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**FRIENDSHIP AND IDOLATRY IN
ESTHER EDWARDS' BURR'S LETTERS**

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We know today that Puritan women authors often revealed other stories within the main story of emergent orthodoxy. One story they told concerns the discomfort some of them experienced in contemplating their feelings and identity. This discomfort often destabilized features of their writing. My essay tries to piece together a version of this "other story" by assembling clues from letters by Esther Edwards Burr. These letters present an underlying crisis in authority resulting from Burr's unacknowledged negotiation of a prohibited sentiment concerning potentially idolatrous earthly relationships.

I.

To uncover this story, I will focus on logonomic conflict. Logonomic systems regulate "ideological complexes," a "set of contradictory versions of the world, coercively imposed by one social group on another on behalf of its own distinctive interests or subversively offered by another social group in attempts at resistance in its own interests." Ideological complexes include friction between various authorizations that represent "the social order as simultaneously serving the interests of both dominant and subordinate" groups. Regulating this subterranean strife, "logonomic systems" provide a visible "set of rules prescribing the conditions for [the] production and reception of meanings." Logonomic systems express attempts by dominant groups to control, and to legitimate their control over, subordinated groups; but the ways whereby these systems contain opposition or exceptions to general rules inadvertently acknowledge the contradictions and conflicts at the core of all ideological complexes.¹

Logonomic conflict, my argument suggests, can be glimpsed in the unintentional, barely perceptible tensions that occur in uneasy attempts, like Burr's, to negotiate between orthodox and personal authority. Authority is the matrix of this logonomic conflict. As Foucault and new-historicist studies have indicated, humanity engages authority by way of an unresolved dialogism between resistance to and replication of the status quo.² The perception of authority is always "a process of interpretive power," so that "the sentiments of authority lie in the eye of the beholder," who experiences both "fear and regret" in

trying to penetrate the “secret the authority [figure] possesses.”³ Colonial American men, accordingly, were not exempt from this struggle despite the fact that they were more favorably aligned than were women with the power structure of their time—i.e., with the logonomic systems of set “rules prescribing the conditions for [the] production and reception of meanings.”

Similarities notwithstanding, it is reasonable to assume, on the basis of what we know of Puritan American culture, that female encounters with authority were *on the whole* qualitatively dissimilar to male encounters with authority. Excluded from male modes of identity formation, women had to manage an alternative form of negotiation with the dominant social text.⁴ During the seventeenth and the eighteenth-centuries, women struggled with the nature of authority more personally and internally than did most of their male peers. Biblically, theologically, ecclesiastically, socially, and familially, women were the second and weaker sex. To be second, it hardly needs to be observed, is to be less empowered in relation to the theocratic authority that has defined one as secondary.

According to the hegemonic and selective Puritan reading of Genesis, the mother of mankind was not only created from Adam’s rib on second thought (as it were), but through a weakness of mind she ruined paradise and engendered mortality. Reinforced by patristic, monarchic and social authority, the Puritan ministry enhanced this reading of Genesis by relying on the Pauline epistles as the chief guide to the second sex. Although without clarification Paul seems to insist upon gender-based hierarchies in Corinthians and appears to eradicate such differences in Galatians,⁵ Puritans like Mather were inclined to relegate the former to the quotidian and the latter to the afterlife. Seventeenth-century Christian dogma, in general, reflected an abiding dualism, even in the unitary belief in the Word made flesh,⁶ and this feature is evident in the Puritan belief that “the head of the woman is the man” (1 Cor. 11:3). As Cotton Mather wrote in 1726/1727, “as now it is,” women’s “Subjection to Men” is divinely sanctioned.⁷ In this context, women were relegated to second-class citizenry within both church and state; and in a move at once devaluative and co-optative, their identity was appropriated to depict the ideal saint’s spiritual abjection⁸ and their traditional roles were reassigned to male protagonists in Puritan works.⁹

Admittedly, there may have been another side to this pattern of subjugation. Possibly women generally ignored the male strategies of confiscation in this cultural representation of them and, instead, often

unquestioningly derived from it a sense of the significance of their place and role. Some women may have derived manipulative strategies from the Puritan feminine ideal;¹⁰ others may have appreciated its authorization of their specifically feminine influence, particularly in the domestic realm, as exemplary Christians.¹¹ That such empowerment may have figured in women's sense of themselves is possibly suggested by their renegotiation of the boundaries of male authority in England during the Commonwealth. Then a number of women argued on the basis of their traditional identification with virtue for a more active female involvement in society.¹²

Such a potential response should not be underestimated. Nevertheless, its appeal to women and its success in negotiating their feelings should not be overestimated. As we noted briefly, a substantial body of discourse suggests that authorized identities are never secure, either in definition or in reception, but always problematically relational for both males and females. In the specific instance of colonial American women, moreover, there is ample evidence of discomfort and instability in living within their culturally assigned place, from major disruptions such as Anne Hutchinson's dramatic dissent¹³ to small tremors of discontent, such as glimpsed in Cotton Mather's refutation of "the Female Sex [who] may think they have some Cause to complain of us [men], that we stint them so much in their Education, and abridge them of many points wherein they might be serviceable."¹⁴

My point, finally, is that whatever conscious accommodations women may have made to the status quo of their authorized identity, it was also utterly *natural* for them, given their situation, to experience at least unconscious swells of resistance. Whether intended or unintended, such resistance registers the unstable coalescence of both an anxious desire for authorization based on the inner province of personal feelings and a fretful belief in authorization based on the outer province of theocratic definition. It is an unsettled and unsettling contest between subjectified, secularly unauthorized connotative readings of experience and objectified, divinely authorized denotative readings of that same experience. Indeed, Anne Hutchinson may have implied as much by suggesting that human comprehension of the divine word is necessarily limited and that the meanings of words are contextually determined, not absolute in the ways her male inquisitors were using them to impose order, control, and closure to their arguments.¹⁵

The language of this logonomic conflict was the male controlled discourse of church and state. That is to say, when women did express

their inner impulses, they did so in terms at once personal and public. This meant the use of biblical allusion, a predominant rhetorical currency of their time. Men determined the credit of this currency, a credit with a long patristic history, and women tried to work within this male interpretative framework. Until eighteenth-century Quakerism, colonial women simply had no authority whatsoever to venture into the male preserve of scriptural interpretation; and among the colonists generally, the Quakers were hardly deemed suitable figures of authority. Even at the start of the nineteenth-century, Hannah Adams (the author of the first American dictionary of world religions) was assailed by orthodox clergy not only for her liberal theology but also, and especially, for assuming the right to interpret scripture and to publish her views in the male genre of theological treatises.¹⁶ Colonial women, in short, utilized scriptural allusions as authorized by male tradition, and it is within their use of these allusions that we often can detect the underground impulses otherwise screened by the seemingly orthodox surface of their writings.

If the use of biblical allusions potentially occasioned anxiety in women because such scriptural citation was circumscribed by male authority, writing itself was possibly another source of uneasiness. Concern with female composition could be severe indeed. John Winthrop pointed to Anne Yale Hopkins, wife of the governor of Hartford, as “a godly young woman, and of special parts,” who suffered “the loss of her understanding and reason ...by occasion of her giving herself wholly to reading and writing, and had written many books.”¹⁷

Excessive reading, not reading per se, was potentially a problem. Writing, however, was distinctly understood as a male activity. Even as late as 1756, as evidenced by the fear and secrecy expressed in one of Esther Edwards Burr’s letters, female interest in writing as a cultural pursuit and as an expression of identity was still generally taboo:

The good woman inquired after you very kindly and desired me the next time I wrote to you to send her kindest regards to you—she said the next time I wrote—she does not know our method of corresponding—I would have told her, for I know her friendly heart would be pleased with it, but I was affraid she would tell her MAN of it, and he knows so much better about matters than she that he would certainly make some Ill-natured remarks or other, and so these Hes shall know nothing about our affairs untill they are grown as wise as you and I are.¹⁸

Burr's conspiratorial sarcasm is clear in this instance, as is her ongoing concern with at-large male disapproval, when three months later she again tells her correspondent: "She dont know that I am always writing and I dare not tell her for fear she will tell her MAN[,] and everybody hant such a Man as I have about those things" (200).

The teaching of reading to children was a common maternal responsibility in seventeenth-century England and New England, whereas the teaching of writing only to boys was a paternal duty.¹⁹ This fact, more than any other, explains why archival research has turned up so few documents penned by women.²⁰ Obviously, as the example of Anne Bradstreet (c. 1612-1672) demonstrates, even early in the seventeenth century some colonial women could write, and certainly by the middle of the next century many more could do so. How many remains very much in dispute. We do know that urban women substantially outnumbered their village peers in this skill throughout the colonial period and that women in general continued to be taught reading alone long after writing had become a primary part of male instruction.²¹ We know that in the 1770s the Boston subscription campaigns against the consumption of imports, women's lists carried several hundred signatures.²² However, we also know that the increased level of female signatures by 1795 (nearly 45%) evidently does not actually reflect an equal gain in the mastery of writing because signature percentiles always exceeds those for actual writing ability and that women, in particular, were able "to 'fake' a smooth signature when totally illiterate" (Lockridge, 126-127). The need to resist easy conclusions about writing skills on the basis of female signatures is suggested as well by the Newbury town records, which may or may not be typical of broader regional practice; in this town, the children assigned to the care of the selectman from 1743 to 1760 were all instructed in reading, whereas only the boys were expected to learn "to write a Ledgable hand & cypher as far as the Gouldin Rule" (Ulrich, 44).

Such details reinforce the impression, as given by Bradstreet's defensive concession that "Men can doe best, and Women know it well,"²³ that the ability to write was generally perceived in colonial America as a male property. As a result, women who ventured into writing doubtless experienced some uncertainty of authorization, an uncertainty exacerbated by male control over literary genres and scriptural allusions. Women authors, in short, found themselves in foreign territory, unsettled strangers in a strange land. They replicated the precarious undertaking of their colonies, marginalized and feminized

by the homeland as they struggled for identity.²⁴ My reading of Burr's letters excavates a site of logonomic conflict that discloses something of Puritan women's underground narrative within the ideological complex of their time.

II.

"When Mr Burr is gone," Esther Edwards Burr confesses to her confidante Sarah Prince (1728-1771), the recipient of the letters in Burr's journal, "I am ready to imagine the sun does not give so much light as it did, when my best self was at home, and I am in the glooms two [too], half de[a]d, my Head gone. Behead a person and they will soon die" (81). Her imagery is identical to Anne Bradstreet's in "A Letter to Her Husband." However, at mid-eighteenth century Burr seems *in some respects* more conservative than Anne Bradstreet at mid-seventeenth century. This peculiarity may not be immediately evident because, with the exception of citing the basis of sermons she has heard, Burr alludes to Scripture infrequently in her correspondence. Her manner may disguise the fact that whereas Bradstreet is able (however problematically) to biblically contextualize her celebration of physical love,²⁵ Burr appears to be unable to do so. As an eighteenth-century Presbyterian, Burr cannot access the Renaissance appreciation of life that Bradstreet inherits and coalesces with her Reformed response to the world; nor, on the other hand, is Burr able to benefit from the Deistic celebration of human potentiality in the world that she has encountered in her reading. Burr sees her attachment to the quotidian, including her intense affection for her husband, as utterly without any approved authorization. In lieu of Bradstreet's Renaissance heritage, Burr inherits her reactionary father Jonathan Edwards's minimalist version of Puritanism, including an eschatological obliteration of all temporal images and shadows of the divine.²⁶

This legacy informs her self-castigation for spiritual "deadness" (61) expressed throughout her epistolary journal: "I wish I could be willing to be and do, and suffer, just what God pleased without any will of my own, but I am stubborn, willfull, disobedient...How unfit am I to ap[p]roach the Lords Table" (131). Even the Lord's Supper, approached in Presbyterian expectation rather than Congregationalist restraint, does not help her: "I hoped to have meet [met] My Lord and Savior at his Table. But to my grief find no great alteration"; "I was in great hopes [hopes] of meeting Christ in some extreordinary manner at his Table, but alas God has dissappointed me!" (78, 131).

Acknowledging "how apt be we to set our hearts on the enjoymts of time and sense," Burr laments, "My heart, I see is on the World and not on God!" (68, 84).

Specifically, her heart is set on two people. One is Sarah Prince, the daughter of Boston minister Thomas Prince. The intensity of Esther's affection for Sarah can be gauged in a letter of 1755: "How over joyed I have just now been! I could not help weeping for joy to hear once more from my dear, very dear Fidelity [Sarah]....I broke it open with [as] much e[a]gerness as ever a fond lover imbraced the dearest joy and d[e]light of his soul" (97). Assessed in the context of the journal as a whole, the intensity of emotion here is genuine, not a matter of convention. The analogy to the lover, with the unrecognized, significant displacement of what in Puritan terms ought to be the true joy and delight of a *soul*, illuminates for us a crucial feature of Burr's indictment of herself as "carnel, fleshly, Worldly minded, and Devilish" (127).

Indeed, it is likewise as a lover that her heart is set upon her husband, whose absences invariably make her feel benighted, beheaded, and dying. If the communion with the Son in the Lord's Supper is unable to reverse Esther's feeling of spiritual deadness, communion with her sunlike Aaron reinvigorates her life: "I received a very affectionate Letter from Mr Burr, which did me more good than ever a Cordial did when I was faint. I was before extreemly low-spirited, but at once I felt as lively as ever I did in my life" (55). Time and again, "so lonely" that "every minute seems an hour" (46, 101), she anticipates Aaron's return with a fervor that, in contrary Edwardsean moments, she knows ought to be decarnalized and directed toward Christ. No wonder, then, that she is "affraid" she might "provoke God," her soul's bridegroom, "by set[t]ing [her] heart two [too] much on this dear gentleman, to take him from" her: "and—Alas what would all the world be to me if he were out of it!" (106).

So intense are her feelings on this occasion that she does not focus on the appropriateness of such a loss of attachment to the world, the authorized response she elsewhere observes when contemplating the disheartening French defeat of General Edward Braddock near Fort Duquesne: "that it might teach us to depend whol[l]y on God, and not on an Arm of flesh!" (137). In contrast, during her husband's nearly fatal illness, she confesses:

I cant be resigned to the Will of God if it is to bereave me of all that is near and dear at one stroke! I can see it [as] infinitely just, but I [c]ant be willing that justice

should take place ...O pray for that I may have a right temper of mind towards the ever blessed God! (146-47)

Did she attain this ideal state of mind when Aaron Burr died on 24 September 1757, two years after this candid revelation? Her journal of intimate letters to Sarah ends three weeks before his demise, and the subsequent, certainly guarded correspondence to her parents is difficult to assess in this regard. In her letters home, usually addressed to her mother but always read by both parents, Esther reports on 7 October 1757, "I think I have been enabled to cast my care upon him [God], and have found great peace and calmness in my mind" (293).

Her hesitant "I think" may possibly raise a doubt in our mind, particularly when at the end of her letter Esther entreats her parents "to request earnestly of the Lord, that I may never despise his chastenings, nor faint under this his severe stroke; of which I am sensible there is great danger, if God should only deny me the supports that he has hitherto graciously granted" (294). Given what we know of Esther Burr's feelings, as expressed in her much less guarded letters to Sarah Prince, we might become especially sensitive to her fear of being in "great danger." Her parents, and probably Esther herself, may have read in this expression a dread of some kind of rebellion against God, such as despair and suicide. But, as we will see, these possible transgressions overlay a prior, unacknowledged offense.

A month later (2 November 1757) she reassures her father that she has accepted divine will. Now further stressed by the near death of one of her children, she thinks of "the glorious state [her] dear departed Husband must be in" and then her "soul [is] carried out in such longing desires after this glorious state" (296). Was it the state of glory that her fatigued spirit desired, or was it reunion with her husband, about whom she had once speculated, "What would all the world be to me if he were out of it"?

Burr's allusion to Job 13:15 in the same letter—" [God] enabled me to say that altho' thou slay me yet will I trust in thee" (295)—may seem to answer our question if we overlook what it displaces. Such contemporary commentaries as Matthew Henry's specify, apropos this passage from Job, that we must have faith in God *as a friend* even if He afflicts us as an enemy. This allusion, with its embedded subject of friendship, functions as a site of logonomic conflict in Esther's letter; it unsurely negotiates the authorized theological ideal of divine relationship represented in the official commentaries on Job and the unauthorized emotional value of human relationship represented in the intimate letters by Burr.

"Nothing is more refreshing to the soul (except communication with God himself) then [than] the company and society of a friend," Esther Burr tells Sarah Prince in 1756: "One that has the spirit off [of], and relish for, true friendship—this is becoming [to] the rational soul—this is God-like"; "Tis the Life of Life" (185). A year earlier she had spoken similarly:

To tell the truth when I speak of the world, and the things that are in the World, I dont mean friends, for friendship does not belong to the world. True friendship is first inkindled by a spark from Heaven, and heaven will never suffer it to go out, but it will burn to all Eternity. (92)

This deep sentiment concerning human relationships informs Esther's attachment to Sarah, whose missives she reads "with [as] much e[al]gerness as ever a fond lover imbraced the dearest joy and d[e]light of his soul" (97); and it informs her attachment to Aaron, whom she would not exchange "for any person, or thing, or all things on E[ar]th ...Not for a Million such Worlds as this that had no Mr Burr in it" (92).

Esther properly gave priority to "communication with God himself." She knew well her father's doctrinal insistence upon an ecstatic, atemporal, spiritual sense of the heart as the only possible sign of this divine communication. She had in fact experienced his attitude first hand, such as the time when she was close to death and he was less concerned with fostering her recovery than with exhorting her at this time "to lot upon no Happiness here" (286). Moreover, she was doubtless far more sensitive to her beloved mother's personal experience of this sense when Esther was a child. Much closer to her mother than to her father, Esther likely measured her own spiritual condition against the model of Sarah Pierpont Edwards, especially as presented in Jonathan's *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New-England* (1742).

Her father had altered his wife's version of her religious experience, making it reflect an abstract inner purity of motive utterly indifferent to social context.²⁷ He reported a state of soul "wherein the whole world, with the dearest enjoyments in it, were renounced ...[and] seemed perfectly to vanish into nothing." Edwards particularly specified "resignation of the lives of dearest earthly friends ...having [instead] nothing but God"—"as it were seeing him, and sensibly immediately conversing with him" as one's sole/soul intimate.²⁸

Esther may consciously subordinate human friendship to “communication with God himself,” but it is precisely this doctrinally imposed superior friendship, the Edwardsean new sense of the heart, that is missing from the “soul” of her intimate correspondence with Sarah Prince and of her intimate remarks about Aaron Burr. These letters not only overtly attest to the spiritual “deadness” of a “heart [set] ...on the World and not on God,” but they also covertly overwhelm their obligatory concession to the primacy of divine friendship by the sheer power of their true emotional center, a reservoir of dramatically expressed feeling. This emotion indeed “tell[s] the truth”—that in effect, Esther’s earthly affection for Aaron and Sarah has been “more refreshing to [her] soul,” has been more the “Life of [her] Life,” than has “communication with God” who “dissappointe[s]” her desire for religious affections even in the Lord’s Supper. Human friendship, “inkindled by a spark from Heaven,” is divine for Esther. It “does not belong to the world” but it is indeed found *in* the world, and found there for Esther far more efficaciously than is divine friendship *per se*. Her record of this efficacy, the experiential heart of her affection for Sarah and Aaron, in effect values “God-like” human relationships over God, the image of the divine over divinity.

In other words, against her conscious aim and *at the level of feeling* Esther unconsciously prizes the image of God (Aaron and Sarah) more than God. The emotional center of Esther inner life—positioning strong physical affection for a divine “likeness,” for a graven image, over weak spiritual affection for God—veers toward a violation of the second commandment: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). This “carnel, fleshly, Worldly minded, and Devilish” *idolization* of “the Life of Life” is the unacknowledged “great danger” intimated in Esther’s allusion to Job. Expressed in a “public” letter to her watchmanlike parents rather than in a “private” letter to Sarah Prince, this ventriloquised allusion represents two competing sites of authority: the official Edwardsean version of friendship based on abstract ideal and the outlawed Estherean version of friendship based on intense emotion. As a shrouded site of logonomic conflict, this allusion explicitly, officially declares faith in divine friendship as supreme and at the same time implicitly, secretly, and elegiacally recalls Esther’s transgressive valuation of human friendship as supreme.

This double sense likewise inheres in Burr’s proclamation that human friendship, “will burn to all Eternity.” The nuances in this instance include more than the suggestion of a reunion of loved ones in heaven (certainly one aspect of Esther’s “longing desires after this glorious state” after Aaron has died); they also suggest a concealed

fantasy in which the secular displaces or at least parallels the divine. Esther's desire for an eternal reunion with her friends seems to transcend her desire for the beatific vision—hardly a pattern of thought supported by the concept of eternal love held by her father.

Sarah Prince's eulogy on Esther, entered in her private notebook on 21 April 1758, provides a further glimpse into the nature of the conflict over authority lodged in her friend's attitude toward human relationships. Prince heads her document with an apt cautionary note: "GOD will have no Rival in the heart which he sanctifies for himself" (307). This threat of idolatry, as we noted, is the "great danger" lurking just below the surface of Esther's awareness; and it is the peril that Sarah keeps steadily.

So did Mehitulde Parkman, as indicated in a 1683 letter to her husband: "Ms Mechison tells me often she fears that I love you more than god," Mehitulde reports. Here she tells her husband something unsayable except in a virtual code and reveals to us just how much trouble some Puritan women had, consciously or unconsciously, in truly subordinating and conforming emotional human attachments to a system of belief that insisted on assessing such attachments only as dehumanizing images and shadows of the divine. Mehitulde, like Bradstreet and Burr, concludes her statement by seeking the safety of scriptural allusion (Matthew 10:37); she writes, "he that loves father or mother more than me is not worthee of me" (Ulrich, 109). This is a poignant move, if we sense the author's desperation over the witchery of desire and feeling that the authorized biblical allusion is meant to reprove and exorcise.

Mourning the death of Esther, "the Apple of [her] Eye," and remembering "the Lovely Pattern she set," Sarah laments, "She was mine! O the tenderness which tied our hearts!" (307). Now her "Earthly joy is gone!" Now, too, her "God hides his Face!" She "can't see Love in this dispensation!" (308). Nevertheless, she resolves "to live loose from the World ...and have done with Idols" (308).

The words "have done with Idols" indicate that in retrospect Sarah suspects that her relationship with Esther had truly verged on the idolatrous. The toppling of her life "Pattern," a female model of "Natural Powers ...superior to most Women" (307), has exposed the danger of a relationship that potentially rivals God in the human heart.

In contrast to Sarah, however, Esther seems not to have brought this concern to full consciousness. Because Esther had difficulty finding God in her heart, even when partaking of the Presbyterian celebration of the Lord's Supper, the image of God (Sarah and Aaron) filled this emotional emptiness. Unknown to Esther, intimate, lover-

like human companionship had become the surrogate religion of her heart. This unperceived idolatrous disposition is cloaked within Esther's dutiful allusion to Job in her guarded letter to her father. Had he known of it, Jonathan Edwards would have firmly reproved his daughter's secret sense of self-validation through her latently idolatrous coalescence of friendship and authorship, such as when she wrote, "To tell the truth I love my self two [too] well to be indifferent whether I write or no" (89).

NOTES

¹Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress, *Social Semiotics* (Ithaca, 1988), pp. 3-12.

²Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, 1977), p. 151.

³Richard. Sennett, *Authority* (New York, 1980), pp. 20, 154.

⁴Nancy K. Miller, "Changing the Subject: Authorship, Writing, and the Reader," *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*, ed. Teresa de Lauretis (Bloomington, 1986), p. 111.

⁵Daniel Boyarin, "Paul and the Genealogy of Gender," *Representations* 41 (1993), 1-33.

⁶Henry Staten, "How the Spirit (Almost) Became Flesh: Gospel of John," *Representations* 41 (1993), 34-57.

⁷Reiner Smolinski, ed., *The Threefold Paradise of Cotton Mather* (Athens, Ga., forthcoming), ms. p. 516.

⁸Ivy Schweitzer, *The Work of Self-Representation: Lyric Poetry in Colonial New England* (Chapel Hill, 1991), pp. 1-35.

⁹Margaret Olofson Thickett, *Fictions of the Feminine: Puritan Doctrine and the Representation of Women* (Ithaca, 1988), pp. 20-23.

¹⁰Lyle Koehler, *A Search for Power: The 'Weaker Sex' in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Urbana, 1980), pp. 181-86.

¹¹Amanda Porterfield, *Female Piety in Puritan New England: The Emergence of Religious Humanism* (New York, 1992), pp. 80-95.

¹²Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing, 1649-88* (Ann Arbor, 1988), pp. 13-18.

¹³Amy Schragger Lang, *Prophetic Women: Anne Hutchinson and the Problem of Dissent in the Literature of New England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987), pp. 41-46.

¹⁴Smolinski, ms. p. 516.

¹⁵Lad Tobin, "A Radically Different Voice: Gender and Language in the Trials of Anne Hutchinson," *EAL* 25 (1990), 253-70.

¹⁶Michael W. Vella, "Theology, Genre, and Gender: The Precarious Place of Hannah Adams in American Literary History," *EAL* 28 (1993), 21-41.

¹⁷James Kendall Hosmer, ed., *John Winthrop's Journal: "History of New England," 1630-1649* (New York, 1959), 2:225.

¹⁸Carol F. Karlsen and Laurie Crumpacker, eds., *The Journal of Esther Edwards Burr, 1754-1757* (New Haven, 1984), p. 183. Page references to subsequent quotations from this edition are cited parenthetically in my discussion. All of Burr's and the editors' italics have been deleted in order to avoid confusion with my emphases.

¹⁹E. Jennifer Monaghan, "Literacy Instruction and Gender in Colonial New England," *Reading in America: Literature and Social History*, ed. Cathy N. Davidson (Baltimore, 1989), pp. 53-80.

²⁰See, for example, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York, 1982), p. 5.

²¹Kenneth A. Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England* (New York, 1974), pp. 38-42.

²²T. H. Breen, "Narrative of Commercial Life: Consumption, Ideology, and Community on the Eve of the American Revolution," *WMQ* 50 (1993), p. 490.

²³Joseph R. McElrath, Jr. and Allan P. Robb, eds., *The Complete Works of Anne Bradstreet* (Boston, 1981), p. 7.

²⁴Patricia Caldwell, "Why Our First Poet Was a Woman: Bradstreet and the Birth of an American Poetic Voice," *Prospects* 13 (1988), 1-35.

²⁵William J. Scheick, "Logonomic Conflict in Bradstreet's 'Letter to Her Husband.'" *ELWIU* 21 (1994), forthcoming.

²⁶William J. Scheick, *Design in Puritan American Literature* (Lexington, 1992), pp. 69-119.

²⁷Julie Ellison, "The Sociology of 'Holy Indifference': Sarah Edwards' Narrative," *AL* 56 (1984), 479-95.

²⁸C. C. Goen, ed., *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 4: The Great Awakening* (New Haven, 1972), pp. 333, 340.