Example 2

Final Year Project title: Mother of the Nation: Elizabeth Hamilton’s Reformist Politics

Benger, Elizabeth, *Memoirs of the Late Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton. With a Selection from her Correspondence, And Other Unpublished Writings*, 2 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1818)

An interesting primary text in its own right, Benger’s Memoirs are the still the most authoritative account of Hamilton’s life; they were published two years after her death. It combines a biographical account of Hamilton as well as extracts from her private journal and correspondence.

Grogan, Claire, *Politics and Genre in the Works of Elizabeth Hamilton, 1756-1816* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012)

This book is the only monograph devoted solely to Hamilton. Grogan offers a useful reconsideration of the political frameworks that previous critics have used to evaluate Hamilton’s work. She is particularly interested in Hamilton’s generic innovations and the ways in which they enable her to articulate claims to women’s rights.


The final chapter of this book discusses Hamilton in relation to a range of women writers from the second half of the eighteenth century. Guest focuses on Hamilton’s investigation of the categories of the public and the private, identifying the form of female domestic authority that emerges in her work. It offers some useful ways of theorizing the concepts of the public and the private.

This book includes two chapters on Hamilton. The first provides an account of the counter-revolutionary feminism that characterises her writing in the 1790s. The second links Hamilton’s ideal of an intellectual domestic woman with a post-revolutionary project of national reconstruction.


This book offers some useful information about Hamilton’s life in late-Enlightenment Edinburgh. Perkins provides detailed analysis of Hamilton’s philosophical and educational writing and considers her alongside two of her Scottish contemporaries, Anne Grant and Christian Johnstone. It will be particularly helpful in aiding me when I consider the significance of Hamilton’s Scots-Irish identity.


This article anticipates Grogan’s book in suggesting that Hamilton’s work resists categorisation within an antagonistic binary opposition that pits ‘radicalism’ against ‘conservatism’. Thaddeus argues that Hamilton’s writing on domestic reform enables her to outline a model for wider social regeneration.


This article is very attentive to the philosophical nature of Hamilton’s late works. I was unsure whether I needed to read these but Warburton makes a strong case for their importance. She argues that Hamilton’s domestication of philosophical discourse is fundamental to the formation of her authorial voice.