for example, as models of the ways writers play on the deviations for literary effect. Suggest to students that Aupaumut’s style may be seen as an example of “authentic” English dialect of an American Indian. Have them compare the Fus Fixico letter by Alexander Posey in Volume 2 for a literary use of an Indian’s English dialect.

Students are amazed at how little the questions of race/political power, race/social bias, and race/fear have changed in two hundred years. And expect to hear this

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

question: “Could Indians actually write back then?”

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

1. Indian identity, racial self-consciousness. (Aupaumut is painfully aware that he is an Indian writing about Indians. He is also aware of his odd position in defending the United States when the Indians have ample reason to doubt it. Note the *I–they* posture he takes.)
2. Ethnic identity in the emerging new nation.
3. Indian-white relations, colonial period to period of Indian removal.

Original Audience

An Indian, having visited tribes in the old Northwest, is making recommendations concerning the posture the United States should take toward those tribes. His report indicates that he advised the tribes how they should act. Also, the piece is a defense of himself against accusations that he betrayed his trust. While his audience was mainly public policy makers, the piece speaks with pointed relevance today about the American Indians’ (reasonable) distrust of federal policy makers. (Some things have not changed in the past two hundred years.)

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

The “assimilated” Indian, since the “Praying Indians” of the Puritan period, has been in an anomalous position. Aupaumut is caught between the expectations of two societies. Compare this position with those of Copway, Apess, and Boudinot. For texts related to the Indians’ distrust of the Europeans, see relevant sections of Smith, Bradford (more relevant to

216 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
Aupaumut), Franklin, and the Pueblo Revolt texts. Compare
also Jefferson's letters to Benjamin Hawkins and to Handsome
Lake, as well as Handsome Lake's own view of white
civilization.

Bibliography

Ronda, Jeanne and James P. Ronda. " 'As They Were
Faithful': Chief Hendrick Aupaumut and the
Struggle for Stockbridge Survival, 1757–1830."
American Indian Culture and Research Journal 3.3
(1979): 43–55.

Hannah Webster Foster (1758–1840)

Contributing Editor: Lucy M. Freibert

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Teaching Hannah Foster's *The Coquette* raises three issues: (1)
the lack of name recognition of both author and work; (2) the
question of quality, given previous exclusion of *The Coquette*
from the canon; and (3) the effort required on the student's
part to extract the narrative from the epistolary structure.

Strategies for dealing with these issues include the
following: (1) Explain the lack of recognition by pointing out
that in the latter part of the nineteenth century, publishers,
influenced by academics and critics, discontinued the
publication of works by women, who had been extremely
popular in the earlier part of the century. (2) To circumvent the
assumption that previous exclusion from the canon indicates a
lack of literary excellence, select several interactive letters
from *The Coquette*, and ask some imaginative students to
present them to the class in a "readers' theater" format. For the

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

same class session, ask the other students to do a close reading of the letters in order to determine how Foster makes the characters believable and interesting to twenty-first-century readers by delineating sex roles and including customs, manners, and conventions. This combination of approaches will enable the student to recognize Foster's artistry. In a subsequent class, point out how Foster's use of distinctive voices representing various perspectives eliminates didacticism and sharpens her feminist focus. Especially helpful in this regard is Sharon M. Harris's "Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette*: Critiquing Franklin's America" in *Redefining the Political Novel: American Women Writers, 1797–1901* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995). Small group discussions enable students to clarify questions about the plot structure.

The plot element students bring up most frequently is the dependence of men in these novels on the money they acquire by marriage to women of means. The question asked by both male and female students is: Why didn't Sanford expect to have a regular job? A question frequently asked by young men is: Why didn't Eliza want to marry? Young women want to know: Why didn't Eliza get a job?

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Teaching Hannah Foster's *The Coquette* (1797) within the context of the National Period offers students opportunities to acquire historical, cultural, and literary insights. As Walter P. Wenska, Jr., points out in "*The Coquette* and the American Dream of Freedom" (*Early American Literature* 12.3 [Winter 1977–78]: 2434–55), *The Coquette* raises "the question of freedom, its meaning and its limits, in a new land newly dedicated to births of new freedoms," a theme treated subsequently by many American writers. Wenska sees Eliza Wharton as a rebel who seeks a freedom not typically allotted to her sex, and he shows how she consistently rejects the advice of friends who encourage her to settle into the "modest

218 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
freedom” of marriage.

Like Wenska, Cathy N. Davidson in *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) recognizes *The Coquette* as much more than “simply an allegory of seduction.” Davidson reads it as “less a story of the wages of sin than a study of the wages of marriage” and as “a dialogical discourse in which the reader was also invited to participate if only vicariously.” Davidson’s analysis of *The Coquette* is indispensable reading for anyone who would teach the novel thoroughly, as are Carroll Smith-Rosenberg’s “Domesticating ‘Virtue’: Coquettes and Revolutionaries in Young America” in *Literature and the Body* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), Kristie Hamilton’s “An Assault on the Will: Republican Virtue and the City in Hannah Webster Foster’s *The Coquette*” (*Early American Literature* 14, 1989), and Sharon M. Harris’s “Hannah Foster’s *The Coquette*: Critiquing Franklin’s America,” cited above. Harris argues cogently that Foster imagines alternative lifestyles for women, challenges “the ‘truth’ of patriarchal structures established to guide—and to control—women’s lives, by satirizing the Franklinesque use of maxims . . . , [and] illuminates the political ideology of excluding women from citizenship and systems of power that is fostered in the social milieu.”

Space limitations prevented the inclusion of excerpts illustrating the discrepancy between the freedom boasted by the Republic and the social and political restrictions placed on women (see Letter XXIII, for example). The instructor can deepen the students’ understanding of the novel’s significance by reading some of the political discussions and pointing out how popular iconography showed Young America as a woman pitted against the worldly European male.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

The American novel had its origin in the seduction novel appropriated from the British sentimental tradition of Samuel Richardson and his followers. To make the sensational story of
Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

the “ruin” of an innocent girl palatable to readers steeped in Puritan thought, early novelists emphasized the factual and educative nature of their works. Alexander Cowie in *The Rise of the American Novel* (1948) says that didacticism was, in fact, a “*sine qua non* of the early novel.”

Although the novel as genre had come into its own by the time Foster wrote *The Coquette*, authors continued to claim basis in fact in order to justify the publication of risqué materials. The preceptress in Foster’s *The Boarding School* explains the prevailing objections: “Novels, are the favorite and the most dangerous kind of reading, now adopted by the generality of young ladies. . . . Their romantic pictures of love, beauty, and magnificence, fill the imagination with ideas which lead to impure desires, a vanity of exterior charms, and a fondness for show and dissipation, by no means consistent with that simplicity, modesty, and chastity, which should be the constant inmates of the female breast. . . .”

While voicing opposition to the novel in general, Foster and other novelists characterized the reading of their own works, which were “founded on fact,” as warnings, to keep young women from peril. As Lucy Sumner’s last letter in *The Coquette* (LXIII) states, “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.” In *The Boarding School*, a former student justifies reading Samuel Richardson’s novels by claiming “so multifarious are his excellencies, that his faults appear but specks, which serve as foils to display his beauties to better advantage.”

Original Audience

A very effective way of handling student inquiries about who read *The Coquette* is to read to the class a passage from Elias Nason’s biography of Susanna Rowson. Writing in 1870, Nason describes the readership of Rowson’s best-selling novel, *Charlotte Temple*, with which *The Coquette* competed during the National Period, as follows:

It has stolen its way alike into the study of the
divine and into the workshop of the mechanic,

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

into the parlor of the accomplished lady and the bed-chamber of her waiting maid, into the log-hut on the extreme border of modern civilization and into the fore-castle of the whale ship on the lonely ocean. It has been read by the grey bearded professor after his "divine Plato"; by the beardless clerk after balancing his accounts at night, by the traveler waiting for the next conveyance at the village inn; by the school girl stealthfully in her seat at school.

Insofar as this description applies to *Charlotte Temple*, it likely applies to *The Coquette*.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Novels that invite comparison and contrast with *The Coquette* are William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789) and Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1794), with which it competed for favor through the early decades of the nineteenth century. Frank L. Mott discusses the popularity of these novels in *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1947).

All three works treat the seduction theme and claim to be based on fact. The British title of *Charlotte Temple* was *Charlotte, A Tale of Truth* (1791); the seduction possibly involved Colonel John Montrésor, a cousin of the author (Richard S. Birdsall, "Susanna Haswell Rowson," *Notable American Women* 3 [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971]). *The Power of Sympathy* drew on the seduction of Frances Theodora Apthorp by her sister's husband, Perez Morton (William S. Kable, "Editor's Introduction," *The Power of Sympathy* [Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969]); and *The Coquette*, on the seduction of Elizabeth Whitman of Hartford, Connecticut, by a person of disputed identity (Aaron

Burr and Pierrepont Edwards, son of Jonathan Edwards, being among the “accused”). Extensive, yet inconclusive, discussion of the Elizabeth Whitman story appears in Jane E. Locke’s “Historical Preface” to the 1855 edition of *The Coquette* (Boston: William P. Fetridge and Company, 1855), Caroline Dall’s *The Romance of the Association: or, One Last Glimpse of Charlotte Temple and Eliza Wharton* (Cambridge: Press of John Wilson and Son, 1875), and Charles Knowles Bolton’s *The Elizabeth Whitman Mystery* (Peabody, Mass.: Peabody Historical Society, 1912).

Significant differences separate *The Coquette* from *The Power of Sympathy* and *Charlotte Temple*. Characters in *Charlotte Temple* follow relatively stock patterns. Only the villainous Mademoiselle La Rue and Belcour display individuality. Charlotte, generally passive, succumbs easily to La Rue’s temptations and threats, Montraville’s persuasion, and Belcour’s deceit. The characters in Brown’s novel have interesting potential. Harriot, for example, displays strong powers of observation, and Ophelia speaks forcefully. But they employ the same voice as Rowson’s narrator—the voice and style of the sentimental novel.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Students should be asked to consult the *Oxford English Dictionary* for the meanings of *coquette* and *rake*, paying special attention to the changes in meaning through time. They might also be asked to investigate the concept of *dowry*, noting what brought about the end of the practice of providing a dowry. Ask them to find out whether the epistolary form is used in novels today.
2. Paper topics may include the following:
 - argumentative*—Eliza Wharton and Peter Sanford are/are not equally responsible for Eliza’s death, or Eliza Wharton’s fall was entirely her own fault.
 - analytic*—a character study of Eliza Wharton using her letters alone, or a character study using only the letters of others.

- 222 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
 research paper—compare *The Coquette* to a British
 epistolary seduction novel, focusing particularly on
 social issues.
 research paper (nonliterary)—a study of property
 rights of men and women in eighteenth-century
 America.

Bibliography

Helpful sources have been provided above. Both students and teachers might find quick access to the beginnings of the American novel in the introduction, didactic, melodrama, and satire/humor sections of *Hidden Hands: An Anthology of American Women Writers, 1790–1870*, edited by Lucy M. Freibert and Barbara A. White (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1994). See also Linda Kerber's *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

Web sites to explore include:

Origins: The Female Form as Allegory (Text Drawing).
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/LIBERTY/lady_frm.html>.

Keep Within Compass (Drawing).
<<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/americanstudies/lavender/graphics/compass.jpg>>.

(Plus page of text):
<<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept./americanstudies/lavender/quesorig.html>>.

Susanna Haswell Rowson (1762–1824)

Contributing Editor: Laraine Fergenson

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Susanna Haswell Rowson's *Charlotte Temple*, one of the most popular American novels of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, contains timeless themes of seduction and abandonment, loss of innocence, and betrayal of trust—themes that resonate with modern readers despite the book's quaint and heavily didactic style. Where Rowson's language may not be clear to modern readers (e.g., where she uses "eagerly" for "anxiously"), a note is provided in the text. But apart from the issue of clarity, some students may be put off by Rowson's rather heavy moralizing and by her eighteenth-century style, for example, in such melodramatic lines as, "I am snatched by a miracle from destruction!" or "It is not too late to recede from the brink of a precipice, from which I can only behold the dark abyss of ruin, shame, and remorse!"

One approach to discussing this type of language is to ask students to consider the author's audience and her purpose in writing. As Susanna Rowson saw it, she was arming young women for survival in a perilous world inhabited by seducers, hypocrites, and false friends. The society that forms the background of the novel was dominated by a rigid moral code, and violations of it were dealt with very harshly. Keeping in mind that Rowson intended to reach "the young and thoughtless of the fair sex" (see her "Author's Preface"), and, if possible, to protect these vulnerable young women from the pain of social rejection, the modern reader can better understand the author's emphatic moralism and melodramatic language.

An interesting point to discuss in the classroom is the influence of Mademoiselle La Rue and Belcour in Charlotte's seduction. It is clear that in the "Conflict of Love and Duty," the defeat of the latter is due almost as much to La Rue's manipulations as to Charlotte's feelings for Montraville. Charlotte makes her fateful decision to elope after both La Rue and Belcour have "seconded the entreaties of Montraville," and later, when Charlotte regrets her decision, it is La Rue who pressures her into going to meet with Montraville, knowing that the self-delusive Charlotte will not be able to keep her resolve to bid him good-bye and return to the school. Since peer pressure of all sorts is an issue with which modern students are familiar, it might interest them to discuss its application to an eighteenth-century novel.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

The theme of seduction and betrayal that dominates *Charlotte Temple* is easily recognizable to modern students. They may see it as rooted in the traditional view of woman as a helpless victim, who must have the support of either her parents or a lawful husband. Ellen Brandt discusses the novel's "Clarissa theme," derived from the works of Samuel Richardson, to whom Rowson was indebted. Inevitably, the young woman who abandons the wisdom of her parents for the false promises of a lover is doomed to an early death. An instructor might wish to bring into the discussion the famous song from Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766):

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can sooth her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

To give repentance to her lover,

And wring his bosom—is to die.

Students may want to discuss other works that contain elements of or variations on this theme, such as Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* (see below).

Rowson's place in American literary history is an intriguing topic. Despite the formidable reputation she enjoyed in the Federalist period, her importance as the first best-selling American author, and the enduring popularity of *Charlotte Temple*, Rowson, by the middle of the twentieth century, was virtually ignored in anthologies of American literature. Ellen Brandt says she became "a 'forgotten' woman in the archives of our cultural history." A discussion of possible reasons for Rowson's eclipse and the recent revival of interest in her is a good way to begin or conclude the class work on this author.

The historical background of *Charlotte Temple* and the importance of Rowson as a major literary figure during the nation's infancy should be emphasized. In the preface to her insightful work on Rowson, Patricia Parker states the following:

Rowson lived during a crucial period in our nation's history, as it turned from provincial colony to preindustrial nation. She herself strongly identified with the political objectives of the new republic and came to consider herself American despite her British birth, as she lived most of her life in this country. Her writings reflect an increasing concern with freedom and democratic principles, both politically and sexually. To study her song lyrics and theatrical compositions during the 1790s is to understand the popular taste of the American public who were trying to decide how to live with their newly acquired independence.
(Preface i)

Some of Rowson's song lyrics have been excerpted in the works of Parker and Brandt, and an interesting discussion might grow from reading them to the class. Further, Rowson's role in the early American theater and her association with the prominent theater company of Thomas Wignell could be explored. Instructors interested in Rowson's theatrical career should consult Amelia Howe Kritzer's article entitled "Playing with Republican Motherhood: Self-Representation in Plays by Susanna Haswell Rowson and Judith Sargent Murray."

The American Revolution had a great impact on Rowson's life and work. She was one of the first writers to use it as the background for a novel. Montraville and Belcour are both British soldiers being sent to America to fight against the rebels. Charlotte, wondering about La Rue's desertion of Belcour, reflects that she thought only true love had made La Rue follow her man to the "seat of war." Montraville, seducing Charlotte, says, "I thought that you would for my sake have braved the dangers of the ocean, that you would by your affection and smiles, have softened the hardships of war."

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Plot, Characterization, and Structure of *Charlotte Temple*

An instructor presenting selections of *Charlotte Temple* would do well to read the entire novel in order to appreciate fully its structure and the sophistication of its characterization. By explaining the motivations of the characters at length, Rowson makes their actions believable and, in doing so, invalidates the charge that she was merely a writer of melodrama. Her portrayal of Charlotte is masterful. The girl's naive and ingenuous character is rendered convincingly. Rowson details the progress of her seduction with sympathy and keen psychological insight.

Rowson devotes considerable space in this short novel to describing Charlotte's parents, and with good effect. Lucy Eldridge (later Temple) and her father had been driven to a debtor's prison by the machinations of an unscrupulous man with designs on Lucy. Her refusal to submit to the kind of arrangement Charlotte enters with Montraville brings disaster upon the household, but the Eldridges and Temple never doubt that she has done the right thing. It is thus doubly poignant that Lucy's daughter, Charlotte, should yield as she does. It is ironic and also perfectly understandable that a couple so idealistic, so perfectly loving, and so trusting could produce a child as dangerously naive as their Charlotte.

Montraville, too, is carefully drawn. Although he plays an evil role in the story, he, like Clyde Griffiths in *An American Tragedy*, is no villain. Attracted to Charlotte and unable to resist seducing her, though he knows that her lack of fortune will make marriage impossible, he abandons her because, misled by his deceitful friend Belcour, he doubts her fidelity, and because he cannot resist the charms of Julia Franklin, his new love, who is conveniently wealthy and therefore a good marriage prospect. Although Montraville causes great harm to Charlotte, he, like her, is not so much evil as weak, and he suffers intense pangs of conscience—and eventually an early death—for what he has done. By making

Montraville a sympathetic human being rather than a stock figure of evil, Rowson lends plausibility to her story, and she accomplishes her goal, which is to show that yes, such things can really happen—even to the most well-meaning people.

Original Audience

Charlotte Temple was originally published in England, but when Rowson saw it republished in America, she was no doubt aware that its subtitle was particularly appropriate for her American audience. Influenced by their Puritan heritage, the hardworking inhabitants of a new and growing country might look askance at reading novels, but might be more receptive to “a Tale of Truth,” only disguised by a “slight veil of fiction” and written to preserve the “happiness of that sex whose morals and conduct have so powerful an influence on mankind in general.”

The most striking aspect of the audience of this book is that it was quite clearly intended to be female. In her “Preface” Rowson explicitly states that she is writing to “the fair sex,” specifically to the “young and thoughtless” among them, and in the asides in which she comments on the story, she addresses her readers as “my dear girls.” In one aside, interestingly, Rowson addresses herself specifically to the “sober matron” who might be reading the book before she trusts it “to the eye of a darling daughter.” But even though she may depart from her view of the audience as exclusively young, it is apparent that this is a book written by a woman for other women, and throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, the book’s readership was largely female, a point that was not lost upon its detractors. For example, *Charlotte Temple* was described disparagingly by Carl Van Doren as appealing to an audience of “housemaids and shopgirls” (*The American Novel*, 1921). A class discussion might center on the reasons for the book’s appeal to such an audience. Instructors might raise the issue of the vulnerability of women of lower socioeconomic status and hence their identification with Charlotte.

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

As noted earlier, Rowson has often been compared to Samuel Richardson, the British author of *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) and *Clarissa, or, the History of a Young Lady* (1747–48). The similarities between Rowson and Richardson are obvious, both in theme and style. Richardson is known for the epistolary form, and in *Charlotte Temple*, letters (often ones that do not get delivered) play an important role.

Another comparison mentioned earlier is with Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), a novel dealing with seduction and the economic oppression of a family by a rake with designs on a virtuous daughter—a situation strikingly similar to one of Rowson's subplots, the story of Charlotte's parents. In her *Women and the Rise of the Novel, 1405–1726*, Josephine Donovan discusses the relationship between chastity and economic security in a rigidly moralistic world in which a woman who loses her virginity “loses her market value as well as her honor, and she must die” (120).

This theme can lead us to a comparison between *Charlotte Temple* and Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* (1925). The plots have many similarities: in both novels a self-indulgent young man of little personal wealth, but with wealthy connections, seduces a poor girl and then falls in love with another woman, who offers not only superior attractiveness but money as well. In both stories, the young man, seeing the first girl as an obstacle to his material and romantic happiness with the second, regrets his rashness in seducing the first, who is pregnant and dependent on him. In both novels the seduced women die. Montraville does not plot to kill his mistress, as Clyde plans to and in effect does, but Charlotte dies as a result of her lover's neglect.

Both Dreiser and Rowson depicted, to quote Charlotte, “a very bad world”—but their analyses were different. Rowson's solution to the evil was not to change that world, but to help develop in women the strength, wisdom, and common sense they would need to deal with it as it was. Where Dreiser

saw Roberta and Clyde as victims of social and economic inequality, Rowson saw Charlotte and Montraville as victims of individual failings. Whereas Dreiser's novel is a sweeping indictment of the class system in America, Rowson's is an indictment of personal evil and weakness.

Even if Rowson seems to have focused on individual failings rather than the failings of society, it is helpful to analyze *Charlotte Temple* by placing it within the socioeconomic context of the American nation. In tandem with the theme of economic inequality is the view of Charlotte as a hopeful immigrant to the new world, an immigrant for whom the grand promises of America, like the promises of her seducer, prove false. In her introduction to the Penguin Classic edition, which includes both *Charlotte Temple* and *Lucy Temple*, Ann Douglas asserts that Charlotte, like Susanna Rowson herself, is an immigrant seeking success in the New World. Although Charlotte agrees to accompany Montraville because she loves him and is not—at least consciously—seeking to wed for money, she expects to marry him and take up “a new and more exciting life” (xxii) as his wife once they disembark in America. For Douglas, Montraville's violation of this promise and his eventual abandonment of Charlotte represent the idea that “If America is a land of promise, it is also an academy in promises deferred, broken and betrayed” (xxiii).

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Look up information about Rowson's life and show how her biography and the historical period in which the novel is set influence the work.
2. Prepare a critical evaluation of the novel. Consider the author's development of the characters, the plotting of the novel, and the novel's impact on the reader.
3. Write a paper comparing and contrasting *Charlotte Temple* and *An American Tragedy*. (This assignment might be suitable for a term paper or special individual project.)

Bibliography

Brandt, Ellen B. *Susanna Haswell Rowson, America's First Best-Selling Novelist*. Chicago: Serba Press, 1975.

Davidson, Cathy N. Introduction. *Charlotte Temple*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

———. *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Derounian-Stodola, Kathryn Zabelle. "The Gendering of American Fiction: Susanna Rowson to Catharine Sedgwick." In *Making America/ Making American Literature: Franklin to Cooper*, eds. A. Robert Lee and W. M. Verhoeven. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996. 165–181.

Charles Brockden Brown (1771–1810)

Contributing Editor: Susan Clair Imbarrato

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Students may be surprised to be reading a suspenseful narrative with such a compelling narrator. "Somnambulism" will likely remind students of Poe, who was three years old when Brown died. Brown's explorations into the irrational and the unconscious suggest a different tone from the sentimental novel. Discuss Brown's use of the Gothic as a possible criticism of reason as the guiding force in human actions.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Issues

1. The Gothic mode and psychological themes
2. The landscape, specifically the woods, as setting for terror and fear
3. The Gothic as a critique of New Republic values, assumptions of human rationality
4. Brown's dedication to a literary life and its affect on his subject matter and experimentation

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

1. Brown's adaptation of the Gothic to an American setting. Using the Gothic to critique Enlightenment ideals.
2. Unreliable narrator and its psychological implications, as in the notion of the "double."

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

1. Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797); Matthew G. Lewis's *The Monk* (1796); Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818).
2. Contrast Brown's works with a contemporary Sentimental Novel to emphasize the difference in intentions, style, and mood.
3. Compare Brown to Poe or Hawthorne.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Discuss the psychological themes in one of Brown's works. How does a character's irrational or subconscious actions express doubts about human rationality?
2. Examine the duality or double nature of the narrator. What is Althrope's connection to Nick Handyside?
3. How does fear function as a character in the story?
4. Brown's impact as an editor and his contributions to the literary community.

Bibliography

Biographical Information

234 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
Clark, David Lee. *Charles Brockden Brown: Pioneer Voice of America*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1952.

Gilmore, Michael T. "The Literature of the Early Revolutionary and Early National Periods." In *The Cambridge History of American Literature: Volume I, 1590–1820*, ed. Sacvan Berkovitch. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 541–693.

Ringe, Donald A. *Charles Brockden Brown*. New York: Twayne, 1966.

Rosenthal, Bernard. "Charles Brockden Brown." In *DLB: American Writers of the Early Republic, Volume 37*, ed. E. Elliott. Detroit: Gale, 1985, 69–80.

Warfel, Harry R. *Charles Brockden Brown: An American Gothic Novelist*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1949.

Historical and Critical Contexts

Alexrod, Alan. *Charles Brockden Brown: An American Tale*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983.

Barnes, Elizabeth. *States of Sympathy: Seduction and Democracy in the American Novel*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Christophersen, Bill. *The Apparition in the Glass: Charles Brockden Brown's American Gothic*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993.

Davidson, Cathy. *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Elliott, Emory. *Revolutionary Writers: Literature and Authority in the New Republic, 1725–1810*.

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Grabo, Norman S. *The Coincidental Art of Charles Brockden Brown*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981.

Hinds, Elizabeth Jane Wall. *Private Property: Brockden Brown's Gendered Economics of Virtue*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997.

Lewis, Paul. "Charles Brockden Brown and the Gendered Canon of Early American Fiction." *Early American Literature* 31 (1996): 167–89.

Samuels, Shirley. *Romances of the Republic: Women, the Family, and Violence in the Literature of the Early American Nation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Stern, Julia A. *The Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Watts, Steven. *The Romance of Real Life: Charles Brockden Brown and the Origins of American Culture*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

Internet Links

1. *Authors in Early American Fiction* from the University of Virginia.
<<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/eaf/authors/cbb.html>>.
2. *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature in 18 Volumes (1907–21.)*. Volume XV, *Colonial and Revolutionary Literature; Early National Literature, Part I*. VI. Fiction I. § 1. *The Novel in the Colonies. Fiction I: Brown, Cooper*. By Carl Van Doren, Ph.D., Head Master of The Brearley School, Associate in English in Columbia University.

Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

- 236 • *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*
The Novel in the Colonies.
<<http://www.bartleby.com/225/1501.html>>.
Charles Brockden Brown.
<<http://www.bartleby.com/225/1505.html>>.
Brown's Indebtedness to Godwin.
<<http://www.bartleby.com/225/1509.html>>.
3. *PAL: Perspectives in American Literature: A Research and Reference Guide: An Ongoing Online Project* ©
Paul P. Reuben. Chapter 2: Early American Literature:
1700–1800—Charles Brockden Brown.
- <<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap2/brown.html>>.