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**Benjamin Franklin's Female and Male Pseudonyms
Sex, Gender, Culture, and Name Suppression from Boston to Philadelphia and Beyond,
1722-1747**

By

Jared C. Calaway

“Historians relate, not so much what is done, as what they would have believed.”

~Richard Saunders [Benjamin Franklin], *Poor Richard's Almanack*, 1739~

Introduction

Ever since Benjamin Franklin wrote his autobiography, biographers throughout the centuries have molded him into the model American. Recently, too, historians increasingly have chosen Benjamin Franklin as a biographical subject. In 2000, H. W. Brands wrote a seven-hundred-plus page biography of Franklin entitled *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*,¹ and, in 2002, Edmund S. Morgan published his more concise book, *Benjamin Franklin*.² The current rising interest in Benjamin Franklin is not surprising in light of the surging surplus of biographical sketches of many of the “Founding Fathers” such as Joseph Ellis’s work on Thomas Jefferson and David McCullough’s biography of John Adams. In any case, as one can see by the title of Brands’s book, these modern Franklin biographers, like their predecessors, use Franklin to create an ideal citizen. Therefore, they tend to emphasize Franklin’s political and diplomatic roles, seeing his contributions to the public sphere and to the American Revolution as the most important aspects of his life.

Morgan sets up this public man by displaying Benjamin Franklin’s curiosity and physical vivaciousness. He begins his biography thus:

The first thing to do is to overcome the image of a man perpetually at his desk, scribbling out the mountain of words that confronts us. Because Franklin wrote so well and so much it is natural to think of him with a pen in hand. But the man we will find in his writings likes to be in the open air, walking the city streets, walking the countryside, walking the deck of a ship. Indoors, he likes to be with people, sipping tea with young women, raising a glass with other men, playing chess, telling jokes, singing songs.

Don’t start with his first surviving writings, the labored compositions of a precocious teenager, which he slyly introduced into his brother’s newspaper under the facetious name of Silence Dogood.³

¹ H. W. Brands, *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*, (New York: Doubleday, 2000).

² Edmund S. Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

³ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 1. Although many biographers prefer to begin with Silence Dogood, strangely, few provide any meaningful interpretation or commentary on this piece of writing, since most biographers seem to be in a hurry to get Franklin to France, where he served as the American diplomat to gain monetary, material, and political support for the war against Great Britain.

Morgan does not want to portray Franklin as merely a prolific writer, but as a man whose high level of activity led him to become a man primarily defined by his public life. Although Franklin's political and diplomatic contributions were important, his later years should not be emphasized to the detriment of ignoring significant aspects of his earlier life. An examination of Franklin's earlier years provides a useful glimpse into early eighteenth-century culture in Boston, Philadelphia, and New England in general. Using Franklin's earlier writing, this glimpse, then, can contribute to our understanding of colonial New England's changing sex and gender stereotypes. Therefore, by beginning exactly where Morgan advises we should not, with the female pseudonym, Silence Dogood, this essay will draw out a lesser-known aspect of an extraordinarily well-known historical figure.

The story of Benjamin Franklin and female pseudonymity begins in 1722 in the bustling port city of Boston, Massachusetts. In this place, a sixteen-year-old printer's apprentice, in the heart of what historically had been strongly Puritan country with such notables as Cotton Mather, took up his quill pen and began to write sardonic prose under the guise of a forty-year-old preacher's widow, now historically immortalized as Silence Dogood. Young Benjamin Franklin clandestinely dropped the manuscript under the door of his master and brother James Franklin. He acted in secret, believing his brother would never print Silence Dogood if he knew that his little brother, Benjamin, had written it. James and the other contributors to his paper, *The New England Courant*, loved the biting commentary of the piece and printed it. Benjamin Franklin as Silence Dogood would contribute thirteen more letters to the *Courant* before the year was out, until his brother, James, finally discovered the author's identity and discouraged young Benjamin

Franklin from writing more.⁴ Many historians of early America and certainly all Franklin historians are familiar with this story and the Silence Dogood letters. As Morgan infers, this is a natural place to begin writing about Franklin's literary career; however, strangely few have made more than brief or passing comments about it and no one to my current knowledge has written a systematic analysis of it and its larger cultural significance in relation to Franklin's other female pseudonyms. Indeed, after Benjamin Franklin escaped from James Franklin in Boston and moved to Philadelphia, he wrote again under various women's names.

Learning these facts, one must wonder not just why he used a pseudonym, but why did he use a *female* pseudonym? What was the incentive for a man to use the name of the opposite sex in the early eighteenth century? More importantly, what did these pseudonyms say, particularly about women, about men, and, in addition, about sex in Boston and Philadelphia in the early eighteenth century? Did they conform to current female ideals and stereotypes or did they challenge them? Finally, how do Benjamin Franklin's female pseudonyms compare to his male pseudonyms on the subjects of sex and gender? This analysis contends that Benjamin Franklin's gendered pseudonyms reveal an ambivalent attitude toward sex and women in the early eighteenth century. The male pseudonyms, such as Richard Saunders and Anthony Afterwit, tend to reinforce early eighteenth-century female stereotypes of idle, vain, proud, ignorant, deceitful, adulterous, sexually seductive, and even diabolical women, while the female ones, such as Silence Dogood and Celia Single tend to oppose or reinterpret these derogatory preconceptions. However, the male pseudonyms also reflect a tension between these alleged female vices and the ideal woman, who was an industrious, chaste, pleasant, economical, and practical wife and mother. This ambivalence also exists within the female pseudonyms

⁴ Benjamin Franklin, *Benjamin Franklin: The Autobiography and Other Writings*, ed. Kenneth Silverman, (New

themselves, by challenging different aspects of both the stereotype and the ideal. While Franklin's female *nom de plumes* promote women, often at the expense of men, they, too, as a whole, depend upon and, at times, reinforce these same cultural stereotypes.⁵

Why Use a (Female) Pseudonym?

Before discussing how Benjamin Franklin's male and female pseudonyms reinforced, opposed, and reinterpreted female stereotypes and ideals, it is important to discuss various theories presented by different scholars and historians on the use of pseudonyms, especially a man's use of a female pseudonym. Regrettably, a comprehensive investigation scrutinizing the many reasons for pseudonymity and anonymity is difficult to find, if such a work even exists. One scholar explains the absence of such research: "to discuss the art of pseudonyms at adequate length would require a study so large that few could be bothered to read it, let alone write it."⁶ Although this presents a considerable problem for those interested in researching "name suppression,"⁷ the apparent absence of such a work presents an opportunity for a fresh, creative analysis, investigating the reasons why a person—in this case, Benjamin Franklin—might use pseudonyms andonyms. Fortunately, several scholars and historians have commented briefly upon pseudonyms in order to carry out their own inquiries into different historical figures. This section analyzes these various pieces and theories, coalescing their ideas

York: Penguin Books, 1986): 20-21.

⁵ Since this current discussion emphasizes reinforcements and challenges to gender stereotypes, I should define what I mean by stereotype and differentiate it from an ideal. An ideal, in this case, would be how a perfect woman acted and what qualities that woman would possess. For example, an ideal woman might be morally upright, chaste, and industrious. A stereotype, in this case, would be a collective judgment upon how women, in general, were perceived to act and what qualities women collectively seemed to possess. Thus, a stereotype might be how people perceived women to live up to or fall short of the current collective ideal. In this case, not living up to the ideal produced a common stereotype in the early eighteenth century of the vain, frivolous, extravagant, seductive woman.

⁶ Kevin Jackson, "Pseudonyms (a.k.a. Noms de Plume)," In *Invisible Forms: A Guide to Literary Curiosities*. (London: Picador, 1999): 20.

⁷ I borrow this term from Marcy L North, "Anonymity's Reflections in *The Arte of English Poesie*," *Studies in English Literature* 39, issue 1 (Winter 1999): 1-18.

to gain greater insight into the reasons for writing pseudonymously and anonymously, developing what are the two most all-encompassing and useful theories: the mundane theory of convention and the more insightful theory of name currency. Examining these theories will specifically shed light upon the possible motivations behind Benjamin Franklin's prolific use of pseudonyms, and his unparalleled use of female pseudonyms.

One theory, though, which provides limited insight into Franklin's use of pseudonyms, but which contains a useful component, is "courtly modesty."⁸ Name suppression here serves two purposes. First, it provides protection when one criticizes directly or satirically established institutions, authorities, or customs (as Benjamin Franklin does in most of his pseudonyms). Next, name suppression creates boundaries between the insiders (the anonymous "elite") and outsiders. In Franklin's writings examined in this paper, this extends beyond and even excludes the political elite, creating a literary elite. However, this does not exclude a message to outsiders. The thrust of the writing could be intelligible to anyone, but subtle clues may provide additional, subtler criticism as well as point to authorship. "The Speech of Miss Polly Baker" provides a relevant example. Many people believed this hoax, published anonymously by Franklin, was an actual event of a woman on trial in New England for fornication. The thrust of its satirical message clearly denounced punishment for such a private offense, double standards in punishment between men and women, and harsh punishments in general. Those who were fooled by the hoax, such as Abbe Raynal, understood the purpose of the publication, but Silas Deane realized it was satire, and Voltaire even discerned Franklin's authorship.⁹

⁸ North, "Anonymity's Reflections," 1-18.

⁹ Benjamin Franklin, "The Speech of Miss Polly Baker" In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, Vol. 3, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961): 120-23; Thomas Jefferson, *The Complete Jefferson: Containing His Major Writings, Published and Unpublished, Except His Letters*, ed. Saul K. Padover, (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1943): 892-5; for a complete discussion on the literary transmission of this text, see

Although “courtly modesty” has its uses, it ultimately does not explain why Benjamin Franklin employed pseudonyms, much less female pseudonyms. Although more mundane, the theory of literary convention is more germane to Benjamin Franklin’s use of pseudonyms, particularly his female pseudonyms.¹⁰ In the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, pseudonyms were used to satirize and criticize the government, religious institutions, and authority figures. Kevin Jackson writes, “Disreputable writings of all kinds tended to be handed to a world pseudonymously or anonymously.”¹¹ Satire tended to be more “disreputable” because, as Linda Kerber notes, “It may be that the satirical mode freed the writers to be less cautious than usual.”¹² Franklin was more “radical” when writing under a nom de plume than in his “signed” pieces. While this suggests that satirists used pseudonyms so they would not get caught, it also shows that, generally, satirists previous to Franklin provided an example for him to follow, such as Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope, in using pseudonyms that both hide one’s own name while amplifying the personality of the writing. In his satires, Jonathan Swift used seventeen pseudonyms including Isaac Bickerstaff and M. B. Drapier,¹³ following a satirical convention of having silly-sounding, playful, and memorable pseudonyms.

In the eighteenth century, Enlightenment figures became prolific users of pseudonyms. Voltaire, whose real name was Francois Marie Arouet, used 173 pseudonyms (174 if one includes “Voltaire”). Benjamin Franklin, too, became a productive user of pseudonyms in his own right; however, he did not have to look across the Atlantic Ocean to find precedent, for his own brother, James Franklin, and most of the primary contributors to *The New England Courant*,

Max Hall, *Benjamin Franklin and Polly Baker: The History of Literary Deception*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960).

¹⁰ David S. Shields, “Nathaniel Gardner, Jr., and the Literary Culture of Boston in the 1750’s,” *Early American Literature* 24, issue 3 (December 1989): 197.

¹¹ Jackson, “Pseudonyms,” 30.

used satirical pseudonyms as well. Franklin, thus, in creating his own sardonic pseudonyms may have merely followed the footsteps of Jonathan Swift, but, more likely, his older brother James.

The theory of convention can be expanded to explain why one might have chosen to use the name of the opposite sex rather than that of one's own sex. Benjamin Franklin was not the only male employing female pseudonyms. Thackeray used a pseudonym called "The Honorable Wilhemina Amelia Skeggs."¹⁴ Voltaire presumably once used the name Catherine Vade. Daniel Defoe, who holds the record of using 198 pseudonyms, had one called Miranda Meanwell. In his female pseudonym, Silence Dogood, Franklin actually quotes Defoe, showing he was familiar with his writing to some degree. Yet again, James Franklin and the contributors to *The New England Courant* provided an immediate precedent for Benjamin Franklin to follow. James Franklin wrote under the pseudonym Abigail Afterwit, and another contributor to the *Courant*, Mr. Gardner, used a female pseudonym called Fanny Mournful.¹⁵ These two female pseudonyms appear particularly satirical and critical in content.

Although convention provides a general context which inspired Benjamin Franklin to write using pseudonyms, it fails to explain why the convention itself existed in the early eighteenth century. However, the theory that a name has currency, developed by Jennifer Jordan Baker, proves especially compelling, for it directly addresses the underlying aspect of name suppression in general.¹⁶ The logic of this theory is straightforward. When one has either a bad reputation or no reputation at all, one's name becomes a liability. On the other hand, if one is highly respected, one's name becomes an asset. The liability and asset of a name appear to be

¹² Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980): 257.

¹³ Jackson, "Pseudonyms," 34.

¹⁴ Jackson, "Pseudonyms," 34.

¹⁵ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, Vol. 1, 9.

subject and context sensitive. In other words, Franklin's name might have been an asset in Philadelphia later in his life, but it would have been a liability in London at the same time. Hence, pseudonyms are often employed by those who have yet to "make a name" for themselves and wish to publicly present their ideas.

Benjamin Franklin apparently wrote the bulk of his known pseudonyms (and all his female pseudonyms) toward the beginning of his life, when his name was more obscure, and less toward the end of his life, when he was internationally renowned. He did use pseudonyms andonyms later in life, but usually in places where he was not as popular or which might be dangerous for him to publish because of his political enemies. Because "The Speech of Miss Polly Baker" discussed illegitimate children, it would have been unwise for Benjamin Franklin to openly discuss this topic in Philadelphia, where his political enemies would be reminded of his own illegitimate son, William. He also anonymously published the satirical "An Edict of the King of Prussia" late in life in England, where he was not popular at the time. Once Franklin became established, people in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and then the colonies as a whole sought Franklin to lend the weight of his name to their endeavors. According to Jennifer Jordan Baker, the weight of Franklin's name eventually became the means by which the colonies attempted to gain credibility in Europe, especially France, during the Revolutionary War.¹⁷ Thus, following a pattern of suppression and construction, Franklin, in his early days constructed false identities through pseudonyms to publicize a particular message; however, when his name

¹⁶ Jennifer Jordan Baker, "Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* and the Credibility of Personality," *Early American Literature* 35, issue 3 (2000): 274-8.

¹⁷ Baker, "Credibility of Personality," 277-8.

had greater currency, he reconstructed aspects of his identity to present a position, as in his autobiography.¹⁸

The theory of name currency implies that Franklin may have used pseudonyms to prevent prejudgment. Preventing prejudgment also works when one is well known, so that one can speak outside one's expected discourse. Thus, although Franklin may have had currency in some topics (e.g. the occurrence of lightning and electricity), he may not have had the same currency to discuss publicly other topics for which he had an opinion (e.g. sex and gender), making name currency topic sensitive. Interestingly, Benjamin Franklin satirized prejudgment through his first female pseudonym, Silence Dogood. In Silence Dogood's very first appearance in James Franklin's *New England Courant* on April 2, 1722, she related:

And since it is observed, that the Generality of People, now a days, are unwilling either to commend or dispraise what they read, until they are in some measure informed who or what the Author of it is, whether he be poor or rich, old, or young, a Schollar¹⁹ or a Leather Apron Man, &c. and give their Opinion of the Performance, according to the Knowledge which they have of the Author's Circumstances, it may not be amiss to begin with a short Account of my past Life and present Condition, that the Reader may not be at a Loss to judge whether or no my Lucubrations are worth his reading.²⁰

Then Dogood related a synopsis of her life. In essence, Franklin developed her, giving the pseudonym greater character. Moreover, when Franklin wrote this passage, he elucidated that people tended to prejudge pieces of writing by whoever wrote it and by whatever that person's station in life was at the time, pertaining to wealth, age, profession, and, one might add, gender and fame. Thus, Franklin escaped prejudgment through pseudonymity. He was, at the time, a

¹⁸ Baker, "Credibility of Personality," 274-5. Autobiographical reconstruction is evident in Franklin's downplay of his faults, which he labels "errata" and his silence on the circumstances behind William Franklin's illegitimacy.

¹⁹ Because of the many differences between eighteenth-century and modern English pertaining to spelling, punctuation, and grammar, all quotes from that time will appear in the old format without modernization or the use of "sic."

²⁰ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:9. Franklin writes similar sentiments under the pseudonym Busy Body: "Every Man will own, That an Author, as such, ought to be try'd by the Merit of his Productions only; but Pride, Party, and Prejudice at this Time run so very high, that Experience Shews we form our Notions of a Piece by the Character of the Author." Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:134.

sixteen-year-old apprentice, essentially a nobody to the public. Even so, later in his career as a printer and then as a diplomat, he escaped prejudgment by creating false personas. In the case of Silence Dogood, though, he utilized the idea of prejudgment not just in name suppression, but also in character construction. He extensively developed this character about whom people could then form judgments and he could then capitalize upon those judgments in later letters of Silence Dogood. At the same time, the name Silence Dogood would have been recognized in Boston in the 1720s as a satire upon Cotton Mather's *Silentarius* and his *Essays to do Good*. If educated public knew this was a pseudonym, then virtually anyone could have written it, and because the public (and, presumably, James) did not know who wrote it, the writing would have to be evaluated upon its own merits.

Name currency theory, with prejudgment, particularly provides insight into Franklin's use of female pseudonyms. Prejudgment explains much of women's use of male pseudonyms. In early America, the avenues for women to publish their ideas in a public forum were limited. Sylvie L. F. Richards explains, "it was scandalous . . . for a woman to write publicly; if she did, she was judged not as a writer, but as a woman."²¹ However, as Linda Kerber notes, "Increased dependence on writing rather than on oral communication would ultimately help bridge the gap between male and female experience, since the spoken word—depending as it does on the physical presence of the speaker—conveys the speaker's gender in a way that the written word cannot."²² Since the written word could obscure one's gender, a woman could use the name of a man to have her ideas and opinions published, and not be prejudged by social stereotypes of

²¹ Sylvie L. F. Richards, "Finding Her Voice: George Sand's Autobiography," *Women's Studies* 22, Issue 2 (March 1993): 140.

²² Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 193.

women. Such was the case for George Eliot, whose real name was Mary Ann Evans. Moreover, Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell were otherwise known as Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Bronte.²³

Richards explains why Aurore Dupin (Amandine-Aurore-Lucille Dudevant) used a male pseudonym, George Sand. Richards argues that one's own gender had limitations of expression imposed by society, which could even limit one to no public expression; thus, by using a pseudonym of the opposite gender, one overcame those imposed boundaries.²⁴ Richards further explains, however, that when using a pseudonym of the opposite gender, one cannot completely suppress one's own gendered voice; therefore, Dupin used a male name, but retained her female voice. Richards claims that this created either an androgynous or a neuter character, which could transcend the gender boundaries by creating a third, undefined category.²⁵

Although it may have been scandalous for a woman to write publicly, it generally was not so for a man; therefore, a difference arises between when a woman used a masculine pseudonym and when a man used a feminine pseudonym. Whenever a woman used a male pseudonym, the false name was usually believable, such as George Sand or George Eliot. However, when a man used a female pseudonym, he usually used it for satirical purposes, resulting in a name that was clearly a pseudonym, such as Benjamin Franklin's Silence Dogood and Alice Addertongue. On the other hand, Richards's argument can extend to men who used female pseudonyms since name currency theory is topic sensitive. A man might be constrained by society, forcing him to use a woman's name to address or satirize a subject more effectively. For example, in many of Franklin's female pseudonyms, particularly Silence Dogood, he criticized men's vices, praised women's virtues, and argued that women's perceived vices, such as idleness and vanity, were either illusory or caused by men. Using a female pseudonym to discuss these issues, then,

²³ Jackson, "Pseudonyms," 21-2.

²⁴ Richards, "Finding Her Voice," 141-4.

probably proved more effective than a male pseudonym. Furthermore, one can often tell that a male author wrote these female pseudonyms. Jackson refers to men using female pseudonyms as literary “cross-dressing.”²⁶ Perhaps “cross-dressing” is an apt metaphor. Usually one can tell that a cross-dresser is really a man, but cross-dressing might also liberate the man to act outside of societal gender constraints.

Male authorship becomes evident with Franklin’s pseudonyms when one analyzes them as a whole. Although these pseudonyms often praised women in an era when women were thought to be immoral agents,²⁷ when read as a whole, they reveal a sexualized nature to them. Patience is a pseudonym who wanted to fornicate. Martha Careful and Caelia Shortface attacked Samuel Keimer for printing descriptions of female genitalia in his newspaper, which caused the women to be ashamed. Margaret Aftercast complained about being punished with virginity.²⁸ When sex and the female body become the primary discussions with the female pseudonyms, such as Patience and Margaret Aftercast, and merely peripheral with only a handful of the male pseudonyms, such as Richard Saunders and Anthony Afterwit, that indicates an underlying ambivalence in Franklin’s use of his female pseudonyms, opposing some early eighteenth-century female stereotypes while depending upon others. Richards would understand this internal inconsistency as a result of the androgynous category, which gives the author greater freedom and less boundaries, but, as Richards notes with George Sand, Franklin, while using a female name, did not suppress his male voice. Therefore, ambivalence toward gender conceptions appears to naturally result from literary “cross-dressing.”

Benjamin Franklin’s Pseudonyms: Reifying, Rejecting, and Revising Societal Stereotypes

²⁵ Richards, “Finding Her Voice,” 143.

²⁶ Jackson, “Pseudonyms,” 34.

²⁷ Richard Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002): 239 - 72.

Benjamin Franklin's male and female pseudonyms engaged images of women in the eighteenth century. Although these images were largely universal, they changed slightly with respect to religion, location, and time. Throughout British North America, the stereotype of the seductress prevailed, but varied in degree with respect to time and location. As the eighteenth century progressed, this stereotype became subtler. The common assumption of a woman's seductive qualities was transformed in Victorian times, with an idea that a woman seduced a man to virtue, rather than to vice as in the early eighteenth century. Furthermore, this ideology was more prevalent in Boston than in Philadelphia; however, it was still a common belief in Philadelphia, partly evidenced by Franklin's own male pseudonyms.

Other female stereotypes depicted women as ignorant, vain, proud, deceitful, scornful, and idle. These appeared to be more prevalent in urban areas than in rural communities, partly because in rural areas, men and women worked hard side by side just to make ends meet; thus, it would be difficult to say in this environment that a woman was idle.²⁹ The stereotype of ignorance, though, permeated all areas of the northern colonies. This stereotype resulted from the belief that women should not be educated and the fact that most women were not educated.³⁰ Kerber observes that in the latter part of the eighteenth century domestic tradition condemned the

²⁸ Labaree, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:38, 112-3, 122-4.

²⁹ Judith A. Ridner, "Freedom in Frontier Pennsylvania, 1750-1800," In *Women & Freedom in Early America*, ed. Larry D. Eldridge, (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 168-9, 177-8. Using this argument, this particular stereotype of idleness also would have been less prevalent among lower classes.

³⁰ Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 190-91; Paul Leicester Ford, *The Many-Sided Franklin*, (New York: The Century Co., 1915): 263-5; see also Joel Perlman and Dennis Shirley, "When did New England Women Acquire Literacy?" *William and Mary Quarterly* 48, Issue 1 (January 1991): 50-67.

highly educated woman as a perverse threat to family stability;³¹ thus, as one finds in Ulrich's portrayal of women from 1650-1750, the roles of wife and mother defined the ideal woman.³²

Benjamin Franklin's male and female pseudonyms reinforced, reinterpreted, and challenged these broad cultural assumptions. The earliest of these pseudonyms, Silence Dogood, appeared in Boston in 1722. Franklin continued to employ both male and female pseudonyms throughout the 1720s with Busy Body, Patience, Martha Careful, and Caelia Shortface. In the 1730s he used the nom de plumes of Alice Addertongue, Anthony Afterwit, Celia Single, and, most prolifically, Richard Saunders. All of these pseudonyms that discussed sex and gender came early in Franklin's life, before his political career, his experiments with lightning, and his diplomatic involvement in London and France. Pseudonyms like Richard Saunders and Anthony Afterwit tended to reinforce stereotypes of seductive, idle, and vain women, whereas Silence Dogood and Celia Single tended to challenge such popular perceptions and even reverse them. However, Franklin's male pseudonyms did include passages that praised women and some of his female pseudonyms reinforced these female stereotypes, creating ambivalence between his male and female pseudonyms as well as within each group of pseudonyms.

Male Pseudonyms

Unlike Benjamin Franklin's female pseudonyms, most of his male pseudonyms did not discuss sex and gender. For example, "B. B." wrote about the necessity of paper currency, and "The Casuist" wrote about "The Case of the Trespassing Horse." Although his male

³¹ Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 10, 198-9, 210-13. Kerber quotes a pseudonym, "Sophie," who claims that a learned woman is less attractive. "Sophie" believes that when women become educated, they defeminized themselves. Conversely, some argued women should be educated to become better wives and mothers.

³² Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in the Northern New England, 1650-1750*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1980). See also, Merril D. Smith, "'Whers Gone to She Knows Not': Desertion and Widowhood in Early Pennsylvania," In *Women & Freedom in Early America*, ed. Larry D. Eldridge, (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 209.

pseudonyms discussed a broader range of issues, they did occasionally discuss sex and gender and, in so doing, greatly contrasted the perspective of Franklin's female pseudonyms.

When Franklin's male pseudonyms commented on female stereotypes and ideals, they sometimes praised women in the idealized roles of wife and mother, as Richard Saunders occasionally did. The ideal woman in puritan ideology was a good wife.³³ The ideal wife was obedient to her husband, loving to her children, kind to her neighbors, dutiful to her servants, chaste, industrious, and religious.³⁴ Puritans often used biblical examples to show tendencies in women toward both virtue and vice, such as Bathsheba, Eve, and Jael. The most useful example for the ideal woman was Bathsheba. Those who know the story of Bathsheba might wonder how this is an ideal instead of the stereotypical seductress, since the story could be construed that way; however, Puritans believed that the highly industrious woman of Proverbs 31:10-31 referred to Bathsheba. When New England ministers, like Cotton Mather, gave sermons on Proverbs 31, Bathsheba became the virtuous housewife, "whose industrious labors gave mythical significance to the ordinary tasks assigned to her sex."³⁵ This industrious ideal was highly important in almost all Franklin's pseudonyms, male and female, in their discussions on female ideals and stereotypes.

Franklin also held this ideal in actual relationships with women. In 1727, he wrote to his younger sister, Jane, who was about to get married that he was "thinking what would be a suitable present for you." He almost "determined on a tea table, but when I considered that the character of a good housewife was preferable to that of being only a pretty gentlewoman, I

³³ Single women, either not yet married or widowed, were suspect; Ulrich, *Good Wives*, xiii, 6.

³⁴ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 6, 8, 52.

³⁵ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 14, 83.

concluded to send you a *spinning wheel*.”³⁶ With the spinning wheel, Jane Franklin Mecom could be more industrious than with the less practical tea table.

While Saunders sometimes reinforced this ideal, another male pseudonym, Busy Body criticized men and women evenhandedly, possibly reflecting Quaker gender ideals of the equality of the sexes. However, Anthony Afterwit and, especially, Richard Saunders revealed a general trend in these male pseudonyms to reify the images of women who fall short of the ideal, portraying women as being proud, scolding, extravagant, idle, ignorant, sexually seductive, deceitful, and even diabolical. This was Eve’s legacy, which contrasted with that of Bathsheba. Eve’s legacy as seductress along with her punishment of being ruled over by her husband had practical and ideological implications in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England.³⁷ Theoretically, neither sex was more sinful than the other; however, women were seen as “physically and sexually vulnerable, easily aroused, quick to succumb to flattery.”³⁸ Moreover, single women, either never married or widowed, were thought particularly susceptible to sexual temptations. Considering this, society viewed Eve’s sin as the inevitable consequence of her female nature, portrayed as weak and unstable, deriving from an inherently weak body.³⁹ Thus, a strain developed between the industrious Bathsheba and the seductive Eve. Franklin’s male pseudonyms reflected these cultural tensions between upholding the ideal, while, at the same time, reinforcing the stereotype.

In February 1729, Franklin wrote a series of letters attacking his rival printer, Samuel Keimer, through the male pseudonym, Busy Body. Busy Body acted as the village gossip who wrote on male and female indiscretions for the primary purpose of instructing virtue. Busy Body

³⁶ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:100-101; see Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 68.

³⁷ Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 185. One implication was a woman was viewed as the property of her husband. As late as 1788, Benjamin Trumbull wrote, “The wife hath not the power of her own body, but the husband.”

³⁸ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 97.

threatened men and women to act virtuously because of his pseudonymous status: he could be anyone, anywhere.⁴⁰ Although potentially seeing all and knowing all, he did not always tell, “What Woman has been false to her Husband’s Bed; nor what Man has, by barbarous Usage and Neglect, broke the Heart of a faithful Wife, and wasted his Health and Substance in Debauchery.”⁴¹ Busy Body saw various women who were both ideal and stereotypical, who remained faithful to their husbands, and who committed adultery. At the same time, he gave parity to these actions of faithful and unfaithful men, assuming the existence of both adulterous wives and disloyal husbands in Philadelphia. For the most part, though, this was the extent of Busy Body’s discussion on sex and gender. Most of his letters were more didactic, contrasting one who was virtuous with the half-witted “Cretico,” who represented Keimer.

Perhaps Busy Body’s equal treatment resulted from Philadelphian culture. Philadelphia tolerated a greater amount of religious diversity than Puritan Boston. Pennsylvania became a haven for believers of almost all denominations, attracting various European religious groups. The most notable of these was the Society of Friends. In the polyglot culture of Pennsylvania, the Quakers were distinctive for their concept of the family, their stance on issues such as slavery, and their exceptional tradition of female religious participation and leadership.⁴²

Historians uphold the Quakers as the only religious denomination to preach equality of the sexes. The Quakers’ ideal of equality of the sexes derived from their founder, George Fox, whose exegesis of the Garden of Eden story differed from most Protestant groups. He argued that before the fall, men and women were equal, but after the fall, man was to rule over his wife;

³⁹ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 131, 144.

⁴⁰ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 122, 127, 129.

⁴¹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 127-8.

⁴² Janet Moore Lindman, “Wise Virgins and Pious Mothers: Spiritual Community among Baptist Women of the Delaware Valley,” in Eldridge, *Women & Freedom in Early America*, 127.

however, when restored in the image of Christ, men and women became equal again.⁴³ Thus, redemption not only guaranteed immortality in heaven, but also a release from gender hierarchy. Quaker women, unlike women in other Protestant groups, held independent meetings to exhort good behavior and conversion.⁴⁴ However, when Quaker women fell from what they defined as good behavior, many of the sexual stereotypes directed toward women reemerged. They, as in Puritan Boston, believed women to be sexually promiscuous; thus, they tended to monitor and punish women's sexual behavior much more often than men's.

Quakers recognized that they differed from their neighbors with respect to ideal gender relationships. Karin Wulf explains, "Because George Fox described Eden before the Fall as a place of equality between men and women, the goal of the Quakers was to achieve that prelapsarian state, not to mimic the sexual hierarchy that was the legacy of Eve's seduction and transgression."⁴⁵ However, in overcoming "Eve's legacy," Quakers still couched the ideal of equality in terms of the seductress. In Quaker mythology, Eve's seduction still caused the Fall. Furthermore, "Eve's legacy" was something still to be surmounted and equality was something yet to be realized. Therefore, although they believed in equality, they still upheld, although more subtly, some of the same sexual stereotypes the Puritans held. Unlike the Puritans, though, the Quakers were more optimistic that Eve's nature could be overcome.

Although proclaiming the equality of the sexes, the Quakers, like the Puritans, reveal an underlying cultural gendered assumption not explicitly expressed theologically. While Quakers were one of many religious traditions, other groups also held similar views about women's nature. Baptists in Pennsylvania apparently held a common assumption about female nature with

⁴³ Jean R Soderlund, "Women's Authority in Pennsylvania and New Jersey Quaker Meetings, 1680-1760," *William and Mary Quarterly* 44, Issue 4 (October 1987): 726.

⁴⁴ Karin A. Wulf, "'My Dear Liberty': Quaker Spinsterhood and Female Autonomy in Eighteenth-Century Pennsylvania," in Eldridge, *Women & Freedom in Early America*, 85.

Puritan Boston. Through their monitoring and disciplining processes, they reveal the assumption that women's sins were primarily sexual. Perhaps this polyglot culture influenced the Quakers, causing them to develop a different practical ideology from their theology. Although Quakers, like Puritans, never explicitly expressed inequality with regard to sex and gender, their practices reveal varying degrees of very similar deprecating assumptions about female nature.

In contrast to the few excerpts from *Busy Body* discussing sex and gender, Benjamin Franklin's male pseudonyms usually did not give such an equal rendering. Instead, they regurgitated, reified, and re-disseminated the female stereotypes derived from popular Puritan and Philadelphian theology and ideology. For Franklin's reassertion of these female labels, Anthony Afterwit and, especially, Richard Saunders prove the most prominent examples.

Anthony Afterwit appeared on the pages of Franklin's paper, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, on July 10, 1732.⁴⁶ Immediately, Afterwit presented himself as "an honest Tradesman, who never meant Harm to any Body."⁴⁷ Throughout the letter, he claimed that he was industrious and practical, traits which he contrasted with his wife. The Afterwits were somewhat poor, but had enough to get by and lived in a house "tolerably furnished, for an ordinary Man, before."⁴⁸

He recreated the ideal of the industrious wife, claiming that his wife fell short of this because "my Wife had a strong Inclination to be a *Gentlewoman*."⁴⁹ Because of this, she manipulated him into replacing all of his economical furniture with more extravagant luxury items, such as a looking glass, a table suitable for such a glass, chairs to match the table, a tea-table (because she wanted to entertain her friends), and china and silver for the tea-table. Then

⁴⁵ Wulf, "My Dear Liberty," 86-7.

⁴⁶ Benjamin Franklin probably borrowed the name of this pseudonym from James Franklin's female pseudonym, Abigail Afterwit.

⁴⁷ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:237.

⁴⁸ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:238.

⁴⁹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:238.

his wife needed a maid for their small house, she tricked her husband into buying an ornamental clock by never knowing what time it was, and, finally, a horse. After this process, Afterwit post-facto called his wife “an excellent Contriver.”⁵⁰ His wife, the extravagant “Contriver,” had pushed the couple into living beyond their means.

However, Anthony Afterwit’s idle, manipulative, and extravagant wife decided she needed a vacation, so she went away to visit some relatives. While she was away, Afterwit counteracted her lack of wifely virtue:

I have turn’d away the Maid, Bag and Baggage (for what should we do with a Maid, who have . . . none but our selves). I have sold the fine Pacing Mare, and bought a good Milch Cow. . . . I have dispos’d of the Tea-Table, and put a Spinning Wheel in its place, which methinks *looks very pretty*: Nine empty Canisters I have stuff’d with Flax; and with some of the Money of the Tea-Furniture, I have bought a Set of Knitting-Needles; for to tell you a Truth . . . *I begin to want Stockings*. The stately Clock I have transform’d into an Hour-Glass In Short, the Face of Things is quite changed⁵¹

Afterwit replaced all of his wife’s extravagances with practical items, such as a cow and a spinning wheel. Instead of being idle, she could now be industrious, making her husband some nice stockings. The contrast between the tea table and the spinning wheel recalls Franklin’s gift to his younger sister for her wedding. Afterwit showed women to be manipulative, extravagant, and, worst of all, idle. The would-be gentlewoman, with her vices, vividly contrasted and fell short of the exalted Bathsheba paradigm of an industrious wife at her spinning wheel. Thus, through Anthony Afterwit, Benjamin Franklin upheld derogatory female stereotypes, at least, for those who read his newspaper.

This portrayal of women generally falling short of the ideal appeared frequently in Franklin’s character, Richard Saunders, in his *Poor Richard’s Almanack*, which had a much larger audience than his newspaper. The almanac was an extremely popular medium through

⁵⁰ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:239.

⁵¹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:239-40.

which to express one's ideas, especially concerning women, sex, and marriage. Almanacs tended to portray women as lustful, sexually voracious, and manipulative. James Franklin, in his *Poor Robin's Almanack* series that he wrote in the late 1720s and early 1730s regularly included bawdy and misogynistic material. In Titan Leeds's Philadelphia almanacs, which competed with Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanack*, one could read: "Regard not a woman's passions, nor her smiles; / With passions she ensnares, with tears beguiles."⁵² In 1732, Benjamin Franklin, using the nom de plume, Richard Saunders, joined these almanac writers. Richard Saunders, Franklin's most famous and most widely disseminated pseudonym,⁵³ wrote a series of aphorisms, which, like Anthony Afterwit, contrasted the ideal good wife with the gentlewoman and the seductress. Saunders's aphorisms and epigrams pushed the stereotype further than Afterwit, not only showing women to be manipulative, idle, and extravagant, but also proud, scolding, and ignorant. In addition, he provided many examples of the seductress, and directly referred to women as diabolical. Saunders provided the most misogynistic material found in all of Franklin's writing, reinforcing denigrating female stereotypes in their most extreme forms.

Richard Saunders's gender ideology, though, was not wholly consistent, but reflected a certain tension toward female ideals and stereotypes. He even at times criticized men, while, at the same time, praised women. For example, Saunders wrote:

Little Half-wits are wondrous pert, we find,
 Scoffing and jeering on whole Womankind,
 ALL False, ALL Whores, ALL this and that and t'other,
 Not one Exception, ev'n for their Mother.
 But Men of Wisdom and Experience know,
 That there's no greater Happiness below
 Than a good wife affords; and such there's many,
 For every Man has one, the best of any.⁵⁴

⁵² Quoted in Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 272.

⁵³ *Poor Richard's Almanack* sold over 10,000 copies annually for several years; Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:280-83.

⁵⁴ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:9.

This poem discussed the vast generalizations made about women: they were all liars, whores, and so on; however, Saunders actually opposed this view here. Although he said elsewhere that a good wife was hard to find, here he claimed that the ideal good wife was a general reality. Ironically, Saunders called those who made such generalizations “Half-wits,” but he, himself, produced the same and even more extreme generalizations.

Extolling wives and criticizing men, Saunders wrote, “One good Husband is worth two good Wives; for the scarcer things are the more they’re valued.”⁵⁵ Here, a good wife was more prevalent than a good husband, implying that women fulfilled their ideal roles more often than men did. Moreover, Saunders asserted that good wives were gifts from God: “A good Wife lost is God’s gift lost.” Here, Franklin hearkened back to the Bathsheba myth from Proverbs: “Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies,”⁵⁶ or, in Saunders’s terms, two good wives were worth one good husband.

Saunders also recognized a good wife’s fidelity: “There are three faithful friends, an old wife, an old dog, and ready money.”⁵⁷ Although being compared to money or a dog may not be the most flattering compliment, Saunders praised those things that were traditionally faithful and useful. Continuing this ideal of a good wife, Saunders expanded his praise by advising husbands to listen to their prudent wives:

Would Men but follow what the Sex advise,
All things would prosper, all the World grow wise.
‘Twas by Rebecca’s Aid that Jacob won
His Father’s Blessing from an elder Son.
Abusive Nabal ow’d his forfeit Life
To the wise Conduct of a prudent Wife.
At Hester’s suit, the persecuting Sword
Was sheath’d, and Israel liv’d to bless the Lord.

⁵⁵ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:336.

⁵⁶ Proverbs 31.10, King James Version.

⁵⁷ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:192.

Saunders extolled women through their prudent conduct in raising great men. These men would not be historically significant without these women; thus, Saunders advised men who would be great and wished to prosper to follow women's advice. However, in the story of Jacob and Rebecca, Rebecca secured Jacob's birthright through deceitful means, and the characteristic of deceitfulness was a female stereotype that Saunders reinforced throughout his almanacs.

Saunders discussed good wives in other ways. One aphorism read, "Good wives and good plantations are made by good husbands."⁵⁸ Seemingly incongruous with the statement about good wives being more plentiful than good husbands, this maxim claimed that a good husband created a good wife. Moreover, notice the agricultural parallel of a good plantation. Elsewhere in these almanacs, other farming metaphors appeared, representing women as gardens or plantations, creating a theme of sowing the fields as an analogy for sex.

Although identifying a woman with her sexuality led to the seductress stereotype, it also led to an ideal: the archetypal good wife was also a mother. With this in mind, Richard Saunders reminisced, "A Ship under sail and a big-bellied Woman, / Are the handsomest two things that can be seen common."⁵⁹ While identifying a woman with her body and sexuality led both to female ideals and negative stereotypes (being two sides of the same coin), here this identification reinforced women's roles as wife and mother. Moreover, because Saunders had reified the idyllic wife, he could then extol the institution of marriage.

With the image of a good wife intact, Saunders commended the state of marriage, saying, "He that takes a wife, takes care," and, "He that has not got a Wife, is not yet a compleat Man."⁶⁰ Using the metaphor of completeness, he wrote, "A house without woman and Firelight, / is like a

⁵⁸ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:141.

⁵⁹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:7.

⁶⁰ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:139, 396.

body without soul or sprite.”⁶¹ In the idealized state of marriage, a woman was the soul and life of the home. In a longer poem, Saunders called a wife a “peculiar Gift of Heav’n” and “One solid Comfort.”⁶² The heavenly gift motif appeared earlier as well as comfort to some extent in the faithful old wife. Finally, drawing these themes together, Saunders said, “A little House well fill’d, a little Field well till’d, and a little Wife well will’d, are great Riches.”⁶³ Perhaps Saunders was drawing the agricultural metaphor, but he may also be showing forms of male prosperity, having a good house, a tilled field, and a good wife. The well-willed wife surfaced elsewhere in the almanacs, but usually in less flattering circumstances.

Although Saunders praised marriage and women, nonetheless, he more often denigrated both marriage and women through bolstering the stereotypes of the seductress and the idle and extravagant gentlewoman. In a passage devaluing marriage, Saunders wrote:

Dorothy would with John be married;
Dorothy’s wise, I trow:
But John by no means Dorothy will wed;
John’s the wiser of the two.⁶⁴

Along the same lines, he wrote elsewhere:

Kate would have Thomas, no one blame her can;
Tom won’t have Kate, and who can blame the Man?⁶⁵

In contrast to previous proverbial sayings, these two made marriage an unwanted state. John was wise not to marry Dorothy without stating any good reasons. Likewise, Saunders asked, who could blame the man for not wanting to have Kate? Therefore, marriage may not be the ideal state for a man to be in, largely because, in contrast to the sayings mentioned above, most of

⁶¹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:312.

⁶² Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:398.

⁶³ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:5.

⁶⁴ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:357.

⁶⁵ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:336.

Richard Saunders's aphorisms pertaining to women displayed them as deceitful, scornful, seductive, proud, extravagant, idle, and, because of these things, diabolical.

By analyzing the year's eclipses, Saunders, as a good astrologer or Philomath, predicted:

Some of the eclipses foreshow great Grief and many Tears among the soft Sex this Year; whether for the Breaking of their Crockery Ware, the Loss of their Loves, or in Repentance for their Sins, I shall not say; tho' I must own I think there will be a great deal of the latter in the Case.⁶⁶

A good wife would be grieved over broken crockery ware because, being industrious, broken cooking supplies would slow her down; however, that was not why Saunders believed there would be "many Tears among the soft Sex." Instead, they had fallen short and would be confessing their sins.

Saunders, though, portrayed non-ideal women in less discreet ways. He often showed them to be proud. He even called his own pseudonymous wife, Bridget Saunders, "excessive proud."⁶⁷ In another passage, he linked pride to idleness:

She that will eat her breakfast in her bed,
And spend the morn in dressing her head,
And sit at dinner like a maiden bride,
And talking of nothing all day but of pride;
God in his mercy may do much to save her,
But what a case is he in that shall have her.⁶⁸

This vain woman spent an entire morning dressing her head, spoke all day of pride, and, consequently, got nothing done. Far from a good wife, Saunders felt sorry for the man who married her. In 1742, Saunders again drew this causal relationship between vanity and idleness:

Celia's rich Side-board seldom sees the Light,
Clean is her Kitchen, and her Spits are bright;
* * * * *
Her Plates unsully'd, shining on the Shelf;
For Celia dresses nothing,--*but herself*.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:247.

⁶⁷ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:311.

⁶⁸ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:304.

Celia's house was in complete order and utter cleanliness because she never did anything except dress herself. Elsewhere he criticized the gentlewoman: "Many estates are spent in the getting, / Since women for tea forsook spinning and knitting."⁷⁰ This reflects Anthony Afterwit whose wife, who wanted to be a gentlewoman, took to having tea, but Anthony replaced her tea-table with a more useful spinning wheel. Saunders further elicited the connection between women and luxury and extravagance, saying, "The proof of gold is fire, the proof of woman, gold; the proof of a man, a woman." Overall, the industriousness or idleness of the wife determined the success of the household, but, unfortunately, according Richard Saunders, idleness reigned. The image of the gentlewoman stood out, being idle, vain, and extravagant, and being such, she neglected her duties and lived above her means, causing ruin to herself and her household.

Another prominent image in these almanacs was the loud, scandalous, scolding wife. Saunders referred to his wife Bridget as scolding and hot-tempered. The year after the success of the first almanac, Saunders wrote in his introduction, "These Things have render'd her Temper so much more pacifick than it us'd to be, that I may say, I have slept more, and more quietly within this last year, than in the three foregoing years put together."⁷¹ Although her scolding temper tempered, elsewhere, Saunders wrote for her epitaph, "Here my poor Bridget's Corps doth lie, she is at rest, —and so am I."⁷² The former quote also relied upon the image of his wife as a stereotypical gentlewoman. Because the almanac was a success, they had more money, which she spent on various items, making her presence more pleasant. On the other hand, the second quote relied upon the continuity of her scolding personality.

⁶⁹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:338.

⁷⁰ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:315.

⁷¹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:350.

⁷² Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:400.

Saunders used the death theme other places, contrasting where a woman was with a place of rest. Following the epitaph motif, Saunders wrote one for another woman with the gift of gab:

Beneath this silent Stone is laid,
A noisy antiquated Maid,
Who from her Cradle talk'd 'till Death,
And ne'er before was out of Breath.
Wither she's gone we cannot tell;
For, if she talks not, she's in Hell:
If she's in Heaven, she's there unblest,
Because she hates a Place of Rest.⁷³

The idea of women talking unto death filled other passages as well. One epigram insinuated that you can tell when a man died because his heart stopped, but, with a woman, you know she died when her tongue stopped. In a longer poem, Saunders wrote didactically to remind women "That all your Neighbors too have Tongues; / One Slander fifty will beget."⁷⁴ This poem elsewhere stated that when a woman stretched her lungs, it was always for the purpose of slander. For a husband, it seemed, this alleged female trait was one of the most galling:

Things that are bitter, bitterer than Gall
Physicians say are always physical:
Now Women's Tongues if into Powder beaten,
May in Potion or a Pill be eaten.
And as there's nought more bitter, I do muse,
That Women's Tongues in Physick they ne'er use.
My self and others who lead restless Lives,
Would spare that bitter Member of our Wives.⁷⁵

Franklin, through Saunders fed into popular conceptions of women with the pervasiveness of this stereotype throughout various editions of *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Interestingly, Franklin revisited the scornful, slanderous woman, exploiting this stereotype with the female pseudonym Alice Addertongue, turning this vice into a virtue.

⁷³ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:194.

⁷⁴ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:369.

⁷⁵ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:139.

Along with the scornful wife, another common theme in *Poor Richard's Almanack* was the deceitful and unfaithful wife, who cuckolded her husband. Saunders explicitly utilized the idea of a woman cuckolding her husband in a short poem:

Says Roger to his Wife, my dear;
The strangest piece of news I hear!
A Law, 'tis said, will quickly pass,
To purge the matrimonial Class;
Cuckolds, if any such we have here
Must to a Man be thrown i' th' River.
She smiling cry'd, My dear, you seem
Surpriz'd! *Pray han't you learn'd to swim?*⁷⁶

The husband did not realize his wife had deceived him. Although knowing men were often tricked by their wives, he never thought he was until his wife hinted that if cuckolds were to be thrown into the river, he ought to learn to swim. In another place, Saunders wrote, "Three things are men most liable to be cheated in, a Horse, a Wig, and a Wife."⁷⁷ This saying suggests a man should expect his wife to have adulterous affairs. However, this proverb may not mean that his wife was necessarily cheating on him, but that she was deceitful in other ways, such as tricking her husband into marrying her; thus, appearing to be a different person from before to after marriage. According to the stereotype of a deceitful wife, a man never really knew what he was getting into until it was too late; therefore, Saunders provided this warning to men, "Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterwards."⁷⁸ Men should approach marriage carefully, knowing they might be beguiled by their wives, but, afterwards, men ought to purposefully keep them half shut in case they were deceived, so that they may then live ignorantly blissful not knowing their wives cuckolded them.

⁷⁶ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:249.

⁷⁷ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:142.

⁷⁸ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:194.

The adulterous wife fit into a larger ideology of equating women with sexuality and sexual gratification: “After 3 days men grow weary, of a wench, a guest, and weather rainy,” and “Be temperate in wine, in eating, girls, and sloth.”⁷⁹ While advising sexual moderation, Saunders equated women with their sexual function—like a sex object.

Elsewhere, Franklin cast doubt upon a woman’s sexual probity: “Neither a Fortress nor a Maidenhead will hold out long after they begin to parly.”⁸⁰ Linking sexuality with vanity, Saunders claimed, “She that paints her Face, thinks of her Tail.”⁸¹ He insinuated that a woman intended to cuckold her husband when she painted her face: “Why does a blind man’s wife paint herself?”⁸² Throughout New England society, the belief that a husband held exclusive rights to his wife’s body prevailed, but, this wife, painting herself, was thinking of another man, not her husband.⁸³

The theme of the adulterous woman and sexual infidelity, in this culture, conjured up the image of the “damned woman.” In his first almanac, in 1733, Franklin wrote a barbed verse:

Jove, Juno leaves, and love to take his Range;
From whom Man learns to love, and loves to change.
♂ is disarmed, and to ♀ gone,
Where *Vulcan*’s Anvil must be struck upon.
That *Luna*’s horn’d, it cannot well be said,
Since I ne’er heard that she was married.⁸⁴

Astrological speculation and Greco-Roman mythology created a gendered word play. Jove, or Jupiter, traditionally was Juno’s husband in Roman mythology. Here, she left Jove, suggesting adultery. The male, then, disarmed by Juno, went to the female, disarming suggesting seduction.

⁷⁹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:314, 352.

⁸⁰ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:354; see Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 272-3.

⁸¹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:139.

⁸² Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:140.

⁸³ Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 185.

⁸⁴ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:290.

There is further sexual play, though. The narrator of the poem, unsure if Luna (another name for Juno) was actually married, asked whether or not Luna committed adultery or just fornication.

One might wonder what “horn’d” meant in this poem. A horned moon was another name for a crescent moon, but, with the sexual theme of the poem, this word might pun “horny.” However, there was a further connotation of “horn’d.” In another adage, Saunders wrote, “You cannot pluck roses without fear of thorns, / Nor enjoy a fair wife without danger of horns.”⁸⁵ In these passages, there might be a connection between sexuality, the seductress, and the devil. In popular mythology, Satan had horns and the seductress was related to Satan; thus, horns in these passages about female sexual promiscuity probably referred to the devilish woman.

Puritan Boston often equated female sexuality with evil power. Witch accusations in New England endured into the 1720s, when Franklin wrote under his first female pseudonym, and the most famous in Salem occurred in 1692, only fourteen years before Franklin’s birth.⁸⁶ These accusations reveal how women allegedly fell short of the ideal, accusers often citing being a bad wife, bad mother, bad daughter, or a bad neighbor as evidence of witchcraft.⁸⁷

Although Puritans claimed men and women were equal before God, they were not equal before the devil. Both men and women believed that women were more likely to be enlisted into Satan’s service than men, expressing a communal belief in women’s inherent wickedness.⁸⁸ Reis argues, “in the process of negotiating their beliefs and ideals in practical ways, both women and men embedded womanhood in the discourse of depravity.”⁸⁹ Women internalized ministers’ messages on the complete depravity of the soul, identifying with the soul, whereas men distanced

⁸⁵ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:352.

⁸⁶ Reis, *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997): 7.

⁸⁷ Karin A. Wulf, “‘My Dear Liberty’: Quaker Spinsterhood and Female Autonomy in Eighteenth-Century Pennsylvania,” in Eldridge, *Women & Freedom in Early America*, 84-5, 103 n.7; Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 158; One woman was accused because she was disrespectful to her husband, Reis, *Damned Women*, 11, 145, 157.

themselves from the soul and the “discourse of depravity.”⁹⁰ A woman believed she sinned due to her inherently wicked soul, but a man focused on individual sins. Thus, men were damned for what they did and women for who they were.⁹¹

In addition to internalizing ministers’ messages of innate depravity, women’s bodies became an entry point for Satan to enter. Reis explains, “Women’s feminine souls were seen as unprotected by their weaker female bodies, vulnerable to the devil’s molestations.”⁹² Satan could seduce and possess a woman more easily than a man because of the woman’s weaker body. Women, becoming corrupt and wicked, in turn, seduced men. Furthermore, generally, “Puritans regarded the soul as feminine and characterized it as insatiable, in consonance with the allegedly unappeasable nature of women.”⁹³ Women, already thought to be insatiable, were led by dissatisfaction to the devil, adultery, fornication, and other illicit acts. Possession, then, magnified their inherent insatiable, wicked, and seductive natures.

Possession by the devil was a sexual act.⁹⁴ Possessed women, then, sexually seduced men, making women’s sexuality something to be feared and controlled by the ideal of chastity. Once the devil seduced a woman, not only would the woman seduce men, but he could take the form of the woman and seduce men, creating even greater anxiety about female sexuality. Although the devil could appear as both male and female, when the apparition sexually assaulted a victim, it always took the shape of a woman.⁹⁵ However, as the eighteenth century progressed,

⁸⁸ Reis, *Damned Women*, 1-3.

⁸⁹ Reis, *Damned Women*, 163.

⁹⁰ Reis, *Damned Women*, 1-3, 12-3.

⁹¹ Reis, *Damned Women*, 37, 39, 44, 121-2.

⁹² Reis, *Damned Women*, 5, 107.

⁹³ Reis, *Damned Women*, 93, 104.

⁹⁴ Reis, *Damned Women*, 92, 99.

⁹⁵ For various examples of this, see Reis, *Damned Women*, 74, 115.

the belief that the devil literally lurked behind every corner moderated. The devil disappeared, leaving wicked and sexualized female natures behind.⁹⁶

However, this described common preconceptions in Boston, not necessarily in Philadelphia. Although previously knowing the seductress myth existed in Philadelphia to a lesser extent, here Franklin either reflected the less historically-analyzed aspect of a more extreme form of female sexual diabolical power in Philadelphia, or he imported it with him from Boston. However, Franklin borrowed most of his aphorisms from a variety of sources available in Philadelphia, altering them from abstract sayings to concrete examples. Considering this and the interactive city culture, Franklin most likely echoed this belief in Philadelphia rather than originating it. In any case, the fact that Franklin used it, demonstrates that it was present. Indeed, he became even more blatant in describing women's satanic qualities:

Good Women are like STARS in the darkest Night,
Their Virtuous Actions shining as a Light
To guide their ignorant Sex, which oft times fall,
And falling oft, turns diabolical.⁹⁷

At first, this poem appeared complimentary, equating good women with stars in the night. However, it quickly turned, calling women ignorant, another popular stereotype. Apparently, women, more often than not, fell from being good. Instead of having many degrees between good and evil, Franklin and his culture ideologically created two positions for women: "Good Wives" and "Damned Women." Simply by falling from the ideal, women turned diabolical.

In other poems, through Richard Saunders, Franklin linked stereotypical traits squarely with satanic qualities. In one poem that tied many stereotypes together, Saunders related:

⁹⁶ Women continued to think of themselves as morally depraved. Dissociating their souls from Satan, they took more responsibility for their sinful natures. Reis claims, "women's sense of their natures remained more pessimistic right through to the Great Awakening and beyond." Although women continued to carry a sense of innate depravity, during the Great Awakening, they gained the freedom to choose Christ more actively, instead of waiting passively and despondently for either a virile savior or devil. Reis, *Damned Women*, 5, 164-5, 173-4.

Sam had the worst Wife that a Man could have,
 Proud, Lazy, Sot, could neither get nor save,
 Eternal Scold she was, and what is worse,
 The D---I burn thee, was her common Curse.
 Forbear, quoth Sam, that fruitless Curse so common,
 He'll not hurt me who've married his Kinswoman.⁹⁸

Saunders again described women as lazy or idle and proud, adding sot.⁹⁹ In addition, "Eternal Scold she was," recalled the scolding woman that proliferated throughout these almanacs. Bringing these denigrating stereotypes together, the husband then linked his wife to the devil, actually saying that, because she had these traits, she was the devil's relative.

Anthony Afterwit and Richard Saunders drew upon a general understanding that women fell short of the ideal, reinforcing the derogatory stereotypes of idle, extravagant, scolding, ignorant, deceitful, seductive, and diabolical women. Conversely, Busy Body held both sexes equally accountable for their sexual indiscretions. Moreover, Richard Saunders did, occasionally, compliment good wives, and even, at times, criticized their husbands; however, these sayings were only a handful compared to his abundant use of denigrating female stereotypes. Overall, these male pseudonyms reflected a broader cultural tension between the ideal good wife and the stereotypical damned woman, between the industrious Bathsheba and the seductive Eve. In the end, though, in these male pseudonyms, Eve prevailed.

Female Pseudonyms

Whereas Benjamin Franklin's male pseudonyms tended to reinforce the stereotype of "damned women," his female pseudonyms expressed a different point of view. Instead of seeing women as morally inferior, these pseudonyms criticized men's vices, praised women's virtues, blamed men for women's alleged vices, and argued that women were more virtuous than men.

⁹⁷ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:351.

⁹⁸ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:8.

⁹⁹ Sot was a term for a drunkard, a typically male stereotype, making its presence here somewhat peculiar.

While upholding some virtues in these pseudonyms, Franklin also redefined virtue in some ways.¹⁰⁰ While attacking some derogatory stereotypes, though, he did not always uphold the ideal good wife. As with the male pseudonyms, there appeared some contradiction between potentially reinforcing and opposing these stereotypes. Unlike the male pseudonyms, these female pseudonyms' ambivalence did not necessarily arise from a tension between these stereotypes and ideals. Indeed, at times, Franklin criticized the ideals through exploiting the stereotypes, such as with the sexually promiscuous woman and the scandalous gossip. Ultimately, he satirized some of these "negative" female traits, turning them into virtues, employing satirical methods of exaggeration and reversal.

Female Pseudonyms Reinforcing Stereotypes?

On August 20, 1722, in one of the Silence Dogood letters, appeared a petition from a spinster named Margaret Aftercast. This female pseudonym lived in "the forlorn State of a Virgin, well stricken in Years and Repentance."¹⁰¹ Aftercast had the "the Vanity to think, that her extraordinary Wit and Beauty would continually recommend her to the Esteem of the Gallants; and therefore as soon as it came to be publicly known that any Gentleman address'd her, he was immediately discarded."¹⁰² However, these men, after being rejected by Aftercast, found other women to court and marry. Being abandoned by her old adorers and not gaining any new, she played the role of a gentlewoman, becoming "a strict Observer of the Fashion," and "to restore her decay'd Beauty, she has consumed above Fifty Pound's Worth of the most approved *Cosmeticks*." After being a vain youth, she became penitent and asked Silence Dogood "to form a Project for the Relief of all those penitent Mortals of the fair Sex, that are like to be punish'd

¹⁰⁰ He would have to, as Kerber notes, "It was perhaps more than a coincidence that virtue was derived from the Latin word for man, with its connotations of virility. Virtue in a woman seemed to require another theater for its display." Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 229.

¹⁰¹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:37.

with their Virginity until old Age, for the Pride and Insolence of their Youth.”¹⁰³ Aftercast repented for not fulfilling her ideal role as a wife because she pushed away all her suitors, believing there would always be more. She appeared quite vain and preoccupied with her appearances. Furthermore, she might have had some unfulfilled sexual desires, since she was “punish’d with . . . Virginity.” Thus, she, like some of Franklin’s male pseudonyms, just bolstered the paradigms of a proud, vain, and sexually unsatisfied woman.

While some of Franklin’s female pseudonyms, such as Margaret Aftercast, appeared just to reinforce many degrading female stereotypes, they also might have challenged societal ideals of chastity and virginity. Since Franklin was a secular moralist, he tried to develop sexual morality outside of religious grounds. In his autobiography, he set out a plan for moral perfection, where he listed the virtues he wanted in his own life: temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, chastity, and humility. For each of these virtues, he wrote a little aphorism to serve as a mnemonic device. Chastity, though, appeared to be a strange virtue for Franklin to hold because of his reputation for flirtatiousness and, while he was single, promiscuity. However, his aphorism for chastity read, “Rarely use Venery but for Health or Offspring; Never to Dulness, Weakness, or Injury to your own or another person’s Peace or Reputation.”¹⁰⁴ Looking at this passage, Morgan concludes, “Franklin’s definition of chastity would not have excluded extramarital affairs if they were not injurious to the well-being or reputation of his partners.”¹⁰⁵ Morgan’s argument becomes stronger considering the characters of Patience and, later, Polly Baker.

¹⁰² Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:37.

¹⁰³ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:38.

¹⁰⁴ Benjamin Franklin, *Benjamin Franklin: The Autobiography and Other Writings*, ed. Kenneth Silverman (New York: Penguin Books, 1986): 91-2.

¹⁰⁵ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 24.

On February 25, 1729, Patience appeared in one of the Busy Body letters. Busy Body introduced the letter, saying, “The following Letter, left for me at the Printers, is one of the first I have receiv’d, which I regard the more for that it comes from one of the Fair Sex, and because I have my self oftentimes suffer’d under the Grievance therein complain’d of.”¹⁰⁶ Being, thus, empathetic, he inserted Patience’s brief, but barbed satire.

Patience was a single female shop owner, who was “tir’d out of all Patience”¹⁰⁷ because a respected friend of hers visited her excessively. She seemed to be always around: “Now I cannot do the least Thing in the World, but she must know all about it.” Patience, exasperated, exclaimed, “every Person has little Secrets and Privacies that are not proper to be expos’d even to the nearest Friend.”¹⁰⁸ It seems Patience was referring to a common practice among most religious groups in the early eighteenth century called moral surveillance.

Puritans were eager to identify signs of sexual impurity among their neighbors. They constantly witnessed the actions of their neighbors, making sex between two clandestine lovers difficult. Because men and women suspected women’s inherently wicked nature, they especially monitored their behavior, distrusting privacy and secrecy. Secrecy implied illicit behavior and Puritans believed that secret sins were the most damaging to the covenanted community.¹⁰⁹ However, at times, the boundaries between sexual monitoring and prurient gossip were unclear, leading to sexual slander, which Alice Addertongue might additionally portray.¹¹⁰

In Philadelphia, Baptist women played a role in the church by monitoring and helping discipline other women’s sexual sins. Lindman elaborates, “The majority of these cases involved adultery, fornication, and illegitimacy, issues about which women allegedly possessed

¹⁰⁶ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:122-3.

¹⁰⁷ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:123.

¹⁰⁸ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:123.

¹⁰⁹ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 60; Reis, *Damned Women*, 40-41.

special knowledge.”¹¹¹ Likewise, behavior of its members was a major concern among Quaker leaders: “Behavior, control, and personal responsibility were essential for the attainment of salvation.”¹¹² Because of the importance of orthopraxy within the community, monitoring and disciplining behavior was a significant aspect of governing the religious community.¹¹³ Not surprisingly, there were two basic categories of deviant behavior for women: marriage offences and sexual offenses.¹¹⁴ Marriage offences usually meant a woman married a non-Quaker man.¹¹⁵ The most common sexual offence was fornication.¹¹⁶ Of course, men would be disciplined for these infractions, but there was a much higher concern about women’s behavior than men’s with regard to sex. Although men and women probably committed sexual offenses and married non-Quakers with about equal frequency, after 1725 in Philadelphia, nearly six times more women than men were punished for these offences.¹¹⁷

Therefore, because Patience was a single woman, whose behavior would be suspect, a respected friend monitored her behavior by visiting her so often that she could not have a moment to herself. Moreover, Patience wished for privacy and secrecy, which, in this culture, conjured connotations of illicit behavior. However, Patience appeared to be morally upstanding compared to her respected friend. Patience ran her own business and typified an industrious woman, while her friend had large amounts of time to visit, indicating she may not be as industrious. This woman, being a mother, brought her children to Patience’s shop, but could not control them. They caused mischief, creating more work for Patience to do. Patience complained, “I have all the Trouble and Pesterment of Children, without the Pleasure of—calling

¹¹⁰ Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 26-7, 89-91.

¹¹¹ Lindman, “Wise Virgins and Pious Mothers,” 130.

¹¹² Wulf, “My Dear Liberty,” 85.

¹¹³ Soderlund, “Women’s Authority in Quaker Meetings,” 726.

¹¹⁴ Soderlund, “Women’s Authority in Quaker Meetings,” 734, 739-41.

¹¹⁵ Soderlund, “Women’s Authority in Quaker Meetings,” 740.

them my own.”¹¹⁸ Patience apparently wanted children, somewhat reinforcing the ideal of motherhood. Having, thus, set up Patience’s virtue, the underlying cause of frustration emerged: “There is a handsome Gentleman that has a Mind (I don’t question) to make love to me, but he can’t get the least Opportunity to.”¹¹⁹ Perhaps, the monitoring neighbor’s fears were justified, with Patience fulfilling the single woman’s stereotypical desire for illicit sex; however, apparently, that was not this letter’s purpose.

Franklin constructed this story around his favorite virtue, industry, but provided an interesting twist at the end of the story when Patience described her unfulfilled sexual desire. Perhaps Patience’s sexual desire just reflected society’s stereotypes; however, the contrast between the monitoring neighbor and the virtuous woman who desired to fornicate suggests that Franklin may not be depicting fornication as sinful. Busy Body, too, had “oftentimes suffer’d under the Grievance therein complain’d of.” In this ambiguous remark, Busy Body may be referring to the pestering neighbor or unfulfilled sexual desire. Interestingly, instead of approving the practice of moral surveillance even with a woman who clearly intended to fornicate, this letter actually opposed monitoring. Directly after Patience’s letter, Busy Body wrote against the pestering neighbor, “exhort the Visitor to remember and consider these Words of the Wise Man, *Withdraw thy Foot from the House of thy Neighbor lest he grow weary of thee, and so hate thee.*”¹²⁰ By quoting Proverbs 25.17, Busy Body combated the church’s practices (surveillance) and values (chastity). By claiming that this woman ought to be left alone and allowed to fornicate, Franklin, the secular moralist, seriously challenged Christian moral ideals.

¹¹⁶ Soderlund, “Women’s Authority in Quaker Meetings,” 740.

¹¹⁷ Soderlund, “Women’s Authority in Quaker Meetings,” 743.

¹¹⁸ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:124.

¹¹⁹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:124.

¹²⁰ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:124.

In this passage, fornication itself did not appear as either a virtue or a vice; however, Franklin argued for the former with Polly Baker.

Women Have Errata—So Do Men

Richard Saunders's wife, Bridget Saunders, ostensibly wrote the preface to the 1738 edition of *Poor Richard's Almanack*. This female pseudonym, knowing her husband's tendency to reveal her faults to the public, decided to read it before it was printed. She discussed what she discovered:

And truly . . . he had put into his Preface, that his Wife Bridget—was this, and that, and t'other.—What a peasecods! They have already been told, at one time that I am proud, another time that I am loud, and that I have got a new Petticoat, and abundance of such kind of stuff; and now, forsooth! all the World must know, that Poor Dick's Wife has lately taken a fancy to drink a little Tea now and then. A might matter, truly, to make a Song of!¹²¹

Bridget Saunders never denied that she was proud and loud. She admitted to having tea, which connoted an extravagant gentlewoman. Although she potentially contained these so-called vices, she criticized her husband's actions of revealing them. Bridget Saunders saw her faults as trivial matters, which were definitely not any of the public's business. A person's flaws, which all people had anyway, were private, not public or communal, affairs.

In addition to criticizing her husband, Bridget Saunders censured men using a common male stereotype, the drunkard:

He for the sake of Drink neglects his Trade,
And spends each Night in Taverns till 'tis late,
And rises when the Sun is four hours high,
And ne'er regards his starving family;
God in his Mercy may do much to save him,
But, woe to the poor Wife, whose Lot it is to have him.¹²²

¹²¹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 2:191.

¹²² Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:358.

Interestingly, in *Poor Richard's Almanack*, Franklin used a female pseudonym to criticize a stereotypical male fault, in contrast to her husband's verses, which criticized women. She used the drunkard, which detracted from the male ideal of providing for his family. His family starved and he was a burden to his "poor Wife." Therefore, Bridget Saunders both criticized her husband and, as Franklin's male pseudonyms did to female stereotypes, exploited a male stereotype, while her own stereotypical faults were too trivial to "make a Song of."

Benjamin Franklin often developed dialogues between his pseudonyms. Bridget Saunders responded to Richard Saunders. Likewise, Celia Single provided a rebuttal to Anthony Afterwit. Two weeks after Afterwit's letter, Single replied, criticizing that the letter did "more Harm than Good . . . by causing Difference between Men and their Wives."¹²³ Single then told a story. A husband came home from the market with balls of thread for his wife to make him stockings. He had seen "Neighbor Afterwit knitting for her Husband, of Thread of her own Spinning: I should be glad to have some such Stockins my self."¹²⁴ Evidently, she now conformed to her expected role of an industrious wife, causing other men to desire a wife so diligent. This man's wife, though, refused to knit stockings for her husband, advised him to hire a poor woman who could knit. Her husband countered, "there is neither Sin nor Shame in Knitting a pair of Stockins."¹²⁵ His wife responded that, when they had married, he had promised to maintain her like a gentlewoman. Then, they broke out into a full-blown argument. Single's account cut off, but she informed the reader that the husband and wife made peace because they decided to throw the balls of thread into the fire.

Single's friend did not fit the mold of an ideal wife. She was not industrious and wished to be an idle gentlewoman; thus, she was at fault according to society's ideals. However, in this

¹²³ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:241.

¹²⁴ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:241.

story, unlike Afterwit's tale, the difference was not settled until the balls of thread, the symbols of female industry, were thrown into the fire. Marital discord became a more pressing concern than fulfilling expected roles, indicating that society's ideals were not always practical or even desirable. Indeed, Single never denied this woman's failings, but had her fulfill the stereotype of an idle gentlewoman; however, with this piece, Franklin redefined the boundaries of virtue and vice in practical situations. Just like Bridget Saunders, she had a few faults, but they were ultimately insignificant compared to other issues, like having a happier marriage.

After this story, Celia Single's letter proceeded to discuss men's vices. She wrote, "I have several times in your Paper seen severe Reflections upon us Women, for Idleness and Extravagance, but I do not remember to have once seen any such Animadversions upon the Men."¹²⁶ Having passed off idleness and extravagance, the traits of a gentlewoman, as present but unimportant, next Single mentioned several men who had more destructive vices than idleness or extravagance. She pointed out, "Mr. Billiard, who spends more than he earns, at the Green Table; and would have been in Jail long since, were it not for his industrious Wife."¹²⁷ Gambling pushed Mr. Billiard's family into financial ruin, saved only by his industrious wife, contrasting a man of vice with a woman of virtue. Another man played checkers, idly sitting by while the world passed him. Single showed how men were idle and did not take care of their businesses. Although she disclosed male flaws and diminished the importance of female vices, she wrote, "remember, that there are Holes enough to be pick'd in your Coat as well as others."¹²⁸ Everyone had faults. While Celia Single and Bridget Saunders, at times, reinforced the stereotype of an idle and extravagant gentlewoman, they reminded the readers of male vices

¹²⁵ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:241-2.

¹²⁶ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:242.

¹²⁷ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:243.

¹²⁸ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:243.

of drunkenness, gambling, negligence, laziness, and irresponsibility. According to these female pseudonyms, like with Busy Body, everyone, men and women, equally had vices.

Through the Looking Glass: A Woman More Virtuous than a Man

By the 1720s, in Puritan culture, women and men saw women as inherently wicked. With the influx of European immigrants in the late 1600s and early 1700s,¹²⁹ in the bustling port city of Boston, the Puritans perceived their hegemony passing. James Franklin's counterculture newspaper and Benjamin Franklin's writing provided evidence for outspoken opposition to Puritan values in Boston at this time. Puritans, with their cultural authority shrinking, became concerned as the masses no longer heeded their sermons.¹³⁰ In response to their declining authority, Puritan ministers began to reprint old sermons. For example, Samuel Willard gave a sermon in 1654, exhorting the unregenerate in his congregation: "The Devil is your master, you have not command of yourselves, but do and will obey his commands; and Oh! remember, he is driving you to the chambers of death, and hurrying you down the steep precipice of everlasting destruction."¹³¹ Seventy-two years later, in 1726, this sermon was reprinted and circulated in Boston as an exhortation to the mass of unregenerate sinners throughout the city. This paper war between the clergy and dissenters could be found in Franklin's satirical pseudonym, Silence Dogood, who, borrowing her name from Cotton Mather's *Silentarius* and his *Essays to Do Good*, derided Puritan ministers as ignorant and immoral.

Silence Dogood, written in Massachusetts in 1722 was the most critical of Franklin's female pseudonyms, combating the clergy, magistrates, the postmaster, Harvard College, men of wealth, and men in general.¹³² In these letters, Franklin overturned the general belief that

¹²⁹ See Reis, *Damned Women*, xvi.

¹³⁰ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 103, 122.

¹³¹ Samuel Willard, *The Compleat Body of Christian Divinity* (Boston 1726), 241, in Reis, *Damned Women*, 21.

¹³² Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:8.

equated men with virtue and women with corruption. Instead, Dogood praised female virtue, condemned male vice, and claimed that male faults caused female failings. Unlike Bridget Saunders and Celia Single, Dogood claimed women were more virtuous than men, completely opposing early eighteenth-century gender stereotypes.

At first, Dogood described her background, since people tended to evaluate writing according to the character of the person who wrote it, not on its own merits.¹³³ She wrote that although she “past my Infancy and Childhood in Vanity and Idleness,” she soon was “bound out Apprentice.”¹³⁴ Her master, a country minister, instilled “virtuous and godly Principles into my tender Soul . . . while it was yet untainted with Vice.”¹³⁵ He taught her, most of all, how to become the archetypal Bathsheba: “He endeavour’d that I might be instructed in all that Knowledge and Learning which is necessary for our Sex . . . such as all Sorts of Needle-Work, Writing, Arithmetick, &c. and observing that I took a more than ordinary Delight in reading ingenious Books, he gave me the free Use of his Library.”¹³⁶ Learning typical practical female skills, Dogood also had an intellectually vivacious character. Then her “Reverend Master who had hitherto remained a Batchelor” proposed to Dogood, they married, and Dogood bore “Two likely Girls and a Boy”; however, after seven years of marriage, he passed away, making her a widow.

Franklin created a female pseudonym who completely fulfilled the ideal female roles of a good wife and mother. She was industrious, intelligent, and, having been married to a minister, had intimate knowledge of the inner workings of the church in Massachusetts. Moreover, as “an Enemy to Vice, and a Friend to Vertue,” she had “a natural Inclination to observe and reprove

¹³³ Lagaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:9.

¹³⁴ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:10.

¹³⁵ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:10.

¹³⁶ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:10.

the Faults of others, at which I have an excellent Faculty.” Being thus virtuous, she was in a prime position to provide criticism to those who were not as virtuous as she was, such as men and ministers.

Franklin then pitted Silence Dogood against a male character, Ephraim Censorious, who condemned women for idleness, ignorance, folly, and pride, “which are Vices more peculiar to your Sex than to our’s.”¹³⁷ Ephraim claimed women naturally had these faults and caused men to fall. He argued women “are the prime Causes of a great many Male Enormities.”¹³⁸

Responding to his letter, Dogood said, “Mr. Ephraim charges Women with being particularly guilty of Pride, Idleness, &c. wrongfully, inasmuch as the Men have not only as great a Share in those Vices as the Women, but are likewise in a great Measure the Cause of that which the Women are guilty of.”¹³⁹ Having stated her thesis, she rebutted his arguments, answering point for point each female vice he listed.

First, she claimed men shared equally in all alleged female vices, and, in addition, had vices peculiar to men, such as drunkenness and swearing; thus, overall, women were more virtuous than men were. Then, she attacked the idea that women, in general, were idle:

As for Idleness . . . Where are the greatest number of Votaries to be found, with us or the Men? it might I believe be easily and truly answered, *With the latter*. For notwithstanding the Men are commonly complaining how hard they are forc’d to labour , only to maintain their Wives in Pomp and Idleness, yet if you go among the Women, you will learn, that *they have always more Work upon their Hands than they are able to do;* and that *a Woman’s Work is never done, &c.*”¹⁴⁰

Dogood asserted that women, in general, were not idle, challenging this preconception with the proverbial, “A Woman’s Work is never done.” However, not only did she declare that women were not more idle than men, but contended that if women were more idle, men were to blame:

¹³⁷ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:18-9.

¹³⁸ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:19.

¹³⁹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:18.

Suppose we should grant for once, that we are generally more idle than the Men, . . . I desire to know whose Fault it is? Are not the Men to blame for their Folly in maintaining us in Idleness? . . . And if a man will be so fond and so foolish, as to Labour hard himself for a Livelihood, and suffer his Wife in the mean Time to sit in Ease and Idleness, let him not blame her if she does so, for it is in a great Measure his own Fault.¹⁴¹

The foolish men, in their folly (supposedly a vice peculiar to women), produced idleness in women; however, according to Dogood, this was a hypothetical question since women, in general, were less idle than men.

The fictitious Mr. Ephraim and actual men in the eighteenth century tended to equate ignorance with women. Because a good wife devoted all of her energy to her family, society thought sophisticated education useless to her. Kerber writes, "Americans inherited the image of the learned woman as an unenviable anomaly and kept alive the notion that the woman who developed her mind did so at her own risk."¹⁴² Silence Dogood, having introduced the idea that men, through their folly, generated female idleness, refuted the perception that women were inherently ignorant and, at the same time, argued for women's education:

And now for the Ignorance and Folly which he reproaches us with, let us see (if we are Fools and Ignoramus's) whose is the Fault, the Men's or our's. An ingenious Writer, having this subject in Hand, has the following Words, wherein he lays the Fault wholly on the Men, for not allowing Women the Advantages of Education.¹⁴³

Dogood temporarily conceded the general idea that women were ignorant, but blamed men for not allowing women to be educated. Quoting Daniel Defoe, she contended that keeping women uneducated is "one of the most barbarous Customs of the World."¹⁴⁴ She further argued that if

¹⁴⁰ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:19.

¹⁴¹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:19.

¹⁴² Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 190-91.

¹⁴³ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:19-20.

¹⁴⁴ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:20.

women had the same education as men, women would surpass men. Thus, men were to blame for this female flaw, which was not inherent in female nature, but in male-dominated culture.¹⁴⁵

Next, Dogood argued that pride, like ignorance, folly, and idleness, was caused by men:

Why truly, if Women are proud, it is certainly owing to the Men still; for if they will be such *Simpletons* as to humble themselves at their Feet, and fill their credulous Ears with extravagant Praises of their Wit, Beauty, and other Accomplishments . . . and when Women are by this Means perswaded that they are Something more than humane, what Wonder is it, if they carry themselves haughtily, and live extravagantly.¹⁴⁶

Attributing folly to men, calling them “simpletons,” Dogood charged men for female pride and extravagance, which resulted from when men lavishly praised women. Dogood further claimed, “I believe there are more Instances of extravagant Pride to be found among Men than among Women, and this Fault is certainly more heinous in the former than the latter.”¹⁴⁷ Thus, men possessed these vices to a greater degree than women, overturning common assumptions about female nature.

Through this pseudonym, Franklin disputed general female stereotypes by opposing a male antagonist who represented those who reinforced these alleged female traits. Taking each generalization point by point, Dogood turned each stereotype on its head, arguing that men not only shared in these vices, but held a greater share than women. The traits of idleness, folly, extravagance, and pride were all transferred to men, while, at the same time, men caused the vices that women did have. Thus, instead of the usual pattern of women drawing men away from virtue, men caused women to fall, if they did fall.

Through Silence Dogood, Franklin set up an extraordinary moral character compared to society’s collective views on women. She liked to read books and argued for women’s

¹⁴⁵ For a parallel argument, see Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 257.

¹⁴⁶ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:20.

¹⁴⁷ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:21.

education, which also contradicted the position that women should not be educated.¹⁴⁸ Thus, Franklin created the ideal wife and mother, who was intelligent, moral, and industrious. Because Franklin used a female persona, the attack on male vice was more effective. This woman who contained all society's ideals for a woman in addition to ideal male traits (intellectual vivacity), then, through her exceptional virtue, served as a mirror for men and even the clergy.

The idea of the female looking glass materialized elsewhere in early eighteenth-century didactic discourse. In addition to the popular Bathsheba and Eve paradigms, a lesser-known biblical figure, Jael, figured into discussions of women.¹⁴⁹ This was a particularly interesting gender ideological model because Jael was a woman who displayed both female and male virtues. She did a man's job because men refused to do it; however, the purpose of the story was not to say that women should act like men, but to serve as a looking glass for morally slack men. Ulrich eloquently explains the role of Jael: "the effectiveness of the narrative rests on an awareness of role contradiction. Because Jael was womanly in the traditional sense—and remained so—her ability to kill Sisera testified all the more powerfully to God's triumph on her part. Her faithfulness was a mirror held up to a flagging Israel."¹⁵⁰ This female archetype of exceptionality reemerged in Franklin's tales of Silence Dogood; however, whereas the looking glass of Jael performed didactic purposes, Dogood served satirical motives. Franklin used her to shame less-than-virtuous men in a derisive fashion.

The seductress and the gentlewoman, which made Benjamin Franklin's Silence Dogood letters more effective because of their seeming exceptionality, were supplemented in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts by other, non-satirical literature. Women did not have to actively pursue men in order to seduce them. The very form of their bodies sufficed for this

¹⁴⁸ Ford, *The Many-Sided Franklin*, 263-5.

¹⁴⁹ See Judges 5.24-31, "The Song of Deborah."

purpose. The fear of the seductress was so prominent that even a virtuous woman could seduce a man away from virtue. In 1692, Cotton Mather warned, in *Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion*, that a virtuous woman should take care that her “good proportion and symmetry of parts,” “skin well-favored,” “handsome carriage,” and “good motions” not “deceive unwary men into those amours which bewitching looks and smiles do often betray the children of men.”¹⁵¹ A woman of God could seduce a man unwittingly, just as a woman of Satan could intentionally.

The identification of a woman with her body surfaced in the pervasive use of midwifery manuals in the eighteenth century, which circulated among young men and women.¹⁵² Many girls, at the onset of puberty, used these materials to study about themselves; however, among young boys, they served pornographic purposes. These manuals had illustrations and explicit textual descriptions of female genitalia. Moreover, many depicted sexual relations, abortion, and masturbation in graphic detail.¹⁵³ Often boys used what they found in these popular medical texts to taunt and ridicule girls. Boys “made sport of what they read,” ran up to girls, harassing them about their “nasty” bodies. They claimed they “knew about girls, knew what belonged to girls as well as girls themselves.” Moreover, they taunted that they knew more about girls’ “nasty” bodies than girls did themselves.¹⁵⁴

Similarly, Samuel Keimer, Franklin’s rival printer in Philadelphia, published an article on abortion on January 21, 1729, which vividly described female genitalia when explaining the abortion operation. In response, Franklin created two female personas, whose effectiveness, like

¹⁵⁰ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 169.

¹⁵¹ Cotton Mather, *Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion*, (Cambridge, 1692): 12, in Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 63, 352, n. 26.

¹⁵² Ava Chamberlain, “The Immaculate Ovum: Jonathan Edwards and the Construction of the Female Body,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 57, Issue 2 (April 2000): 315; Godbeer, 28.

¹⁵³ Chamberlain, “The Immaculate Ovum,” 293, 312-3.

¹⁵⁴ Chamberlain, “The Immaculate Ovum,” 319; Godbeer, 239-40.

Silence Dogood, rested upon the looking-glass paradigm. Writing under the nom de plumes, Martha Careful and Caelia Shortface, Franklin effectively censured Samuel Keimer.

First, both pseudonyms, in separate letters, set up their own virtue. Martha Careful spoke “In behalf of my Self and many good modest Women in this City.”¹⁵⁵ Likewise, Caelia Shortface represented “all the Modest and Virtuous Women in Pennsylvania,” who, because of Keimer’s publication, were “ashamed.”¹⁵⁶ Having established their virtue and modesty, they assailed the immodest Keimer. Careful threatened:

That if he proceed farther to Expose the Secrets of our Sex, in That audacious manner, . . . To be read in all *Taverns* and *Coffee-Houses*, and by the Vulgar: I say if he Publish any more of that kind, which ought only to be in the Repository of the Learned; my Sister Molly and my Self, with some others, are Resolved to run the Hazard of taking him by the Beard, at the next Place we meet him, and make an Example of him for his Immodesty.¹⁵⁷

By exposing the “Secrets of our Sex,” this abortion article performed the same pornographic function as the midwifery manuals, especially if “read in all Taverns and Coffee-Houses . . . by the Vulgar.” Careful, thus, contrasted Keimer’s “Immodesty” with “good modest Women.”

In addition, Caelia Shortface discussed with her friends, Keimer’s “Indecencies,” and resolved that if Keimer should “proceed any further in that *Scandalous* manner, we intend to very soon have thy right Ear for it.”¹⁵⁸ Like Careful, Shortface contrasted the virtuous women of Philadelphia with the scandalous, indecent Samuel Keimer. Beyond physically threatening Keimer, Franklin used these female pseudonyms to discredit Keimer, attacking his immodesty through modest women, who were outraged at their own sexual exploitation.

Perhaps these two female pseudonyms reflect the same tension as the male pseudonyms, between upholding the ideal of modesty and chastity and subtly reinforcing the sexual

¹⁵⁵ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:112.

¹⁵⁶ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:112.

¹⁵⁷ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:112.

stereotype, equating a woman with her body. Indeed, Keimer publishing his indecent material on abortion caused the modest women of Pennsylvania to be ashamed. Moreover, overcoming the negative generalization of the seductress, these women might just fill the archetypal ideal virtues women should have: chastity and modesty. On the other hand, since the cultural preconception of women was that they were sexually immodest, the modesty these two pseudonyms possessed was magnified, serving as a looking glass for the sexually immodest Keimer.

Vices Into Virtues

This section began with female pseudonyms who, on the surface, appeared to reinforce female stereotypes, but criticized religious definitions of female morality through desire for fornication. Then, other pseudonyms admitted to certain failings, but also claimed that men equally had faults. Still other pseudonyms were highly virtuous, providing a looking glass for less-than-virtuous men, arguing that women were more virtuous than men were. This next group of pseudonyms combined some of these ideas. Like the first group, on the surface, they seemed to reinforce female stereotypes, in this case, scornful/slandorous and sexually fallen women. In doing this, they also chided religious institutions both implicitly, like Patience and overtly, like Silence Dogood. Like the second group, these pseudonyms admitted to certain characteristics; however, instead of being lesser vices, as Bridget Saunders and Celia Single argued, they turned into virtues, and, moreover, through her sexuality, Polly Baker became more virtuous than men.

Late in the eighteenth century, John Ogden warned women against “spending whole afternoons in company without work. . . . Idle afternoons are proof of corrupt times, they make bad wives and gay daughters; they make families poor and a country wretched, by circulating

¹⁵⁸ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:112.

scandal and folly, instead of industrious and useful arts.”¹⁵⁹ Although occurring late in the eighteenth century, this warning still encapsulated the relationship between ideals and stereotypes. Of course, the ideal woman was industrious, while others were idle, which led to folly and scandal. Scandal was considered a characteristically female vice in the early eighteenth century. However, in a short satire, Franklin tinkered with the causal relationship between idleness and scandal, flipping the concept, showing that the scandalous woman did not result from the vice of idleness, but from the virtue of industry.

Franklin wrote as Alice Addertongue on September 12, 1732. Addertongue had an extraordinary ability to gossip and embraced the scandalous woman stereotype. Addertongue proclaimed “scandal” to be “agreeable both to my Principles and Practice.”¹⁶⁰ Noticing that everyone blamed women for gossiping, she commented on a writer from Franklin’s competing newspaper who concluded, “the *Fair Sex* are so peculiarly guilty of this enormous Crime: Every Blockhead ancient and modern, that could handle a Pen, has I think taken upon him to cant in the same senseless Strain.”¹⁶¹ Addertongue found this ancient widespread accusation ridiculous. Indeed, to her, scandal clearly was not a crime: “If to *scandalize* be really a *Crime*, what do these Puppies mean? They describe it, they dress it up in the most odious frightful and detestable Colours, they represent it as the worst of Crimes, and then roundly and charitably charge the whole Race of Womankind with it.”¹⁶² Addertongue proposed that the perceived vice of scandal was men’s creation, which they then criminalized and proceeded to attribute to all women. While showing the ridiculousness of generalizing, she further observed that men, too, scandalized, especially the ones who accused women of it: “If they accuse us of any other

¹⁵⁹ John Ogden quoted in Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 282.

¹⁶⁰ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:243.

¹⁶¹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:244.

¹⁶² Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:244.

Crime, they must necessarily *scandalize* while they do it: But to *scandalize* us with being guilty of *Scandal*, is in itself an egregious Absurdity, and can proceed from nothing but the most consummate Impudence in Conjunction with the most profound Stupidity.”¹⁶³ Men, in the very act of accusing women of scandal, ironically, spread scandal. Thus, if truly a vice, it was not principally female, but just as much male. Moreover, Addertongue noted that the men who proclaim these things are “Blockheads” and this overall theory derived from “the most profound Stupidity,” accusing these men of the alleged female flaw of folly.

Transferring these so-called female vices to men was not the only reversal employed in Addertongue’s letter. Unlike other pseudonyms, Franklin did not set up this woman’s virtue as a mirror for men. Instead, using industry, he turned her vice into a virtue. The first step of this satirical reversal was to establish that scandal was Addertongue’s obligation:

I have no Care upon my Head of getting a Living, and therefore find it my Duty as well as Inclination, to exercise my Talent at CENSURE, for the good of my Country folks. There was, I am told, a certain generous Emperor, who if a Day had passed over his Head, in which he had conferred no Benefit on any Man, used to say to his Friends, in Latin, *Diem perdidit*, that is, it seems, I have lost a Day. I believe I should make use of the same Expression, if it were possible for a Day to pass in which I had not, or miss’d, an Opportunity to scandalize somebody.¹⁶⁴

To scandalize people was her duty, and to fail to do so was a complete waste of her time. Instead of idleness leading to scandal, although she did not have a care upon her head, Addertongue argued that scandal led her to industry, which became clearer as the letter progressed.

Addertongue then contrasted scandal with self-praise. To her, praising oneself was a vice. Since scandal was the opposite of self-praise, it must be a virtue. She found this virtue particularly rewarding, “*Scandal*, like other Virtues, is in part its own Reward, as it gives us the

¹⁶³ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:244.

¹⁶⁴ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:244.

Satisfaction of making our selves appear better than others, or others no better than ourselves.”¹⁶⁵

Not only did she scandalize virtuously, but did so with the supreme feminine ideal—industry.

Addertongue wrote, “By Industry and Application, I have made my self the Center of all the Scandal in the Province, there is little stirring but I hear of it.”¹⁶⁶ Scandal was her trade. Like other trades, she had secrets, and the readers became the apprentices, learning the tricks of the trade. She told how she elicited information from both men and women about other men and women. For example, by complimenting a woman’s beauty, wit, virtue, or good management to someone else one would discover, Addertongue claimed, all of her failings; thus, in speaking of the ideal, one found exactly how a woman fell short of the ideal.

In her industrious business of slander, Addertongue balanced her accounts, keeping track of scandalous remarks through an accounting double-ledger system of debits and credits:

I keep a regular Set of Books, and can tell at an Hour’s Warning how it stands between me and the World. In my *Daybook* I enter every Article of Defamation as it is transacted; for Scandals *receiv’d in*, I give Credit; and when I pay them out again, I make the Persons to whom they respectively relate *Debtor*. In my *Journal*, I add to each Story by Way of Improvement, such probably Circumstances as I think it will bear, and in my *Ledger* the whole is regularly posted.¹⁶⁷

Thus, Addertongue kept up her virtuous scandal through industrious business habits; however, her moral intentions of spreading true, exaggerated, and false rumors about others did not end there. Indeed, she scandalized so that no one became too vain or proud: “‘Tis a Principle with me, that none ought to have a greater Share of Reputation than they really deserve; if they have, ‘tis an Imposition on the Publick.”¹⁶⁸ She continued to tell how people concealed their own vices and that probably only one-fifth of them became discovered; thus, false and exaggerated stories kept people from becoming too proud, and, in a sense, did justice. Addertongue saw

¹⁶⁵ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:245.

¹⁶⁶ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:246.

¹⁶⁷ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:247.

herself as merciful since, to her, she was not making things worse than they were in reality, but only worse than what people knew.

The letter of Alice Addertongue was a playful satire, flipping common conceptions of what is really a vice and a virtue, mocking would-be moralizers who condemned others, but were just as guilty of vice themselves—they were just better at concealing it. Thus, Addertongue's job was to bring the moralizers low. However, this was not the only satire nor even the most interesting one where Franklin switched vice and virtue. He did so in the much more barbed satire of seduction, "The Speech of Miss Polly Baker."

Puritan New England viewed sex as an extension of spirituality. This affiliation between sex and religion created a symbiotic relationship between heavenly and earthly marriages; therefore, infidelity on earth meant infidelity to God. Hence, in covenanted communities, sexual control was highly important and both ecclesial and civil authorities attempted to enforce it.¹⁶⁹ This relationship influenced civil law on fornication, adultery, and other deviant sexual behavior. The punishment for premarital sex consisted of fines and public shaming through floggings and a letter or label describing the crime. For adultery, the punishment was death.¹⁷⁰ Usually, the authorities used scripture to justify their penalties, whereas Franklin, with Polly Baker used scripture to criticize these penalties and justify fornication.¹⁷¹ Since women were responsible for seducing men, according to the popular ideology of the time, fornication in the eighteenth century was seen primarily as a woman's crime, and men who sired children out of wedlock were rarely held accountable for their actions. When an unmarried woman became pregnant, the

¹⁶⁸ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:247.

¹⁶⁹ Kristin Boudreau, "Early American Criminal Narratives and the Problem of Public Sentiments," *Early American Literature* 32, issue 3 (1997): 252-3.

¹⁷⁰ Marcello Maestri, "Benjamin Franklin and the Penal Laws," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, no. 3 (July-September 1975): 551-560; Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 105-6.

father often abandoned the unwed mother; thus, single deserted women had the weight of bearing a child, the resulting public punishments, and raising the child alone.¹⁷²

Toward the middle of the eighteenth century, literature began to depict deserted women with greater sympathy. The pattern of these stories often showed women as both seduced and seductress. They were seduced by a man, became pregnant, and were abandoned. The tales often showed them being rejected from their homes and communities, resulting in a downward spiral ending in prostitution, in which they seduced men, ultimately having additional illegitimate children.¹⁷³ Although sympathetic, this literature, didactically warning women of the dangers of sex before marriage, still maintained that women should take responsibility for their own actions and safety. Ultimately, this overall pattern derived from the diabolical woman, whom the devil seduced and who, in turn, seduced men. This literature seemed even to be based upon the premise that women were hypersexual and, therefore, needed additional warning of the consequences of their actions.¹⁷⁴

Then, on April 15, 1747, an anonymous piece entitled "The Speech of Miss Polly Baker" appeared in London's *General Advertiser*. This satire spread quickly in newspapers and magazines throughout Great Britain and British North America. Meeting wide critical acclaim, many Enlightenment thinkers included it with their own works. Peter Annet appropriated Polly

¹⁷¹ Maestro, "Benjamin Franklin and the Penal Laws," 551-560; Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 35, 100; Boudreau, "Early American Criminal Narratives," 252.

¹⁷² One area in which Puritans were more lenient, in theory, was divorce. Kerber explains, "Only in New England, where Puritan tradition regarded marriage as a civil contract—which like other contracts, could be broken under certain circumstances—were statutes providing for final divorce part of the legal code." These certain circumstances were adultery and desertion. Usually, men petitioned for divorce on grounds of his wife's adultery, whereas women tended to petition on grounds of desertion and abusive behavior. Either society found it easier to believe a wife's infidelity than her husband's or it was more forgiving of a husband's sexual indiscretions than a wife's, blatantly enshrining in law society's gendered sexual double standard; Kerber, *Women of the Early Republic*, 159-160; Nancy F. Cott, "Divorce and the Changing Status of Women in Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts," *William and Mary Quarterly* 33, Issue 4 (October 1876): 586, 593, 594-5, 597, 599, 601; C. Dallet Hemphill, "Women in Court: Sex-Role Differentiation in Salem, Massachusetts, 1636 to 1683," *William and Mary Quarterly* 39, Issue 1 (January 1982): 171-2.

¹⁷³ Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 264-5.

Baker's defense in *Social Bliss Considered*, a 1749 work on marriage, fornication, and divorce. Abbé Raynal, in 1770, placed the speech in *Histoire Philosophique et Politique*, citing Polly Baker's case as an example of the severity of New England's laws.¹⁷⁵ On the other hand, John Adams, in a letter to James Warren, called Polly Baker's speech one of Franklin's many "Outrages to Morality and Decorum."¹⁷⁶ Of course, Franklin fully intended to satirize current understandings of "Morality and Decorum."

In this satire, a New England court prosecuted Polly Baker for the "Fifth Time, for having a Bastard Child."¹⁷⁷ Baker asked the court to remit her fine, especially since it had fined her twice and publicly punished her twice for previous offences. Although her punishment agreed with the laws, "Laws are sometimes unreasonable in themselves . . . I think this Law, by which I am punished, is both unreasonable in itself, and particularly severe with regard to me."¹⁷⁸ Not only were the punishment for the laws on fornication too severe, but the laws in themselves were perverse. Baker failed to see the nature of her offense to society: "I have brought Five fine Children into the World, at the Risque of my Life; I have maintained them well by my own Industry, without burthening the Township, and would have done it better, if it had not been for the heavy Charges and Fines I have paid."¹⁷⁹ Polly Baker had the virtue of industry, with which she raised her children; however, the civil authorities that fined her for fornication debilitated her from carrying out her role as mother. Throughout this piece, Baker continued to draw out the distinction between her virtue and civil authority's vices.

¹⁷⁴ Merrill D. Smith, "'Desertion and Widowhood in Early Pennsylvania,'" 213; Godbeer, 164-5.

¹⁷⁵ Thomas Jefferson told a humorous tale of Franklin's revelation to Raynal, who believed this to be a true story, of his authorship of this piece; Thomas Jefferson, *The Complete Jefferson: Containing His Major Writings, Published and Unpublished, Except His Letters*, ed. Saul K. Padover, (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1943): 892-5.

¹⁷⁶ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:122.

¹⁷⁷ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:123.

¹⁷⁸ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:123-4.

¹⁷⁹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:124.

However, before making this distinction, she utilized some common justifications from the Age of Reason for her opposition to these unreasonable laws. She argued, “Can it be a Crime (in the Nature of Things I mean) to add to the Number of the King’s Subjects, in a new Country that really wants people? I own it, I should think it a Praise-worthy, rather than a punishable Action.”¹⁸⁰ Baker drew upon Enlightenment speculation on humans in the state of nature to justify her actions; thus, in a state of nature, there were no artifices such as the church or the state to impose regulations such as fornication. Instead, “in the Nature of things,” procreation and population were more important; thus, one might recall Franklin’s plan for moral perfection, where chastity included using venery for procreation and health, but did not require marriage.

Before she progressed further in her arguments against civil and religious reasons for punishing fornication, she had to handle the seductress stereotype. A single woman with five bastard children would call up images of the sexually insatiable woman who seduced men. Thus, Franklin set up Polly Baker as a sexual woman who was extremely virtuous, and her illicit sexual activity became a virtue in itself. First, Baker assumed the role of the seductress, but she had self-control. As a virtuous seductress, Baker had “debauched no other Woman’s Husband, nor enticed any Youth; these Things I never was charg’d with, nor has any one the least Cause of Complain against me, unless, perhaps, the Minister, or Justice, because I have had Children without being married, by which they have missed a Wedding fee.”¹⁸¹ Baker embraced her role as a seductress. She beguiled men, but not married or young men; thus, she did not corrupt the youth nor cause marital discord. In addition, she was cynical of the true reasons behind the laws against fornication. Marriage just gave ministers and justices extra revenue for their services. However, she actually desired marriage, and had all of the characteristics of a good wife, “having

¹⁸⁰ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:124.

¹⁸¹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:124.

all the Industry, Frugality, Fertility, and Skill in Oeconomy, appertaining to a good Wife's Character."¹⁸² She was industrious, handled money well, was not extravagant, and she was fertile, all ideal characteristics of a good wife and mother.

Having proclaimed her virtue, she next shifted her role of seductress onto a male seducer, contrasting her exemplary virtue to a man's vices. Desiring the married state, she wrote:

I defy any Person to say, I ever refused an Offer of that Sort: On the contrary, I readily consented to the only Proposal of Marriage that ever was made me, which was when I was a Virgin; but too easily confiding in the Person's Sincerity that made it, I unhappily lost my Honour, by trusting to his; for he got me with Child, and then forsook me.¹⁸³

Baker, seduced by a man, became pregnant before marriage and was forsaken, following the standard mid-eighteenth-century story of a woman who was seduced, became pregnant, was deserted, and, left without any means of support, turned to prostitution, seducing men. Even so, Baker passed judgment upon her seducer and shifted the blame to him in a biting criticism on magistrates: "That very Person you all know; he is now become a Magistrate of this Country . . . but I must now complain of it, as unjust and unequal, That my Betrayer and Undoer, the first Cause of all my Faults and Miscarriages (if they must be deemed such) should be advanc'd to Honour and Power in the Government, that punishes my Misfortunes with Stripes and Infamy."¹⁸⁴ Baker attacked the double standard in punishing fornication. She and this magistrate committed the same act, for which his reputation survived and he even gained a place of honor and power in the government, but she was punished with shame, whipping, and fines. Even while she uncovered the inequity and injustice of the courts by showing that the male magistrates committed these same acts for which they punish women, she still questioned

¹⁸² Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:124.

¹⁸³ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:124.

¹⁸⁴ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:124-5.

whether fornication really was a crime and that her illicit sexual activities truly were “Faults and Miscarriages” when she parenthetically wrote “if they must be deemed such.”

Challenging the state’s and church’s sexual dictates, Baker criticized the collusion of religious morality and civil authority:

If mine, then, is a religious Offence, leave it to religious Punishment. You have already excluded me from the Comforts of your Church-Communion. Is not that sufficient? You believe I have offended Heaven, and must suffer eternal Fire: Will not that be sufficient? What Need is there, then, of your additional Fines and Whippings?¹⁸⁵

Baker wondered how fornication could possibly be an offence in civil law. Already having challenged the civil code based upon the laws of Nature, Baker found that hers could not be a civil offence; however, it might still be a religious offence. At this time, though, due to a strong religious influence of various groups, particularly Puritans in New England, religious morality governed much of the logic behind civil law. Baker openly challenged this collusion between religious morality and civil punishment. If hers was a religious offence, she was already damned; thus, there was no need of further civil punishment.

More than just challenging temporal punishment for sins, thereby opposing civil and ecclesial authority, Polly Baker combated the entire religious moral code with regard to sexual practice. She truly did not think that fornication was even a religious offence. She wrote:

I own, I do not think as you do; for, if I thought what you call a Sin, was really such, I could not presumptuously commit it. But, how can it be believed, that Heaven is angry at my having Children, when to the little done by me towards it, God has been pleased to add his Divine Skill and admirable Workmanship in the Formation of their Bodies, and crown’d it, by furnishing them with rational and immortal Souls.¹⁸⁶

Fornication was neither an offence nor a sin. Having a child outside of wedlock was too small an offence to arouse the fury of God. Instead, her sexual behavior gave God pleasure since he was pleased to form the bodies of her children, endowing them rational minds and immortal

souls. Hence, her actions did not contradict divine or natural law, so when magistrates accused her of fornication, they “turn natural and useful Actions into Crimes, by your Prohibitions.”¹⁸⁷

In contrast to her having just a few babies, pleasing to God, she demonstrated that, far more dangerous, were the bachelors in the country who feared to raise a family; thus, they “never sincerely and honourably courted a Woman in their Lives.”¹⁸⁸ In their dishonorable intentions, they failed to produce offspring, a sin of omission Baker regarded as little better than murder. Since her values depended upon procreation, failing to reproduce was a greater offence than having an illegitimate child. Thus, for men who bore no fruit, Baker recommended, “Compel them, then, by Law, either to Marriage, or to pay double the Fine of Fornication every Year.”¹⁸⁹ They should marry to be fruitful and multiply, enabling women to do their duty to God and Nature; however, if men failed in their duty, women still must do theirs: “the Duty of the first and great Command of Nature, and of Nature’s God, *Encrease and Multiply*. A Duty, from the steady Performance of which, nothing has been able to deter me; but for its Sake, I have hazarded the Loss of Publick Esteem, and have frequently endured Publick Disgrace and Punishment.”¹⁹⁰ Thus, quoting God’s command to Adam and Eve in Genesis to populate the earth, Polly Baker followed the decrees of Nature and Nature’s God, the transcendent authorities of the Enlightenment and religion, instead of the unreasonable laws of the church and state. Doing her duty to God and Nature, she asserted that she “ought, in my humble Opinion, instead of a Whipping, to have a Statue erected to my Memory.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:125.

¹⁸⁶ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:125.

¹⁸⁷ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:125.

¹⁸⁸ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:125.

¹⁸⁹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 3:125.

¹⁹⁰ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:125.

¹⁹¹ Labaree, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 1:125.

Another Philadelphian, Susanna Wright, expressed similar opinions to Franklin's Polly Baker. Wright, with whom Franklin corresponded, also reversed the stereotypical seductress.¹⁹² In a private poem to a friend, she wrote, "But He, who arguments, in vain, had tried / Hopes still for Conquest, from ye yielding side / Soft Soothing flattery & Persuasion Tries, / And by a Feigned submission, seeks to rise, / steals, unperceived,--to the unguarded heart, / And There Reigns TYRANT."¹⁹³ In this poem, Wright suggested that men duped women into marrying them, opposing the supposedly prominent view. Like Franklin, though, Wright was writing toward mid-century, when a proliferation of literature portraying women as seduced emerged throughout Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and the American colonies in general.¹⁹⁴ Thus, both of these Philadelphians portrayed women as seduced instead of seducer, challenged gendered double standards, and employed Enlightenment and religious arguments.

Moreover, Baker's appeal to reason and Nature paralleled other Enlightenment literature on sex and gender, such as Denis Diderot's "Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage." Both criticized Christianity's control of sexual behavior as opposed to Nature. In his "Supplement," Diderot constructed an ideal society where Christian morality did not dictate sexual behavior. In this story, European Christians encountered Tahitian culture. The Tahitians' reason contrasted the Christians' superstition. The Tahitians found the Christians to be hypocritical and their sexual prohibitions on adultery and fornication horrid. The Tahitians, by contrast, enjoyed sex publicly and embraced their sexuality. However, the Christian explorers affected the young Tahitians, teaching them sexual shame. Through the mouth of a wise Tahitian, Diderot wrote:

Only a little while ago, the young Tahitian girl blissfully abandoned herself to the embraces of a young Tahitian man; she impatiently awaited the day when her mother, authorized by the girl's nobility, would lift her veil and show her naked breasts. She was

¹⁹²Wulf, "My Dear Liberty," 88, 91.

¹⁹³ Susanna Wright quoted in Wulf, "My Dear Liberty," 91-2

¹⁹⁴ Wulf, "My Dear Liberty," 93, 95, 97

proud to be able to excite the desires and attract the amorous looks of strangers, of her relatives, of her brother; she accepted the caresses of the one whom her young heart and the secret voice of her senses had pointed out to her—accepted them without fear and without shame, in our presence, in the midst of a crowd of innocent Tahitians, to the sound of flutes and amid dancing. The crime and the fear of disease entered among us only with you. Our enjoyments, once so sweet, are attended with remorse and dread. That man in black standing near you, listening to me, has spoken to our boys; I don't know what he said to our girls, but our boys hesitate, our girls blush.¹⁹⁵

Previous to Christian influence, in this story, Diderot showed sexual freedom in the reasonable state of nature; however, as Peter Gay suggests, in the garden of Tahitian innocence, Christian morality played the role of the serpent, creating the fall from innocence and introducing sexual shame with religious superstition.¹⁹⁶

However, the Tahitians in Diderot's sensual paradise did not possess complete sexual freedom. Diderot created strict limits, substituting Christian morality with the laws of Nature. The Tahitians placed strict taboos on non-procreative intercourse.¹⁹⁷ Although Diderot criticized Christian society's censure of fornication and adultery, he reinforced other Christian sexual beliefs. Moreover, the problem with adultery in Christian societies in Europe and the American colonies was that a husband held exclusive rights to his wife's body.¹⁹⁸ Diderot actually reinforced this notion when the Tahitians announced, "Our women and girls we possess in common."¹⁹⁹ In this sexual "utopia," women were considered male property, and fornication and adultery did not exist because women were shared property.

Diderot's "Supplement" and Franklin's "Speech" both appealed to Nature's laws to endow lust with moral purity.²⁰⁰ However, whereas Diderot continued to give women a sexually

¹⁹⁵ Denis Diderot, "Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage," in *The Enlightenment: A Comprehensive Anthology*, ed. Peter Gay (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973): 395.

¹⁹⁶ Gay, *The Science of Freedom*, 196-9.

¹⁹⁷ Gay, *The Science of Freedom*, 199.

¹⁹⁸ Benjamin Trumbull wrote, "A wife hath not the power of her own body, but the husband." Quoted in Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 185.

¹⁹⁹ Diderot, "Supplement," 393.

²⁰⁰ Gay, *The Science of Freedom*, 205.

dependent role, Franklin's Polly Baker claimed her own sexual independence and the right to her own body, which provides a parallel to a different Enlightenment text, Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*.²⁰¹ These letters discussed women and sex at length by depicting an erotic Persia. The despotic Usbek controlled a large harem and through extreme authoritarian methods demanded obedience from the women in the harem. The novel culminated with a rebellion by Roxana, who declared her own sexual independence.²⁰² Kerber concludes, "In Montesquieu's Persia, public despotism is mirrored in the private harem. Both as systems of dominance and submission, and one needs the other in order to exist. Sexual life is thus an adjunct of political style."²⁰³ Franklin made the connection between sexual autonomy and political freedom more explicit with Polly Baker, attacking civil and ecclesial authority's unreasonable laws, which despotically controlled private sexual behavior.²⁰⁴

"The Speech of Miss Polly Baker," although an anonymous satire, encapsulated many of the arguments posed throughout Franklin's female pseudonyms. While upholding particular ideals of a good wife and a good mother, he criticized the stereotype of the fallen woman, since, in practical circumstances, sexual ideals did more harm than good. Although Franklin ultimately still defined a woman with regard to her sexuality, through praising sexual behavior, he changed a negative stereotype of the seductress into a positive role and a duty. He directly challenged the laws of the church and the state, using religious and Enlightenment arguments. He revealed the injustice of the laws that punish women and not men. Overall, he praised Polly Baker's virtues

²⁰¹ Despite the differences, Diderot himself saw the similarities between the two pieces and appended Franklin's "The Speech of Miss Polly Baker" to his own copy of "The Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage." For transmission and literary history of "The Speech of Miss Polly Baker," see Max Hall, *Benjamin Franklin and Polly Baker: The History of Literary Deception*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960).

²⁰² Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, Trans. C. J. Betts, (New York: Penguin Books, 1973): 42-4, 46-51, 75-7, 279-81.

²⁰³ Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 19-20.

²⁰⁴ The Enlightenment, as a whole, held conflicted ideas regarding women and sexuality. Peter Gay explains, "eighteenth-century culture gave its philosophers . . . fragmentary, confusing, and contradictory information on this

and criticized the only male figures in the piece, the magistrate who impregnated her and those who dictated morality from ecclesial and civil positions.

There does appear to be some ambivalence to sexual and gender stereotypes throughout these female pseudonyms though. Patience and Polly Baker seem to reinforce sexual stereotypes, while Bridget Saunders and Celia Single reify the proud and extravagant gentlewoman. On the other hand, Franklin redefined morality by using these stereotypes; thus, the seductress and the gossip become virtuous characters. While proclaiming their virtuous aspects, female pseudonyms like Bridget Saunders and Celia Single proclaimed that these flaws were insignificant and men were equally at fault. However, Silence Dogood took the argument much further, reversing common gendered preconceptions. According to her, women were more virtuous than men and what failings a woman may have had resulted directly from men's vices. Therefore, while some ambivalence was present, the virtuous woman, with virtue redefined by Franklin, ultimately prevailed, providing a vivid contrast to the male pseudonyms, where unfavorable depictions of women abounded. Thus, ambivalent attitudes resulted from merging the ideal with the stereotype, resolving the tension between the sensual Eve and the industrious Bathsheba, turning vices into virtues.

Conclusion

Contrary to the practice of most historians, whose purpose is to analyze Benjamin Franklin's later political career, exploring Franklin's pseudonymous satires provides a profitable peek into early eighteenth-century ideology, especially pertaining to gender values about the ideal good wife and the stereotypical damned woman. The implicit and sometimes explicit gender values of the Puritans, Quakers, Baptists, and other groups in Boston and Philadelphia

delicate subject. Libertinism coexisted with modesty, high exaltation with cynicism." Thus, one finds attempts to overcome and to reassert belittling female stereotypes; Gay, *Science of Freedom*, 201.

portray a surprising conformity in their basic thoughts about the nature of women as sexual, seductive, and even diabolical. In both Boston and Philadelphia, concepts of the vain, extravagant, and idle gentlewoman prevailed as female tendencies that needed to be overcome to produce an industrious, chaste, and submissive ideal wife.

Engaging these idyllic virtues and perceived vices, Benjamin Franklin's male pseudonyms, overall, differed from his female pseudonyms, revealing a potential inherent ambivalence from writing under different genders. The male pseudonyms, paradigmatically exemplified by Richard Saunders, in general, showed women to be idle, extravagant, proud, ignorant, scornful, deceitful, adulterous, seductive, and even diabolical. On the other hand, Franklin's female pseudonyms, best exemplified by Silence Dogood, provided a completely different view. According to them, women were industrious, intelligent, economical, and frugal. They challenged point for point those who forced incorrect stereotypes upon all women. In contrast to the male pseudonyms, the female pseudonyms claimed women were more virtuous than men, female flaws were insignificant, and such flaws resulted from male deficiencies.

However, both the male and the female pseudonyms internally show some contradictions toward female ideals and stereotypes. Indeed, Richard Saunders sometimes praised women. This disagreement within the male pseudonyms appears to reflect a general cultural tension in the northern colonies between the ideal good wife and the stereotypical damned woman, praising Bathsheba and chastising Eve; however, in the male pseudonyms, the image of the seductress and the gentlewoman prevails.

The female pseudonyms also show internal contradiction. Indeed, they depend upon the stereotypes in order to criticize religious and civil authorities' definitions of licit and illicit behavior. While, with Patience and Polly Baker, Franklin reinforced equating a woman with her

sexuality, he also redefined sexual morality, claiming that sexual behavior for health, pleasure (Patience), and procreation (Polly Baker) was a virtue ordered by God and Nature, not a vice as dictated by church and state. Moreover, through Silence Dogood, he challenged directly, whether women really did have many of these characteristics, claiming that men were much worse than women were and, instead of women corrupting men, men corrupted women. However, a historical tension between the ideal and the stereotype does not fully explain this ambivalence. Perhaps it arises simply through literary cross dressing: a man using a woman's name, reflecting Franklin's inherently male voice. Therefore, in contrast to the male pseudonyms, although characteristics of both the ideal and the stereotype appear throughout the female pseudonyms, instead of being at odds with one another, Bathsheba and Eve merge into one character.

Overall, though, there is one similarity to draw out between the ambivalence of the male and the female pseudonyms, since both groups revolve around, challenge, and reinforce the cultural archetypes of Bathsheba and Eve. In these satirical pseudonyms, ambivalence is not necessarily a perceived paradox. Individuals in the eighteenth century could have held these two different views of women simultaneously without difficulty. Although there might be some tension between the two concepts of a good wife and a damned woman, they are truly two sides of the same coin, revolving around equating women with their sexual behavior.²⁰⁵ The peculiar

²⁰⁵ Historians might see the eighteenth century as a time when gender ideologies were in flux between late seventeenth-century "Damned Women" and early nineteenth-century "Republican Motherhood" or "Republican Wife." Ideology changed throughout time, but not as much as one might expect. The ideal and the stereotype remained two sides of the same coin: the chaste woman and the seductress both depended upon a general perception of women's sexuality. At the birth of the American Revolution, many of these stereotypes remained in American discourse. At this time, Kerber asserts, feminine qualities were avoided: "Luxury, effeminacy, and corruption" or "ignorance, effeminacy, and vice" continued to be grouped together; thus, in Early American culture, "the overtones of virtue were male, and those of corruption, female." Ironically, women became responsible for the moral development of their households, beginning to show the chaste side of the coin; however, the seductress lurked underneath in popular perception. Especially during courtship rituals, women could use their sexual prowess to tempt men to be good; thus, at times the seductress merged with the chaste woman who seduced men to virtue,

aspect about Benjamin Franklin's female pseudonyms more than his male pseudonyms is that they try to show both sides at the same time, while his male pseudonyms and society at large, prefer to flip back and forth between one and the other. Thus, the saga of the satirical pseudonymity of Silence Dogood, Margaret Aftercast, Martha Careful, Caelia Shortface, Busy Body, Patience, Anthony Afterwit, Celia Single, Richard Saunders, Bridget Saunders, Alice Addertongue, and the anonymous Polly Baker concludes with a resounding ideological ambivalence about gender manifested in an individual, his archetypal caricatures, and his culture.

contrasting a hundred years earlier, when women seduced men to sin. Cott, "Divorce and Massachusetts," 586; Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic," *William and Mary Quarterly* 44, Issue 4 (October 1987): 690, 697, 700-702; Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 10-11, 31.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

Addertongue, Alice [Benjamin Franklin]. "Alice Addertongue." In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol 1. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

This pseudonym is upset that everyone blames women with the crime of scandal. Indeed, to Addertongue, scandal is a virtue, not a crime. She mocks those "Puppies" who accuse women of the crime of scandal: "If they accuse us of any other Crime, they must necessarily *scandalize* while they do it: But to *scandalize* us with being guilty of Scandal, is in itself an egregious Absurdity, and can proceed from nothing but the most consummate Impudence in Conjunction with the most profound Stupidity." She finds it to be her talent and her duty to scandalize. She also keeps track of who she censures and who has censured her in a ledger of debts and credits. Thus, she scandalizes with industry, one of Franklin's favorite virtues.

Afterwit, Anthony. "Anthony Afterwit." In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol. 1. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

This male pseudonym, whose name is partly borrowed from James Franklin's Abigail Afterwit, should be read in conjunction to Celia Single. Anthony Afterwit complains that his wife prefers luxury and has symptoms of vanity. She buys things for the house that they cannot afford. Thus, while she is away, Anthony Afterwit throws out all of the luxury items she had collected and creates a more modest environment. To replace her vanity, he buys her some needles and thread so that she can develop the virtue of industry. Celia Single, then, is a rebuttal to Anthony Afterwit; therefore, Franklin has one of his female pseudonyms argue with one of his male pseudonyms.

Body, Busy [Benjamin Franklin]. "Busy Body Letters" In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol 1. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

Franklin wrote the first four Busy Body letters and parts of No. 5 and No. 8, but later Busy Body was taken over by J. Brintnal. Busy Body receives a letter from one of Franklin's female pseudonyms, Patience. Patience is a single woman who is "tir'd out of all Patience." She is continually pestered by children who are not her own. Because of this inconvenience, her love life is disrupted. "There is a handsome Gentleman that has a Mind (I don't question) to make love to me, but he can't get the least Opportunity to." So, Patience, speaks of having sex outside of marriage, against which there were laws in the early colonies; however, it is an unfulfilled desire because of a woman and her children always coming over, possibly secretly keeping watch as the Puritans encouraged neighbors to do—especially with single women.

Careful, Martha and Caelia Shortface [Benjamin Franklin], "Martha Careful and Caelia Shortface" In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol 1. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

After Samuel Keimer, Franklin's rival printer, printed an article on abortion. In response, Franklin created these two women to voice "their sex's sense of scandal and insult." Martha Careful complains that Keimer has exposed "the Secrets of our Sex . . . to be read in all *Taverns* and *Coffee-Houses*, and by the Vulgar." Caelia Shortface determines to write a public letter to Keimer, saying that he shamed the modest and virtuous women of Pennsylvania by printing such things. Within a week after this, Franklin wrote a series of invectives against Keimer through the pseudonym *Busy Body*, using Bradford's paper, who eventually became Franklin's rival printer, but who actually helped get Franklin started.

Diderot, Denis. "Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage." In *The Enlightenment: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Peter Gay. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973.

This story parallels Franklin's "The Speech of Miss Polly Baker." Diderot creates a Tahitian sexual paradise where sex has not yet been tainted by Christian morality. He distinguishes between Tahitian reason and Christian superstition, showing Christian laws on fornication and adultery not to be inherent in the nature of things. However, Diderot establishes many restrictions and taboos. He ultimately places a taboo on any sexual activity not leading to procreation, reifying some of Christianity's other restrictions.

Dogood, Silence [Benjamin Franklin]. "Silence Dogood Letters." In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol 1. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

Silence Dogood was Franklin's first female pseudonym. He wrote them for his brother's, James Franklin, newspaper, the *New England Courant* when he was only sixteen years old. The *Courant* was a paper was full of satire and invective with essays against the clergy, magistrates, Harvard College, men of property, and the entire Massachusetts establishment. Franklin wrote fourteen letters from Silence Dogood, although James did not know that they were from his own brother, Benjamin. Much of Franklin's inspiration to use female pseudonyms may have come from his brother, who had one of his own called Abigail Afterwit, who sounds very familiar to Benjamin's Anthony Afterwit. Also, Mr. Gardner (Nathaniel Gardner, Jr.'s father) used a pseudonym called Fanny Mournful. Thus, Franklin's use of a female pseudonym was not without precedent. Following the aims of the paper, Silence Dogood speaks against Harvard College and ministers, especially Cotton Mather, although she claims to be a lover of the clergy. Silence Dogood also speaks of virtue and vice. She is a friend of virtue and an enemy of vice. She claims that, although men claim that vice lies entirely with women, men have as much vice as women and are the cause of female vice. Then she speaks at length about pride, idleness, industry, and freedom of speech (the *Courant* was in danger of being censored). She also speaks on more practical matters, such as social security for widows. Franklin also used a device with Silence Dogood that he would continue when writing through pseudonyms. He had one pseudonym reply to another pseudonym. In the letters of Silence Dogood, one finds another pseudonym, Margaret Aftercast, who complains, like all of the "fair sex," of being "punish'd with their Virginitie." Finally, Silence Dogood argues that women should be employed and education, not having to always stay in the home.

Franklin, Benjamin. *Benjamin Franklin: The Autobiography and Other Writings*, ed. Kenneth Silverman. New York: Penguin Books, 1986.

Franklin's Autobiography is indispensable to any project about Franklin. It is his construction of himself. It is how he wants people to view him. Much of it seems to be an instruction manual of how to be successful in life, how to achieve the American dream. Although it promotes this myth, it informs every aspect of his life in the many hats that he wore.

Franklin, Benjamin. *Life of Benjamin Franklin*. London: W & R Chambers, 1889.

This book contains Franklin's autobiography, but instead calls it his *Life*. The editor is unknown, but when one reads it, one discovers that much of the diction has been altered from the edition of the *Autobiography* cited above. It might be indicative of the view of Franklin at the time that this edition has "The Way to Wealth" appended to it.

[Franklin, Benjamin]. "The Speech of Miss Polly Baker." In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol 3. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.

This anonymous satire of Franklin's was first published in London's *General Advertiser* in 1746. From there it spread around England and in the Colonies through many printings and with many editions and additions. Many people used the speech. For example, Peter Annet included it in his *Collection of the Tracts of a Certain Free Enquirer*, Abbe Raynal used it in his *Historie Philosophique et Politique*, and Diderot even appended it to a late version of *Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage*. Many people have been deceived into believing Polly Baker to be a real woman, including Abbe Raynal. The actual speech is about a poor woman, brought to court for fornication through the evidence of having children outside of wedlock, for which she has been publicly punished through whipping and fining already. She claims the laws are unreasonable. She then claims that by having children, even outside of wedlock, she displays virtue. She has brought five children into the world at the risk of her own life and has brought them up by her industry (Franklin's favorite virtue). She asks how it could be a crime to add to the number of the King's subjects? Even so, it is not her fault that she is not married. A man claimed to love her and that he would marry her, but after he slept with her, he left her (this was a common occurrence in early America). But she has a wife's character—industry, frugality, fertility, and economy. However, her accusers say hers is a religious offense. She claims that she is not sinning but obeying God in his command to go forth and multiply. She demands that the state not punish her, but the men who sleep with women and then abandon them. These men should pay a fine to pay for the children or be forced to marry. Since Polly Baker has not done anything wrong with her sexual intrigues, instead of whipping, she should have a statue erected in her memory.

Jefferson, Thomas. *The Complete Jefferson: Containing His Major Writings, Published and Unpublished, Except His Letters*, ed. Saul K. Padover. New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1943.

Although Jefferson became involved in Franklin's life toward the end of Franklin's life, he recalls an incident pertaining to Polly Baker. While they were in France, Jefferson and

Franklin were spending the evening with Silas Deane and Abbe Raynal. Silas Deane claims he knows the story to be a farce, but Raynal insists that it is true, having cited it in his own works. However, Franklin, shaking in unrestrained laughter, admitted to writing the story decades before, to which Raynal replied that he would rather tell Franklin's stories than other men's truths. There are many problems with Jefferson's recollection and whether the error lies with his memory or Franklin's is difficult to say. In any case, it is one of the few pieces of evidence that links Franklin to Polly Baker.

Montesquieu. *Persian Letters*. Trans. C. J. Betts. London: Penguin Books, 1973.

This text provides an Enlightenment parallel to some of the issues discussed in Franklin's "The Speech of Miss Polly Baker." Montesquieu creates an erotic Persia through his novel, which seems to serve some voyeuristic means. The despotic Usbek, who is traveling in Paris controls a large harem in Persia. He controls these women through authoritarian means, but the novel culminates when one of the women, Roxana, rebels and establishes her own sexual independence.

Saunders, Richard [Benjamin Franklin]. *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1733*. In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol. 1. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

Saunders, Richard [Benjamin Franklin]. *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1734*. In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol. 1. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

Saunders, Richard [Benjamin Franklin]. *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1735*. In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

Saunders, Richard [Benjamin Franklin]. *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1736*. In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

Saunders, Richard [Benjamin Franklin]. *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1737*. In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

Saunders, Richard [Benjamin Franklin]. *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1738*. In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

Saunders, Richard [Benjamin Franklin]. *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1739*. In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

Saunders, Richard [Benjamin Franklin]. *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1740*. In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

Saunders, Richard [Benjamin Franklin]. *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1741*. In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

Saunders, Richard [Benjamin Franklin]. *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1742*. In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

Saunders, Richard [Benjamin Franklin]. *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1743*. In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

Saunders, Richard [Benjamin Franklin]. *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1744*. In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

Poor Richard's Almanack proved to be very financially lucrative for Benjamin Franklin, possibly even being the reason why he could retire early from the printing business. The almanacs included basic things such as calendars, predicted weather for the year, astrological movements, and, most importantly, aphorisms. The aphorisms cover a wide variety of subjects, from finance, wealth, morality, and, as I have found, certain concepts pertaining to gender. With Richard Saunders, Franklin's most used male pseudonym, Franklin seems to reflect the New England stereotypes of women most often related to seventeenth-century New England. At the same time, he also holds up the ideal situation of marriage, comparing an unmarried man to the odd half of a pair of scissors. Richard Saunders, along with Anthony Afterwit and possibly Busy Body, will provide the male pseudonymous comparison to Franklin's female pseudonyms.

Single, Celia [Benjamin Franklin]. "Celia Single." In *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, et al. Vol 1. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

As Franklin does many times, he has his pseudonyms criticize him. Celia Single says that Franklin causes "Difference between Men and their Wives." Celia Single points out that her friend, Mrs. Careless, has no time. She does all the house chores as well as being expected to do extra work when her husband asks her. He asks her to knit, but she has no time to do so. Here she argues for the employment of women, for many women can knit if they were *employed*. Celia Single berates Franklin for saying that women are idle and extravagant, when he does not say the same about men. She goes through a list of idle and extravagant men who have wise and industrious wives.

Secondary Sources

Baender, Paul. "The Basis of Franklin's Duplicative Satires." *American Literature* 32, no. 3 (November 1960): 267-279.

Baender explores the use of Franklin's satires, such as "Exporting Felons to the Colonies," in which he criticizes the English policy of exporting felons to the colonies. Franklin, in the spirit of Jonathan Swift, suggests that, in their gratitude, the colonies should export rattlesnakes to England. "An Edict of the King of Prussia" announced Prussia's right to tax and bind the English "colonies." In both of these hoaxes, Franklin forces the English reader to assume the position of the American colonists. The final hoax, "On the Slave Trade," pretended to be a defense for the Muslim enslavement of Christians. Through all of these satires, Franklin forces a reversal upon the reader, showing the reader how it might feel to be part of the victims of England's policies. Baender argues that Franklin intended these "reverse duplicates" to induce the readers to adopt a more virtuous perspective. With these, Franklin tried to show the role of true duty and justice, not the metaphysical reasoning that can be used to justify anything. A virtuous man was impartial, and when people read these satires and became enraged or amused, their partiality became confirmed. Of course, if Franklin could not convert readers to his ideas, he at least wanted them to squirm when they read his hoaxes. These satires were largely aimed at policy makers in England as a looking glass "in which some Ministers may see their ugly Faces, & the Nation its Injustice." Finally, it should be noted that the "Edict" was published anonymously, while the other two used pseudonyms.

Baker, Jennifer Jordan. "Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* and the Credibility of Personality." *Early American Literature* 35, issue 3 (2000): 274-293.

Although this particular article focuses primarily upon Franklin's financial views, it also discusses, in relation to that, the importance and the uses of a name, whether real or false. It speaks of using a name to give something credibility. In this, the Franklin's name itself has with it a certain currency. For example, once Franklin was considered a credible person, whatever he gave his name to also became credible. However, whenever he was unknown, his name would bring little to no weight; thus, he would useonyms and pseudonyms. However, his name went from a liability as a young man to a great asset later in his life. The weight of Franklin's name eventually became the means by which the colonies tried to gain credibility in Europe during the Revolutionary War. Then, his autobiography served also as an advertisement, entwining the interests of Franklin with that of the burgeoning nation; thus, Franklin constructed his identity in his autobiography, suppressing idiosyncrasies, to create a persona to show the possibilities and the opportunities in America.

Block, Seymour Stanton. *Benjamin Franklin: His Wit, His Wisdom, and Women*. New York: Hastings House, 1975.

Boudreau, Kristin. "Early American Criminal Narratives and the Problem of Public Sentiments." *Early American Literature* 32, issue 3 (1997): 249-269.

This article speaks of criminal narratives of those who were executed in early America. At first, these narratives were largely controlled by the clergy in collaboration with the civil authorities in order to channel sentiment to show how justice was being done, although the executed would make a public confession and penitence. However, sentiment could prove to be dangerous to the authorities if the public sympathized too greatly with the executed. One dangerous example was the execution of John Young, who used his confession and penitence as a means to show how justice is not always done and how corrupt the government can drive a person to crime. Other interesting aspects about this article is the way in which it presents the novel as a means to both instill morals and divert moral activity with women. Finally, the article speaks briefly on how women were driven by expectations of society to infanticide after having illegitimate children. Its relevance to Franklin comes from his satire on Polly Baker, at whose court case she aroused the sentiment of the public against the unjust laws of the government concerning having illegitimate children.

Brands, H. W. *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

Brands's biography, overall, is unremarkable. He does not contribute much to the understanding of Benjamin Franklin. However, he does handle Franklin's childhood, of which relatively little is known compared to his later life, comparably well. This was the very first piece of the Franklin secondary literature I read. I discovered my topic when I read an entire chapter on Poor Richard. Brands introduces this pseudonym with other examples of pseudonyms, including a few of Franklin's female pseudonyms.

Chamberlain, Ava. "The Immaculate Ovum: Jonathan Edwards and the Construction of the Female Body." *William and Mary Quarterly* 57, Issue 2 (April 2000): 289-322.

Chamberlain analyzed the interplay in the eighteenth century generally and with Jonathan Edwards specifically between natural science and theology. She argues that new natural scientific theories of women's reproductive organs influenced Jonathan Edwards theology, specifically the conception of Christ within Mary. She also argues that this new medical knowledge of the ovum influenced concepts of gender in the eighteenth century, moving from what she characterizes as a vertical axis, which sees women as a weaker, "colder," and altogether inferior form of men to a horizontal axis, which characterizes women as completely "Other" (note capital "O") and incommensurable to men. She then gives a history of gender construction based upon medical assumptions from Aristotle to Galen and so forth. What might be gleaned from this essay for my paper is the recognition of the influence of natural science on theology and gender ideology. With new ideas about female reproductive organs, Jonathan Edwards began to characterize the womb as filthy, corrupt, and the means by which original sin is passed from generation to generation. Probably the most useful part of this essay is its discussion of popular medical advice books that began to circulate from the early to middle of the eighteenth century. These books provided details about current understandings of the female body, descriptions of genitalia, means of conception, and so on. Magistrates and clergy became concerned the youth would use these medical books to glean information about abortion and masturbation. Indeed, young men used these books as a type of soft pornography. After they read them, they ridiculed girls about their sexual parts, harassing them about their "nasty"

bodies. Chamberlain argues that these boys saw gender on the horizontal axis, seeing girls as completely “Other” and harassing them for it. This aspect of Chamberlain’s article has a direct relation to two of Franklin’s female pseudonyms who ridicule Samuel Keimer for publishing an article on abortion. These pseudonyms claim that men used the article with its descriptions of the female body for pornographic purposes, such as the boys did with the medical advice books in Jonathan Edwards’s parish. Finally, Chamberlain notes in her discussion of gender construction the double standard before the law concerning fornication which tended to punish women while allowing men off the hook (which is directly related to “The Speech of Miss Polly Baker”).

Cott, Nancy F. “Divorce and the Changing Status of Women in Eighteenth Century Massachusetts.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 33, Issue 4 (October 1976): 586-614.

By analyzing the freedoms and the obligations of husbands and wives through divorce proceedings, Cott probes the double standard of the eighteenth century with regard to sexual morality between men and women. She writes, “Historians have yet to explain the transition from ‘Puritan’ to ‘Victorian’ standards, but current research has begun to suggest that unrest and change in patters of sexual and familial behavior were conspicuous in the eighteenth century” (586). She uses the cases for divorce on grounds of adultery for her analysis. She notes that men who accused their wives of adultery were more likely to obtain a divorce than vice versa. Indeed, when women attempted to obtain a divorce, they would cite adultery in addition to other charges. Even in these cases, women were less successful to end an unhappy marriage if they were the petitioner, so women often equivocated and requested legal separation instead of outright divorce. In such, it seems that either the courts did not believe women petitioners for divorce, or that society could forgive sexual transgressions in a man, which they found abhorrent in a woman. Cott writes, “Unless we assume that husbands displayed much more virtue than wives, the difference between the numbers of petitioners from men and from women . . . suggests a deeply entrenched double standard of marital fidelity” (601). Moreover, as noted elsewhere, this was also true in pre-nuptial fornication cases where women were punished and men went unpunished. However, later in the eighteenth century, women petitioners gained greater success in divorcing husbands on grounds of adultery. “The seventeenth-century linkage of women with moral evil, Eve’s legacy, gave way to a new image of woman as a being ruled by conscience and religion” (613).

Dayton, Cornelia Hughes. “Taking the Trade: Abortion and Gender Relations in an Eighteenth-Century New England Village.” *Women’s America: Refocusing the Past, Fifth Edition*, ed. Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hard. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000: pp. 90-106.

This brief article provides some rare insights into the practice of abortion in eighteenth-century New England. This aspect of the article relates to two of Franklin’s pseudonyms who oppose Samuel Keimer (Franklin’s rival printer) when he publicly prints descriptions of the abortion procedure. Other aspects of the article might be more useful because it clearly delineates the court’s double standard in the early to mid-eighteenth-century to prosecute women for fornication but not men. The case which came before the courts described in this article occurred only a few years before Franklin’s “The Speech of Miss Polly Baker” was printed, a

document in which Franklin clearly exposes this double standard. So, although this article is brief, it is useful to multiple parts of my paper.

Donovan, Frank. *The Women in Their Lives*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966.

Donovan discusses in his chapters, the women in the lives of Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison. The Chapter on Franklin, entitled, "Several Women and Benjamin Franklin," discusses a very wide range of relationships Franklin had with women throughout his life, such as Deborah Read, Catherine Ray (a young woman half Franklin's age, with whom he corresponded quite flirtatiously when he was married to Deborah Read), his landlady in England, and especially the many women he flirted with in France, such as Madame Helvetius and Madame Brillon.

Eldridge, Larry D., ed. *Women & Freedom in Early America*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.

This book composed of various articles is beneficial because it provides a good overview on various topics concerning women largely in the colonial period. I found the series of articles on "Religion" to be most useful followed by the series of articles on "Marriage and the Family." The first set provided the varied views on women by differing religious traditions and even within those traditions. In this section, I was particularly drawn to the article in chapter 5 called "My Dear Liberty': Quaker Spinsterhood and Female Autonomy in Eighteenth-Century Pennsylvania" by Karin A. Wulf. She focuses on Susanna Wright (who happened to be a correspondent with Benjamin Franklin). One finds in her poems some of the same sentiments expressed in some of Franklin's female pseudonyms. Indeed, she expressed the Quakers, arguably the religion closest to gender equality at this time in Pennsylvania was not close enough. She felt that no marriage relationship ever realized the Quaker ideal of equality before God. Wright clearly says that women are equal to men mentally and that men seduced or tricked women into marrying them. Of course, the other articles are of interest as well, but will probably be most useful for general background information, footnotes, or just to improve my own understanding.

Ford, Paul Leicester. *The Many-Sided Franklin*. New York: The Century Co., 1915.

This biography is very interesting and informative. Originally published in 1898, this biography directly addresses the many different aspects of Franklin's life. What makes it all the more useful is that it is not organized chronologically, but thematically. Therefore, those not interested in certain aspects of Franklin's life do not have to weed through pages of irrelevant material to get particularly useful information. For my concerns, Ford's chapters entitled "Religion" and "Relations with the Fair Sex" are particularly useful. In "Religion," Ford provides a clear framework to show Franklin's development from growing up in a Presbyterian Church to the Deism, somewhat qualified, which marked most of his life, his emphasis on good works, his relationship with George Whitefield, and his anti-sectarianism. In "Relations with the Fair Sex," Ford launches immediately into a very good discussion on Silence Dogood and Franklin's view of women's education. He then goes on to relate Franklin's views of marriage,

his relationship with his own wife, Deborah Read, and also his famous flirtations throughout his life.

Gay, Peter. *The Enlightenment: The Science of Freedom*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1969.

This book gives a quick overview of the Enlightenment. It is briefer than his other work about the Enlightenment about the rise of modern paganism. In this book, Gay briefly discusses Enlightenment attitudes toward sexuality and gender. This was a topic from which the philosophes tended to shy. However, there were some discussions, such as Denis Diderot's "Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage" or Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*. Other figures also figured in the discussion, who tried to separate sexuality from Christian morality, such as La Mettrie and Holbach.

Godbeer, Richard. *Sexual Revolution in Early America*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002.

Richard Godbeer, in my estimation, fails to show a sexual revolution in Early America, unless one accepts his revolution as he describes in his introduction as a fundamental shift away from an ethos in organic conceptions of society and toward a more individualistic marketplace of sexual desire. He does show this change, but he not as a revolution and maybe not as "fundamental" as it at first appears. Instead, he reveals a steady, gradual change occurring from the seventeenth century through the end of the eighteenth century into the Revolutionary War. He demonstrates how sexual values in relation to gender almost reverse themselves from the early to the late eighteenth century. Although the use of the word "Revolution" in the title is a quibble of mine, which I think he used to make his book appear more appealing, he does reveal a shift in thinking of sex in relation to women. In the early eighteenth century, women were perceived as seducers, who caused men, who were viewed as inherently virtuous, to have moral lapses. In the late eighteenth century, women were the paragons of virtue, who made men more virtuous. I see this more as two sides of the same coin, where women, throughout history, have been viewed alternately (and sometimes at the same time) as either prostitutes or Madonnas. In any case, this book is highly valuable because it brings together a wide range of scholarship, giving a comprehensive overview of extremely complex sexual values, which differ according to class, gender, religious affiliation, geographic location, and time.

Hall, Max. *Benjamin Franklin and Polly Baker: The History of Literary Deception*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960.

This is the most complete analysis of "The Speech of Miss Polly Baker." Hall not only analyzes the text in relation to its historical background, but he also traces the history of the text itself, especially how, throughout the years, it has continued to deceive people into believing it to be a true story. Hall also provides the best argument for linking this anonymous writing to Benjamin Franklin. Indeed, before his research, this writing has been excluded from collective works of Franklin; however, afterwards, editors began to include the speech.

Hemphill, C. Dallet. "Women in Court: Sex-Role Differentiation in Salem, Massachusetts, 1636 to 1683." *William and Mary Quarterly* 39, Issue 1 (January 1982): 164-175.

This article analyzes the changes in sex roles as Salem developed from a small farming community to a larger mercantile town. This article reminds us of the double standard at court regarding men and women. Hemphill writes that women came before the court more often than men for only two crimes: absence from church and sexual offenses. However, even so, she says that even these have only a marginally greater frequency. She argues that, in the early years of Salem, there was not a great deal of gender role differentiation and much overlap. Women often went out in public and represented their husbands in many affairs (like Ulrich's "Deputy Husband" model). However, Hemphill argues that late in the 1670s and 1680s, sex roles began to diverge more drastically. Whereas, before, women often were more expressive of dissent with their husbands and with religious authority, as the years passed, they became less willing to physically express such dissent (at least in violent enough ways to show up in court records).

Jackson, Kevin. "Pseudonyms (a.k.a. Noms de Plume)." In *Invisible Forms: A Guide to Literary Curiosities*. London: Picador, 1999.

This very playful chapter provides very useful examples of various people throughout recent history who have employed pseudonyms. Although, the theories Jackson presents are weak and not very illuminating, the examples he provides help support other theories of pseudonymity described by other authors, especially those theories of convention and name currency. Jackson seems to be more concerned with why an author chose a specific pseudonym and less concerned with why the author used a pseudonym in the first place. The most interesting section of this chapter, though, analyzes how pseudonyms almost develop a life of their own separate from the author, and how those pseudonyms becomes more widely known than the author's true name.

Kennedy, Jennifer T. "Death Effects: Revisiting the Conceit of Franklin's *Memoir*." *Early American Literature* 36, issue 2 (2001): 201-234.

Kennedy is interested in the literary construction of Franklin in his *Memoir*. In this article, she entwines a fascination with death with reincarnation. She argues that Franklin produces himself as a reincarnation of past figures as well as one who will be repeated again in a second edition, but slightly improved. She takes this repetition of personality to be literary as well as literal. She demonstrates this through his literary incarnations—not just of his pseudonyms, but in his recreations of the image of himself in his own *Memoir*. In this, she argues he dies to some personality while he creates a false persona that he eventually adopts to replace the old persona. Although much of this article is ridiculous speculation, she does bring forward some useful concepts in Franklin's view of the afterlife, immortality of the soul, his use of Poor Richard, the construction of a false identity (both pseudonymous and otherwise), the use of a proper name as coming from a common word, and it calls into question the historicity of Franklin's own self-reflections as one who is trying to correct his life instead of merely retelling it. Indeed, she sees his Autobiography as ultimately a means by which he attempted to reincarnate himself and gain a sense of immortality, if not literal, then literary.

Kerber, Linda K. *Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980.

For the most part, this book is out of the scope of my research since it principally handles revolutionary and post-revolutionary ideology with respect to women. However, the chapter entitled, “‘Empire of Complacency’: The Inheritance of the Enlightenment” sheds some light upon what Benjamin Franklin’s contemporary philosophes thought about the role of women in politics and society at large. Unfortunately, Kerber does not speak of Benjamin Franklin, except in a passing note in her discussion about how people of the Enlightenment era viewed women, but she does show the connection that these philosophes made between forms of government and sexual independence, especially in Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters*. The Enlightenment philosophes seem to have largely shared the gender stereotypes of the early eighteenth century of the woman being a seductress. Rousseau wrote that relationships between men and women are always sexual and that “Her violence consists in her charms. . . . [Her modesty masks her] unbounded desires.” Her chapter devoted to divorce laws may prove instructive, linking freedom in marriage to freedom within the state, which closely integrates civil authority, ecclesiastical ideology, gender, and sexuality (in most colonies, adultery was one of the very few legitimate reasons for divorce). She also reveals how female stereotypes tended to relate women more squarely with their “natural” bodies than male stereotypes. With regard to education, Kerber writes, “The more that a woman’s life was governed by repeated cycles of pregnancy, lying-in, nursing, and childrearing, the closer she was to nature and the less the need to reform her education” (25). Another instructive chapter involves a discussion on education of women. I find this interesting because writers in the 1790s and 1800s were using the same arguments, even less radical arguments, than Benjamin Franklin made with Silence Dogood and other female pseudonyms seventy to eighty years before. Finally, Kerber shows that these stereotypes with which my research is concerned survived at least until the eve of the revolution, which is much later than I had originally anticipated. With regard to Revolutionary America, she writes, “. . . it must be added that the overtones of virtue were male, and those of corruption, female” (31).

Lewis, Jan. “The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 44, Issue 4 (October 1987): 689-721.

Lewis presents a subtle shift from Linda Kerber. Whereas Kerber describes the political role of a woman in the revolutionary era as the “Republican Mother,” Lewis presents, instead, a different analogy in the “Republican Wife.” In her discussion, she elucidates that virtue, for both men and women, was the key to republicanism in the early republic. Using popular literature from the period, she reveals the common themes of courtship, marriage, and seduction. She argues, very interestingly for some of my research, that the “Republican Wife” was not mutually exclusive to the “seductress” of the previous century. Instead of denying their sexuality and becoming “passionless,” through courtship behavior, women were to use their seducing qualities in order to get men to behave better (pp. 700-702). In Lewis’s words, “What earlier Americans perceived as Eve’s most dangerous characteristic, her seductiveness, is here transformed into her capacity for virtue” (701-2). However, Lewis claims that, at this time, “no one argues that women were naturally more virtuous or pure than men; rather, they had the capacity to overcome weakness and become good” (703). Looking at themes of virtue within literature circulating in the early republic, she shows conceptions of the ideal husband and the ideal wife. Lewis also

argues that women at this time were not always considered as the pinnacle of virtue or as always more virtuous than men, which is the stereotype many see of the so-called Victorian era. Indeed, she shows “both sides of the coin” that sees women as either extremely virtuous or extremely vicious, but rarely at a medium. The popular literature warned men against women who were too enticing, such as “great beauties,” “heiresses,” and “coquettes.” Of course, this literature warns women against coxcombs and fops. These examples of flirts, coquettes, fops, and coxcombs represented “luxury, vice, and deceit.” Overall, though, women were to overcome their “licentious manners” first, and then use their influence over the manners of men. This article has many of the themes I am researching, but unfortunately, it’s timing is much too late. However, I might be able to salvage it in order to show some continuity of ideas from Franklin’s newspapers to early republican popular literature.

Maestro, Marcello. “Benjamin Franklin and the Penal Laws.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, no. 3 (July-September 1975): 551-562.

Maestro tells that Franklin devoted much attention to criminal law. One piece of evidence Maestro uses is “The Speech of Miss Polly Baker.” Although it is an amusing story, Maestro notes that it is a protest against existing legislation, specifically the law that prohibited sexual intercourse outside of wedlock and punished the mother to fines and whipping and not the father. Polly claims that unjust laws must be repealed and that other laws should have less severe penalties as well as the removal of religious influence in civil matters. Maestro then uses other instances where Franklin criticized the penal laws and the demonstrated the problems of using religion as a basis for law. He also shows further evidence of Franklin’s disgust at severe punishments: “To put a man to death for an offence which does not deserve death, is it not murder?” When Franklin finally had power in government, he helped pass an act to limit capital punishment to four crimes: murder, treason, rape, and arson. The punishments of branding with a hot iron, ear cropping, whipping, and the pillory were abolished.

Morgan, David T. “Benjamin Franklin: Champion of Generic Religion.” *Historian* 62, issue 4 (Summer 2000): 723-729.

This article attempts to discuss Franklin’s elusive religious views. It speaks of how several different denominations have claimed him as somewhat one of their own. In a sense he was a promoter of all religions that served a useful function—that which speaks of good morals to inspire people to be good citizens. Franklin grew up in a Presbyterian home in Boston. However, he quickly changed his beliefs, following the intellectual trend at the time, Deism. He became a Deist after reading books denouncing Deism. Due to Franklin’s own ambiguity on the subject, scholars have ranged in interpretation of Franklin’s beliefs from atheism to polytheism. Others have promoted a concept called “theistic perspectivism,” wherein all religious expressions, except for the First Cause, are stories or symbols. The symbols are terms used in lieu of the more forbidding and calculating metaphysics. In any case, the most accurate description is probably Deism, although some details within his Deistic beliefs alter throughout his life. Indeed, sometimes the Calvinism of his youth crept back into his own theology. Unlike a typical Deist, Franklin, at times, would concede that God sometimes intervenes in human affairs from time to time for some sort of benevolent effect. Indeed, Franklin had renounced almost every Calvinist doctrine, except for the Providence of God. Of course, Franklin never

endorses orthodox Christianity outright. The only time he ever mentions Jesus, it is on the same level as Socrates as a good person to emulate. In short, Franklin believed in a God who governs the world by his Providence, that the soul is immortal, and that religions (all religions) have a utilitarian value. In the end, Franklin viewed that all religions were essentially the same.

Morgan, Edmund S. *Benjamin Franklin*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

This most recent biography of Franklin is lucid and accessible. Morgan presents a Franklin who has great curiosity and vitality. This Franklin is also politically savvy and understands the importance of opinion in governing. Structurally, Morgan begins the biography on somewhat of a thematic framework, but then moves into the traditional chronological narrative. For the most part, this biography is of little use to my study, but it does touch upon certain points, but, due to the relative brevity of the book, he must gloss over others. Morgan does take time to relate subjects such as religion. Here, Franklin is not anti-religion per se, but more anti-religious authority (see p. 20). Luckily, Morgan does, at times, try to show some of Franklin's sexual values, such as the idea that chastity would not have excluded extra-marital affairs (23-4). Morgan, furthermore, does bring up, somewhat in passing, Franklin's flirtatiousness with such figures as Catharine Ray Greene, Polly Stevenson, Madame Brillon, and Madame Helvetius. He even claims that Franklin's relationship with Madame Brillon was not platonic. He does not relate many details of these relationships, probably due to space, and, furthermore, these aspects of Franklin lie outside of Morgan's central thesis that Franklin's importance lies primarily in his dealings with public affairs. Those other aspects of Franklin, to Morgan, seem to be only supporting details that add some richness to the personality that attracted so many people in Franklin's lifetime, especially in France. By defining Franklin largely with his public life, Morgan tries to dispel the preoccupation of defining Franklin by his pen. Overall, although I might disagree with certain emphases within the book, I recommend it for those who do not wish to read the lengthier classic by Carl Van Doren.

North, Marcy L. "Anonymity's Reflections in *The Arte of English Poesie*." *Studies in English Literature* 39, issue 1 (Winter 1999): 1-18.

By analyzing an anonymous writing about anonymity itself, Marcy L. North illuminates various theories of pseudonymity and anonymity under the general category of name suppression. Of course, anonymity was useful for polemicists and satirists who wish to defer criticism from themselves, but North is particularly interested in anonymity within elite court circles in Elizabethan England with respect to modesty. In this context, a courtier either lavishly praises the queen or speaks of his own accomplishments, but does so anonymously for respect to modesty. Only when the writing gains the attention and approval of the court, does the writer reveal himself. However, this is a difficult situation if one is trying to gain attention because one is largely unknown at court because if one is completely unknown, one may not get due credit for the composition. However, one who is established at court who seeks additional favor through anonymous patronage, will undoubtedly be recognized. In this situation, the court already has familiarity with one's writing so that the identity of the author is in the writing itself instead of a signature. Often, identity of anonymous literature is obvious, such as the use of revealing oneself anagrammatically within the prose of poetry. But, in less obvious ways, style and indirect references reveals one's identity within particular contexts. Thus, in this way,

anonymity serves to separate insiders from outsiders: insiders can readily identify the author due to contextual clues, whereas outsiders cannot. In these circumstances, anonymity could serve three purposes in one piece: a protective device, a plea for unbiased consideration for outsiders, and a tool for girding the boundaries of elite social circles. Thus, for outsiders, who play along with the accepted rules of anonymous political and ecclesiastical writings, especially in satire, anonymity protects the author and, at the same time, enhances his message, while for the elite, the effectiveness depends on the audience to willingly respect the guise of anonymity while seeing through it at the same time.

Perlman, Joel and Dennis Shirley. "When did New England Women Acquire Literacy?"
William and Mary Quarterly 48, Issue 1 (January 1991): 50-67.

This article reminds readers once again that there was a literacy gap in the colonial era between men and women. However, these authors contend that women's level of literacy was actually higher than previous historians have argued. Perlman and Shirley claim that previous historians' statistical analyses are not representative, being based primarily upon wills. These authors base their analysis upon wills, deeds, and census data. They argue that these materials, although they cannot be completely representative, provide slightly more accurate insights than previous data. Most of this essay focuses upon the second half of the eighteenth century; however, it might prove somewhat useful, although I admit its utility in my paper will be very limited, in a discussion of Silence Dogood's discussion on formally educating women.

Reis, Elizabeth. *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.

Although Reis primarily analyzes seventeenth century religious gendered ideologies, she does comment on early eighteenth century developments. Moreover, much of this material might be useful considering that the Salem witch trials, which this book interprets, were in 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts, and Benjamin Franklin was born only fourteen years later in Boston, Massachusetts. There are some important Puritan concepts and gendered self-understandings that Reis elucidates. First, she claims that the Puritans did not subscribe to the prevailing European view that women were inherently more evil than men (indeed, everyone was, in theory, depraved due to original sin). However, men and women had differing views of themselves. Reis writes, "Women, in particular, internalized their ministers' messages. They were ore likely to think of themselves as utterly depraved, as 'rebellious wretches against God,' bonded to Satan, and bound for hell; lay men, by contrast, were more likely to repent for particular sins than to dwell on the worthlessness of their essential natures. . ." (1-2). Thus, men thought they were damned for what they did, women for who they were. Next, Reis claims that the Puritans thought the soul to be female and that Satan attacked the soul through the body. Since it was thought that the female body was weaker than the male body, Satan could successfully attack a woman more often than a man. Moreover, because the soul was female, Puritans gave it certain characteristics they associated with physical females. They said the soul was insatiable, to match the allegedly unappeasable nature of women. Reis also says that "The representatives of the soul as a woman invited metaphors of fecundity and sexuality. Ann Bradstreet portrayed the eyes and ears as the doors of the soul, 'through which innumerable objects enter,' but the soul is never satisfied In Bradstreet's vision, the feminine soul

needed a virile Christ to satisfy her otherwise insatiable desires" (105). Similarly, Satan's invasion of the body was described in terms of rape. So, although Puritans never explicitly admitted that women were more sinful than men, it seems that in practice both women and men seemed to equate womanhood with "the discourse of depravity." Although beliefs about Satan waned after the Salem witch trials, it seems that the idea of a woman being inherently depraved and the stereotypes of women being insatiable in many ways, including sexually, survived into the early part of the eighteenth century. However, at the Great Awakening, not the women stopped seeing themselves as inherently depraved, but men, too, at this time began to see this as their nature as well.

Richards, Sylvie L. F. "Finding Her Voice: George Sand's Autobiography." *Women's Studies* 22, Issue 2 (March 1993): 137-144.

This article produces provocative theories of using pseudonyms of the opposite gender in the early nineteenth century. It shows how a woman, Aurore Dupin, constructed a fictional autobiography under the guise of a man, George Sand. The theories advanced in this article suggest that one's own gender has limitations of expression imposed by society; thus, by using a pseudonym of the opposite gender, one can overcome those boundaries. However, the issue of voice is important here. Although one uses the persona of the opposite gender, the voice of one's own gender inevitable shows through, or may even become magnified because of using a pseudonym of the opposite gender. Thus, here, using a masculine pseudonym with a feminine voice, one either creates a neuter character or an androgynous character, which would be more free from expected gender restrictions. However, often, the reasons for a woman using a male pseudonym may be different than a man using a female pseudonym because "it was considered scandalous . . . for a woman to write publicly; if she did, she was judged not as a writer but as a woman." Thus, here, a woman uses the name of a man in order to be heard. The reasons of using a pseudonym rather than being anonymous is that anonymity has no sense of voice, whereas pseudonymity not only gives a voice, but often enhances voice.

Seavey, Ormond. *Becoming Benjamin Franklin: The Autobiography and Life*. University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988.

Shields, David S. "Nathaniel Gardner, Jr., and the Literary Culture of Boston in the 1750's." *Early American Literature* 24, issue 3 (December 1989): 196-216.

This article about Nathaniel Gardner, Jr., presents a literary culture that flourished during the time of Franklin. This culture, based upon poetry of "sense," of morality, religious sublime, and neoclassicism, developed out of Harvard about the time that Franklin was apprenticed to his brother James Franklin. Interestingly, Nathaniel Gardner, Jr.'s father published frequently in James Franklin's paper, the *New England Courant*, during the 1720's, when Benjamin Franklin would have been just becoming active. Moreover, the wit of Harvard poetry opposed the wit of the *Courant's* prose. Indeed, one can find in Benjamin Franklin's first female pseudonym, "Silence Dogood," an invective against the ignorance of Harvard.

Soderlund, Jean R. "Women's Authority in Pennsylvania and New Jersey Quaker Meetings, 1680-1760." *William and Mary Quarterly* 44, Issue 4 (October 1987): 722-749.

Soderlund argues that Quaker women in Pennsylvania and New Jersey had authority unparalleled by any other religious group at the time, but that their authority did not equal autonomy. Women leaders oversaw, for the most part, female members of the Society of Friends. This article then examined the role of women's meetings within the Society of Friends as a whole. Some interesting aspects of this article that are potentially relevant to my paper include the Quaker view of women from the Genesis story (which in Christianity is still used today to argue that men should have authority over women). However, George Fox, the founder of the Quakers claimed that before the fall, male and female were equal. After the fall, women were subjected to the authority of their husbands; however, in the restoration in Christ, the sexes became, once again, equal as they were before the fall. Another potentially relevant point with regard to Franklin's pseudonym Patience (and possibly even Polly Baker) is that Quakers, like the Puritans, practiced informal stewardship or supervision of their neighbors' behavior. Generally, the Quakers were supposed to supervise members of their own gender and then report any deviant behavior to the leaders, who would then subject the "deviant" member to a hearing. Often, if the member fornicated or married a non-Quaker, the community disowned them. One example of this was a Quaker woman who became pregnant out of wedlock. The Quakers took care of her medical needs after she "bore a bastard child," but when she was well, they disowned her and cut her off from the Quaker community. As far as disciplinary measures went in Philadelphia, women more than men were held accountable for sexual misconduct and for marrying a non-Quaker. Furthermore, in Quaker Philadelphia, Quaker disciplinary measures were relatively lax until about 1725 when the Quakers began to supervise their neighbors and report them to Quaker leaders with greater frequency, possibly recognizing that they were not as stringent as their Quaker counterparts in other colonies and attempting to make up for their previous leniency.

Tise, Larry E., ed. *Benjamin Franklin and Women*. University Park, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.

This book is a collection of various scholars' writings on Benjamin Franklin and his relationship to women. Tise lists many of Franklin's pseudonyms among his "women," and also includes Franklin's first fictitious female, which is technically not a pseudonym. When Franklin ran away from his brother James Franklin, he needed a reason to leave Boston without being caught and returned to James. So, a suspicious captain of a ship leaving Boston asked Franklin, who was of apprentice age, why he was running away, Franklin made up a story that he had gotten a young woman pregnant, which, to the captain, was a legitimate excuse for running away. More than this, though, Tise indexes some of Franklin's pseudonyms and is a good source of reference to explore other authors.

Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in the Northern New England, 1650-1750*. New York: Vintage Books, 1980.

Ulrich's book intricately weaves both cultural ideals and expectations with reality into a coherent narrative. Between ideology and practice, she interprets various roles expected of and filled by women between 1650 and 1750 in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine. Within her descriptions of women, she explicitly states and often implicitly acknowledges the powerful

role of religion in shaping both expectations and real behavior. She does this most explicitly in how she divides the book. Part one is called "Bathsheba" and uses the description of a virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 to describe mundane expectations of a good wife. Part two is called "Eve" and speaks of sexual and bodily definitions of a woman extrapolated from Genesis 2-3. This sections probably proved the most pertinent to my research. Finally, part three is called Jael, based upon a woman from the book of Judges who, when men were unwilling to fulfill their expected duties, a woman broke out of her expected role and took on the masculine role. This last section might provide some insight into some of the arguments Franklin used, especially with Silence Dogood and some other of his pseudonyms. He also argued that men often did not fulfill their roles and so when their wives or other women broke out of their established roles to fulfill both feminine and masculine duties, they proved extraordinarily virtuous. As Ulrich notes, the "effectiveness of the narrative [of Jael and parallel New England narratives] rests on an awareness of role contradiction," which I have previously argued provided the basis for the effectiveness of some of Franklin's consciously and overly virtuous female pseudonyms (169). Of course, these three biblical women were ideals or stereotypes and Ulrich attempted to show to what degree these stereotypes functioned in day-to-day operations.

Van Doren, Carl. *Benjamin Franklin*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

Originally published by the Viking Press in 1938, Carl Van Doren's work has remained a classic piece in Franklin scholarship. Basically, Van Doren edits Franklin's letters and other interesting writings, incorporating them with his autobiography to create a very lengthy narrative told more by Franklin and less by Van Doren. This is a great book for an introduction to Franklin's life because of Van Doren's organizational ability and because it gets the reader familiar with Franklin's own words and how they fit within the context of Franklin's life.

Wells, Robert V. and Michael Zuckerman. "Quaker Marriage Patterns in a Colonial Perspective." *William and Mary Quarterly* 29, Issue 3 (July 1972): 415-442.

For the most part, this article just examines the patterns of marriage among 276 Quaker families and then attempts to explore marriage patterns distinctive to the middle colonies as a whole. It looks at things like the age of the husband and wife when married, how long marriages lasted, and, then, how that affected family size and population expansion. Interestingly, Quakers did not usually rush into second or third marriages and many Quakers remained single throughout their lives. Perhaps, those who remained single held similar sentiments to Susanna Wright, who refused to marry, as she says, because marriage inevitably led to such a level of inequality between the sexes that, in practice, undermines the Quaker ideology of sexual equality. This "celibate" group was significant in size, but not an overwhelming large group. Overall, these authors conclude that Quaker marriage patterns reflect colonial marriage patterns as a whole. The more relevant parts of this article refer to marriage values. For example, single people were considered to require special supervision, reflecting a cross-denominational norm of community supervision or stewardship. Overall, to remain single for too long was to reject the accepted social patterns of New England and Pennsylvania.

Wright, Esmond. *Franklin of Philadelphia*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986.

This well-written and well-organized biography is good for those interested in Franklin's career, from being a printer to his public career in his various governmental and political roles, especially as a colonial agent to England and a diplomat to France. The chapter of Franklin's time in France is probably the most interesting part of the book; however, Wright does not really add anything new or extra to understanding either Franklin or the world in which he lived. As far as pseudonyms are concerned, Wright does not provide much discussion, and, when he does, it is usually in passing. He does mention Silence Dogood, Benevolus, FB, Richard Saunders, and "A Lover of Britain." Benevolus and Silence Dogood seem to be the only pseudonyms that he spends more than a page discussing, and, even then, the discussion is not very illuminating. If one wishes to read a general biography to reinforce one's basic knowledge of Franklin, this book would be perfect, but for my purposes, it is not very useful.